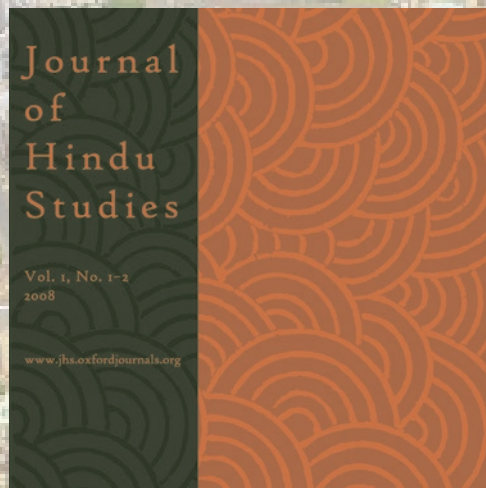


The Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies Board of Governors Report 2013-14



The Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies Annual Report 2013–14

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A RECOGNISED INDEPENDENT CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

1. The Academic Year 2013–14

THIS academic year has witnessed a number of developments at OCHS. We currently have 57 students, all students registered for a degree at Oxford University and studying in faculties including Politics, Philosophy, Oriental Studies, Theology and Religion, Economics, History, Engineering, Law, and Literature.

These students attend lectures, use the library, attend the Wednesday lunch, and generally engage with activities at the Centre. Some of the undergraduates are considering pursuing further degrees in Oxford. Almost all students who applied for bursaries were awarded something.

We have had two postgraduate students from Aarhus University studying here for three terms and who have been a good contribution to the scholarly life of the centre. This has been the result of the MOU with Aarhus University.

We would particularly like to bring to the attention of the board the development of the India Curriculum. This has developed apace with the Director of OCHS attending meetings in India at which not only enthusiasm for but commitment to the curriculum was expressed. The Curriculum is under development and will be finalised by the end of September 2014.

The strong postgraduate culture continues to thrive with postgraduates themselves taking the lead in organising seminars and facilitating cross-disciplinary discussion. This is an ethos that OCHS wishes to encourage.

Apart from these developments, OCHS has continued with its research and teaching programmes, offering core teaching to the Theology and Religion Faculty, teaching for the joint degree in Theology and Oriental Studies, and supervising postgraduate students in Theology and Oriental Studies. The OCHS has continued to develop research in Hindu Studies with a number of publications coming out by members of staff and research projects developed.

Curriculum Development: The Study of Indian Traditions

The OCHS is developing a curriculum for the study of Indian traditions as an academic subject in India. This will be an important contribution to the Human Sciences curriculum. The curriculum provides a coherent programme on the formation and development of Indian traditions of thought and practice over the centuries. It critically assesses the place of society, religion, philosophy, and politics in the context of Indian history. The programme provides both a general overview of the history of Indian traditions along with the opportunity to study particular traditions in depth.

The curriculum should be ready for trialling at Lady Shri Ram College and Shiv Nadar University, both in Delhi. Discussions are also underway at Jadavpur University and Madras University with plans to extend these to Benares Hindu University and Bombay University.

Teaching

In the current academic year the OCHS offered the teaching of Hinduism 1 and 2 for the Honours School in Theology. The OCHS also offered Sanskrit Prelims. Although no student took the examination this year, there has been a core body of students continuing with the subject throughout all three terms. It seems that the course is functioning as additional training for postgraduate students.

The OCHS offered various series of seminars. Dr Lutjeharms continued his reading of Sanskrit commentaries. Professor Flood offered readings in Phenomenology (at the request of the student body) and readings in the Netra Tantra. Apart from undergraduate teaching and non-core seminars and lectures, Prof. Flood has been supervising or co-supervising postgraduate students (nine D.Phil. students in Theology, one D.Phil. student in Oriental Studies, one Ph.D. student registered at another university, and two M.St. students in Theology). He has also done tutorials with four undergraduates in the Single or Joint Honours School.

Dr Frazier offered lectures in a series on key concepts in Hindu Studies as well as lectures on comparative philosophy, all of which were very well attended.

The Continuing Education Department (CED) programmes have continued. In spite of illness Dr Nick Sutton has continued to work with the CED and online and classroom-based courses have continued with new teachers added to the team.

Research

The OCHS has a number of research projects within the four research areas previously defined.

Hinduism and Modernity

Under this general heading the OCHS continues to develop a project on Bengali Vaishnavism in the Modern Period which will be the subject of a Shivdasani Conference in 2015. This project under the direction of Dr Ferdinando Sardella, a Research Fellow at the OCHS from the University of Uppsala, is undertaking to map, collect manuscripts, edit, and translate literature and other relevant material concerning Caitanya Vaishnavism in Bengal from the 18th century to the modern period. A number of scholars at OCHS are contributing to this including Lucian Wong.

Classical Hinduism

Under this general category the OCHS has two current projects that have continued during the year, the Bhagavata Purana Research Project and Śākta Traditions: History, Doctrine and Practice. The Śākta Traditions project had good news in the form of a contract with Routledge for papers originally presented at the Śākta traditions conference. Bjarne Olesen will edit and prepare the volume for publication. Unfortunately, due to funding problems, the second Śākta conference in Aarhus has had to be postponed.

Work has also begun on a new project in this field:

The Gosvami Era: The Founding of Gaudiya Vaishnavism in Early Modern South Asia

The early modern period in North India was one of the most socially turbulent and yet culturally vibrant times in its history. While the Mughal rulers were establishing the Pax Mughalana, their rule was far from uncontested. To achieve and maintain their hegemony, they fought against Afghan invaders from the west, rebellious Rajputs in Rajasthan, Shivaji in the south, and the Muslim rivals in the east. Culturally, the policy of religious tolerance adopted by some of the prominent Mughal rulers helped to strengthen the Hindu-Muslim cooperation, while more law-oriented Orthodox Muslims condemned such policy. This was also the period when the Indo-Persian style of art was developed in architecture, paintings and music.

This was precisely the period when what we now call Gaudiya Vaishnavism was founded and became a major player in religiously competitive early modern North India. While Krishna Caitanya inspired radical devotion to Krishna, it was his immediate followers, some of them called the Gosvamis, who provided profound theological underpinning to the tradition through their Sanskrit writings. With this theology in foundation, later Gaudiyas were able to establish their distinct identity in relation to other emotional Bhakti theologies articulated by Nimbarka, Vallabha, or Madhusudhana Sarasvati.

How did Gaudiya theologians articulate the uniqueness of Caitanya's teaching? What was the social and political influence of the Gaudiyas on the Mughal regime and vice versa? How did those theologians negotiate with their Muslim rulers? In what ways was Gaudiya theology expressed in ritual, architecture, poetry, drama, dance, paintings, and culinary culture?

While some of these questions have been addressed by research focusing on vernacular languages (Bengali, Brajabbhāsa, Hindi, Urdu, Persian etc.), Sanskritists have only recently turned their attention towards the early modern period. However, Sanskrit devotional theologies remain largely unexplored. This project therefore aims to examine the formative period of Gaudiya tradition through the Sanskrit writings left by the early Gaudiya authors.

This project is managed by Kiyokazu Okita (Kyoto University) and Rembert Lutjeharms (Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies). Its main activities will be manuscripts collection and digitisation; production of critical editions, translations, and studies; monographs and articles on the Gosvami era; organising group-reading sessions; biannual conference/workshop, and; publication of conference/workshop proceedings.

The five branches will be:

Branch A: Gosvamis in relation to other traditions

Branch B: Gosvamis and earlier works

Branch C: Gosvamis in later Gaudiya works

Branch D: Gosvamis in vernacular (Bengali, Oriya, Brajabbhāsa)

Branch E: Gosvamis in material and performative cultures

Comparative philosophy, religion, and theology

Gavin Flood and Dr Jessica Frazier have both published books on comparative religion. Flood's *Importance of Religion* (Wiley-Blackwell) came out in 2012 and his *The Truth Within: A Comparative History of Inwardness in Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism* was published by OUP in November 2013. Dr Frazier published *The Continuum Companion to Hindu Studies and Religion and Experience: Models of the Self in the Study of Religion*.

Historical perspectives on Hindu cultures

This research group significantly overlaps with Classical Hinduism and the projects on the Shakta traditions, the Bhagavata Purana, and the Bengal Vaishnava project could be categorised here as well.

In relation to this general project Prof Flood is the general editor of the OUP series on the History of Hinduism. Nine volumes are projected and the project is in process.

