

# The Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies Trustees Report 2011-12



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## **Introduction**

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This report is a reflection of the life of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies.

Leafing through, it can be quite surprising just how much can be achieved by a few good people – research projects with global reach, brilliant scholars from around the world teaching and learning, publishing projects, a vibrant lecture programme, scholarships, a brilliant library, meaningful interactions with the wider community, and a constant supply of material for media, government, and business.

Not only is the quantity of work impressive; the quality is astonishing. How does a small centre like this evolve into a unique national institution, an integrated part of one of the world's oldest and finest universities, a global leader in its field? In a word, ethos.

The ethos of the OCHS has been carefully nurtured since its foundation. A characteristic spirit of academic integrity and original thought combined with hard work has delivered us a centre that we can all be proud of and that we can all make use of. This admirable spirit is held together by a generosity of intent in which every person that interacts with the Centre is important and of value.

The Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies invites you to become involved. The few good people at the Centre are supported by hundreds of good people – a growing community of friends and supporters all of whom enrich the life of the OCHS and are themselves enriched.

Best wishes,  
Lord Navnit Dholakia, OBE DL  
Chairman, OCHS Board of Governors

## **Academic report**

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The OCHS continues to develop its teaching programmes, offering core teaching to the Theology Faculty and supervising postgraduate students in Theology and Oriental Studies. There is an ongoing refinement and development of our research programmes leading to publication and conferences. The OCHS's publishing programme is expanding with a number of books and articles by members of staff and through the Routledge–OCHS Hindu Studies book series and the Journal of Hindu Studies. There is also a vibrant Continuing Education Department teaching online and in classrooms.

## **Teaching**

The OCHS offers the teaching of Hinduism 1 and 2 for track three of the Honours School in Theology. The OCHS also offered Sanskrit Prelims attracting a lively group of students as did the two terms of spoken Sanskrit with Prof. Narasimhachary.

A growing cohort of students was tutored by Professor Gavin Flood, Dr Jessica Frazier, Dr Rembert Lutjeharms, Professor Narasimhachary, Professor Bilimoria, and Professor Patil. It is worth noting that the expansion in student numbers this year includes a considerable growth in the number of UK youths from a Hindu background, a very hopeful indication of the future of the Hindu Studies on its home ground.

The Continuing Education programmes have continued with Dr Nick Sutton, Dr Rembert Lutjeharms, and Anuradha Dooney presenting distance-learning courses and external lectures. These have continued to be popular.

### **Lectures and Seminars**

A highlight of the year was the OCHS Conference on the Sakta Traditions which attracted over fifty participants and a dozen specialist scholars. The conference was held in collaboration with the section for the Study of Religion, Aarhus University and the project leaders were Professor Gavin Flood and OCHS alumnus, Bjarne Wernicke Olesen (Aarhus University). The conference presented an interdisciplinary survey of Sakta history, practice, and doctrine in its diversity and conveyed something of the distinctive Sakta world-view. Articles from the Conference are to be published as a book.

Our three Shivdasani Fellows, Professors Purushottama Bilimoria, M. Narasimhachary, and Parimal Patil delivered a full schedule of lectures, further enhancing the Centre's output. These are listed in Appendix Two.

Seminar series included 'Transforming Traditions', a series of three lectures by Dr Jessica Frazier, Richard Williams, and Professor Sanjukta Gupta. Graduate seminars included OCHS graduate David Soud on Yeats and the Yoga-sutra; Brainerd Prince on Aurobindo; and Brian Dunn on Bishop Appasamy.

Other lectures included Ferdinando Sardella on modern Gaudiya Vaisnavism; Dr Ulrike Roesler on Gods in Buddhist literature; James Mallinson on Vaishnava origins of yoga; and a fascinating late addition was Anne-Marie Gaston's lively exposition on Krishna in Dance and painting.

### **Named Lectures**

Two Majewski Lectures were held for the academic year. In Michaelmas, Prof. John Brockington spoke on changes in japa, and in Hilary, Professor Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad spoke on comparative theology. This year's Wahlstrom Lecture was 'The Concept of Laksmi in Srivaisnavism' by Prof. M. Narasimhachary.

### **Research**

The OCHS research programme supports well-defined research in all areas in the study of Hindu culture. It encourages collaborative and individual scholarship that leads to advances in the understanding of cultures associated with Hinduism. It further aims to encourage a fruitful interaction with the public from grass-roots to policy-making and media sectors, with the goal of enhancing the culture of knowledge on the broadest scale.

Thematically, OCHS research falls under four key themes: Hinduism and Modernity, Classical Hinduism, Religious Dialogue and Interface, and Historical Perspectives on Hindu Cultures.

A particularly encouraging facet of our research programmes is the extent to which they are driven by alumni including Dr Ferdinando Sardella, Bjarne Wernicke Olesen, Dr Rembert Lutjeharms, Dr Jessica Frazier, Dr Kiyokazu Okita, Dr Kenneth Valpey, and Dr Ravi Gupta. This involvement of OCHS alumni is a key goal of the Centre and one that we are pleased to say is working very well.

