



Yugabdh: 5125
Shaka Samvat: 1945
Vikram Samvat: 2080

VOL: LV
No: 4
October - December 2023
www.vhp-america.org

HINDU VISHWA

Vishwa Dharma Digest

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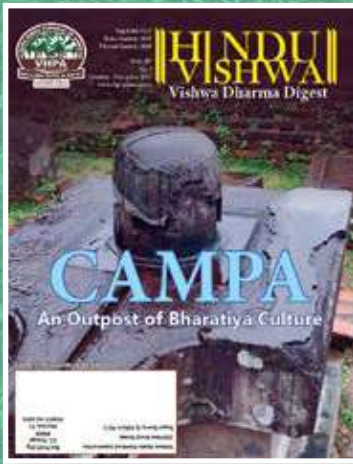
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Tel.: 732-744-0851
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Volume: LV

No.: 4

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2023



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ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योतिस्तमसः परमुच्यते ।
ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञानगम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य विष्ठितम् ॥

— श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 13.17

He is the source of light in all luminaries, and is entirely beyond the darkness of ignorance. He is knowledge, the object of knowledge, and the goal of knowledge. He dwells within the hearts of all living beings.

jyotiṣhām api taj jyotis tamaśaḥ param uchyate
jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ jñāna-gamyāṁ hṛdi sarvasya viṣṭhitam

Bhagvad Gita, 13.17

ABOUT THE HINDU VISHWA

World Hindu Council of America (VHPA) publishes the Hindu Vishwa issue quarterly, except when combined with special publications. For subscription, please fill out the membership form on the last page.

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World Hindu Council of America (VHPA), founded in 1970 and incorporated in the state of New York in 1974, is an independent, nonprofit, tax-exempt and volunteer-based charitable organization serving the needs of Hindu community in USA. It aims to build a dynamic and vibrant Hindu society rooted in the eternal values of Dharma and inspired by the lofty ideal of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, i.e. “the entire creation is one family”.

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THE RESURGENCE OF Hindu Dharma

Many of us participated in the awe-inspiring World Hindu Congress (WHC) in Thailand and were enthused by the sights, sounds, and profound discourses on various aspects of our dharma. While the attack on us is relentless from adharmic forces, the resolve to defend it is equally bold and concerted. True to the motto “Dharmo Rakshati Raskshitah”, the dharma sangha is mobilizing across the world to protect what is good, noble, and frankly only worldview that seeks the betterment of all of humanity and not just the followers, all living beings not just humans, and the universe in its entirety and not just earth.

The resurgence of Hindu dharma is liberating itself from the derogatory labels imposed by invaders and colonialists through reductionist theorizing. The WHC played a pivotal role in deconstructing one such term – “Hinduism.” The essence of this deconstruction lies in understanding “Hindu” as an unbounded word, signifying the eternal sustenance of individuals, families, communities, societies, and nature, both animate and inanimate. In contrast, the term “Hinduism,” suffixed with an “ism,” carries the baggage of oppressive and discriminatory connotations, a context we must be mindful of.

Emphasizing “Hindutva” over “Hinduism” becomes imperative, as Hindutva encapsulates the essence of Hinduism without the negative baggage associated with the term “ism.” Alternatively, the term “Sanatan Dharma” serves as an adjective, indicating the eternal nature of our beliefs.

We find ourselves at the brink of a historic moment as the divine child form of Lord Ram returns to his birthplace in a grand abode befitting Maryada Purushottam (the perfect man). This juncture calls for celebration and reflection on the 495 years of struggle. Our cultural emphasis on internal spiritual gains should not overshadow our responsibility to address challenges posed by adharmic forces. The grand Ram Janma Bhoomi temple stands as a testament to the triumph of creation over destruction just as in Somnath Temple, reinforcing that dharma will always prevail but battle needs to be fought.

Continuing the exploration beyond the WHC, my journey led me to the enchanting island of Bali, home to perhaps the only native Hindu culture surviving outside of India and its diaspora. The Balinese Hindu dharma is vividly ritualistic, woven seamlessly into daily life. You cannot miss it irrespective of the routine being pursued; whether taking a taxi, walking on the street, visiting a park, or eating at a restaurant. I couldn’t help but contrast this with the Hindu Dharma practiced in India and other places where the rituals are confined to a room in a house or the temple in a neighborhood. This stark contrast prompts contemplation on whether the victory flag fluttering atop Ram Janma Bhoomi encourages us to bring our religious expressions out into the open, akin to the Balinese Hindus who have preserved their dharma amidst challenges.

Reflecting on external pressures that may have subdued our expression of religious symbols in public spaces, examples like the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul offer poignant insights. I visited Istanbul, Turkey during my return trip to the USA from WHC. The conversion of this grand Orthodox Christian Church into a mosque, with Christian symbols defaced, serves as a stark reminder of what could have happened. It was the grandest Orthodox Christian Church in Constantinople now Istanbul and the seat of power of eastern Christianity.

I picked up an official brochure on the structure that pointed to remaining Christian motifs. I was able to locate many of the symbols on the vestibule but could not see the picture of baby Jesus in the arms of Mary. It was supposed to be in the central hall of the structure. On close examination, I found that it was covered with white clothes because the ancient church had recently been opened for Muslim prayers under the Islamist president Erdogan. The religious figures are forbidden (“Haram”) for Muslims so the beautiful mosaic had been covered.

As we celebrate the hard-fought reclamation of Ram Janma Bhoomi, let us ponder how best to practice the inward serenity of quiet contemplation and bring back the boisterous celebrations of our cultural expressions. It’s time for a collective “coming out party,” where the rich tapestry of our heritage takes center stage, resonating with the world in all its glory.



HWN
ORGANIZES

5K Walk for The Drake House

Sunday, October 1st, 2023, an auld lang syne made once again for a reoccurring 5K walk, a fundraising event at Webb Bridge Park, organized by Hindu Women's Network (HWN), Atlanta Chapter: an initiative of World Hindu Council of America (VHPA).

Energized by the overpouring of support from past year, HWN, reinstated their efforts to bring an earnest, beseeching spirit to raise funds for The Drake House. A 501c3 non-profit organization, The Drake House, work to respond to the growing number of women and children experiencing homelessness in North Metro Atlanta. Their goal is to keep single mothers and their children united under one roof as they work toward self-sufficiency.





The walk commenced on schedule at 7:30 am and was self-paced. A family friendly walk saw children, adults, and old, excited for the walk. With fall punching the clock the weather was perfect to enjoy the beautiful location. The easy trail was marked with VHPA signs for convenient navigation of the participants. An aquamarine t-shirt with 5K walk logo was handed over along with registration. The still green park had a blue wave streaming down with a purpose. Granola bars, water bottles and a lot of vivacity were provided at each successful completion of the track. TV Asia gracefully doled out the coverage of the indefatigable event.

An initiative of the women, by the women, for the women with the sole motto of empowering women. HWN is a forum that gives voice to the Hindu women's perspective on contemporary issues through programs that enrich holistically; the physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual development of woman. The HWN spearheaded this fundraising 5K walk and set out, yet another milestone for Hindu Heritage Month of October 2023.





HWN volunteers commenced the groundwork by connecting broadcasting and aggregating registrations for the noble cause. Be it India's first Covid vaccine or setting a precedent by leading and governing the country, women now are at the forefront. The giving and sacrificing nature of a woman nurtures the much-needed change we experience today and will be the reason for the future transposition in the society.

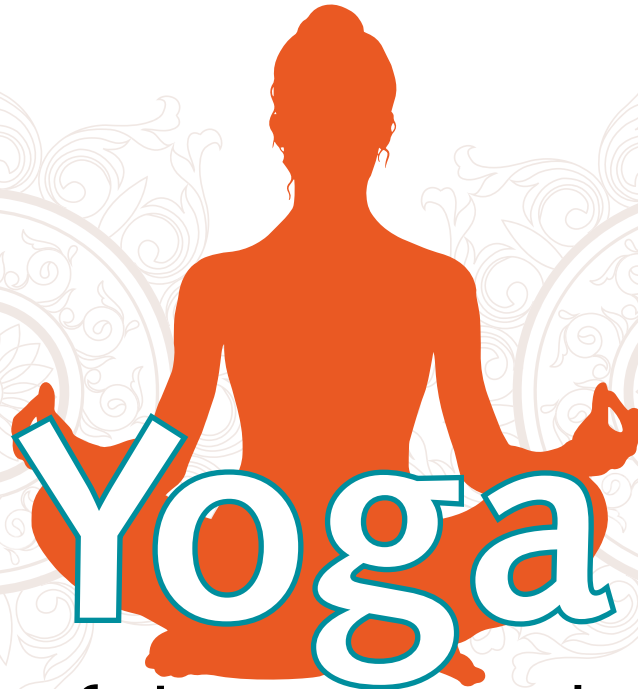
HWN is enthusiastic to come back each year with bigger and better fervencies. HWN looks forward to accessorizing with your enterprise and motivations. You can be instrumental to the growth of HWN with your support.



A proud mention of the current volunteers and sponsors:

Global Mall and ArtInCrochet	Sponsors
Mr and Mrs Harry Chopra, Synergy America, Inc, Radha Savitala	Supporters
Sabitha Venugopal, Ragu Veeraraghavan, Veena Katdare, Anu Whitakar and family, Sarika Jaswani	Venue, printing signs, connecting with The Drake House
Kusum Khurana	Fundraising donations, snacks, gathering youth volunteers and t-shirts.
Surendra Dhar	Registration
Jigna Oza	Hot tea, coffee
Anjali Chhabria	TV Asia coverage





One of the Most Valuable Contributions of **BHARAT** to the World

By **Jai G. Bansal**, VP of Education - Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA)

Kalyan Viswanathan, Hindu University of America (HUA)

“

Yoga does not transform the way we see things; it transforms the person who sees.

— **B.K.S. Iyengar**

Introduction

What began in the early 19th century as a curiosity about Hindu thought system through translated works and visitors from the West, today stands as the most widely adopted complementary health practice in the United States.

The statistics related to the Yoga industry are undeniably impressive. In the United States, approximately 36 million Americans practice Yoga, and between 2012 and 2016, this figure witnessed a remarkable 50% growth. During the same period, the number of male Yoga practitioners surged from four million to ten million. It is noteworthy that every third American has, at the very least, experimented with Yoga, and in 2017, more than

a third of Americans favored Yoga and meditation as Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM). A recent report by The Wall Street Journal even highlighted instances of overcrowded Yoga classes leading to disputes among practitioners due to limited space.

On the flip side, there has been a burgeoning growth in America's Yoga instructors. Presently, over 100,000 Americans have obtained qualifications as Yoga teachers, and more than 6,000 Yoga studios have opened their doors to enthusiastic Yoga enthusiasts. The global Yoga industry is estimated to yield an annual economic impact of \$80 billion, with a substantial \$16 billion directed toward Yoga classes, equipment, clothing, and accessories in the United States alone.