Himanshu Prabhu Ray is the general editor of a book series with Routledge on Archaeology and religion in India.

Shivdasani Fellowship

During this academic year Mr Azad Shivdasani has continued to support scholars through the Shivdasani Fellowships. The Shivdasani Fellows in Michaelmas 2013 were Professor Harunaga Isaacson, Chair of Indology, Hamburg University and Professor Wendy Doniger from Chicago University. In Michaelmas term we hosted Prof. Sushil Mittal from James Madison University, USA.

Majewski Lecture

Three Majewski Lectures were held for the academic year. The Majewski Lectures were presented by Dr. Gwylm Beckerlegge (Open University), Dr Vergiani (Cambridge University), and Dr Faisal Devji (St Anthony's College).

Other Lectures and Seminars

There were also lectures presented by Dr Kiyokazu Okita (an OCHS alumnus now at the University of Kyoto) and Dr Jessica Frazier. In July 2014 there will be a conference on the Ramayana, organised by Mandakranta Bose and John Brockington.

Publishing

Dr Jessica Frazier edited *The Bloomsbury Companion to Hindu Studies* and her new title *Categorisation in Indian Philosophy: Thinking Inside the Box* is due for publication by Ashgate in July.

The OCHS is continuing to develop the Hindu Studies Series with Routledge. New titles this year are *The Death and Afterlife of Mahatma Gandhi* by OCHS Shivdasani Fellow Makarand R. Paranjape; *Consciousness in Indian Philosophy* by Sthaneshwar Timalsina; *Hindu Pilgrimage* by Prabhavati C. Reddy; *Hinduism and Environmental Ethics* by Christopher G. Framarin; a reprint of *Attending Krishna's Image* by OCHS alumnus Kenneth Valpey; *Advaita Vedanta and Vaisnavism* by Sanjukta Gupta; and *A Woman's Ramayana* by Mandakranta and Sarika Priyadarshini Bose.

The Journal of Hindu Studies under the editorship of Gavin Flood, Jessica Frazier, and Rembert Lutjeharms has continued to flourish with three editions per annum. It is published by Oxford University Press and the OCHS.

Summary

The OCHS has had a successful academic year, continuing to pursue its core activity of the academic study of Hinduism. We have had a full programme of teaching offered to the Theology Faculty and lecture and seminar series, we have a solid research programme and an enthusiastic student body of 57 registered students.

2. Fellows and students

Visiting Fellows

Aarhus Students in Oxford

New Students

Awards

Visiting fellows

Michaelmas 2013: Prof. Wendy Doniger

Prof. Wendy Doniger (M.A., Ph.D. (Harvard University) D.Phil. (Oxford University) is Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions in the Divinity School, University of Chicago; also in the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations, the Committee on Social Thought.

Wendy Doniger's research and teaching focus on translating, interpreting, and comparing elements of Hinduism through modern contexts of gender, sexuality, and identity. Her courses in mythology address themes in cross-cultural expanses, such as death, dreams, evil, horses, sex, and women; her courses in Hinduism cover a broad spectrum that, in addition to mythology, considers literature, law, gender, and zoology.

Michaelmas 2013: Prof. Harunaga Isaacson

Professor Isaacson is Professor of Classical Indology at the University of Hamburg. His doctoral work at the University of Leiden was in classical Vaisesika. He has been a Visiting Fellow at All Souls College, Wolfson College Oxford, and the International Institute for Buddhist Studies, Tokyo, and a Sabbatical Fellow of the American Philosophical Society. He is one of the world's foremost experts in tantric traditions in pre-13th century South Asia, especially Vajrayana Buddhism, and is an expert in classical Sanskrit poetry, classical Indian philosophy, Puranic literature, and manuscript studies.

Hilary 2014

Professor Sushil Mittal is Professor of Religion in the Department of Philosophy and Religion and Founding Director of the Mahatma Gandhi Center for Global Nonviolence at James Madison University.

He earned his B.A. from McGill University in Montreal, M.A. from Carleton University in Ottawa, and Ph.D. from University of Montreal. He has served on the faculties of the University of Florida in Gainesville and Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois.

His publications include *Development and Change in India* (1993), *Surprising Bedfellows: Hindus and Muslims in Medieval and Early Modern India* (2003), *The Hindu World* (2004), *Religions of South Asia: An Introduction* (2006), and *Studying Hinduism: Key Concepts and Methods* (2008).

His current work-in-progress includes *The Living Hindu World*, *Encyclopedia of Hindu Studies*, and *The Gandhi Reader*.

Aarhus Sanskrit Students in Oxford

A Report by Silje Lyngar Einarsen, PhD student, Aarhus University

Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by and between the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (OCHS) and the Department for the Study of Religion, Aarhus University, Sanskrit students from Aarhus at BA, MA and PhD level have the opportunity to spend a semester in Oxford as visiting students at the centre. The purpose of this short article is to give the reader and interested Sanskrit student an impression of how this programme works at present. The article is based on my own experiences as a visiting student in Oxford during Trinity term 2014. To me, a PhD student of Sanskrit and Religion from a country where the *raison d'être* of the Humanities constantly has to be defended, the term in Oxford was a fantastic experience – a term completely spent in a state of academic bliss. I therefore hope the information provided here also will be useful for the further development of the programme.

I left for Oxford after two years of PhD studies in Denmark including several rounds of fieldwork in India. My PhD project explores the relationship between tradition, text, and ritual in Hindu religious traditions. At the early onset of the study, I chose the core text of the Goddess tradition, the *Devīmāhātmya* portion of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, as main focus of research. The verses of the *Devīmāhātmya* are embedded in a complex ritual routine that has been transferred from teacher to student for generations in India and still are so today. This routine consist of sets of practices that typically are regarded as Tantric, such as identification with the deity, visualisations, imprintments (*nyāsa*), putting on the armor (*kāvaca*), etc., accompanied with the recitation of several (to us) lesser known texts and mantras. All of this and more is part of the tradition of the *Devīmāhātmya*, which I approach through careful study of the commentary literature, ritual manuals and

Fellows and students

handbooks, as well as the practical performance routines in present-day India as they are taught from teacher to student. It is a multifaceted study that requires an ability to combine different methods and disciplines, and to apply factual data onto a theoretical level. The time spent at the OCHS greatly contributed to my research in this regard, the latter theoretical challenge in particular. Furthermore, the lectures, seminars and reading groups were very informative and great contributions to the mandatory course-part of the Aarhus Graduate School programme.

Since lectures in Oxford are scheduled primarily in Michaelmas and Hilary terms, whereas the university students take exams in Trinity, I was warned that Trinity was a quiet term and consequently not the best time for a student to visit. However, I soon discovered that *quiet* in Oxford meant, to me as a student from Denmark, something closer to *normal*. Not a day passed without something interesting going on at the OCHS, at one of the many colleges, or faculties. It is always something interesting going on somewhere in Oxford. The trick is to catch where and when.

The schedule of lectures and arrangements at the OCHS is published at their website shortly before each term. Students from AU who travels to Oxford in accordance with the MoU can attend all of these lectures and seminars free of charge. The lectures at the centre are oriented towards a Hindu Studies approach; it is a strong emphasis on Hinduism approached through the studies of Sanskrit scriptures, and on theories of Religion (particularly philosophy of Religion). To get an idea of the lecture program, prospective students are advised to look at the previous lectures site on www.ochs.org. Lectures are held in the OCHS library. They are often attended by students and fellows of the Centre alike, and it is likely that they end in interesting discussions continuing long after the scheduled time is up. For this reason, I ended up following all the lectures at the OCHS regularly, even those that did not strictly target my interests.

It was a very pleasant surprise to find out that visiting students easily can follow lectures at the University of Oxford, despite not being enrolled at the University. Lecture lists are published on the website of the respective faculties at the beginning of each term – again, the trick is to look for previous lectures to get an idea of the program. There are many lectures open to public, such as the lectures at the Faculty of Philosophy, which I followed. Smaller classes, for instance in Indian languages at the Oriental Faculty, are restricted to certain participants. In general, if a student that is *not* enrolled at the faculty wants to follow these classes, the normal procedure is that the student contacts the lecturer personally. If the lecturer agrees to it, the student is welcome to attend. Obviously, this procedure does not guarantee that the lecturer can or wants to accept outside students, and to avoid disappointment when arriving in Oxford, it could be a good idea to contact the lecturer in advance (but then again, some lecturers apparently “don’t do e-mail”, which means that the student will have to turn up before class and ask in person). It is also possible for visitors to apply for admission to courses formally, but then a heavy fee applies.