#### **AHRC grant**

Gavin Flood was awarded an AHRC Fellowship for the Hilary and Trinity Terms 2012 to complete a book, *Religion and the Human Person: Towards a Comparative History of Inwardness*. The book is a comparison of ideas about the human person in Christianity and Hinduism, taking texts from the medieval period as exemplars and developing a thesis about religious subjectivity. The book argues that the pre-modern understanding of subjectivity is distinct from a modern sense of inwardness and might be characterised as a collective subjectivity or even as a cosmological psychology. In spite of wide theological divergence, Hindu and Christian traditions of the same period share significant assumptions about the self, cosmos, and religious practice.

#### **Sakta Traditions: History, Doctrine, and Practice**

This project examines what might be called Śākta traditions: those traditions, tantric and non-tantric, that are focused on a Goddess (Devī) or on a God's feminine power (Śakti). It inquires into the history, doctrine and practices of 'Śāktism', exploring local and pan-South Asian traditions, esoteric practices and exoteric temple cults, and developments in contemporary Śākta worship.

Outputs included an international conference in 2011 and a book publication is in progress.

#### **Bhagavata Purana Research Project**

The Bhagavata Purana is one of the most highly regarded and variegated of Hindu sacred texts, notable for its coherent narrative structure, high poetic quality, philosophical sophistication, and extensive development of bhakti theology.

This project aims to produce both a balanced translation of the Purana, and a volume of critical essays on it.

#### **Bengali Vaishnavism in the Modern Period**

This project undertakes the collection, translation and investigation of material dealing with the modern development of Caitanya Vaisnavism in Bengal from the late 18th century to the present. It aims at facilitating research in a number of areas such as theology, sociology, history of ideas, philosophy, gender studies, and anthropology.

Outputs include a proposed conference in 2013 and a book series is currently being proposed to an American publisher.

### **Thinking Inside the Box: Categories in Indian Philosophy**

This project explores the use of categories as a way of doing philosophy in Indian intellectual culture. Indian categorical systems include linguistic categories, aesthetic and emotional categories, universals, logical, metaphysical, ontological, and other kinds of categories. The goal of this project is to shed a clear light on categorisation as a mode of reasoning in the Indian philosophical traditions, illuminating its relation to Western methods, and its unique contribution to philosophy across the globe.

Outputs included an international conference in 2009 and a book publication is in progress.

### **Redefining Religion**

The OCHS 'Redefining Religion' project aims to refine current models of religion and the religious subject, and of the notions of religious meaning and experience which it entails, along with the hermeneutic methodologies on which it relies. It will do so through research, publication, and interdisciplinary and comparative collaboration, the proceedings of which will be disseminated to the academic community through web and print access.

Outputs include the book, *The Importance of Religion*, by Professor Gavin Flood.

### **Global Hinduism: The Living Tradition**

This project explores the way Hinduism responds to new situations in global contexts around the world. Interviews in England, Trinidad, Mauritius, Bali, and Thailand reveal ways in which Hinduism is still alive and growing in response to new situations. From Hindu rituals that draw on the vibrant energies of the Caribbean landscape, to conceptions of the divine adapted to the inter-faith discussions of British society, to Hinduism for Thai Buddhists who believe in the deities even though they do not believe in Hinduism – in all of these contexts we see Hindu religious ideas growing through the grassroots theology of everyday experience.

Outputs for this project are a body of qualitative primary interviews for each culture, exploring the rationale behind religious ideas and developments and a monograph analysing, explaining, and further exploring the ways in which Hindu theology in each of these diaspora contexts has adapted creatively to a new situation.

### **Shivdasani Fellowship**

During this academic year we have continued to support scholars through the Shivdasani Fellowships. We were pleased to welcome Professors Purushottama Bilimoria (Deakin University, Australia), M. Narasimhachary (University of Madras), and Parimal Patil (Harvard University).

The Shivdasani Fellowships continue to add value to the Centre and to Hindu Studies globally as it brings scholars in contact with our students and fellows as well as the wealth of resources Oxford offers. It is a key priority of the OCHS to expand this programme.

## **Publishing**

The Continuum Companion to Hindu Studies, a prestigious and comprehensive reference guide to Hindu Studies was edited by our own Dr Jessica Frazier with a foreword by Gavin Flood. Professor Flood also published one of the most significant books to come out of the OCHS to date, *The Importance of Religion: Meaning and Action in our Strange World*, with Wiley Blackwell.

Forthcoming titles include *Religion and Experience*, by Dr Frazier, and *Religion and the Human Person: Towards a Comparative History of Inwardness* by Professor Flood.

OCHS fellows, Dr Kenneth Valpey and Dr Rembert Lutjeharms both contributed chapters to *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, a thematic encyclopaedia containing the latest research on all aspects of Hindu tradition.

Meanwhile, OCHS alumnus, Dr Jonathan Edelmann published *Hindu Theology and Biology: The Bhagavata Purana and Contemporary Theory*, with OUP. Another OCHS alumnus, Dr Ithamar Theodor, was awarded by the American Academic Libraries Association for his *Exploring the Bhagavad gita: Philosophy, Structure and Meaning*.