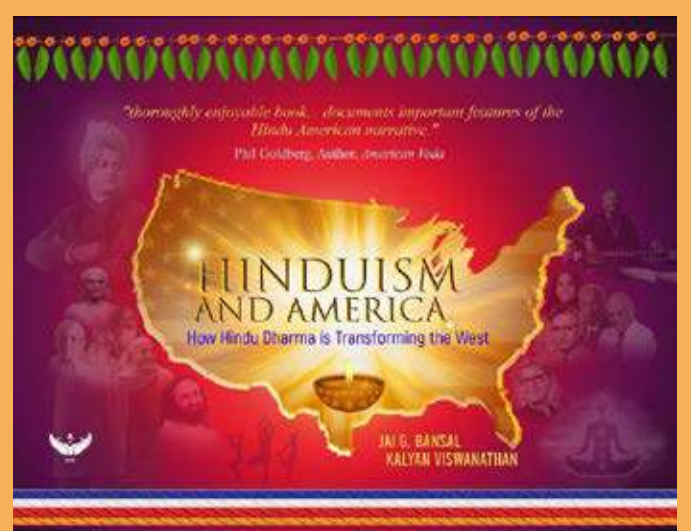


The intriguing journey of this Hindu spiritual practice to the United States, spanning approximately two centuries, can be segmented into two partially overlapping phases. The initial phase witnessed the introduction of Hindu thought into America, conveyed by visiting gurus, swamis, and yogis from India as an integrated system for spiritual self-discovery. Subsequently, the second phase experienced the gradual assimilation and Westernization of these ideas, along with their widespread commercialization, resulting in the emergence of diverse offshoot traditions with a primary emphasis on health benefits and a diminishing connection to its spiritual roots.

Introduction of Yoga to Western World

Following his historic address at the Parliament of Religions in 1893, Swami Vivekananda embarked on a two-year journey of lecturing throughout the eastern and central regions of the United States. His erudite discourses on Yoga and Vedanta captivated large audiences wherever he went. Indeed, it is difficult to find a more concise and clearer exposition of the essence of Yoga and its links to Hindu thought, than Swami Vivekananda's: *"The Hindu focused on the inner world, delving into the unseen realms within the Self, and developed the science of Yoga. Yoga involves the mastery of the senses, will, and mind, and its study empowers us to exert control rather than being subject to it. The mind appears as layers upon layers, and our ultimate goal is to transcend these intervening strata within our being and attain realization of God. The ultimate purpose of Yoga is to experience God. To achieve this, we must surpass relative knowledge and transcend the sensory world. While the world is awake to the senses, the children of the Lord are awakened in a different realm – they are the true seekers of God. There is only one way to master the senses: to perceive the Reality that exists in the universe. Only then can we genuinely conquer our senses."*

Swami Vivekananda recognized Yoga's contributions to health and physical fitness, yet he firmly centered his teachings on the spiritual core of this tradition. He delivered extensive discourses on various forms of Yoga, including Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Raj Yoga, each serving as a path



HINDUISM AND AMERICA:

How Hindu Dharma is Transforming the West” is a recently released **COFFEE TABLE BOOK** that attempts to narrate the story of this transformative movement. Written jointly by the authors of this article, this book represents two-and-half-year long collaboration effort of VHPA and HUA.

Order your copy at tinyurl.com/3svef6mm, or scan the QR code:



“This book should adorn every Hindu American's coffee table.”:

Prof. Ved Nanda, Director,

The Ved Nanda Center for International & Comparative Law, Padma Bhushan

toward moksha, the ultimate state of self-realization. Among these, Raja Yoga, commonly known as Yoga, stands as the most widely practiced form globally, often mistakenly equated with Asanas or physical postures. In reality, it represents an integrated system of mental and physical control practices, comprising eight limbs or Ashtanga. The comprehensive theory and practice of the Ashtanga Yoga system are expounded in Patañjali's Yogasutra, the foremost authoritative work on the subject. Although the exact compilation date remains uncertain, it is understood that Patanjali consolidated and organized knowledge from much older traditions. Many artifacts discovered from the Sindhu Saraswati Civilization, dating back to 3000 BCE, illustrate the most ancient depictions of Yoga postures known to humanity.

Transmission and Absorption

A few decades later, Swami Vivekananda was succeeded by Paramahansa Yogananda (1893-1952), who made history as the first Hindu Vedanta and

Yoga teacher to settle in the United States. He became the first prominent Indian to be hosted at the White House by President Calvin Coolidge in 1927. His early acclaim earned him the title of "the 20th century's first superstar guru," as dubbed by the Los Angeles Times.

By 1930, **Paramahansa Yogananda** had founded twelve Yogoda-Satsang centers throughout America. This movement persists today in the form of two competing institutions: the Self Realization Fellowship and the Church of Self-Realization, the latter initiated by Swami Kriyananda, one of his disciples who branched out. In 1946, Paramahansa Yogananda authored the renowned "Autobiography of a Yogi," widely regarded as a spiritual classic on Yoga. Through his Kriya Yoga teachings, he conveyed to America the idea that the body, mind, and soul could be made 'healthier' through dedicated practice and discipline.

Swami Vivekananda and Paramahansa Yogananda, in their unique ways, paved the path for traditional Yoga gurus to impart their wisdom to the Western world. Among them was a remarkable figure, often



referred to as a 'one-man Yoga university' – **Tirumalai Krishnamacharya** (1888-1989), often called the 'father of modern Yoga' and the 'grandfather of American Yoga.' He is widely recognized as the architect of vinyasa karma Yoga, a discipline uniting breath control with graceful bodily movements. His everlasting legacy is the numerous accomplished students he mentored, including Indra Devi, B.K.S. Iyengar, and Pattabhi Jois. Their mastery of Yoga was so comprehensive that they collectively earned the reputation of being the 'technicians' of asana practice.

Eugenie Peterson (1899-2002), better known as **Indra Devi** and hailed as the 'first lady of Yoga,' was the initial non-Indian and female student of Krishnamacharya. Devi introduced her unique form of Yoga, focusing on body postures (asanas) and breathing techniques (pranayama), without incorporating spiritual elements. Her teachings spanned across India, China, and America. In 1948, she established her Yoga studio in Hollywood, becoming the first of its kind in Los Angeles. Indra Devi played a pivotal role in popularizing Yoga as a means for health, fitness, and youthful vitality, particularly among American women. Her studio effectively transformed Yoga from a spiritual pursuit into a trendy fitness regimen and stress-relief practice. Notably, her celebrity students included prominent Hollywood figures like Greta Garbo, Eva Gabor, Gloria Swanson, Ramon Navarro, Robert Ryan, Yule Brynner, Jennifer Jones, and the renowned violinist Yehudi Menuhin, who later introduced the eminent B.K.S. Iyengar to the Western world. Indra Devi authored several books on Yoga and health, such as "Yoga for You," "Yoga for Americans," "Forever Young, Forever Healthy," and "Renew Your Life Through Yoga."

According to her biographer, Michelle Goldberg, Indra Devi's lifelong aspiration was to bring Yoga to the Western world. In the 1990s, when Yoga became an integral part of cosmopolitan urban culture, signifying a lifestyle that was both wholesome and attractive, she had undoubtedly succeeded in her mission. Despite the more strenuous style of Yoga that emerged, Yoga remained, as Goldberg notes, primarily a female pursuit,



just as Indra Devi had shaped it. She also established the association between Yoga and organic food, holistic spas, and biodynamic beauty products in the Western consciousness.

BKS Iyengar (1918-2014), one of T. Krishnamacharya's distinguished disciples and the creator of "Iyengar Yoga," was a globally acclaimed Yoga teacher. Iyengar Yoga represented his interpretation of Hatha Yoga, which he learned from his guru. He gained international recognition for instructing Yoga to numerous celebrities, including philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti, Queen Elisabeth of Belgium, author Aldous Huxley, actress Annette Benning, filmmaker Mira Nair, and designer Donna Karan.

In 1966, he authored his first book, "Light of Yoga," which became an international best-seller. This book emphasized the crucial importance of absolute precision when practicing asanas and delved into the philosophy and practices that make Yoga a perfect path for spiritual growth. "Light of Yoga" was followed by 13 other books that covered various aspects of pranayama and Yoga philosophy. In 2004, Time Magazine recognized Iyengar as one of the 100 most influential people globally, and in

to experience complete relaxation of body, mind, and spirit. He also authored "The Complete Illustrated Book of Yoga," a creation that guided millions on their Yoga journeys. Swami Vishnudevananda also popularized the concept of "Yoga of Synthesis," which involved integrating the four principal paths forming the foundations of Yoga - Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Rāja Yoga.

By the early 1960s, television became a potent medium for spreading Yoga in America, thanks to **Richard Hittleman** (1927-1991), who taught Yoga to millions through his show "Yoga for Health," broadcast during the 1960s and 1970s. Hittleman is credited with introducing Yoga to literally millions of people via television. As a student of Ramana Maharishi, he also authored a series of books on Yoga, covering a range of topics influenced by Yoga, including fitness, personal living, beauty, and diet.

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1918-2008) is renowned for introducing the Western world to

Transcendental Meditation (TM), a technique he developed to attain a state of enlightenment through inner tranquility. While his primary focus was on meditation, he also encouraged the practice of asanas and pranayama before meditation. In the late 1960s, he gained immense fame as the guru to the Beatles, Beach Boys, and other celebrities. Initially framed as a spiritual practice, under Maharishi's guidance, TM and Yoga evolved into evidence-based scientific methodologies, making them more appealing to a broader Western audience. Over his lifetime, Maharishi is credited with teaching his techniques to more than five million people worldwide and establishing thousands of teaching centers.

Swami Muktananda (1908 – 1982) is a notable figure in this journey. After years of searching for spiritual fulfillment, he received a profound and sublime shaktipat initiation from Bhagvan Nityananda in 1947. Nine years later, he established Siddha Yoga, a discipline that incorporated teachings from





Vedanta and Kashmir Shaivism. Between 1970 and 1981, Muktananda embarked on three worldwide tours, establishing ashrams and meditation centers in various countries, including the Siddha Yoga Ashram in Oakland, California, and the Shree Muktananda Ashram in the Catskills Mountains, northwest of New York City. Muktananda authored several books on topics such as Kundalini Shakti, Vedanta, and Kashmir Shaivism, including his spiritual autobiography, "The Play of Consciousness."

Sylvia Hellman, a Canadian born in Berlin in 1911, experienced numerous hardships in her life. In 1955, she travelled to India to meet Swami Sivananda Saraswati with hopes of self-discovery. After just a two-month stay in India, her guru gave her a significant mission: "Start an ashram or school [in Canada] for the divine teachings of Yoga and Vedanta." She returned to Canada, adopted the name **Swami Sivananda Radha** (1911-1995), and began teaching Yoga classes, lecturing on Yoga philosophy, and sharing her Indian experiences on television. In 1963, she founded the first Canadian ashram on the West Coast, where she tailored her teachings to Westerners. She developed a gentler and more meditative style of practice, which she called Hidden Language Hatha Yoga. Swami Radha aimed to bring quality into her students' lives, believing that true spirituality required this quality, even if one meditated for six hours a day. She wrote dozens of books, launched a quarterly journal that would later become the international Yoga magazine *Ascent*, and opened several urban Yoga centers.