In addition to the lectures at the OCHS and the University lectures, the colleges and other research centres also arranges lectures and seminars. In short, there is a myriad of opportunities that makes it possible for visiting student to tailor a schedule fit for his or her academic level and interests. Such freedom and flexibility will most likely confuse a Danish student, who after years of rules and rigidity at the university has been accustomed to the comfort of not having to take initiative and make choices. BA/MA degree students should expect less formal control than they are used to from Denmark, and know that they are responsible for their own learning. They may be surprised to discover that, in Oxford, taking initiative actually pays off.

My affiliation with the OCHS granted me access to the Library of the University of Oxford, the Bodleian Library. Studying at this library would itself have been worth the whole trip to Oxford. Apart from having a copy of every single book published in England, it stores the largest collection of Sanskrit manuscripts outside the Indian subcontinent. For access to the Bodleian Library, visiting students has to bring a letter from the OCHS to the Admissions Office and apply for a library card there. The letter should state the purpose and dates of their stay in Oxford. Sometimes a fee applies. Visiting students get an S-card, which grants access to the whole Bodleian library and all of the reading rooms. Students with an S-card may not check out books from the library, but can keep them on hold in their preferred reading room for as long as they need them.

Access to manuscripts is more complicated and needs to be planned well in advance. The S-card does not give access to manuscripts; for this there is a separate application form to fill out at the Admission Office. The application needs to be completed with a letter from the student’s supervisor or tutor stating the nature of the research for which the manuscript is requested. Visiting students determined to get access to

manuscripts, are advised to contact the Superintendent of the Special Collection well in advance and ask for the exact routines.

Finally, a word should be said on the inspiring milieu at the OCHS. The OCHS has a very open and welcoming atmosphere. I felt instantly included, and it was easy to approach the staff and fellows for practical or academic advice. I was under the impression that people at the Centre genuinely took interest in my research, and I had the privilege to discuss my PhD-project with **academic director** Prof. Gavin Flood and other brilliant scholars and students. The Wednesday lunch is indeed a great opportunity to network with scholars and socialise with other students – many Sanskrit and Theology students from Oxford University attend these lunches. Moreover, there is a very lively graduate student milieu in relation to the Centre, and graduate seminars in Indic Religions are arranged on a weekly basis in the OCHS library. To put it succinctly: participating in this programme is a great privilege and a rare opportunity made possible by the staff and fellows of the OCHS. I hope to see more Aarhusian Sanskritists in Oxford over the coming years.

New students

Elena Backhouse

UK

Lady Margaret Hall

Ellie is doing a BA in Theology. She is particularly interested in New Testament studies and ancient Greek.

Cameron Bailey

USA

Wolfson College

Cameron is studying for a D.Phil. at the Oriental Institute. His main fields of interest are Tibetan and Indian Buddhism and Tantrism.

Shoumik Bhattacharya

India

Wadham College

Shoumik is studying English and Oriental Studies.

Peter Thabiso Bustraan

Netherlands

Wolfson College

BA in Religious Studies - Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Netherlands (2013)

Peter is currently working towards an MPhil in Classical Indian Religion. His main areas of academic concentration are Sanskrit, the political and social history of India and research on Moksa.

Seema Chauhan

England

Wolfson College

BA in Religious and Theological Studies - Cardiff University (2013)

Seema is currently studying for an M.Phil. in Classical Indian Religions. Her main areas of academic concentration are Sanskrit, Vaisnavism and Saivism, and Indian narrative traditions.

Silje Lyngar Einarsen

Norway

BA in Sanskrit and Religious Studies - University of Oslo (2009)

MA in Sanskrit and Religious Studies - University of Aarhus (2012)

Silje is a visiting student for Trinity, 2014.

Shreepriya Gopalakrishnan

India

Wolfson College

Shreepriya is pursuing a M.St. in Social Anthropology. Her main interests are South Asia, women and power in Hindu epics, knowledge and power in corporate social hierarchy.

Alan Herbert

England

St Stephen's House

BA in Philosophy - University of Hawaii, Minoa

MA in Philosophy - University of Hawaii, Minoa

Alan is currently studying for a DPhil in Theology. His main areas of focus are Jiva Gosvami, and the role of imagination in religious experience.

Fabienne Tara Belle Heuze

England

Balliol College

Fabienne is currently studying for a BA in Sanskrit. Her main interests are Sanskrit, linguistics, religion, and literature.

Phoebe Hunt

UK

Pembroke College

Phoebe is doing a BA in Sanskrit. Her main interests are India and Tibet.

Liberty King

UK

Jesus College

Liberty is studying Philosophy and Theology

Anthony King

England

Blackfriars

BA in Study of Religion - SOAS (2013)

Anthony is studying for an M.St. in Study of Religion. He is particularly interested in Modern Hinduism and Vaishnavism.

Hari Kumar

USA

Wolfson College

Hari is studying for an M.St. on contemporary India with a focus on Indian development and politics.

John-Louis Loewenthal

England

St Hugh's College

John-Louis is currently studying for a BA in Anthropology and Archaeology. His main areas of academic interest lie in Education, Informal Waste Management, Gender, Northern India, and Nepal.

Anica Mann

India

St Cross College

Anica is pursuing an M.Phil. in Classical Indian Religions. Her concentration is in Buddhism, Saivism, Yogini culture, and temples in India and Southeast Asia

Rutej Mehta

Ireland

St John's College

Rutej is currently striving towards an M.Eng. in Engineering Science.

Shubha Shantha Murthy

England

Linacre College

BA in Engineering - Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad (1990)

Shubha is currently studying for an MPhil in Classical Indian Religion.

Lobsang Nyima Laurent

UK

Wolfson College

Lobsang is pursuing a D.Phil. in Oriental Studies. His field is Tibetan and Himalayan Studies.

Sunit Patel

England

Wolfson College

MA in Indian Religion - SOAS (2013)

BSc in Computer Science - Queen Mary University, London (2002)

Sunit is currently pursuing a DPhil in Theology. His area of academic concentration is Hinduism.

Ved Patel

America

Worcester College

BA in Religion - University of California (2010)

MA in Religion - University of Florida (2012)

Ved is pursuing an MSt in the Study of Religion. His main areas of academic concentration at Oxford

are Colonial and Modern India, Diaspora Hinduism, Hindu Ethics, Christian Theology, and Christian Ethics.

Sridhar Poddar

India

Regent's Park College

Sridhar is currently on a visiting programme, focusing on English and Economics.

Olivia Porter

UK

Pembroke College

Olivia is studying Sanskrit and Oriental Studies.

Pavlo Smytsnyuk

Ukraine

Campion Hall

BA in Philosophy and Theology - Gregorian University, Rome (2005)

MA in Theology - National University of Athens (2010)

Pavlov is currently studying for a DPhil in Theology. His main areas of interest are Greek Orthodox Theology, Hinduism, Nationalism, and the relationship between the Church and the State.

Jens Christian Thorstensen

Denmark

Jens is a visiting student from the University of Aarhus. He is studying hermeneutics and Sanskrit.

William Westerman

USA

Christ Church

William is studying English, Japanese Linguistics, and Buddhism

Derek Wolter

USA

New College

Derek is studying transpersonal psychology and Hinduism.

Zhao You

China

Zhao is pursuing Buddhist Studies at the Oriental Institute having received a BA in Philosophy at Peking University.

Fellows and Students

Awards for OCHS students

The Gupta Dan Bursary

Sunit Patel

Seema Chauhan

Hanuman Bursary

Ionut Moise

Alan Herbert

The Hansraj and Kanchanben Popat

Bursary

Pavlo Smystnyuk

Jiva Gosvami scholarship

Paul Gerstmayr

Lucian Wong

Patel Book Grant

Anthony King

Professor Makhanlal Roy Chaudhury Book

Grant

Rutej Mehta

Ramiah Alagappan Bursary

Olivia Porter

Phoebe Hunt

3. Library

THE OCHS Library currently holds approximately 18,000 titles, mostly in the fields of Hindu intellectual history (with an emphasis on Vedanta, Nyaya and Mimamsa), Puranic texts, Sanskrit poetry, and comparative theology. Due to several generous donations over the years, the library continues to be a rich resource for the study of Vaisnava thought, and also has gathered a rich collection of works and archival material on Indian Christianity and Hindu-Christian theological interactions.