### **The Journal of Hindu Studies**

The Journal of Hindu Studies is in its fifth year, and has succeeded in publishing issues by respected scholars reflecting a range of topics and disciplines. This year three issues were published: 'Tantra'; 'Ritual and practice'; and one to mark Rabindranatha Tagore's sesquicentenary. See Appendix Three for a full listing of articles.

### **The Routledge Hindu Studies Series**

The Routledge Hindu Studies Series continues to grow with nineteen titles. See Appendix Four for a full list of publications.

## **Summary**

The OCHS has had a productive year with a significant expansion of the student body, the development of research projects, and an increase in publications from fellows of the centre. We have supplied the teaching of Hinduism and Prelims Sanskrit to the Theology Faculty and have presented a number of non-assessed seminar series such as reading Sanskrit commentaries and readings in Phenomenology. The research projects that we have initiated continue to develop and the conferences associated with them have all been highly successful events. As we look to the future we aim to develop along the same successful track, increase our research outputs, increase the range of teaching we offer, and increase our student numbers.

## Fellows and students

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### Shivdasani Visiting Fellowship

#### **Michaelmas term 2011: Professor Purushottama Bilimoria**

Purushottama Bilimoria, is Professor of Philosophy and Comparative Studies at Deakin University in Australia and Senior Research Fellow, University of Melbourne. Visiting Professor and Lecturer at University of California, Berkeley and Dominican University, San Anselmo. His areas of specialist research and publications cover classical Indian philosophy and comparative ethics; Continental thought; cross-cultural philosophy of religion, diaspora studies; bioethics, and personal law in India. He is an Editor-in-Chief of *Sophia*, *Journal of Philosophy of Religion*, Springer. He also edits a book series with Springer on *Sophia: cross-cultural studies in Culture and Traditions*.

Professor Bilimoria is a highly engaging and cheerful individual and it was inspiring to see the amount of ground he covered in six short weeks. He tutored eleven students on a wide range of topics and took full advantage of the facilities Oxford offers. While at the OCHS he authored several papers and prepared a syllabus on 'Gandhi and the Civil Rights Movement in America 1893-1993' for a course he will be teaching in University of California-Berkeley. Prof. Bilimoria teaches and publishes on Hindu religious philosophies. He also works on political philosophy, pertaining to ethics of rights, theories of justice, capabilities, education and gender issues in third world, particularly South Asian, contexts.

On his stay at Oxford, Professor Bilimoria reports: 'It was truly like being in a family, and everyone was always so kind, courteous, caring, and going out of their way to do things for a scholar-academic often somewhat new to the environment, and caught up in his own work, and head. I learnt so much, and was able to share so much. The handful of students I tutored and mentored were simply great; I have kept in touch with most. A wonderful place to sit, read, think, and write into the wee-hours of the night; and come downstairs to streets to take in a few breaths of the world around, and gaze at the towering spires of the colleges.'

#### **Hilary-Trinity terms 2012: Professor M. Narasimhachary**

For Hilary and Trinity terms we were honoured to host Professor Narasimhachary. This is Professor Narasimhachary's second stay at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies.

Prof. Narasimhachary is a world-class Sanskritist and an excellent teacher. 'Studying Sanskrit texts under the supervision of Professor Narasimhachary has provided me with the kind of insight into the language that can only be gained from one profoundly rooted in the Sanskrit tradition,' says student Lucien Wong. 'The phenomenal breadth of his expertise has allowed me to discover subtle and fertile connections between various texts and ideas that would no doubt have been overlooked without his guidance.'

Professor Narasimhachary is the Founder Professor and Head (Retired), Department of Vaishnavism, University of Madras, India. His specialist



subjects include the Pre-Ramanuja Religion and Philosophy, Pancharatra Agama Literature, Telugu and Sanskrit Literature and popularisation of Sanskrit as a spoken tongue. Prof. Narasimhachary received the Certificate of Honour for Proficiency in Sanskrit from the President of India for the year 2004.

The spoken Sanskrit classes given by Prof. Narasimhachary are an excellent complement to the University's offerings. 'I find his more traditional, cultural approach to the language to be invaluable and very necessary in order to truly appreciate the language,' adds another of his students, Bhavishna Modi, 'The Professor impresses us all with his recitations of verses, no matter what the topic, and despite all his students being at different levels we are all able to benefit from the lessons he teaches. He approaches the Ramayana with such enthusiasm that he leaves us inspired to explore beyond the material discussed in class, and it is exciting to learn the mantras he so memorably teaches! The Centre has provided a wonderful opportunity to the students at the University.'

While at the OCHS he also lectured on Post-Ramanuja Developments in Shri Vaishnavism, Readings in Ramanuja's Sribhashya, and Readings in Kavya.

#### **Trinity term 2012: Professor Parimal Patil**

Parimal G. Patil is Professor of Religion and Indian Philosophy at Harvard University, where he is Chair of the Department of South Asian Studies. His primary academic interests are in Sanskrit philosophy and the intellectual history of religion in India. In his first two books, *Against a Hindu God* and *Buddhist Philosophy of Religion in India*, he focused on interreligious debates between Buddhists and non-Buddhist philosophers in the final phase of Buddhism in India. Currently, he is working on early modern Sanskrit philosophy, especially the work of the New Epistemologists.