Lilias Folin (born in 1936), affectionately known as the "Julia Child of Yoga," became a household name in the 1970s for introducing Yoga into American living rooms through her PBS series "Lilias, Yoga and You." She followed up with "Lilias! Yoga Gets Better with Age" in the late 1980s and early '90s. While her show reached millions, Lilias had a unique ability to connect with people, making her viewers feel as though she was a friend and confidante. In a 1974 *Time* magazine article on the growing interest in Yoga, she was likened to the beloved cookbook author and TV personality Julia Child, and the moniker stuck.

In the early 1970s, **Swami Rama** (1925-1996) garnered worldwide attention, not only as a spiritual guru but also as a subject of research when he demonstrated complete control over his body, altering his pulse rate, temperature, and heart rate at will. Swami Rama's enduring contribution to Yoga in America was the establishment of the "Himalayan International Institute of Yoga Science and Philosophy" in Chicago in 1971, along with his book "Living with the Himalayan Masters" (1978).

Swami Satchidananda (1914-2002), another disciple of Swami Sivananda Saraswati, arrived in America during the height of the counter-culture movement in the 1960s. He gained instant fame by delivering the opening address at the Woodstock Festival in 1969. Over his lifetime, he travelled over two million miles worldwide to popularize his trademarked version of Yoga, called Integral Yoga. This system was described as "a flexible combination of specific methods to develop every aspect of the individual: physical, intellectual, and spiritual." In 1969, he initiated the *Integral Yoga Magazine*, which remains an eWeekly magazine to this day. Swami Satchidananda's objective of promoting 'an easeful body, a peaceful mind, and a useful life' is being carried forward by his Integral Yoga Institute, established in 1966, which now has over 30 branches across six continents.



By this time, it was evident that Yoga had secured its place in the West and was seen as a lucrative business. As a result, various institutions and organizations were being formed. The Yoga Society of Pennsylvania and the Kripalu Yoga Ashram were both established by Amrit Desai, the guru credited with developing a new Yoga system he named Kripalu Yoga, in honor of his guru Swami Kripalvananda. The ashram later changed its name to the Kripalu Yoga Fellowship and was eventually rebranded as **the Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health** in 1983. In 1978, Baba Hari Dass founded the **Mount Madonna Center** to offer a wide range of residential Yoga programs. Subsequently, the Pacific Cultural

Center in Santa Cruz and the Salt Spring Yoga Center were established to disseminate his teachings. In 1989, the **International Association of Yoga Therapists (IAYT)** was founded by two veteran Yoga teachers, Larry Payne and Richard Miller. The IAYT aimed to support research and education in Yoga and serve as a training platform for Yoga teachers and therapists. Today, numerous ashrams and institutions, built on the works of Swamis Muktananda, Vishnudevananda, Srila Prabhupada, and contemporary gurus like Mata Amritanandamayi, Sri Karunamayi, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, and Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, can be found throughout the United States and around the world.

About the Authors



Dr. Jai Bansal is a scientist, author, and community leader with a keen interest in Indian history and in exploring the contributions of the Hindu civilization to the world. He currently serves as the Vice President of Education for the World Hindu Council of America (VHPA), as well as a member of its executive board and the governing council. After a distinguished career spanning 38 years, Dr. Bansal retired in 2014 as the Chief Scientific Officer and the Global Technology Development Advisor of a global petrochemical company. From 2014 to 2018, he served as an advisor to the Argonne National Laboratory, Chicago, and the US Department of Energy. He holds a Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Waterloo, Canada, and a B.Sc. (Distinction) from Panjab University. He has published widely and holds over two dozen scientific patents.



Mr. Kalyan Viswanathan is currently serving as the President of Hindu University of America and guiding its renewal and revitalization. He was a longtime student of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, established in the Advaita Vedanta Sampradaya and was associated with his work for over 20 plus years. Prior to his involvement with Hindu University of America, Kalyan was a Global Practice Head for one of India's largest IT Services Company, with a 20-plus year track record. He holds a Master's Degree in Computer Science and a Bachelor's Degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from BITS, Pilani. He is also working on his Doctoral degree in Hindu Studies, currently, with a scholarly focus on the intersection of Hindu and Western thought, the recovery of Hindu epistemology and its relevance and value for humanity.

Kumaon Himalayas

Indigenously Inspiring and Immersive



By **Subhasish Chakraborty**

As the world strides into the final stretch of 2023, there is an all-enveloping awareness of a world that is veering more and more towards “Planet and People First” phenomenon, with the North Indian state of Uttarakhand, magnetised by the mighty Himalayas, truly evolving as New India’s most preferred Conscious Travel destination.

In the days of yore, the Kumaon region, Almora and its surroundings used to be a quiet, sleepy Himalayan outpost, blessed with magnificent Himalayan vistas and a trading hub. The eerie silence of the Himalayas and the pristine mountain environ has for a long time been luring writers, poets and artists to rejuvenate themselves. It goes without saying that creative people find the Kumaon Himalayas (Almora and beyond) particularly conducive for creative pursuits and have found fulfilment here.

The mesmerizing charm of the Kumaon Himalayas is best summed up by an anonymous traveler thus – “Kumaon is so beautiful that there is nothing wrong in calling it, the staircase to heaven”. Shoba Mohan, founder of RARE India www.rareindia.com is of the opinion that – “In a regular world, be RARE! In Kumaon Himalayas, every moment is a potential for transformation and every encounter is an opportunity to dive deep into the heart of India’s Devbhumi (Abode of Gods)”.

Off late, the stupendous cultural diversity, aka Indigenous culture of the Kumaon region has touched the chord of today’s discerning traveler. Needless to say, a journey through the rugged Kumaoni mountain landscape is a stellar experience, an assault on your senses through culture, cuisine, history, heritage and dance.

In a world reeling under global warming and climate crisis, the Indian state of Uttarakhand comes as a breath of fresh air. With the snow-capped high Himalayan peaks like Nanda Devi(7816m), Chaukhamba(7138m), Panchchuli(6904), Trishul(7120m).....standing like sentinels, the peace-loving people of Uttarakhand along with the state government's nodal Tourism department have taken a vow to protect the state's fragile Himalayan ecosystem through a series of eco-friendly measures like encouraging home stay options in lieu of the commercially profitable multi-storied apartment hotels, promoting immersive holidays with the stress on taking tourism to the villages and hamlets; the idea is to make tourism ecologically sensitive and thereby offer high value experiences.

Uttarakhand government's recent declaration to convert the Haldwani Zoo into a Carbon Neutral zone has been much appreciated by environmentalists and the state was also the first one to come up with its own climate change action plan. India's first green energy-based solar panel plant in Rudrapur – Luminous Power Technologies, with an annual production capacity of 500 MW is another feather in the cap of Uttarakhand.

In the Post Covid world, visitors worldwide have unequivocally shown preference towards visiting Carbon Neutral destinations, where nature is pristine, the culture unscathed by modernity and distinctive cultural traits are well preserved.



No wonder, the Kumaon Himalayas (Almora & surroundings) blessed as it is with the majestic Himalayan peaks, is also the melting pot of tribal/indigenous people – Tharus, Bhutiyas, Jaunsaris, Buksas and Rajis, whose fascinating lifestyle, belief systems, cuisine, jewellery design and folklore have all endeared themselves within the minds of today's discerning travelers.

Embarking on a Tribal Tour of Kumaon Himalayas could be life changing and transformative. Out here, travel is slow. The essence is on immersion and engagement with the local folks. The roads are intimidating, yet, the natural vistas, flora and fauna are just fabulous. Sometimes, you keep hiking for hours together with not a soul to be seen!





Each tribe is unique with their own set of belief systems in place. For Instance, the Tharus are matrilineal and women are the torchbearers of society. The colourful Jaunsaris on the other hand are one of the world's last remaining Polyandric societies. The Bhotiyas are distinctive with their Tibeto-Mongoloid features and are expert weavers.

Having been born and raised in India's North Eastern state of Assam, I grew up in the company of tribals – Nagas, Mizos, Bodos, Kacharis, Monpas and what have you! My good friend Chandan Koranga who hails from the bewitching hill station of Almora has been guiding visitors from affluent Western countries like USA,UK, Canada, Australia and Germany through his company – Him Valley Infra and Oh God! most of his guests are repeat visitors to Kumaon, which speaks volumes about the regions astonishing beauty and surreal charm.

Visitors from abroad who come in search of peace and solitude are provided high quality accommodation in Chandan's rugged Wood Villa cottages on self-service basis. The Villas are located in the picture perfect Dhamas village and made of the finest blend of German Pine and English Wood. The village is within close proximity to Almora (32 Kms.) and the cottages are nicely tucked up at an elevation which is all of 1424m/4672 feet above sea level.

Wood Villas in Dhamas is quintessentially curated for Slow Travel/Conscious Travel. An eerie silence pervades the Villa landscape. All the windows and balconies offer 360 degree uninterrupted views of the stunning snow covered Himalayan peaks. In the cozy confines of the Wood Villas, the good old times resonate gracefully. As the red molten ball dips across the Himalayan vistas, it is time to huddle together besides the crackling fireplace, strumming your Guitar, and indulge in your favourite tittle. The all pervading peace inside and the snowfalls outside is nature's invitation to you, reminding you yet



again those immortal words of Roger Ebert – *“The very fact of snow is such an amazement”*.

Chandan Koranga’s untiring efforts to showcase not just the Kumaoni Himalayas, but, also the stupendous tribal diversity of the region is beginning to have a positive rub-off effect on the village folks, particularly Sitlakhet and Balsa Gaon. These picturesque villages receive a regular stream of visitors from abroad, which has metamorphosed into a precious bond of friendship.

The stellar element of this unique friendship bond is that there is no superfluous demands imposed on the village communities. Discerning visitors appreciate the fact that the Kumaon Himalayas is earmarked for “Slow Tourism/Immersive Tourism” and they want the villages to retain their original, centuries old charm. Although, transportation and roads remain below par, yet there are no complaints; the cultural immersion into the Kumaoni folklore, legends and traditions are far more important.

Indeed, what a joy it is to see local folks engaged in serving HNW guests from abroad, some of whom are millionaires in their own rights, partaking the local food prepared so lovingly by the womenfolk, while the men are busy guiding visitors on trek, hiking to remote hamlets and offering them every possible help enroute.

With fulfilment writ large on his face, apart from overseeing the Wood Villa operations from his cozy mountain home in Almora and the wellbeing of the Wood Villa team, Chandan is focussed in ensuring a “No Nonsense” approach when it comes to the question of preserving Kumaon’s fragile Himalayan eco-system and Indigenous diversity. His steadfast commitment is evident in the niche brand - Wood Villa, steering the company through the depressing pandemic years with no loss of staff. Stellar stuff! Ain’t it?

According to Chandan – *“Wood Villa units will offer breathtaking views of the full range of Himalayan peaks. The architectural finesse is every bit European and each independent villa is wholly constructed out of wood, a rarity in the Indian context!”* He further adds – *“Our client base is NRIs and high net worth individuals (HNI) who have shown tremendous interest on this unique project.*

These villas are available for leases for up to 3 years and further renewable”.