The Library has this year received a substantial collection of Hindi books from Winand Callewaert, and smaller donations from Gavin Flood, Shaunaka Rishi Das, Madhu Khanna, Abantee Harun, Kenneth Valpey, Rembert Lutjeharms, Nandini Bhattacharyya-Panda, Poonam Kakkar, Sajan Poovayya, Nick Sutton, Ram Buxani, and Pushpa Satyasheil.

4. Continuing Education Department

EARLIER this year, our CED Director Dr Nick Sutton, was diagnosed with a serious illness. As a good friend to all at the Centre and a key person in our Continuing Education Department, this has caused much concern. However, he is doing well and remains committed to the work of the CED, resuming teaching of online courses in June and continuing to write.

Taught courses and lectures

During the Autumn term we taught a new course, 'Understanding Hinduism: Ritual, Yoga, Caste and Gender' at the Sattavis Patidar Centre in Wembley and at the Regency Hotel in Kensington.

Talks in Leicester are held every month organised by our Friends group and these are very well attended.

Talks in Birmingham have increased to every two months.

Online courses

The provision of online courses has continued this year with six courses currently available to offer each term, with the most popular being the revamped 'Introduction to Hinduism' and 'The Philosophy of Yoga'.

Online student numbers have increased by more than 50% for the second year running, reaching 143 during the Autumn term of 2013.

Dr Sutton's illness has meant bringing on new tutors: Ramesh Pattni, Lucien Wong, Anuradha Dooney, and Avni Chag is joining us as a trainee tutor.

Dr Sutton has written a new course, 'Three Short Upanishads' and the second part of the 'Introduction to Hinduism' courses but it remains to be seen when these will be filmed for online use.

Ebooks

We are working on a series of e-books. Work is nearly complete on Dr Sutton's translation and commentary on Bhagavad-gita and he has also submitted a translation of the Yoga-sutras.

Management

Online courses were taught by Nick Sutton, Rembert Lutjeharms, Anuradha Dooney, Ramesh Pattni, and Lucien Wong. They are managed by Lal Krishna. Anuradha Dooney, Rembert Lutjeharms, and Nick Sutton shared other teaching responsibilities with other tutors contributing occasional classes as and when required. Judit Bajusz provides secretarial support and edits course materials.

5. Internet

THE OCHS website (www.ochs.org.uk) is a valued resource to its core audiences of prospective students, academics wanting more information about the Centre, students of Hinduism worldwide, and potential supporters of the Centre.

Our outreach to the wider community of academic and public interest in Hindu Studies has involved making audio of more than 500 OCHS lectures and seminars since 1998 available on the OCHS website. We also have a very successful podcast of lectures and seminars and the internet has become a major focus of our Continuing Education classes.

The internet is also our main avenue for publicising our forthcoming lectures and seminars.

6. Development activities and achievements

OCHS in Dubai and India

This year Shaunaka Rishi Das has made several journeys to Dubai and India with the aim of raising awareness of the OCHS and further developing a network of friends in these places. Talks were given in numerous places including Alliance Francaise in Delhi, Young Presidents Organisation and the Indian institute of Science in Bangalore. Biku Ahluwalia organised an excellent reception party for the OCHS in Dubai.

Property Campaign

The search for a new home for the OCHS began in earnest in May 2012. To date we have raised a little over £300,000, making this by far our most successful fundraising endeavour.

Only one freehold property has been found that meets our purposes. With assistance from Mr Nath Puri, we have kept up negotiations with the owner but no mutually agreeable price has been found. Meanwhile, we are continuing the search.

CED Online Scholarships Campaign

Launched in Dubai in August 2013, this campaign is aimed at extending the OCHS online courses to upper high school students and other young people in India and other countries. So far, 175 scholarships have been funded and recipients are being identified in India and the UK.

Broadcast

The OCHS serves as a useful reference for broadcasters seeking an authoritative voice for Hindu traditions.

The BBC aired a much-needed documentary, *The Story of the Swastika*, which received significant OCHS input both in consultation and screen time for a number of OCHS staff and students.

Shaunaka Rishi Das consulted on a number of news and documentary programmes as well as appearing on *Beyond Belief*, *All Things Considered*, and *Prayer for the Day*.

Dr Frazier's media work keeps growing with a fourth appearance on Radio Four's *In Our Time*, this time speaking on Hindu Ideas of Creation. Dr Frazier is currently discussing further programming opportunities with BBC TV.

Awards

Thanks to generous donors, the OCHS is able to award £3,000 per year to students.

Outreach

Ashvir Sangha, a former president of the Oxford Union, has been developing the Global Forum for Indian Leadership, with the OCHS as a consulting body.

The OCHS hosts school groups including a standing annual visit from St Mary's Girls School, Ascot, Cherwell Valley School, who visited twice this year, and St James's School bring prospective Sanskritists. We also received a group from the University of Florida.

Shaunaka Rishi Das was appointed by the Indian Government to the International Advisory Committee for Auroville and served on the Commission on Faith and Belief in British Public Life; a consultative meeting for the Catholic Church's Blueprint for Better Business; and an Interfaith Panel at Brookes University, Oxford.

Shaunaka also spoke at Ripon College, Cuddesdon; the University of Applied Sciences, Amsterdam; JP Morgan at Lousi Vuitton in London; and taught at an Avicena Course in Oxford.

Chaplaincy

Shaunaka Rishi Das is the University's first Hindu Chaplain. In this role he provides pastoral guidance to an average of three students per week during term and was invited as a guest preacher at Mansfield, Hertford, Wadham, and Somerville Colleges' Sunday services.

Shaunaka also spoke at the Buddhist Chaplaincy Conference at Balliol College and the Hindu Students Forums at Cambridge and Imperial College.

The OCHS also facilitates HUM, the University's Hindu students group.

The Bhumi Project: Hindu Responses to Environmental Change

The past 12 months have seen significant growth of the Bhumi Project. With continued funding from the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), we have been able to hire staff in India, strengthen existing and create new partnerships in India, and develop new initiatives to outreach to Hindus within India and the diaspora.

Gopal Patel continues to oversee the Project on behalf of the OCHS.

Establishment of India office and staff

In August 2013 the Bhumi Project opened its first overseas office in Mumbai, India. The office space was donated by Govardhana Eco-village, a non-profit organisation based in south Mumbai that operates a eco-re-treat centre two hours north of Mumbai.

With funding provided by the ARC, we were able to hire one part-time staff member to be based in Mumbai to help oversee our activities in India and work alongside Gopal Patel, our Project Manager based in Oxford.

Hindu Environment Week

In February 2014 we celebrated the first ever international Hindu Environment Week. From February 17–23, events were held across India to raise awareness about ecological concerns and celebrate the natural world. Cities that participated in the Week included Chennai, Dwarka, Mt. Abu, Mumbai, Puri, Rishikesh, Varanasi, and Vrindavan. Events also took place in Oxford and Princeton University. In total over thirty events were organised by Hindu temples and organisations, with over 6000 people participating.

In addition to the above events, two separate statements on the importance of the environment were issued by the office of the Shankaracharya of Dwarka and Sri Rameshbhai Oza of Porbandar.

Green Pilgrimage Network

The Hindu chapter of the Green Pilgrimage Network, launched by the Bhumi Project in Rishikesh in 2012, continued to grow and develop new partnerships in India. Of note, the towns of Puri and Varanasi officially joined the Network. We are now working with seven pilgrimage sites and towns across India to raise awareness about green pilgrimage practices and develop green action plans.

Green Temples Guide

As part of the Green Pilgrimage Network, and an extension of our Green Temples initiative that was launched at the White House in 2011, we have developed a Green Temples Guide for use in India. The Guide outlines areas temples should be sensitive to, including waste management, biodiversity, energy, and sanitation. A draft version of the Guide has been completed. During May and June we conducted consultations on the Guide with temples in Dwarka, Mumbai, Varanasi, and Vrindavan to gauge interest and learn how to make the Guide more relevant for temples. The Guide will now be finalised and officially launched in July.

Outreach to American temples

In partnership with New Jersey-based NGO GreenFaith, we have been working with Hindu temples in the United States to help them become more energy efficient. As part of this initiative, Mat McDermott, our New York based Advisor, attended the Hindu Mandir Executive Council annual conference to make a presentation about our work. This led to a number of new partnerships being developing and increased exposure of our work in America.

Bhumi Pledge

Engagement with young Hindus is a key component of our work. For the past five months we have been finalising a new campaign we have called the Bhumi Pledge. Aimed at college and university students, the campaign asks students to sign a pledge for the environment and commit to attending or organising one environmentally-themed event on their campus during the academic year. The campaign will be launched in New York in late September.