For professional reasons his stay in Oxford was shortened, however he managed a busy schedule of lectures, tutorials, and meetings with old colleagues including Dr Jim Benson, an early mentor who started Professor Patil on his journey into Sanskrit. We hope to be able to host Professor Patil again for a full term.

#### **OCHS Visiting Fellow: Andrea Acri**

We were also pleased to host Andrea Acri, a scholar of Shaivism in the Indian Subcontinent and the Indonesian Archipelago.

Andrea Acri is from Parma, Italy. He holds a Laurea degree in Oriental Languages and Cultures (Sanskrit) from the University of Rome 'Sapienza', and an MA degree in Southeast Asian Languages and Literatures (Old Javanese) from Leiden University (the Netherlands). Before receiving his Ph.D. from the same University in early 2011, he was awarded a J. Gonda Fellowship in Indology at the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS, Leiden). He was then granted an Australia Endeavour Award for Postdoctoral Research and a Visiting Fellowship at the School of Culture, History, and

Language of the College for Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University (Canberra).

His other research interests are Hinduism and Indian philosophies, Sanskrit and Old Javanese languages and literatures, and aspects of the intellectual history of the Indic world. He is the author of *Dharma Pātañjala; A Śaiva Scripture from Ancient Java; Studied in the Light of Related Old Javanese and Sanskrit Texts*, and co-editor of *From Lañkā Eastwards: The Rāmāyaṇa in the Literature and Visual Arts of Indonesia* (KITLV Press, 2011).

‘My one-term stay at the OCHS as a visiting fellow was enriching,’ he says. ‘Of the many research centres and academic institutions I have visited worldwide, the OCHS is the most unique, being characterised by an approach to Hindu studies that beautifully espouses the rigorous academic standards and refined intellectual environment of Oxford to the human warmth and pluralistic attitude of India. I was struck by its atmosphere of genuine friendliness and deep respect for the Hindu culture – an aspect that one cannot always take for granted in today’s academic world. Run by devoted staff members and populated on most days by a host of Oxford undergraduate and graduate students, regular or occasional visitors, and other academics, the Centre was for me much more than a vibrant scholarly hub – it provided me with a truly “home away from home” experience.’

## **New students**

### **Rebecca Aier**

Magdalen College

Rebecca is studying for a BA in International Relations at Stanford University. She is studying Philosophy of Eastern Religions while at Oxford.

### **Nirav Yogesh Piyush Amin**

Kellogg College

Psychiatric Anthropology - Harvard Medical School (2006)

MBBS - Bart’s and the London School of Medicine, Queen Mary’s University of London (2008 - 2013)

Nirav is currently taking one year out of his MBBS degree to pursue an MSc in Social Anthropology. His areas of interest are Anthropology of Religion, Hinduism in the Modern Era, and Diaspora studies.

### **Nayan Ashwin Bedia**

Wolfson College

BA in History - Brunel University (2006)

MA in Religion - SOAS (2008)

MA in History - SOAS (2011)

Nayan is pursuing a D. Phil. in Oriental Studies. His area of academic interest is Hindi literature with a focus on the ideas and representation of auxiliary Gods, Krsna and Siva in the works of Rama-Bhakta Tulsidas.

**Abbie Cavanagh**

Regent's Park College

Abbie is studying for a BA in Theology. Part of her studies involve Hinduism.

**Massimo Ce**

Magdalen College

Massimo is studying for a BA in Classics with a focus on classical languages, literature and philosophy.

**Tiffany Donohue**

Blackfriars Hall

Tiffany is studying History, Theology and Philosophy at Oxford.

**Mark Hannay**

St Anne's College

Mark is studying for a BA in Classics and Oriental Studies. He is concentrating on the study of the Greek epics and Sanskrit.

**Devika Jina**

Oriel College

BA in Philosophy - Heythrop College, University of London (2011)

Devika is pursuing an MSt in the Study of Religion. Her area of academic concentration is Hinduism and Christianity.

**Casey Alexandra Kemp**

Wolfson College

BA in Religious Studies - University of Canterbury, NZ (2007)

M.Phil in Religious Studies - University of Oxford (2009)

Casey is pursuing a D.Phil. in Buddhist studies. Her areas of academic concentration include Tantra, and Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy.

**Emily Kilburn**

University College

MSc RS in Structuralism - Edinburgh University (2009)

MA RS in Renunciation - Edinburgh University (2010)

Emily is pursuing a DPhil in theology. Her research areas include Aurobindo, Auroville, Utopian theory, Samkhya, structuralism, semiotics and Sanskrit

**Anirudh Mathur**

Balliol College

Anirudh is studying for a BA in Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE).

**Avni Mehta**

St. Cross College

BA in Study of Religion (Eastern and Western Philosophy, Hinduism and gender) - SOAS (2011)

Avni is pursuing an MPhil in Modern South Asian studies concentrating on Sanskrit and Hinduism identity and gender.

**Verena Hanna Meyer**

Oriel College

MA in Philosophy - Universitat Passau (2011)

Verena is currently pursuing an M St in the Study of Religion focusing on Hinduism and Buddhism.