India’s Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been focusing on highlighting the North Indian state of Uttarakhand to the global community. The outside world is largely unaware of the region’s stupendous diversity in terms of tourism and still carries the perception of Uttarakhand being a landlocked region and a difficult place to visit, which is absurd. The time is ripe to unravel this region in all its glory and change the narratives.



10

Stellar Reasons to Visit Uttarakhand:

1 Uttarakhand is **India's spiritual capital** and blessed with countless pilgrimage sites like **Dev Haridwar, Rishikesh, Kedarnath, Gangotri, Yamunotri.**

2 Rishikesh is considered to be the **Yoga Capital of the world.**

3 **The highest peak of India - Nanda Devi (7816m)** is in Uttarakhand.

4 **"Lake District of India",** Nainital is India's very own Lake District.

5 There are two famous mountaineering institute which is in Uttarakhand - **The Nehru Institute of Mountaineering** situated in Uttarkashi and **Pandit Nain Singh Surveyor Mountaineering** training institute situated an **altitude of 2200 m in Munsiyari, Uttarakhand.**

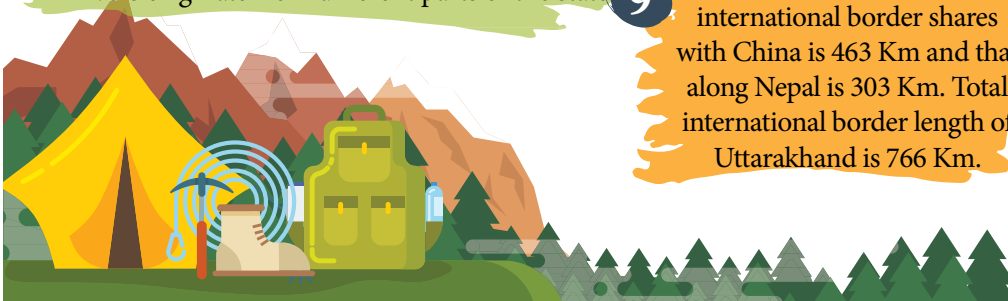
6 Uttarakhand is home to two UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the **Valley of Flowers** and **Nanda Devi National Park.**

7 **Jim Corbett National Park** of Nainital district is the oldest national park in India which was established in 1936 for the protection of the **Royal Bengal Tiger.** The park is situated at the foothills of the Himalayas in the Nainital district of Uttarakhand.

8 The state is home to two of the most sacred rivers in Hinduism – the **Ganges** and the **Yamuna.** The origin of the Ganges is the holy mountain Gangotri, while the origin of the Yamuna is the holy lake Yamunotri. The two rivers originate from different parts of the state

9 Geo-strategically very important as **Uttarakhand shares its international border with China in northeast and Nepal in southeast.** Length of international border shares with China is 463 Km and that along Nepal is 303 Km. Total international border length of Uttarakhand is 766 Km.

10 The first Agriculture University of India **"Govind Ballabh Pant University"** which paved the way for the Green Revolution of India was established in 1960 in Pantnagar.



About the Author



Subhasish Chakraborty has been working as a Travel Journalist for the past two decades and has been editorially involved with numerous international In-Flight magazines of renowned airlines like Cathy Pacific, Dragon Air, Bhutan Airlines, Air Asia, Airport Authority of India etc. He was also involved with the UNWTO (World Tourism Organization) as a Consultant.



CAMPA

An Outpost of Bharatiya Culture

From almost the beginning of the common era, Bharat has played a unique role in the socio-religious and cultural life of the entirety of Asia. Bharat has been responsible for weaving a variegated fabric to dress the Asian countries in garments that are distinctive to each region, yet bearing an indelible imprint of Bharatiya culture. This process was essentially a spontaneous and peaceful sharing of Bharat's spiritual and material achievements with her nearby and distant neighbors. Thus, it can be seen that there was no design at any stage to overrun South-East Asia with the intention of establishing political hegemony or to disturb the established social order of any region.

Bernard Groslier, the learned author of *Bharat-Chinî* in the *Art of World Series*, has made a very significant observation about Bharatiya expansion in the Bharat-Chin region. To quote: "It was one of the most important civilizing movements of ancient times, worthy to compare with the Hellenisation of the Mediterranean

world. And Bharat can be justly proud to have spread the light of her understanding over such distant lands, lands which without her might have remained in darkness."

Among the many countries that fell under the spell of Bharatiya influence was Campa, part of present-day Vietnam, known as Annam. The ancient name of this region, Campa, appears in many Sanskrit inscriptions of that country as *Campadesa*, while the kings are mentioned as *Campesvara*, *Campakasomisvara*, or *Campapurapamesvara*.

There is no doubt that Campa first felt the impact of Bharatiya culture as early as the second century CE. It is commonly known that the prosperous trade with the Far East, which began around this time, attracted a large number of enterprising Bharatiya merchants and princes to migrate to these regions and establish themselves as pioneers in the field. Before long, they identified themselves with these developing countries and soon came to the forefront as political and economic stabilizers

of the region. Periplus mentions trade routes from three harbors on the eastern coast near Masulipatam across the Bay of Bengal to the Eastern Peninsula.

Resume of Previous Work

The continuous cultural contact between Bharat and Campa was not easy to illustrate until the discovery of various Sanskrit inscriptions and extensive research in the art and archaeology of that region. These inscriptions were initially published in French in the last decade of the previous century. This work was further supplemented by Parmentier, who conducted large-scale excavations at the sites of the Buddhist monastery at Dong-doung (Indrapura) and the Hindu Dharma temple establishments at Mi-son and Ponagar. His first volume dealing with Cham monuments, *Inventaire Descriptif des Monuments Chams de l'Annam*, was published in 1909.

G. Maspero published a monograph titled *The Kingdom of Champa (Le Royaume du Champa)* in 1928, tracing the history of the kingdom from its earliest times until its conquest by the Annamites in 1471 CE. The art of Campa was further studied by Parmentier, and the results of his research are contained in *Inventaire Archeologique de Indo-Chine II, Monuments Chams de l'Annam* (Texte: tomes I-II, Planches: 2 albums, 1918-19).

P. Stern, in his book *The Art of Champa and its Evolution (L'Art du Champa Ancien Annam et son Evolution)*, Toulouse, 1942, reclassified the monuments of Campa and its sculptures, presenting a new chronology based on the study of decorative motifs. The most recent work on this subject is by J. Boisselier, *La Statuaire du Champa*, is published in Paris in 1963.

Principal Centers of Bharatiya Influence

The ancient Bharat-Cham kingdom of Campa, whose inhabitants spoke a language from the Indonesian group, came into existence towards the close of the second century CE near the Vietnamese city of Hue. This city is situated almost in the center of the eastern coastline. The kingdom extended over the entire length of the Bharat-Chin peninsula, from the mountainous area



known as the Annam-portal in the north to the Mekong delta in the south. Its centers included: (1) Amaravati, corresponding to the Vietnamese province of Quangnam; (2) Vijaya, corresponding to Binhdin province; (3) Kauthara, corresponding to the province of Nhatrang; and (4) Panduranga, corresponding to Phanrang. These places were successive centers of political authority. It is interesting to refer to the monumental remains and other antiquities found at these centers and in their vicinity, especially with a view to briefly studying the archaeological wealth of Campa so as to trace their cultural inspiration from Bharat.

The oldest Sanskrit inscription of Campa is attributed to a king who referred to himself as the delight of the family of Sri-Mara. The record, partly written in a developed kavya style and in the ornate Sanskrit meter *vasantatilaka*, is estimated to date back to the third or fourth century CE.

Found at Vo-Canh, its contents are not very clear, but it appears to be a donation to a Buddhist establishment.

Amaravati

Belonging to roughly the same period as the previously mentioned inscription is a striking bronze statue of Buddha discovered at Dong-Duong (ancient Indrapura), standing 1.08 meters tall. This remarkable



tall image is attributed to the Mi-son group of temples. There is no evidence to suggest whether Ganesha was worshipped in the Siva temple as an attendant of Siva or if there was a special community dedicated to his worship as an independent deity. However, a 9th-10th century CE inscription of Harivarman I from Po-Nagar mentions that a separate temple was dedicated to Vinayaka when the king replaced the image of Bhagavati in the temple. The image of Ganesha in question is now exhibited in the Museum of Tourane.

From roughly the same period, another exquisite stone image of Skanda standing on a peacock, with the plumage forming an oval-shaped prabhavali, has been discovered. It is also housed in the Tourane Museum.

The popularity of Siva, along with Ganesha and Skanda, is noteworthy. While Siva was worshipped in his Linga Murthy, and the kings of Campa competed in earning religious merit by installing and consecrating new Linga deities, representations of Siva in human form are also found. Among such images, the Siva image from the 10th century CE stands out. This image exemplifies serenity and majesty, and is indeed a very fine representation of Siva. The ornate mukuta enclosing the jatabhara, the karna-kundalas, the bejeweled hara, and the decorated armlets add to its grandeur. It's also worth

mentioning that Siva is depicted as dancing the tandava dance in the Po Klaung Garai temple, where it is fixed over the entrance doorway, similar to some Bharatiya temples. Nataraja Siva with sixteen hands is also represented, and the panel from Phong-le preserved in the Tourane Museum is reminiscent of the Nataraja panel in Rameshvara cave at Ellora. This panel would date back to approximately the 9th century CE. A representation of Ravananugraha-Murti-Siva, similar to the magnificent panel in Kailasa at Ellora, can also be seen at Mi-son.

In the 10th century CE, numerous temples were erected at Mi-son on the left bank of the stream. The old site of the sanctuary of Bhadresvara Linga is marked by two towers. Dating from the beginning of the 10th century CE, it is the largest at Mi-son. Surrounding the main temple are six smaller temples (three each to its north and south). These temples were typically built with brick, though stone was also used in some instances.

Vijaya (Binh-Dinh)

A reference has already been made to the relocation of the capital of Cham rulers southwards to Vijaya in the 10th century. King Harivarman II (982-998 CE) strengthened his power, but the kingdom was fated to



endure due to external aggression and internal conflicts until the capital was ultimately destroyed in 1069 CE by the Annamite Emperor Ly Thanh Ton. However, it was under Jaya Harivarman I (1147-1166 CE) that Campa regained its independence, and the later temples at Mi-son and Po-Nagar bear testament to such a revival inspired by the architectural style of Angkor Wat. The subsequent power struggle between the two Bharatiya-influenced states of Thailand and Vietnam led to the weakening of both powers, and Campa could not survive for long. By 1471 CE, Vijaya, the capital city, was captured, marking the end of the glory that was Campa.

In Binh-dinh, you can find the remnants of a temple situated within the northeast corner of the citadels enclosure wall. The temple plan is square, and its spire is three-storied (tritala), with corners adorned by miniature shrines similar to the kutas found in Dravidian temples. Each story, as well as the central portion of the sanctuary's outer wall, features a niche surmounted by an exuberantly decorated arch akin to the sukanasika of the Dravidian temple. This temple is estimated to date back to the 11th century CE.