Attendance at conferences

Over the past 12 months we have been invited to attend two international conferences organised by ARC. In July 2013 we attended an international meeting of the Green Pilgrimage Network in Trondheim, Norway. The Bhumi Project was asked to contribute and share its successes in India and plans for developing the Hindu Chapter of the Network.

In June 2014 we were asked to attend a meeting in Ise, Japan, to discuss the future direction of ARC and a new UNDP-led initiative looking at how values can help shape the Sustainable Development Goals currently being developed by the UN.

Internships

This year Shreekari Tadepalli from America did a three month full-time internship with us in Oxford. Shreekari helped with organising Hindu Environment Week and developing resources for the Bhumi Pledge. Shreekari is due to start university in America this coming September, and will oversee the development of the Pledge across America.

Interns

The OCHS benefits greatly from the enthusiasm of young people who join our internship programme. Apart from our undying friendship, they receive valuable experience and contacts at Oxford.

This year we welcomed 11 interns from as far afield as the US, New Zealand, Dubai, India, and even Oxford.

We were delighted to welcome back Malvika Poddar who, since her initial internship in 2011, has become a vital part of the OCHS wherever she may be. As well as all her work here in Oxford she also masterminded the organisation of Shaunaka Rishi Das's visit to Bangalore in late 2013.

Vijay Panchia joined us from New Zealand and worked hard at a number of tasks showing a particular talent in events and filming our Online CED lectures. Vijay also took full advantage of the opportunity to sit in in classes and get some Oxford education.

Gehna Mohanani was recommended by our friend, Biku Ahluwalia. Gehna is a driven young woman of many talents who became an integral part of the OCHS in a very short time.

We also welcomed Shreekari Tadepalli from Detroit via India. Shreekari spent part of her year's sabbatical at the OCHS as part of the Bhumi Project.

Thanks are also due to Sophia Russell who came to get some experience of higher education to help her in her aim of studying religion at Cambridge and who in the matter of a week became a fully-fledged member of the OCHS. Avni Chag, an OCHS alumna, helped with administration, as did Jaya Bahl and Ishvar Lalbahadoersing who joined us for a week from the Netherlands.

We are also grateful to Sheena Patel who is helping us in our digitisation project and Ana Corrie Helmeyer who helped with digitising part of our Murray Rogers Archive.

It is impossible to overstate the boost that these bright energetic people gave to the life of the OCHS.

Friends of the OCHS (FOCHS)

Friends groups are thriving in Leicester and Birmingham, raising awareness and funds for the OCHS.

Upcoming events are listed at www.ochs.org.uk/friends-events

Leicester Friends of the OCHS

The Leicester Friends continue to host an excellent series of talks covering topics as diverse as 'Hindu Attitudes to Wealth' and 'Ayurveda and the Hindu Philosophical Systems'.

One of the year's biggest events was the fourth Tirath-Yatra – a sponsored thirteen-mile walk visiting twelve Leicester mandirs.

A very encouraging development this year has been a substantial increase in the number of volunteers joining the Leicester Friends. The Leicester Friends stand as a model of a community supporting good education and helping good education flourish in return.

Development activities

Birmingham Friends of the OCHS

Inspired by the work of the Leicester Friends, Nitin and Meena Sodha and Raj and Jyoti Patel are replicating the success in Birmingham with similar bi-monthly events bringing people to the educational ethos of the OCHS and helping some of those Friends become regular donors.

The talks given by the OCHS provide a further opportunity for the Centre to make its expertise available to as wide a section of the community as possible.

7. Benefactors and friends

Volunteers and donations in kind

In keeping with our tradition of encouraging voluntary service and keeping costs down, we are safeguarding the true charitable nature of the OCHS. The OCHS Director and other administrative staff continue to work on a voluntary basis or at reduced rates. This and other voluntary work saved the OCHS in the region of £244,000 this year.

Other friends and businesses have been kind to the Centre by charging greatly reduced rates for services. These include our accountants, Wenn Townsend.

As always, special thanks are due to David Smith, Washington DC, who funds and maintains our web server. Since 2002 David has been responsible for keeping us online in hardware and software saving us considerable expense and effort. Satish Sharma our volunteer IT Officer provided valuable support in keeping our network running smoothly.

Also, during this period Harish I. K. Patel and Upendra Kalan worked hard to save expense and the time of OCHS staff. Harish also sponsored a Ricoh colour photocopier and network-printer.

Other significant voluntary service has been very gratefully received from Dev Bahl (Honorary Financial Officer) and Sanjay Gadhvi (mobile phone contract).

Significant travel expenses to India, Thailand, and Dubai were covered by Biku Ahluwalia, the Poddar Family, Ramesh Venkataraman, and Anjali Gupta.

Our Wednesday lunches saw attendances grow again this year. Managed by Anuradha Dooney and Judit Bajusz, the increased effort was greatly assisted by numerous helpers, but special thanks go to Lucy Barton for her steadfast help. The BAPS Swaminarayan Temple in Neasden has come forward as a major sponsor of this programme.

All these contributors are saving us considerable time, effort, and expense. Their service has been invaluable because of their heartfelt offering to the cause of good education and thousands of pounds have been saved and donated to the OCHS by their thoughtfulness and commitment.

Benefactors and friends

Donors

We extend our warmest gratitude to the following individuals, companies, and organisations for their generous financial support of the Centre.

Anoopam Mission

BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha

Florida Institute of Technology

Mr Kamal Adatia

Sudershna Aggarwal

Biku Ahluwalia

Hemal Amin

Arun Kumar

Ajay Bahl

Om Bahl

Jhanna Bhalla

Sudhen Bhayani

Bharat Bhundia

Mandakranta Bose

Jugdish Budhan

Babu Chandarana

Kalindi Chandaria

Damayanti Chauhan

Raj Chauhan

Ramila Chauhan

Ritesh Chauhan

Hitendra Chudasama

Dr. Sandhya Chundhur

Pursottam Dabasia

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Mr Dilip Dattani

Ms Urvashi Dattani

Bhupen Dave

Nimish Desai

Anuradha Dooney

Manu Duggal

Vinodbhai Gandhi

Prema Goet

Suresh Gohil

Nitesh Gor

Charlena Graham

Prof. Martin Haigh

Miss Aarti Hansrani

Vicky Ip

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Upendra Kalan

Bharatraj Kiri

Gopal And Elizabeth Krishna

Dr. Sowmi Krishnamurthy

Bhavini Ladwa

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Yashvant Lodhia

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Anjna Mandora

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Bhavit Mehta

Manharlal Mistry

Maaya Modha

Dr. Jagdish Modi

Harsit Nakarja

Dhiren Nathwani

Vinod Pabari

Hemant Kumar Padhya

Preeti Padia

Ravi Parekh

Bharati Patel

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Dhruv Patel

Gita Patel

Govind Patel

Harish Patel

Hema Patel

Jayant Chhaganbhai Patel

Jayesh Patel

Jyoti Patel

Nirav Patel

Parimal Patel

Pyarelal Patel

Ragini Patel

Rajnikant Patel

Raju Patel

Shraddha Patel

Sujata Patel

Y. M. Patel

Yogesh Patel

Dalip Pathak

Basant Poddar

Hemang Popat

Jayesh Popat

Kamlesh Purohit

Dilip Raithatha

H Rajani
Pratibha Rajani
Navinchandra Raval
Mansukh Ravat
John Ridge
Shaumit Saglani
Shila Sampat
Geeta Sampath
Susheel Saraff
R Saujani
Dr. Milen Shah
Azad Shivdasani
Nitin Sodha
Rajesh Somani
Ronald Staff
Diana Stevenson
Raakhi Sunak
Dr. Yash Sunak
Divyesh Tailor
Mr Hasmukh Tanna
Navin Thaker
Harish Thakrar
Manish Thakrar
Subhash Thakrar
Raju Thanki
Caroline Trimmingham
Shobhaben Trivedi
Mani Vadher
Pradeep Vasudevan
Dr. N Vijaykumar
Rahul Vyas
Todd Wahlstrom

8. Accounts and finance

THE Centre has continued to benefit greatly from voluntary work and in-kind donations – these have amounted to more than £244,000 in this period – which add great value to the Centre.

Dev Bahl, Judit McFarland (nee Bajusz), and Marina Polyak were our book-keepers for 2013–14. Our accounts were certified by Wenn Townsend, Oxford.