**Bhavnisha Modi**

St Anne's College

Bhavnisha is studying for a BA in the classics and Sanskrit

**Ionut Moise**

Wolfson College

BA in Theology - University of Bucharest (2006)

MRes in 'Sciences des Religions' - Université de Strasbourg (2008)

MA in Theology - The Orthodox Institute for Christian Studies, Cambridge (2010)

Ionut is pursuing an MSt in the Study of Religion, focusing on Hinduism, Indian Christianity and Vedic Cosmology. His thesis title is 'Self in Early Vaiseshika'.

Awards

Spalding Trust (2010)

Teape Trust (2011)

**Amy Norman**

Wolfson College

MA (Honours) in Religious Studies - University of Aberdeen (2011)

Amy is currently pursuing an MPhil in Modern South Asian Studies. Her areas of academic concentration include Sanskrit, and Buddhism and gender identity.

**Kyle Patrick O'Brien**

Blackfriars Hall

BA in Politics- University of San Francisco (2009-2013)

While at Oxford Kyle will be concentrating on Theology, Philosophy and English Literature

**Sheena Rastogi**

Trinity College

Sheena is pursuing a BSc in Biology of Medicine from the College of New Jersey. She is studying Endocrinology and Philosophy of Hinduism at Oxford.

**Noelle Richardson**

Wolfson College

BA in Politics and International Relations - Royal Holloway (2010)

Noelle is pursuing an MPhil in Modern South Asian Studies. Her areas of academic concentration in Oxford are intellectual history of India, Hindu Philosophy and the Indian caste system.

**John Schiepers**

Balliol College

BA in Classics - Trinity College, Dublin (2010)

John is pursuing a BA in Sanskrit.

**Rohana Seneviratne**

Pembroke College

BA in Sanskrit - University of Peradeniya (2005)

MPhil in Philosophy of Language - University of Liverpool (2009)

Rohana is studying for a DPhil in Sanskrit. His major research interests include Philosophy of Language, Vedic and Classical Sanskrit Grammar and Semantics.

**Jaideep Shah**

Wolfson College

BSc in Government and Economics - LSE

MA in Postcolonial Studies - University College of London

Jaideep is pursuing an MPhil in Classical Indian Religions with a focus on Indian and Western philosophy.

**Vivek Anand Sharma**

Mansfield College

Vivek is studying for a BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE). His areas of academic concentration are Knowledge and Reality and Philosophy of the Mind.

**Divya Sharma**

Christ Church College

Divya is pursuing her BSc and MD in an accelerated program at The College of New Jersey and New Jersey Medical School.

She is studying Medical Sciences, Hindu Philosophy of Human Science, and Public Health at Oxford.

**Sahasrangshu Sinha**

St. Cross College

B.Tech in IT and Computer Engineering - University of Kalyani (2004)

Sahasrangshu is studying for an MBA in finance and Entrepreneurship. He is interested in the study of the History of Hinduism.

**Jay Swain**

Exeter College

Jay is studying for a bachelor's degree in law.

**Sophie Von Der Tann**

St Peter's College

Sophie is studying for a BA in Theology and Oriental studies.

**Tariq Waris**

St. Stephen's House

BA Honours in Theology (History of Christianity in the Indian sub-continent) - London School of Theology (2010)

Tariq is studying for an MSt in the Study of Religion with a focus on Christian - Muslim studies in South Asia.

**Cyril Wohrer**

Wolfson College

BA in Religious Studies (South Asian studies) - University of California, Santa Barbara (2011)

He is pursuing an MSt in the Study of Religion and his areas of interest are Hinduism and Christianity.

**Awards for OCHS students****Bharat Amin Bursary**

Rohana Seviratne

John Schippers

**Damji Devji Pattni Scholarships**

Nirav Amin

Nayan Bedia

Tristan Elby

**Gupta Dan Bursary**

Paul Gerstmayr

**Hansraj and Kanchanben Popat Bursary**

Avni Mehta

Bhavnisha Modi

**Hanuman Bursary**

Corin Golding

Meijia Ling

**Jiva Gosvami Scholarship**

Lucian Wong

**Pundit Abaji Scholarship**

Ionut Moise

**Ramaiah Alagappan Bursary**

Jason Birch

**Ramlal Patel Bursary**

Jason Birch

**Patel Book Prize**

Anirudh Mathur

## **Prof. Makhanlal Roy Chaudhury Book Prize**

Rohana Seneviratne

### **Library**

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The OCHS Library currently holds approximately 20,000 titles, mostly in the fields of Hindu intellectual history (with an emphasis on Vedanta, Nyaya, and Mimamsa), Puranas, Sanskrit poetry, and comparative theology.

This year the online catalogue was launched, which readers can now use to explore the Library's collection, renew books, make purchase suggestions, and so on. The Library's old collection is nearly entirely catalogued; Prof. Roodbergen's collection (approx. 10,000 volumes), which the OCHS library received last year, is currently being catalogued.