Kauthara (Nha-Trang)

The Po-Nagar group at Nha-Trang comprises approximately eight structures, with four still standing. Inscriptions discovered at Po-Nagar detail the construction of a wooden temple enshrining a mukhalinga by a king named Vicitrasingha. The inscriptions further mention that this temple was destroyed and a new one was built in its place by King Satyavarman, who installed a new mukhalinga along with images of Bhagavati and Ganesha. However, it is not possible to identify these mentioned temples with the extant ruins.

Among the surviving structures, the principal temple deserves special mention. It is fairly well-preserved and exemplifies the defining characteristics of temples from Campa. The temple features a three-storied shikhara reminiscent of the late Calukyan style.

Panduranga (Phan-Rang)

The final center from which the Cham kings ruled

is known as Phan-rang (Panduranga). The founder of this dynasty was King Prthivindravarman, who ruled from 758 to 773 CE. Among the succession of kings, Harivarman (800-820 CE) is notably mentioned as rajadhiraja campapura-paramesvara.

The standing monuments in the Panduranga area, however, belong to a later period, marking the final stage of Cham art and architecture. The Po Klaung Garai temple, assigned to the 13th century in its current form, features an inscription carved on three faces of a rock, a part of which is in Sanskrit. This inscription mentions the installation of a Siva-Linga by a prince.

The temple, located on a hill, is remarkably well-preserved and boasts a tritala vimana (three-story spire) with miniature curvilinear shikharas placed at each corner of every story. The temple likely dates back to the reign of Jayasimhavarman IV, who ruled between 1287 and 1307 CE.

Conclusion

The reference to the construction of the earliest temple of Bhadresvara in the first quarter of the 5th century represents a significant development for the study of Bharatiya temple architecture. The later temples of Campa, ranging from the 8th to 14th centuries, warrant more detailed examination to highlight their similarities with their Bharatiya counterparts and to trace potential influences from other Bharatiya influenced states in the Far East. Majumdar has suggested that the temples of Badami, Kanchipuram, and Mahabalipuram influenced the temple styles of Campa. However, a closer study is necessary.

While Saivite tradition was popular in Campa, Vaishnavite traditions and the worship of Vishnu were also prevalent, though not to the same extent as Saivite tradition. The Duong-mong inscription mentions the construction of a temple for the god Visnupurusottama. Vishnu is also referred to as Narayana, Hari, Govinda, Madhava, Vikrama, Tribhuvanakranta. He is depicted on a pedestal of the Mison temple in his kurma form. He is also shown riding a Garuda and holding a sankha, cakra, gada, and padma on a relief. A king named Jayarudravarman

is mentioned as an incarnation of Vishnu and the Batau Tablah inscription of Jayaharivarman I, indicates that the king died at Panduranga. Representations of scenes from Ramayana are also found at Tra-kien. Laksmi, the consort of Vishnu, is also referred to as Padma and Sri. Representations of Gajalaksmi are also found. At Tru-kien, she is depicted holding two lotuses.

Other deities like Kubera, Brahma, Vayu, and Surya are also depicted. The Mahayana form of Buddha Dharma was also prevalent in Campa and representations of Buddha and Avalokitesvara are frequently encountered. However, I-tsing mentions that in Lin-i or Campa, the Buddhists predominantly belong to the Aryasammitinikaya and there are also a few followers of the Sarvastivadanikaya. This would suggest the prevalence of Theravada tradition in Campa. Based on the evidence of inscriptions and sculptures, one can



conclude that Buddha Dharma was particularly prevalent in the Dong-duong region.

Source: It was first published in PRABODHAN VOL III, a book released during 3rd World Hindu Congress 2023 held in Bangkok in Nov 2023.

About the Author



Dr. M.N. Deshpande was a distinguished archaeologist, art historian and conservator, Madhusudan Narhar Deshpande (b.1920-d. 2008) started his research under Prof. H.D. Sankalia on the cultural history of India based on Jaina Canonical Literature and Archaeology after graduating from Fergusson College, Poona in 1942. He was selected for training in the field of archaeology by Sir Mortimer Wheeler in the School of Archaeology at Taxila in 1944. He joined the Archaeological Survey of India as Assistant Superintendent in 1946, was elevated to Deputy Director-General in 1957, and later served as Director-General from 1972 to 1978.

As Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India, he successfully completed the conservation of Buddhist caves at Bamiyan (Afghanistan) and in expanding the different activities of the Survey, especially in undertaking large-scale conservation of monuments like Ajanta (Aurangabad), Qutab Minar (Delhi), and Jagannath Temple (Puri). During his long tenure at the Archaeological Survey of India, he specialized in the cave architecture and Buddhist caves of Ajanta, Pitalkhora (Aurangabad).

He served as an advisor to Nehru Centre, Bombay on the Discovery of India Project, 1979-1982, and also to the Aditi Exhibition of the Festival of India in U.S.A. in 1985.

Dr. M.N. Deshpande contributed to several national and international seminars and published papers on the archaeological history of India and on his research on rock-cut architecture of Western India. He has also authored and co-authored The Caves of Panhale-Kaji (Ancient Pranalaka) (1986) and Care of Cultural Heritage (1996)



Excellent SAC Event Organized in Atlanta

Hearth to Heart' was the theme for this year's Support A Child fundraiser held at Berkmar High School on October 15th, 2023 in Lilburn, Georgia. Balvihar, the non-profit educational chapter of Vishwa Hindu Parishad Atlanta, hosted a musical show for SAC.

SAC team annually invites artists from Bharat to perform for awareness and fundraise for the cause. However, this year Balvihar alumni took upon themselves to put together a program and be the difference in the lives of children in need. The entire panoply including the registration, decoration, administration, and the execution of the show was done by youth for the youth.

This year's SAC awareness event was unique in many ways. It was conducted as a part of Hindu Heritage Month (HHM) celebrations and hosted on the first day of Navratri. HHM is an initiative spearheaded by VHPA.

Vidushi Gupta and Aniruddha Gupta, both Balvihar alumni were the toastmasters who ushered the show starting with inviting the chief guest Ms. Veena Katdare – the president of VHPA Atlanta chapter who then pronounced the commencement of the show with lamp lighting.



Chief guest - Veena Katdare

The playbill was filled with a la carte performances. The git go was with the background score composed by Nihit Tiwari; The de rigueur of prayers was done by Balvihar students ; Guru Vandana in form of a classical dance by Guru Anurag Sharma on a song composed, sung and choreographed by the legend Birju Maharaj; Serenading the audiences with her song was Vidhushi Gupta; Tarana-a Kathak dance performance, done by the dancing feet of Anya Rathi, Aryahi Agarwal, Kavya Salvi, Sharanya Aher, Anaya Tyagi and Anvi Kshatriya; With enchanting vocals enthralling the listeners was Nitya Jaswani who sang a Bhajan, Beat mixing by DJ in the house was Ankit Verma; Vibhor Gupta entertained



Balvihar volunteers

Introduction to the youth volunteers and performers:

Vidhushi Gupta	Graduate of Emory University and currently working in New York as a Business Consultant
Aniruddha Gupta	Recent graduate of Georgia Tech working as a consultant in Boston.
Nihit Tiwari	Balvihar alumni and volunteer, GaTech graduate, currently working as an Engineering Program Manager in Atlanta.
Guru Anurag Sharma	Founder, Artistic Director, and Master Teacher of the Kalashram School of Kathak dance and Performing arts.
Ariya Rathi, Aryahi Agarwal, Kavya Salvi, Sharanya Aher, Anaya Tyagi, Anvi Kshatriya	Danced on Tarana set on Raag
Desh	Sung by Debashish Sarkar, and choreographed by Guru Anurag Sharma
Nitya Jaswani	sophomore at JCHS, talented artist who has won medals for writing, painting, vocal and drama competitions. She owns her entrepreneurial art business online.
Ankit Verma	Georgia Tech graduate in Mechanical Engineering and CS is also a beat maker, DJ, and rapper @therealverma.
Vibhor Gupta	sophomore at Innovation Academy. He plays harmonium and dholak and is a vocalist.
Anagha Jaswani	pursuing Computer Science and is a Data Science and Machine learning enthusiast. She is a certified pianist from Royal Conservatory of Music and has won several awards at regional and state GMTA competitions.
Nandini Joshi	Sophomore at UGA pursuing Pre-Med; Bachelors of Fine Arts
Gauri Gupta	A freshman at Georgia State majoring in business and marketing; Bachelors of Fine Arts

with his yodeling of two Bollywood songs ; Ensnaring with medley of Bollywood and Hollywood songs on her keyboard and entrancing the crowd in a game show of ‘guess that song?’ was Anagha Jaswani ; The grand finale of the show was a dazzling Kathak performance on Bollywood music by professionally trained duo Nandini Joshi and Gauri Gupta.

Support a Child is a non-profit organization that provides education, housing, food, health care and good values to underprivileged children from rural and urban parts of India. SAC is based on strong conviction, ‘education builds a strong nation.’ Last year SAC raised funds to support 4580 children. This year the goal is to support 5000 children. SAC is run by

volunteer efforts with minimum overhead costs of 9% which leaves 90% of funds to Support A Child projects. A \$250 donation will pay for education, housing, lodging and healthcare for a child for one entire year. Support can be given by joining local SAC to take part in various activities. High school and college students can enroll in SAC initiative and earn internship hours in the field of social work.