The Board has been successful in maintaining the sound financial management of the Centre and its responsibility to ensure the true charitable nature of the OCHS. The work to attain financial stability for the long term goes on and the Board is encouraged by the fundraising efforts of the Friends and Benefactors of the Centre.

9. Appendix one: Organisation

Board of Governors

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Fund Management Committee

Mr Upendra Kalan
Mr Akbar Moawalla
Dr Prashun Popat
Mr Ramesh Venkataraman

Appendix one: Organisation

Friends of OCHS

USA

Mr Robert Cohen
Shaunaka Rishi Das
Dr S. Bhattacharya-Ford
Mr Todd Wahlstrom

Birmingham

Shyam Bhayani
Jay Jina
Rekha Jina
Jyoti Patel
Meena Sodha
Nitin Sodha

Leicester

Raj Chauhan
Ramila Chauhan
Aarti Hansrani
Yashvant Lodhia
Kamlesh Purohit
Manish Thakrar

10. Appendix two: Lectures and seminars

Lectures and Seminars Michaelmas Term 2013

Hinduism 1

Prof. Gavin Flood

This lecture series provides some basic material for Theology FHS Paper 20, 'Hinduism 1: Brahminism'. These lectures offer a thematic and historical introduction to the sources and early development of 'Hindu' traditions from their early formation to the early medieval period. We will explore the formation of Hindu traditions through textual sources, such as the Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita, along with the practices and social institutions that formed classical Hindu traditions. The course will include an introduction to Hindu philosophy. A detailed reading list will be supplied at the start of the lectures which will be based loosely around Gavin Flood's *Introduction to Hinduism* (CUP 1996).

Elementary Sanskrit

Prof. Gavin Flood

This is the Theology Sanskrit Prelims paper that introduces basic vocabulary and grammar. The course book is Walter Maurer *The Sanskrit Language*.

Majewski Lecture: Politics in Action: Gandhi, the Gita, and Modern Times

Dr Faisal Devji

While the Bhagavad-Gita justifiably receives scholarly attention as an ancient text, its modern history remains little explored. And yet the Gita is arguably the most important text of modern India, with many of the country's great intellectual and political figures attending to it in new ways from the 19th century. How did the Gita become the key text among such figures to think not about India's past so much as her present and future? This lecture will consider Gandhi's lifelong devotion to the Gita as part of a larger project to create a modern political thought for India's future.

Dr Faisal Devji is University Reader in Modern South Asian History. He has held faculty positions at the New School in New York, Yale University and the University of Chicago, from where he also received his PhD in Intellectual History. Devji was Junior Fellow at the Society of Fellows, Harvard University, and Head of Graduate Studies at the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London, from where he directed post-graduate courses in the Near East and Central Asia. He sits on the editorial board of the journal Public Culture. Dr Devji is the author of two books, Landscapes of the Jihad: Militancy, Morality, Modernity (2005), and The Terrorist in Search of Humanity: Militant Islam and Global Politics (2009), and is currently writing a book on the emergence of Muslim politics and the founding of Pakistan. He is interested in the political thought of modern Islam as well as in the transformation of liberal categories and democratic practice in South Asia. Devji's broader concerns are with ethics and violence in a globalized world, particularly with the thought and practices of Mahatma Gandhi, who was among the earliest and perhaps most perceptive commentator on this predicament of our times.

Shivdasani Lectures

Conceptions of Liberation in Classical Indian Philosophy

Prof. Harunaga Isaacson

In this series of four classes Professor Isaacson will discuss the concept of liberation with particular reference to the section on *apavarga* (i.e. *moksa*, liberation) in the *Nyayamanjari*, the masterpiece of the ninth-century scholar and poet Bhatta Jayanta. In each class we will read a portion of the text and Professor Isaacson will comment upon it. Among other materials that may be brought into the discussion are the *Paramokṣanirasa-akarika* of Sadyojyotis and the commentary thereon by Bhaṭṭa Ramakaṇṭha.

Professor Isaacson is Professor of Classical Indology at the University of Hamburg. His doctoral work at the University of Leiden was in classical Vaisesika. He has been a Visiting Fellow at All Souls College, Wolfson College Oxford, and the International Institute for Buddhist Studies, Tokyo, and a Sabbatical Fellow of the American Philosophical Society. He is one of the world's foremost experts in tantric traditions in pre-13th

Appendix two: Lectures and seminars

century South Asia, especially Vajrayana Buddhism, and is an expert in classical Sanskrit poetry, classical Indian philosophy, Puranic literature, and manuscript studies.

Lecture 1: The Politics of Sexuality in Ancient India: The Indebtedness of the Kamasutra to

the Arthasastra

Prof. Wendy Doniger

The depth and extent of the influence of the textbook of politics (the *Arthasastra*) on the textbook of sexuality (the *Kamasutra*) is surprising, most evident in the high incidence of distrust, betrayal and force in sexual relationships. And the subsequent influence of the *Kamasutra* upon not only the erotic literary traditions of India but the eroticism of the *bhakti* tradition, particularly in Bengal, accounts in part for the darkness of that tradition, its emphasis on divine abandonment, betrayal, and even violence.

Lecture 2: The Magic Ring of Memory and Forgetfulness in South Asian Literature and

Folklore

Prof. Wendy Doniger

In South Asian stories of rings, men accuse women of unchastity only to have the ring prove that it was the man, in fact, who was unchaste; the ring also validates the woman's child as the true heir. These stories—several variants of the tale of Shakuntala, the story of Muladeva from the *Kathasaritsagara*, and a village myth about the god Shiva and his wife Parvati-- show us how widespread is the desire to believe that a little thing like a ring can bring justice to the asymmetrical power relations that have controlled female sexuality for most of human history, or the desire to project the responsibility for sexual rejection or betrayal onto an external force like a gold ring.

Shivdasani Seminar

How Widespread Was Skepticism in Ancient India? Did the Materialists Really Exist, or

Were They Just Straw Men?

Prof. Wendy Doniger

Though ancient *shastras* such as the *Arthasastra* and *Kamasutra* pay lip service to *dharma*, and criticize the so-called Materialists (Lokayatas or Carvakas), their central arguments show a total disregard for *dharma* and a striking congruence with Materialist assumptions. Are the Carvakas straw men that allow *shastras* (and other texts, such as the Jabali episode in Book 2 of the *Ramayana*) to express skeptical ideas without taking responsibility for them?

Wendy Doniger (M.A., Ph.D. (Harvard University) D.Phil. (Oxford University) is Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions in the Divinity School, University of Chicago; also in the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations, the Committee on Social Thought. Wendy Doniger's research and teaching focus on translating, interpreting, and comparing elements of Hinduism through modern contexts of gender, sexuality, and identity. Her courses in mythology address themes in cross-cultural expanses, such as death, dreams, evil, horses, sex, and women; her courses in Hinduism cover a broad spectrum that, in addition to mythology, considers literature, law, gender, and zoology. Among over thirty books published under the name Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty and Wendy Doniger are sixteen interpretative works, including Siva: The Erotic Ascetic; The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology; Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts; Dreams, Illusion, and Other Realities; Tales of Sex and Violence: Folklore, Sacrifice, and Danger in the Jaiminiya Brahmana; Other Peoples' Myths: The Cave of Echoes; Splitting the Difference: Gender and Myth in Ancient Greece and India; The Bedtrick: Tales of Sex and Masquerade; The Implied Spider: Politics and Theology in Myth; The Woman Who Pretended to Be Who She Was; and The Hindus: An Alternative History. Among her nine translations are three Penguin Classics—Hindu Myths: A Sourcebook, Translated from the Sanskrit; The Rig Veda: An Anthology, 108 Hymns Translated from the Sanskrit; and The Laws of Manu (with Brian K. Smith)—and a new translation of the Kamasutra

(with Sudhir Kakar). In progress are *Hinduism*, for the Norton Anthology of World Religions (2013); *Faking It: Narratives of Circular Jewelry and Clever Women*; and a novel, *Horses for Lovers, Dogs for Husbands*.

Seminars

The Nature of the Self in the Bhagavad Gita

Prof. Gavin Flood

Chapter 13 of the Bhagavad Gita is about the relationship between ‘the field’ and ‘the field knower’ which can be taken to represent the body and self or universe and God. Different commentators had different interpretations about this relationship. The two seminars will examine the commentaries of Saṅkara and Ramanuja, focusing in particular on the opening three verses.