The Library has received very substantial donations this year from Professors John and Mary Brockington, and Leo Bowder. The Library also received donations from Krishna Dutta, Diana Stevenson, Guy Beck, Peggy Morgan, Gavin Flood, Shaunaka Rishi Das, Gudrun Buhnemann, Prabhudas Pattni, Lucian Wong, Ashok Aklujkar, Ken Valpey, Madubhai Madvani, Ionut Moise, and Gopal Patel.

### **Continuing Education Department**

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#### **Online courses**

The provision of online courses has continued as a major focus of the CED this year. We have a total of six courses currently available to offer each term and had a total of 172 students enrolled in 2011–12, about the same number as 2010–11.

The introductory course, 'Understanding Hindu Identity', continues to be the most popular of our online courses and hence the next project to be worked on is the upgrading and partial rewriting of this course in order to offer it in two discrete units rather than as a single course. This work is now well underway and we hope that the two courses will be available by the end of 2012. It is expected that recruitment will be boosted by offering the introductory course in two parts.

Alongside the proposed changes to the online introductory course, we also propose to offer online courses in Sanskrit, again responding to a perceived demand.

Satish Sharma is working on marketing the 'Philosophy of Yoga' course and we are optimistic that his repackaging of the course will lead to a significant increase in recruitment. When this work is complete Satish has agreed to look at the full range of online courses and to put forward suggestions as to how these can be marketed more successfully to a wider range of potential customers, including other Higher Education institutions.

**Events**

The FOCHS groups and CED work closely together providing regular talks in Leicester and Birmingham. There was also a very successful series of talks at the Nehru Centre in London which will resume in Summer 2012 with the active support of the Indian High Commission.

**Classroom-based courses**

At present we are not offering taught courses at centres in Britain and are relying almost exclusively on online provision. In terms of staff, venues and resources, taught courses are far more demanding but it is recognised that this is by far the best means of involving communities in our educational activities and that such courses play an important role in establishing and sustaining links between the Centre and local communities. Hence this form of education remains a priority and it is hoped that we can begin to reintroduce taught courses in the near future, perhaps from the beginning of 2013.

**Other**

We are also considering the possibility of providing study tours to selected sites in India. This idea is still at a very early stage but there would appear to be potential for expansion in this direction.

**Management**

At present Nick Sutton is responsible for the writing of courses and modules. Online courses are taught by Nick Sutton and Rembert Lutjeharms and managed by Lal Krishna. Anuradha Dooney, Rembert Lutjeharms, and Nick Sutton share other teaching responsibilities with other tutors contributing occasional classes as and when required. Judit Bajusz provides secretarial support and edits course materials.

**Internet**

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The OCHS website ([www.ochs.org.uk](http://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. The speed of web development means that we are once again upgrading the site to a newer, more reliable platform. At the same time, this allows us to add new features making it more useful to our users.

Our outreach to the wider community of academic and public interest in Hindu Studies has involved making audio of more than 400 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 one of our main avenues for publicising our forthcoming lectures and seminars. These are all noted on the website and particular attention has been paid to upgrading this section of our site.



Our email list subscriptions have grown by 20% over the year. The lecture list has more than 3,400 subscribers, with new subscribers signing on regularly. Our monthly email Friends Updates and six-monthly email Newsletter have 4,100 and 6,100 subscribers respectively.

## **Development activities and achievements**

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### **Broadcast**

The OCHS is a useful reference for broadcasters seeking an authoritative voice for Hindu traditions. Highlights this year include Shaunaka Rishi Das's set of six Prayers for the Day on BBC Radio Four at Diwali time. Shaunaka also appeared four times on Beyond Belief. Dr Jessica Frazier made her second appearance on Radio Four's 'In Our Time', this time on the Kama-sutra along with Prof. Julius Lipner and Dr David Smith. Dr Frazier and Professor Flood also consulted for the BBC series 'Divine Women' and Shaunaka Rishi Das appeared on BBC One's programme on Diwali, Eat, Pray, Light'.

Our Artist-In-residence, Param Tomanec released a feature film: *Rasa Yatra*, an artistic portrayal of pilgrimage and bhakti.

### **The Bhumi Project: Hindu Responses to Environmental Change**

The past year has seen the international network of the Bhumi Project strengthen and grow. The Project continues to be overseen by Gopal Patel.

In August the Project launched its Green Temple initiative at the White House in Washington DC in partnership with the Hindu American Seva Charities. There were also meetings in New York with the Hindu American Foundation.

In November Gopal attended an international conference in Italy, to discuss the environmental impact of religious pilgrimages. Gopal was asked to give a presentation on the challenges and successes of the Bhumi Project.

In December Gopal visited Nairobi to meet with the Bhumi Africa working party, which has been developing a long-term environmental plan for Hindus in Africa that is due for launch in September 2012.

In April Gopal visited India where he had successful meetings with representatives from the Balaji Temple in Tirupati. The temple authorities agreed to work with Bhumi to be a good example of a temple town with high environmental standards.

In June 2012 Gopal visited India again to meet with religious and civic leaders from Rishikesh, Ujjain, Puri, and Vrindavan to discuss the forming of a Green Pilgrimage Network in India.

In April 2012 we received funding of £29,000 from the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC). ARC has been the sole funder of this initiative from inception. This year they have more than doubled funding received from last year, an indication they are happy with our work and keen to see it develop.