To join, or learn more ways to support you may contact - Aditya Trivedi, USA team youth coordinator, at aditya.trivedi@gmail.com

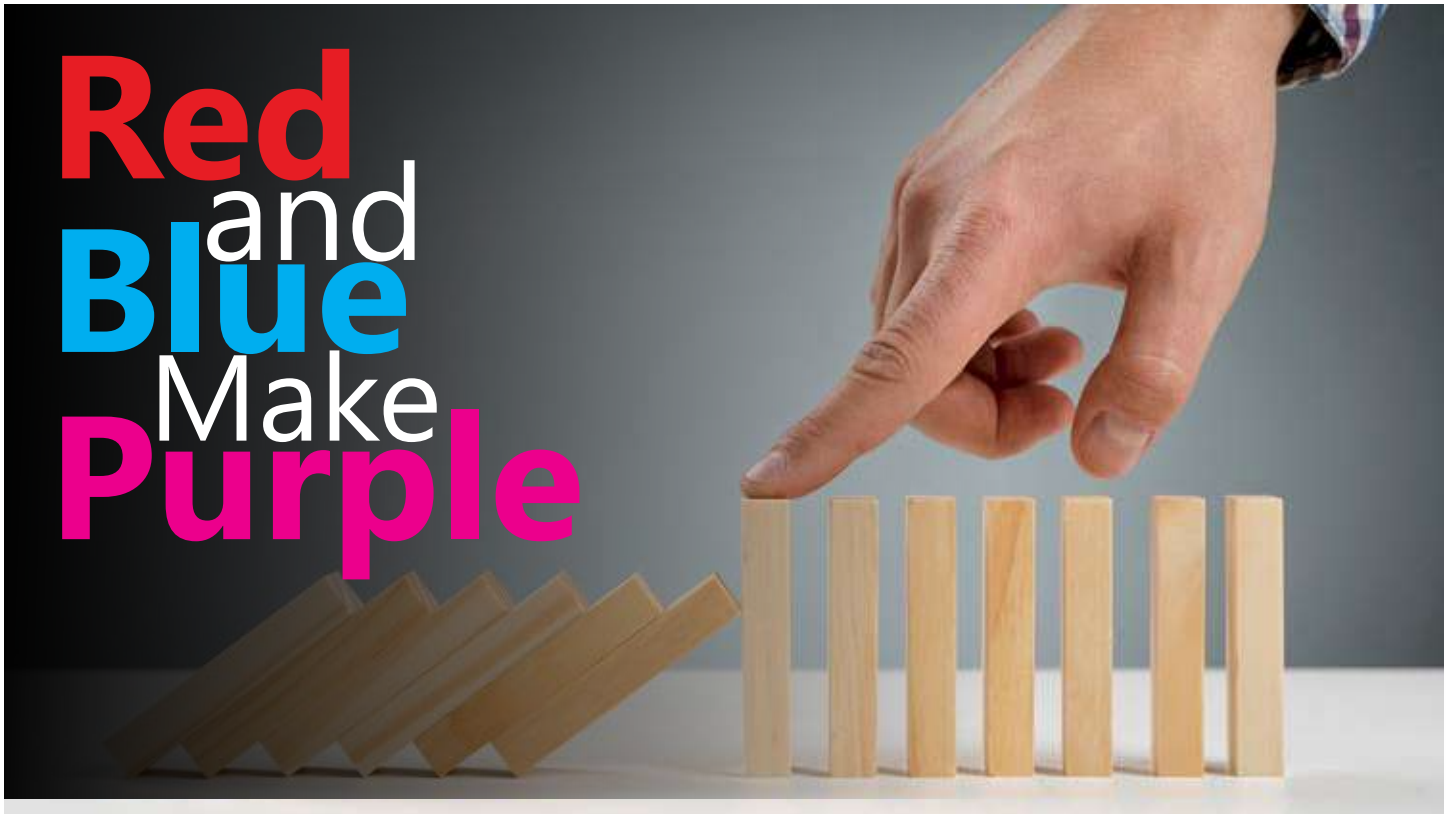
The program was made possible by our very talented technical team which worked many hours in the background before the event.



Balvihar teachers and volunteers

Volunteer list:

Sound and Lights	Rakesh Gupta and Rajesh Chatkara
Photography	Puneet Bhatnagar
Reception	Rakesh Raina
Snacks	Umesh Panwar
Decoration	Seema Laddha
Coordination	Aditya Trivedi
Concept & Narration	Smita Daftardar
Event Marketing	Surinder Dhar
Finance	Ragunathan Veeraraghavan
Event Coordination	Manju Tiwari, Veena Katdare, Neetu Sharma, Jayant Daftardar, Shikha Tyagi
Decoration, Setup, Registration, Backstage help	Students of 203, 301 & 302 classes of Balvihar



Red and Blue Make Purple

By **Sarika Jaswani**

If you were born in the late 1970s, then you have been playing attitude vs altitude game with burgeoning technology boom. The lines between real feel vs reel feels have been gradually thinning out. What were days of patiently tending have now been replaced with a time-lapse video of a flower blooming on the windowsill. Not to forget, the generation before us never had a chance to formally be introduced to the big task of the changing scenario.

The fast-track route of growth has been mushroomed into a perception gap. We are now talking about a generation obsessing over labels and compulsively organizing to the woke behavior. And finally, cancelling and replacing all the conflict behind the cabinet of retrospection.

Arguably, roadway and traffic rules to hot foot a steam car will be different than driving an electric car. At every point in history, the new era has needed new

set of ordinances. However, are they efficient to cease the political gridlocks or bureaucratic accidents that we experience today?! The answer is rhetorical and an assertive 'NO'. The divide between belief vs. ideologies, facts vs. opinions, intolerance vs. forbearance, conservatism vs. liberalism, right vs. left, have been cleaved wider.

Are we suffering from slowly emerging amnesia? A symptomatic PTSD from drowning in a flood of information? Should we take a moment to reflect on the fact that the Democratic-Republican party was introduced to us as a single unit?
<https://perceptiongap.us/>

The Founding Fathers ensured a strong government and central banking systems under the epigraph of 'The Federalist'. Differing political views among them advocated for more decentralized government, forming the Democratic-Republican

party. At the beginning of the 19th century, the D-R were largely victorious. The Federalist slowly faded by 1815. Lacking effective opposition, the D-R party factioned as two separate sides that we see today. Statistically since 2012, Americans have seen strong conflicts between the two parties and gradual deterioration. The result is an unprecedented disappearance of the political center. A political center is a system that demands compromise and accommodation to bring change. This center is vital to the policy making. An absent political center has increased partisanship and polarization. This in turn has led to public distaste and distrust for politicians and political process. Not to forget the political pandits who live on the growing discord and introduce fear to the mix. Their extreme views gaslight the outliers. They create a schism between mindsets and skirt in their followers to tilt the axis to further their gain.

On reflecting, maybe we need a more philosophical approach in tackling the chaos on hand.

Perhaps what has been long handed in scriptures thousands of years ago is equitable even today and seems to stand the test of time. In Brahma Vaivrat Puranas¹, Dharma² manifested as a bullock from right part of the God. The almighty instructed him to protect the mankind from all the evils and sins. Four feet of Dharma signified four virtues – truth, purity, penance, and charity. In Satyuga³, Dharma had all four feet intact. In Treta⁴, the feet reduced to three. The subsequent eras of Dwapar⁵ and Kaliyuga⁶ saw further decline in which Dharma had two feet and then one foot left, respectively.

As Kurt Vonnegut⁷ says, “the universe is turning into kibble.” And we have observed that science seems to corroborate with philosophy here with

the second law of Thermodynamics. All things tend to move towards disorder. Entropy is a measure of disorder of universe. A hidden force that complicates life. As we go forward in time, the net entropy of any closed system will always increase. In short, chaos is inevitable.

- Refraction (bending rules)
- Entropy (leading chaos)
- Disintegration (falling out)

Explaining metaphorically: each new perspective descends on a messy game table of billiard that once was played by the old faulty concepts that do not work anymore. Old models gradually grow myopic and become unserviceable for the new paradigms that we face. Hence, the need to reset the game with a billiard triangle rack of new ideas. Insight from the old pattern, vision from the new worldview to cue in the white wisdom ball. Introducing a new mindset over the old broken ideologies.



¹ Puranas are stories and literature about wide range of topics, particularly about legends and lore from Hindu signifying intricate layers of symbolism through narrative style writing.

² Dharma is defined as cosmic law/ universal truth

³ Yuga is a unit of time consisting of five solar years each yuga is shorter than the preceding one, corresponding in moral and physical state of humanity. There are four yugas. ³Satyuga (1,728,000 years long),

⁴ Treta yuga (1,296,000 years long),

⁵ Dwapar yuga (864,00 years long),

⁶ Kali yuga (432,000 years long)

⁷ Kurt Vonnegut is an American writer known for his satirical and dark humor novels

We need an unambiguous prescription glass and a reset of the weakening and collapsing system. The four-way intersection on Democratic-Republic Road is congested with philosophies, ideologies, theories, and doctrines and causing gridlock. Maybe the time has advanced to bring an end to beating the dead horse. To broaden the roads of our cognizance. The time has matured to make a roundabout for easy flow of new proposals and postulations. To nurture and empower the divider lane between us with Bougainvillea's and Hibiscus Rosas.

With election season upon us, the consensus is that there is a disassociating resolve between our perspectives. When we watch our leaders instead

of living up to the values and trailblazing a way for the ideals, pass snarky remarks at each other during debates for the presidential candidacy on national TV, the war of opinions seems to exacerbate in our country. It is an ignominy to watch the chaperons elected for the governance of the country slowly corrupt the nation with their deficient codes of conduct. A vicious cycle wherein a degraded population lulled by indifference and heedless wokeness elects more indecency and disgrace to preside leaving no chance for change to flower and grow. Unless we come out of the closet of narrowed views, we are looking at an eye to eye gridlock with the winter queen who predicts an eternal political winter in the Narnia of democracy.



About the Author



Doctor by profession. **Sarika Jaswani** is a Crochet Artist, Art Tutor, Writer of Children's Stories. A philanthropist at heart she runs a non-profit by selling her fiber art on Esty. Her art has been recognized and exhibited at local art center.

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Sanskrit's Timeless Resonance

A Celebration of Science, Poetry and Wisdom

Samskr̥tam, often referred to as the “Gīrvāṇibhāṣā” or the language of the divines, stands as a testament to Bhārata’s rich cultural and linguistic heritage. Let us delve into the profound qualities that have made Sanskrit an indispensable part of human civilization. The essence of this language goes beyond its grammatical intricacies; it embodies the wisdom of the ages, serves as a conduit for scientific exploration, artistic expression, and philosophical contemplation, and continues to evolve with the changing times.

Sanskrit as the Language of Vedas: The Wisdom Ocean

The origins of Sanskrit can be traced back to the Vedas, the sacred texts that form the foundation of Sanātana Dharma. The profundity of these scriptures lies not only in their spiritual insights but also in the language in which they are composed. The Vedas are often considered to be ‘apauruṣeya’¹, not of human origin, but of divine inspiration. Therefore, the language

of the Vedas, Sanskrit, becomes a vehicle that carries the essence of cosmic knowledge and eternal truth, making it a timeless reservoir of wisdom. Bhartṛhari, in his famous work Vākyapadīya, explains the nature of the Supreme Brahman as follows:

अनादिनिधानं ब्रह्म शब्दतत्त्वं यदक्षरम् |
विवर्तते अर्थभावेन प्रकृति जगतो यतः ||
anādinidhānaṃ brahma śabdātattvaṃ yadākṣaram |
vivartate arthabhāvena prakṛti jagato yataḥ ||

That beginningless and endless One, the imperishable Brahman, of which the essential nature is the Word, which manifests itself into objects and from which is the creation of the Universe.

– [Vākyapadīya, 1.1]

The verses of the Vedas are intricately woven with poetic meters called ‘chandas’, ensuring their oral transmission across generations. In this way, the universal truth encoded in the Vedas are revealed to the ‘Mantradrāṣṭaras’² when they are spiritually well attuned to the Supreme through years of austere

practices and contemplation of the truth.

Sanskrit as the Language of Science

The greatness of Sanskrit extends to the realm of science as well. Ancient Indian scholars employed Sanskrit to document scientific discoveries, innovations, and theories. There were special linguistic tools specific to Sanskrit, which are used for conveying complex ideas in the poetic metrics and in condensed form. A few of them are:

Kaṭapayādi Saṁkhyā – The Kaṭapayādi system is an ancient Indian method of using alphabetic syllables to represent numerals, aiding in remembering numbers as words or verses. By associating multiple letters with a numeral and excluding some letters, this system allows the creation of meaningful words from numbers for improved recall.