Readings in the Netra Tantra

Prof. Gavin Flood

The *Netra-tantra* is an important text of medieval Saivism. We will read the Sanskrit text based on two manuscripts from Nepal in conjunction with the KSTS edition.

Hindu Theology: The Embodiment of God

Prof. Gavin Flood

The history of Hinduism is replete with the idea that the divine becomes embodied in forms in the world from people (such as the teyyams of Kerala), to plastic icons in temples, to the mythological incarnations. This seminar will examine this idea with reference to particular examples.

Suffering

Ramesh Pattni

This seminar will explore the idea of suffering in Hindu traditions and the proposed remedies for its termination.

Lectures and Seminars Hilary Term 2014

Hinduism 2: Hindu Traditions (Paper 21)

Prof. Gavin Flood

Beginning with the early medieval period, this paper traces the development of Hinduism in devotional (*bhakti*) and tantric traditions. The paper examines the development of Śaiva, Śākta, and Vaiṣṇava traditions along with ideas about liberation, ritual, asceticism, yoga and devotion. There will be some exploration of Hinduism and Modernity and there may also be reference to major schools of Hindu philosophy such as Vedānta.

Elementary Sanskrit

Prof. Gavin Flood

The course continues an introduction to Sanskrit for the preliminary paper in Elementary Sanskrit. The class is designed to introduce students of Theology and Religion to the basics of the Sanskrit grammar, syntax and vocabulary. By the end of the course students will have competency in translating simple Sanskrit and reading sections of the story of Nala. The course book is Maurer’s *The Sanskrit Language*.

Hinduism and Theory: Key Critical Themes

Dr Jessica Frazier

Drawing on Clifford Geertz’s understanding of religion as a ‘worldview’, the seminar series explore key themes in Hinduism and looks at the way in which crucial conceptual ‘translations’ are needed to understand Hindu culture properly from without, and asks whether it is possible to derive critical and hermeneutic ‘theory’ in religious studies from Indic material. One of the goals will be to challenge the hegemony of West-ern-derived ‘theories’ of religion, culture, and human nature.

An Introduction to Vedantic Hermeneutics: Vedānta Deśika's commentary on the Īśā

Upaniṣad

Dr Rembert Lutjeharms

Hindu theology, and particularly Vedānta, is grounded in the reading of sacred texts and has been largely developed in commentaries on those texts. This Sanskrit reading class will explore the way Vaiṣṇava Vedānta develops its theology through a careful reading of the Upaniṣads. We will read the commentary on the Īśā Upaniṣad by Vedānta Deśika (1269–1370), the most prominent Viśiṣṭādvaita theologian after Rāmānuja, paying particular attention to the way he formulates his theology and develops his hermeneutics. This reading class aims to introduce students with an intermediate knowledge of Sanskrit to the style and reasoning of Sanskrit commentaries as well as the fundamentals of Vaiṣṇava Vedānta.

Majewski Lecture: Pāṇini's grammar and the destiny of Sanskrit around the beginning of the Common Era

Dr Vincenzo Vegiani

Grammar (*vyākaraṇa*) has been generally considered to be at the very core of Brahmanical culture, to which it provided a template for systematic thought and intellectual discourse long before any other system of knowledge. And there is consensus about the fact that grammar, and especially Pāṇini's grammar, helped legitimising the use of Sanskrit and making it the linguistic medium that dominated the literary culture of pre-modern South Asia for more than two millennia. However, until now this role has been mainly described in rather vague terms as related to the prestige attached to Sanskrit as the language of the Vedas and the priestly class. In light of the content and structure of Pāṇini's grammar, on the one hand, and of the Buddhists' early adoption of Sanskrit (followed, some time later, by the Jains), this explanation appears overly simplistic. I will look at the early history of the Pāṇinian tradition and suggest that, together with a number of other complex factors, it played a much more fundamental role in shaping the destiny of Sanskrit in South Asian history than has been recognised until now.

Vincenzo Vergiani is lecturer in Sanskrit at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge. His main areas of research are the Sanskrit grammatical tradition and the history of linguistic ideas in ancient South Asia. He is the director of the project "The intellectual and religious traditions of South Asia as seen through the Sanskrit manuscript collections of the University Library, Cambridge" (<http://sanskrit.lib.cam.ac.uk/>), funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council. He has co-edited *Studies in the Kāśikāvṛtti. The section on pratyāhāras. Critical edition, translation and other contributions* (2009), and *Bilingual Discourse and Cross-Cultural Fertilisation: Sanskrit and Tamil in Medieval India* (2013).

Shivdasani Seminar: Communalism, Nationalism and the Limits of Secularism in India

Professor Sushil Mittal

This is an analysis of the influence that the Indian Constitution of 1950 has had on the sociopolitical situation in the Indian Republic. The Reason that informs the spirit of the Constitution is an extension of the rationality that the Enlightenment scientists and philosophers considered to be infallible. This view of Reason is at variance with the Vedic-Samkhyan notion of rationality. Similarly, the law as enshrined in the Constitution preserves the system imposed by British alien rule: it is not in harmony with the spirit of classical indigenous jurisprudence. The new legal vision consequently becomes a handicap in the hands of the ruling establishment whenever a religious or linguistic rift threatens the stability of the body politic. The need to integrate the vital elements of Hindu culture, in particular those elements that foster social harmony and peace, into the law and political management of the Republic becomes imperative.

Shivdasani Seminar: Comparative Religion: Its Failures and Its Challenges

Professor Sushil Mittal

This is an analysis of the success and limitations of comparative religion. The presentation will propose the need for new academic categories, and will discuss the relevance of the Gandhian experience to the study of religions.

Shivdasani Lecture: Hinduism and Peacebuilding

Professor Sushil Mittal

This presentation will identify some of the key positions on peace issues within the Hindu traditions, and how have textual sources and historical experiences shaped these positions.

Shivdasani Lecture: Gandhian Technique for Conflict Resolution: Satyagraha

Professor Sushil Mittal

The presentation will provide an understanding of the principles of Satyagraha, its philosophical base, and the nature and practice of Satyagraha.

Professor Sushil Mittal is a fellow philosophical traveler with Mahatma Gandhi, Sushil Mittal is (full) Professor of Religion in the Department of Philosophy and Religion and Founding Director of the Mahatma Gandhi Center for Global Nonviolence at James Madison University, a post he held for five years (2005–2010). Dr. Mittal joined JMU in Fall 2004.

He earned his B.A. from McGill University in Montreal, M.A. from Carleton University in Ottawa, and Ph.D. from University of Montreal. He has served on the faculties of the University of Florida in Gainesville and Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois.

His discipline by training is cultural anthropology, but he is located in a department of religion where he teaches Hinduism and Gandhian thought. He has conducted archival and field research in Canada, India, South Africa, and the United States at intervals during the last two decades. The recipient of numerous grants and fellowships, his book publications include *Development and Change in India* (1993), *Surprising Bedfellows: Hindus and Muslims in Medieval and Early Modern India* (2003), *The Hindu World* (2004), *Religions of South Asia: An Introduction* (2006), and *Studying Hinduism: Key Concepts and Methods* (2008).

His current work-in-progress includes *The Living Hindu World*, *Encyclopedia of Hindu Studies*, and *The Gandhi Reader*.

He is the (Founding) Editor of the *International Journal of Hindu Studies* (1997-) and the *International Journal of Gandhi Studies* (2012-).

Professor Mittal was born in Canada (his “janma-bhumi”) but has now dedicated himself to working in the United States (his “karma-bhumi”) and he looks to India as the main source of his spiritual inspiration (his “dharma-bhumi”).

Readings in the Netra Tantra

Prof. Gavin Flood

The *Netra Tantra* is an important early medieval Śaiva text. We will read and discuss sections of the text based on the two manuscripts in the NGMPP Library and compare these with the published KSTS edition. Apart from reading the text we will discuss its meaning.

Readings in Phenomenology and Religion

Prof. Gavin Flood

Phenomenology is one of the most important developments in philosophy in the twentieth century that has had a deep impact on Theology and Religious Studies. This reading group seeks to engage with developments in Phenomenology as they pertain to theology and religion. It is a continuation of the reading project begun several years ago. The overall concern is a reconceptualisation of phenomenology in the wake of both deconstruction and cognitivism. This reconceptualisation has been inspired partly by the publication of the English translation of Heidegger’s *Phenomenology of the Religious Life* a few years ago, which reflected the philosopher’s earlier views. A second inspiration is the imperative for the academy to engage with other civilizations and the apparent proximity of some Indian philosophical thinking to Phenomenology. The overall theme of this reading group will be human practices. The particular texts that we read are fluid but we will begin with Peter Sloterdijk’s *Your Must Change Your Life (Du musst dein Leben ändern)* (2009).