For the following 12 months most of our work will be focused in India. Gopal will spend 5 months, based mainly in Rishikesh, working with pilgrim towns across India to promote good environmental practice.

## **New awards**

Thanks to generous donors, the OCHS is able to award nearly £8,000 per year to students.

Three new awards this year are the Hanuman Bursary, sponsored anonymously, the Bharat Amin Scholarship, and the Ramiah Alagappan Bursary, sponsored by Ananthi Al-Ramiah.

## **Bridges and Barriers to Hindu Christian Relations Research Project**

In 2010 the nascent Hindu-Christian Forum won funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government to undertake a research project in the form of a listening exercise exploring the relations between Hindu and Christian communities in the UK. This report is intended to guide the way for the future direction that the Hindu Christian Forum will take.

The OCHS took on this project, and with the consultation of the Oxford Centre for Christianity and Culture, Dr Jessica Frazier designed and carried out the research from June to December of 2010. The research took the form of approximately fifty detailed interviews with Hindus and Christians in London, Leicester, and Preston, recording accounts of people's experiences, and their attitudes, interests, impressions, needs and concerns. In particular the research was designed to explore underlying tensions and theological attitudes, encouraging people to reflect on issues of truth and relationship that are central to interfaith.

The research resulted in more than thirty hours and 100,000 words of interviews containing material on Hindu and Christian experience in the UK, and on issues of religious truth, conversion and controversy, and successful interfaith.

The OCHS 'Bridges and Barriers to Hindu-Christian Relations' report, was launched at the Hindu-Christian Forum (HCF) at Lambeth Palace on 23 November.

The launch was the first event held by the re-invigorated Hindu-Christian Forum. The event, hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, was introduced by the Chairs of the HCF: The Ven. Richard Atkinson, Archdeacon of Leicester, and an OCHS scholar, Ramesh Pattni, Interfaith Chair of the Hindu Forum of Britain. It was addressed by Andrew Stunell MP, Baroness Richardson, and Lord Popat.

It was attended by fifteen OCHS students, some of whom are using it as a stepping-stone to development of interfaith seminars.

## **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](http://www.ochs.org.uk/friends-events)

### **Leicester Friends of the OCHS**

The Leicester Friends continue to host an excellent series of talks. Recent highlights are an interfaith dialogue between the OCHS's Shaunaka Rishi Das

and The Venerable Richard Atkinson, Archdeacon of Leicester; Anuradha Dooney on Free will and Destiny in the Bhagavad-gita; Dr Nick Sutton on Yoga and Hinduism; Sachin Nandha on Quantum Physics and Hinduism; and a new addition to the team, OCHS student Lucien Wong speaking on Hindu Approaches to Pluralism.

One of the year's biggest events was a Gala Dinner in Leicester on 19 November. This was attended by 150 guests. The event, sponsored by Barclays Bank and compered by the BBC's Kamlesh Purohit, included talks by The High Sheriff of Leicester, Resham Singh Sandhu, and Alpesh Patel of Tradermind.com.

Other Leicester Friends events included a day trip to Oxford which included a tour and lunch for thirty; a one-day course on Hindu origins, philosophy, and scriptures; and the second Holi-Yatra – a sponsored fourteen-mile walk visiting fourteen Leicester mandirs.

The Leicester Friends stand as a model of a community supporting good education and helping good education nourish the community in return.

### **Birmingham Friends of the OCHS**

Inspired by the work of the Leicester Friends, Nitin and Meena Sodha and Raj and Jyoti Patel are working to replicate 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. Recent talks include Anuradha Dooney on Human Rights and Right Humans and Shaunaka Rishi Das on the concepts of tirtha and yatra in Hinduism.

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.

### **Other Friends initiatives**

Our longstanding friend, Harish IK Patel organised a portion of ticket sales from the Gujarati Play 'Bachu Ne Baatlima Utaaro' ('Impossible to Control Bachu') to be contributed to the OCHS. Harish is one of the earliest founders of the Friends of the OCHS and personifies the vitality of the FOCHS and its importance to the life of the OCHS in terms of making the OCHS financially stable and relevant to the community.

## **Outreach**

OCHS speakers continue to be invited to provide a voice for Indian traditions in media, business, education, and government.

Shaunaka Rishi Das met the Queen at Lambeth Palace at her first official Diamond Jubilee event. A few of this year's other notable contributions include facilitating a meeting between the Food Standards Agency and Hindu leaders as well as talks to financial bodies including Goldman Sachs and Barclays Wealth.

There were also talks at Cherwell Valley School, to Religious Studies trainees at Oxford University, at St Mary's Girls School in Ascot, and at the University of East Anglia's Hindu Society.

We received a group of senior swamis from the Chinmaya Mission this year and gave presentations at the Oxford Hindu Sangha.

Shaunaka Rishi Das continues to serve as Oxford University's first Hindu chaplain and the OCHS provides the Hinduism entry in the *Annual Register*.

## **Interns**

The OCHS internship programme injected new vitality into the workings of the Centre this year. Internships provide value to the Centre and allow young people to gain valuable experience and contacts. This year has seen a significant expansion in the internship programme.