Sūtras – A sūtra is a condensed rule captured in a handful of words or syllables, serving as the core foundation around which teachings of rituals, philosophy, grammar, or any domain of knowledge can be intricately woven by succinctly conveying the message.

Bhūta Saṁkhyā – The Bhūta Saṁkhyā system involves representing numbers in Sanskrit using common nouns with inherent numerical meanings. For example, the concept of “two” was linked with the term “eye,” since everyone possesses two eyes. Consequently, any Sanskrit word signifying “eye” (e.g., netram) was employed to represent the number “two.”

Employing these highly effective techniques, the ancient sages and scholars of Bhārata showcased countless remarkable works in diverse domains like astronomy, grammar, philosophy, medicine, legal treatises, and ethics. These enduring contributions continue to serve as a wellspring of inspiration for the knowledge traditions of Bhārata and beyond.

Sanskrit: The Best Language for Poems and Literature

The poetic and aesthetic qualities of Sanskrit have rendered it a prime choice for artistic expression. The intricate meters and rhythmic patterns inherent to Sanskrit create a musical quality that resonates through



its verses. The classical epics like the “Rāmāyaṇa” and the “Mahābhārata” and the classical literature of brilliant poets like Kālidāsa’s “Śakuntalā”, Bhāsa’s “Svapnavāsavadattam”, Māgha’s “Śiśupāla Vadha”, and Dandin’s “Kāvyaḍarśa” are a testament to this. The verse that follows elucidates the greatness of Sanskrit poets:

उपमा कालिदासस्य भारवेरर्थगौरवं |

दण्डिनः पदलालित्यं माघे सन्ति त्रयो गुणः ||

upamā kālidāsasya bhāverarthagauravaṃ |

dandīna: padalālityaṃ māghe santi trayo guṇaḥ ||

Kālidāsa’s renown lies in his adept use of similes (metaphors), Bhāravi’s verses resonate with profound meanings, Dandin’s writings exude exquisite beauty, and Māgha embodies the fusion of all these three attributes.

As elucidated here, Māgha’s brilliance serves as an embodiment of the resplendence found within Sanskrit poetry, vividly manifested in his magnum opus “Śiśupāla Vadha.” As showcased in the verse –

जजौजोजजिज्जाजी तं ततोऽतिततातुत्तु

भाभोऽभीभाभिभूभाभू रारारिररिररः ||

jajaujojājijjājī taṃ tato’titatātut |

bhābho’bhībhābhībhūbhābhū rārārirariraraḥ ||

Subsequently, the victorious warrior, adorned with heroic courage and having conquered the haughty adversaries, radiating a luminosity akin to stars and the conqueror of fearless elephants, initiated the battle

¹ Those scriptures which were not written by men

² The “seers” of the hymns. Ṛṣis were called by this name as the Vedas were revealed to them.

with his foe positioned on a chariot.

His work is a testament to his unique poetic prowess. The language's innate beauty and grace allow poets to craft verses that not only convey profound emotions but also elevate the soul through their artistic splendor.

Sanskrit as the Best Language for Philosophical enquiry

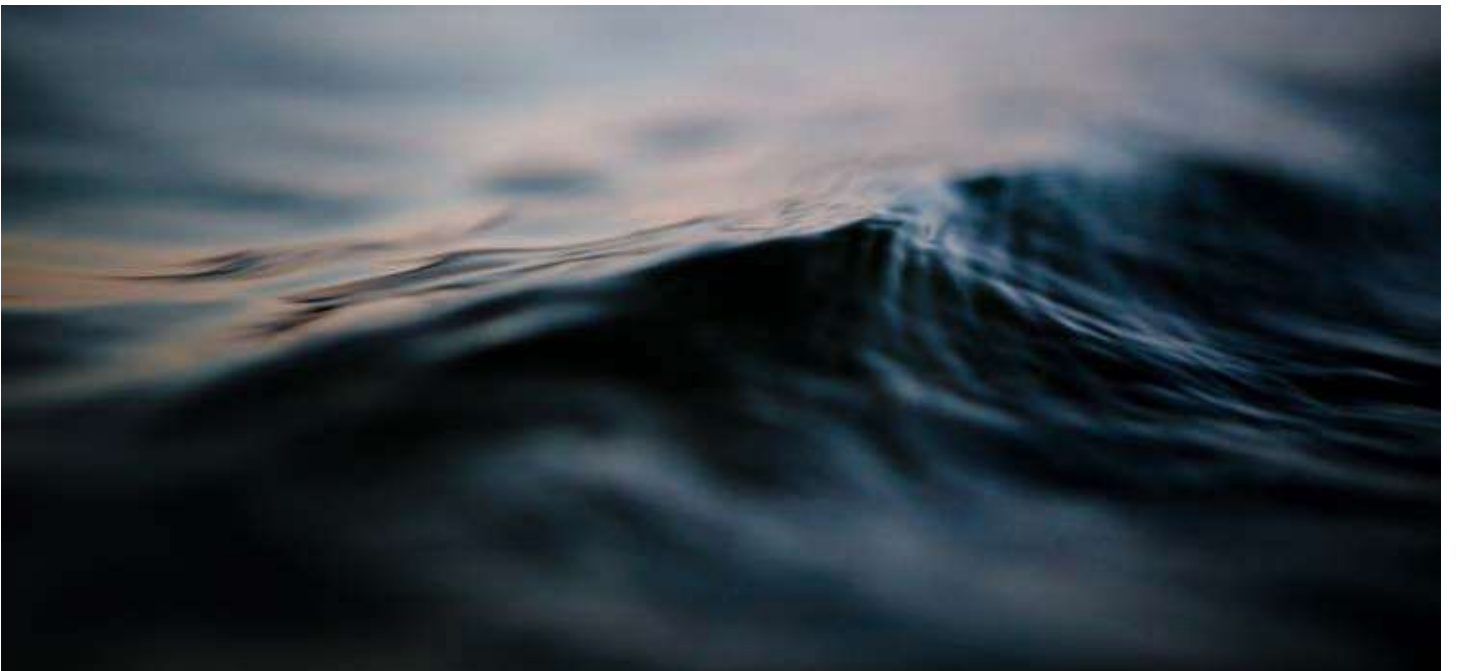
Sanskrit, a language of unparalleled depth and precision, is the perfect conduit for philosophical discourse and logical exploration. It hosts the masterpieces of ancient philosophers like Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, Rāmānujācārya, and Madhvācārya, who wielded its intricate structure to navigate metaphysical intricacies. The profound verse, 'Tat Tvam Asi,' nestled within the 6th chapter of Chāndogya Upaniṣad, exemplifies Sanskrit's potency by inviting diverse interpretations across different traditions and eras. This verse becomes a canvas for philosophers to weave connections between the Individual Soul and the Supreme Soul, spanning the spectrum from Dvaitic to Advaitic viewpoints. In this realm, Sanskrit becomes more than words; it shapes profound contemplation and fuels the meditative

journey toward spiritual enlightenment.

The language's rich lexicon and nuanced grammatical rules allow philosophers to dissect intricate concepts with unparalleled precision. "Brahma Sūtras," "Yoga Sūtras," and the writings of the Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā schools stand as towering pillars of philosophical thought, elegantly presented within a linguistic framework that captures even the subtlest nuances of profound ideas. Sanskrit, as the divine palette of expression, continues to inspire seekers, inviting them to delve into its wisdom and embark on a transformative spiritual odyssey.

We honor the Gīrvāṇa language that spans time and influences diverse aspects of human life. As a wellspring of wisdom, scientific inspiration, artistry, and philosophical exploration, Sanskrit unites past and present, nurturing our heritage while propelling innovation. Just as a river sustains the lands it touches, Sanskrit's legacy enriches minds, cultures, and souls worldwide. Beyond linguistics, it fuels intellectual curiosity, promotes cultural unity, and underscores the enduring human connection across eras.

Source: <https://vediccosmos.com/sanskrits-timeless-resonance-a-celebration-of-science-poetry-and-wisdom/>





24th November 2023

WHC Declaration About Term “Hindu”, “Hindutva” and “Sanatan Dharma”

World Hindu Congress 2023, Bangkok

In the term “Hindu Dharma”, the first word, i. e. “Hindu” is an unbounded word. It signifies all that is Sanatan or Eternal. And then there is Dharma, which means “That, which sustains”. Thus, Hindu Dharma signifies all that which eternally upholds everything; an individual, a family, a community, a society, and even nature - both animate and inanimate.

In contrast, Hinduism is totally different because it is suffixed with an “ism”. The term “ism” is defined as an oppressive and discriminatory attitude or belief. In the mid-nineteenth century the United States of America, the phrase “the isms” was used to collectively refer to radical social reform movements and various non-mainstream spiritual or religious movements in a derogatory manner. The term “Hinduism” should be understood in such a context.

One should also note that the term “Hinduism” was introduced in the popular lexicon by Sir Monier-Monier Willimas via his handbook Hinduism. This handbook was published in 1877 by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. This intellectually dishonest terminology is the seed behind the vicious anti-Hindu narratives over the last 150 years.

It is for such reasons that many of our elders preferred the term “Hindutva’ over Hinduism as the former is a more accurate terms since it includes the gamut (spectrum) of all that the word “Hindu”

implies. We agree with them and should do the same. Hindutva is not a complicated word. It simply means Hindu-ness. Others have used the alternative “Sanatan Dharma”, often abbreviated as “Sanatan”. Here the term “Sanatan” works as an adjective indicating Hindu Dharma’s eternal nature.

However, in the present public discourse many academicians and intellectuals regularly portray Hindutva as the antithesis of Hindu Dharma, i.e. extremely negatively. Some of them argue like that because of their ignorance. But most are anti-Hindutva because of their visceral hatred and biases against Hindu Dharma. Many politicians driven by political agendas and personal prejudices have also joined that group, and are criticizing Sanatan Dharma, or Sanatan with increasing regularity and vitriol.

On behalf of the global Hindu community the World Hindu Congress declares that such malicious criticism of Hindutva, or Sanatan Dharma, or Sanatan, or Hindu Dharma actually targets the Hindu society and all that is beautiful, just, good, and noble in it. In reality, these are attacks against godness itself. The World Hindu Congress strongly condemns such attacks and urges Hindus worldwide for the manifestation of Hindutva through organized global efforts, and overcome those who are engaging in such anti-Hindu attacks and bigotry so that we are victorious.



My Parents Push Me Every Sunday to Go to the Temple, but Why Should I?

By Siddheshwari Devi (Didi Ji)

Question & Answer Session

Q A

Q: If there are many gurus who are God realized, how do you know that the Jagadguru is the best one of them all? As far as I understand, this is only based on a human's judgement of their knowledge level.

A: It is true that the scholars who selected Jagadguru Shri Kripalu Ji Maharaj as Jagadguru were all human, albeit extremely knowledgeable ones. These humans were inspired by God to choose a divine personality as Jagadguru, proving that God has a way of getting great things accomplished by mortals.