Graduate Seminars

Convenors: Tristan Elby and Lucian Wong

Lectures and Seminars Trinity Term 2014

Introduction to Sanskrit

Gavin Flood

An Introduction to Vedantic Hermeneutics: Jayatīrtha's Commentary on the Īśā Upaniṣad

Rembert Lutjeharms

Hindu theology, and particularly Vedānta, is grounded in the reading of sacred texts and has been largely developed in commentaries on those texts. This Sanskrit reading class will explore the way Vaiṣṇava Vedānta develops its theology through a careful reading of the Upaniṣads. This term, we will read the commentaries on the Īśā Upaniṣad by Jayatīrtha, an important Dvaita theologian, paying particular attention to the way he builds on the commentary of his predecessor Madhva, and how he develops his theology. This reading class aims to introduce students with an intermediate knowledge of Sanskrit to the style and reasoning of Sanskrit commentaries as well as the fundamentals of Vaiṣṇava Vedānta.

Gadamer and Religion

Dr Jessica Frazier

Hans-Georg Gadamer: Understanding, Spirit, and Global Horizons

Gadamer's 'Philosophical Hermeneutics' transformed the way we think about belief and truth, bias and conflict. Gadamer argued that understanding any text, person, or culture involves a process of self-transformation that is the true goal of all experience, conversation and research. Gadamer's work redefines key terms, reclaiming 'bias' as the basis for expanding our world-view; 'understanding' as our own particular mode of human flourishing; and 'spirit', or 'living' religion as ideas meant to revive a disaffected modern world.

Week 1: Gadamer's Biography: Beyond Theism and Atheism

Gadamer appears to be an unusually secular figure among the phenomenologists of his day; unlike those who began as theologians, his study of classical culture taught him to study religion dispassionately, while embracing religious arts as a channel for his own concerns. Influenced by "Swabian piety", Bultmann's 'demythologisation', the spirituality and humanism of the classical world, 'free-thinkers' such as Goethe, Rilke, and Stefan George, and creative re-thinkers of the Christian tradition such as Scheler and Heidegger, Gadamer affirmed both the cultural contingency of faith, and its confessional power.

Week 2: Gadamer's Hermeneutics: Bias, Understanding, and Expanding Horizons

Gadamer saw culture, religion, and art as 'living texts' that integrate our life experience into a meaningful worldview that allows us to think, act, and create. But no worldview is ever static or finished; in 'understanding' we use bias (that of ourselves and others) as the raw material from which a new worldview is created. In this respect Gadamer shares much with Aristotelian and later Vitalist thinkers. But Gadamer also affirms that texts can act poetically as 'angels', as he puts it in his studies of Rilke and Paul Celan, gesturing toward the transcendence of that which cannot be encompassed in human thought.

Week 3: Gadamer's Metaphysics: Vitalism, Spirit, and Immanence

Amid theologies of Being and secular philosophies, Gadamer explored a middle ground of non-theistic perspectives, reclaiming a philosophy of immanent 'spirit'. In his work on Plato and Hegel, he was often in dialogue with the classical Greek and later German traditions of 'pantheist' or 'immanentist' thought found in Spinoza, Lessing, Schleiermacher, Dilthey, and others. In many respects, Gadamer appears as one of the twentieth century's first philosophers of immanence.

Week 4: Gadamer's Globalism: Culture, Difference and Pluralism

In the later years of his career, at a retreat exploring religion on the Island of Capri with Derrida and other post-Heideggerian thinkers, Gadamer who insisted that attention to non-Western religions was essential for any steps forward. He encouraged cross-cultural scholars to see themselves as creatively opening up ever-expanding horizons of understanding within their own tradition, and gradually building a new global horizon. Seen in this light, the rich cultural plurality of modern globalism affords us the opportunity to continue a history-long process of growth.

Krishna's Place in an Overview Of Hindu Eroticism (śṛṅgārātā)

Dr. David Smith

What is the role of eroticism in Hinduism? In so far as Krishna is erotic, how does he compare with other Hindu deities who have erotic aspects? My talk, based on chapters of my book in preparation on Hindu Eroticism, will address these questions, with reference to pre-modern sculpture, painting, and poetry.

Dr David Smith taught Hinduism, Sanskrit, and South Asian art at Lancaster University for many years. His most recent books are *Hinduism and Modernity* (Blackwell 2003), and two editions and translations of Sanskrit poetry for the Clay Sanskrit Library (*Kumārasambhava* 2005 and *Kādambarī* 2009).

Graduate Seminars in Indic Religions

Convenors: Tristan Elby and Lucian Wong

Majewski Lecture: Renunciation and service: the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, the

Vivekananda Kendra, and Swami Vivekananda's legacy

Professor Gwilym Begerlegge, Religious Studies, Open University

Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) has been an influential but contentious figure in the history of recent Hindu tradition. From the vantage point provided by the celebration of Vivekananda's 150th Birth Anniversary during 2013/14, this lecture will explore aspects of Vivekananda's legacy with particular reference to the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, the movement he founded, and the Vivekananda Kendra, which came into existence in 1972. Greatly influenced by both the Ramakrishna Math and Mission and the RSS, the Kendra promotes its own brand of Hindutva ideology in Vivekananda's name. Through an examination of these two movements, the lecture will illustrate the diffuse and durable nature of Vivekananda's influence, and in the process explain why Vivekananda has been judged by some to have been a contradictory and controversial figure.

Professor Gwilym Beckerlegge's research has centred on the legacy of Swami Vivekananda and the practice of seva within the Ramakrishna Math and Mission and other contemporary Hindu movements, in particular the Vivekananda Kendra. His most recent publications include the entries on the Ramakrishna Math and Mission and the Vivekananda Kendra in the Brill Encyclopaedia of Hinduism (2013), 'Legacy of Service' Frontline (The Hindu Newspaper Group, Chennai) 30/2: 25-31, 2013, 'Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) 150 years on: critical studies of an influential Hindu guru' in Religion Compass, Vol.7, No.10, 2013, pp.444-453, and 'Eknath Ranade, gurus and jīvanvratīs (life-workers): Vivekananda Kendra's promotion of the 'Yoga Way of Life'' in M.Singleton and E.Goldberg (eds.) Gurus of Modern Yoga (2014).

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<http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/religious-studies/beckerlegge.shtml>

Negotiating the Scriptural Boundary in Early Modern South Asia: Appayya Dīkṣita and Jīva

Gosvāmī on Madhva's Untraceable Citations

Kiyokazu Okita

In an important paper published in 2012, Elisa Freschi effectively establishes the significance of what we might call 'Quotation Studies', an area of study which has been underexplored. Among many benefits such a study can yield, Freschi points out that the study of quotation can reveal the way in which an author understood authority in his / her tradition. In this context Freschi mentions an exciting case of Madhva's untraceable citations, which Madhva uses to validate his own view.

As Freschi points out, the topic of Madhva's quotes is a controversial one because many of the passages and the texts quoted by Madhva are found only in his works. For example, he would cite a passage and attributes it to certain text such as the Caturvedaśikhā, which no one ever heard of. Or after citing a verse, he would say *iti varāhe* but we do not find such a verse in the editions of the Purāṇa currently available. Or he would simply write *iti ca*, without telling us where his citation is coming from.

In the contemporary Indological field the topic of Madhva's untraceable quotes has been systematically and extensively explored by Roque Mesquita, who argues that Madhva's untraceable quotes are for the most

Appendix two: Lectures and seminars

part not actual quotes but his own creation. This claim has received considerable criticism from the scholars who belong to the Mādhva tradition. Therefore, in this presentation I shall first briefly describe the history and the nature of the modern day controversy concerning Madhva's quotes. Then I briefly explore the possible implications of this controversy in relation to the Purāṇic study and the study of Vedānta as Hindu Theology. The main part of this presentation however consists of an exploration of the writings of two important Hindu Theologians in the sixteenth century namely Appayya Dīkṣita and Jīva Gosvāmī, who held opposing views on Madhva's quotes. While Appayya rejects Madhva's untraceable quotes to refute the latter's Dvaita position, Jīva refers to the same quotes to validate his own Gauḍīya viewpoint. By examining these two authors, I hope to show the complexity involved in this topic, which in my view has not been fully addressed in Mesquita's works.

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