Moreover, the 500 scholars of Kashi Vidvat Parishad combined had a formidable knowledge of scriptures, and although they were not divine, yet their scriptural knowledge plus a careful background check on Shri Maharaj Ji (never having had studied scriptures, never having had a Guru) guided them to recognize him as the best of all Gurus, a Jagadguru.

As I said before, God has a unique way of getting great things accomplished by mortals.

Q: If you end up becoming a pet in your next life, does that mean you had better karm (you would be well-fed, pampered, live longer, etc.)? Or does being a wild animal mean you had better karm since you still have your freedom?

A: Just as there are differences in humans in matters of the family one is born in and whether one is born in poverty or in a financially sound family, likewise animals are born in different situations. Just because it's a pet, it doesn't mean that the animal is necessarily pampered. Many are abused and abandoned. And just because the animal is in the wild, it doesn't mean that it is necessarily deprived of food. You would have to look at the entire situation. It could be that the pet is better off, or it could be that the animal in the wilderness is better off.



Q: How would you explain the pandemic in terms of souls dying in such great numbers? Is God taking away these lives because all of their time is up? Is there an explanation to these mass death events, like the Holocaust, wars, etc.?

A: So many people dying at the same time means that the allotted time was up for all of them. There is no such thing as collective destiny. Their individual destiny led them to be in the same place at the same time, or in the same situation.

Q: What happens after death?

A: There is no single answer to this question because everyone is an individual who has performed good actions, sinful deeds and acts of devotion in previous lives. When the individual is given fruits of some of his past actions, he may be sent to Svarg lok (celestial abode) for some time and then given birth on the earthly abode; another may be sent to hell and after suffering punishment for some time he may be given birth in one of the 8,400,000 forms of life.

One may be reborn immediately after death in the human form. Another may be given the body of an animal, bird, insect or a tree.

Only God has the file of innumerable actions of infinite souls. As such, only God knows what will happen to the soul after the death of the body.

Q: What can I do to make sure I receive human birth again?

A: Practice selfless devotion to God under the Guru's guidance and serve God and Guru sincerely.

Q: If Buddha is an avatar of God in Hinduism, why did he create a new religion that deviates from Hinduism?

A: Lord Buddha needed to introduce the genuine interpretation of the Vedas, and the best way He could accomplish this was to take the drastic step of denying the Vedas. He then introduced the philosophy of non-violence to the world, without revealing that this concept was straight out of the Vedas. He did not set out to start a new faith; the ones who followed His teachings came to be known as Buddhists, the followers of Buddha.

Q: If we see an animal in pain, should we put it out of its suffering, or do we not have the right to take a life?

A: We should try to help the animal but if the suffering is too great and there is no cure, then we should ask the vet to do the necessary deed.

Q: If in Hinduism we are vegetarians because every animal has a soul, don't plants also have souls? Thus, we are still killing to eat. How is this allowed? If the argument is that plants are lesser souls (they had bad karm so they became a plant), then are we allowed to eat bugs (since they are lesser beings than animals)?

A: Plants have the least amount of consciousness of all of God's creatures, and while we are still killing living beings by consuming plants, yet the least amount of sin is incurred by eating vegetables, fruits and grains. If we don't eat even plants, we would die.

If you are in a situation where even vegetables are not available and you are forced to eat meat in order to preserve your life, then eating meat would not be considered a sin.

Q: When we offer leaves and flowers to God, do those souls (in that flower or leaf) get blessed?

A: To be blessed, the creature would have to be born human. Only humans receive fruits of their actions.

Q: Do rituals and fasts still give us good karma and forgive our sins (i.e., many believe that bathing in the Ganga River forgives sins)?

A: The only thing we can do that will forgive our sins is sincere devotion. Fasting or bathing in Ganga or some other ritual does not forgive our sins. However, if we are doing Roopdhyam while fasting or taking a dip in the holy water, then we are practicing devotion. And devotion means, 'loving remembrance of God,' i.e., Roopdhyam.

Q: If I have a bad thought of ridiculing someone, but I don't do the action, does the thought of not doing the action cancel it out?

A: It doesn't cancel it; it diminishes it.



Q: I can do an action without a thought, like killing a spider accidentally while walking, so is that still bad karm if you don't know you did it?

A: We inadvertently kill many creatures simply by breathing and walking, but we are not committing a sin because it's not a deliberate act. But, even if you must kill cockroaches or set up a mousetrap in order to live in a hygienic environment, the sin is so small that you are given forgiveness by practicing devotion.

Q: I think getting up early is overrated. Why does my mom always nag me about sleeping in?

A: There is a saying, "Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." If you rise with the sun and sleep early, you are following Nature's rhythm. By waking early, you will feel that you have more hours in the day to get your work done. Moreover, you are more attentive and productive early in the morning because there are no interruptions at that time. When you wake early, you are not rushing for work or school. You are calmer as a result.

Q: I am also nagged about making my bed in the morning. I don't make it because I figure I have to sleep in it at night anyway.

A: Making your bed in the morning may seem like a trivial task, but it isn't. When you make your bed, you have accomplished the first task of the day, which will mentally inspire you to finish another task and then another. It will inspire you to pick up your clothes from the floor and put them in the hamper and move the used cups of coffee from the desk to the kitchen sink.

Another reason is that our mind becomes confused and disturbed by mess and chaos, even though we may not be consciously aware of it. The mind works better if our environment is tidy and well-arranged.

Q: I moved to the U.S. when I was 12. I visit my grandparents in India almost every year and my

Hindi improves when I go there. I like my Indian and Hindu heritage but sometimes I get confused between two cultures.

A: You are very fortunate to have access to two cultures, two languages, two different ways of eating, dressing, and thinking. By taking the best from both cultures, you will enrich your life and you will learn so much. I was in the same situation in my teen years and found that I loved the Indian and Hindu culture. I held on to those traditions and values while learning good things from my new environment also.

Q: My parents push me every Sunday to go with them to the temple, but why should I? I went a few times, but I didn't understand what was going on there.

A: You didn't start understanding Math, Science, History or English by going to class just a few times or visiting occasionally. You went regularly, and concepts started making sense. Whenever you didn't understand something, you asked your teacher. You should go regularly to the temple, and you should ask questions. Soon you will start to understand and appreciate what is being taught.

Q: I tend to hold on to things, but I am afraid of becoming a hoarder. I need help.

A: Some of the objects you are holding on to must have a great emotional significance for you, and you don't wish to discard them. Consider taking photos of these things. This way you can see them whenever you want. After that, donate these things to those who can use them.

There must be other things you are holding on to, thinking you will use them one day. If you haven't used them for a year, you are not going to use them. Give these away also. There must be things that are broken and beyond repair. It's best to throw them away.

If you find all this too daunting, get family and friends to assist you. Or hire a professional.

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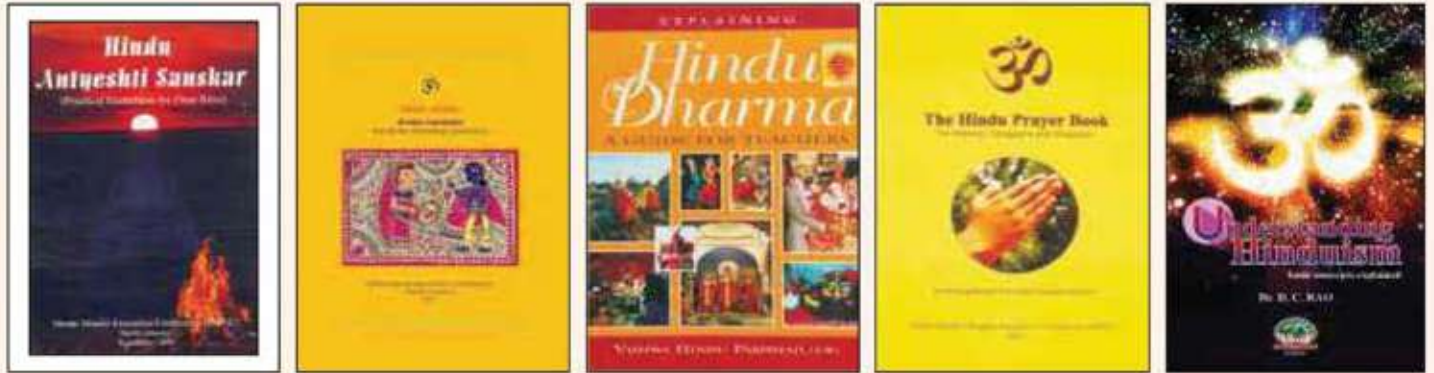
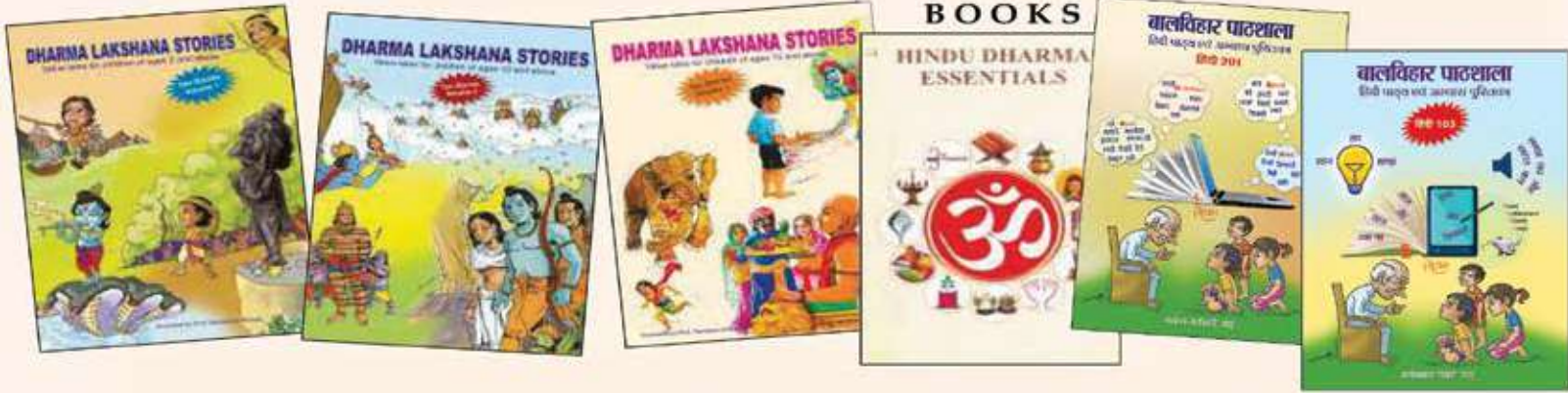
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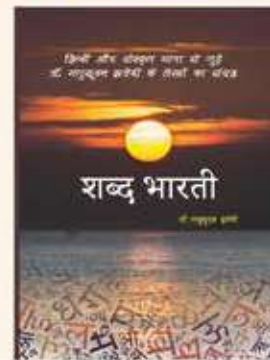
Om, Asato Maa Sad Gamaya; Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya Mrityor Maa Amritam Gamaya

ॐ शांतिः शांतिः शांतिः

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