This year we welcomed one of our best ever interns, Malvika Poddar. From the day she arrived, Malvika became integral to the operations of the OCHS and within a few weeks she became a core member of staff showing herself to be capable of anything that was asked of her and able to anticipate the needs of the Centre with an infectious enthusiasm. Malvika was with us from September to June and will be sorely missed.

This year we also hosted shorter internships. One with Anisha Ford, daughter of our benefactors, Alfred and Sharmila Ford, and one with Basundhara Tripathy, a student at Oxford.

The year ahead looks equally promising. We are delighted to welcome Meijia Ling as our next intern. Meijia is a student of the Centre and has decided to give time in her year off to help. She is already well-known and liked and we look forward to finding a mutually beneficial role for her.

We also look forward to hosting Biranavi Mahesvaran later this year, as well as Raam Chauhan, son of our benefactors, Raj and Ramila Chauhan.

## **Benefactors and friends**

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### **Volunteers**

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, saving in the region of £342,000 this year.

For a number of years, the OCHS has been very fortunate to receive the services of a very talented film-maker, Mr Param Tomanec, at greatly reduced rates. Param, our Artist-in-Residence, produced the video section of the CED online courses. He is also a first-class photographer and has often worked free for the OCHS producing stunning shots of the Centre's activities, of Oxford, and India. Another artist is Rasik Varsani who is helping us with the design of a book series based on our Continuing Education Department class-notes.

Other friends and businesses have been kind to the Centre by charging greatly reduced rates for services. These include our accountants, Macilvin Moore Reveres, Harrow. Thanks also to Sachin Nandha of Leicester for providing us with space for our October day schools.

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.

A major contribution this year was the arrival of Mr Satish Sharma as our volunteer IT Officer. Satish, who is also the father of one of our students, Vivek, worked tirelessly to upgrade hardware and completely revamp our tiring network structure. His visits bring gifts including: a new printer, parts to repair one of our old printers, a new modem, a new backup drive, a new server, new monitors, a video card, and vastly improved wi-fi setup by adding boosters so that all areas of the OCHS are now suitably wireless-enabled.

Satish supplied much of this from his own collection and the rest he acquired by approaching friends with hardware to spare. These generous donors included longstanding supporters Danny Patel of Quest Software, and Rickie Sehgal of Transputec.

Also, during this period Harish I. K. Patel, Prashun Popat, and Upendra Kalan worked hard to save expense and the time of OCHS staff.

Other significant voluntary service has been very gratefully received from Dev Bahl and Syama Dasi (book-keeping), and Sanjay Gadhvi (mobile phone contract).

Hemal Randerwala a CED online student, continues to work to improve enrolments in our online courses.

A major undertaking at present is the cataloguing of our copious library. This is being managed by our Librarian Dr Rembert Lutjeharms and assisted by volunteers including Keshava Kiernan, Nivedita Hanra, and Lucy Barton who catalogued the entire John Brockington collection.

Our Wednesday lunches saw attendances double this year. Managed by Anuradha Dooney and Judit Bajusz, the increased effort was greatly assisted by numerous helpers, but special thanks go to Keshava Kiernan, Vicky Ip, and Lucy Barton for their steadfast help.

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.

## **Donors**

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

Abbey Hotel, Stuart Abbott, Kamal Adatia, Sudershma Aggarwal, Ananthi Al Ramiah, Anita Amin, Hemal Amin, Anoopam Mission, Arnab Banerji, BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, Barclays UK Consumer and Community Affairs, Bhaktivedanta Manor, Sandy Bharat, P. C. Bhatia, A. G. Bhattacharjee, Rajesh Bhavsar, Bharat Bhundia, Jason Birch, Mandakranta Bose, Jugdish Budhan, Bull Hotel, Babu Chandarana, Ashwin Narandas Chandrani, Raj and Ramila Chauhan, Ritesh Chauhan, Hitendra Chudasama, Sandhya Chundhur, Robert Cohen, Pursottam Dabasia, Urvashi Dattani, Bhupen Dave, Nimish Desai, Anuradha Dooney, Manu Duggal, Tristan Elby, FOCHS Birmingham, FOCHS

Leicester, Alfred Ford, Shobhna Ghelani, Kanu Gohil, Suresh Gohil, Nitesh Gor, Martin Haigh, Aarti Hansrani, High Commission of India, Gaby Hock, IK Foundation, Viketuno Iralu, Jay Jina, Ranjit Johri, Vijay Kumar Juneja, Ashwin Kagdadia, Upendra Kalan, Bharatraj Kiri, Gopal And Elizabeth Krishna, Sowmi Krishnamurthy, Bhavini Ladwa, Manoj Ladwa, Ananya Lahiri, Jayendra Lakhani, Jessica Laladia, Meijia Ling, Yashvant Lodhia, R. N. Majithia, Mayuri Mandavia, Anjna Mandora, Bhavit Mehta, Jitendra Mistry, Maaya Modha, Jagdish Modi, Trevor Mostyn, Madhumanti Mukherjee, Harsit Nakarja, Ranju Nathwani, Oxford University Hindu Society, Vinod Pabari, Hemant Kumar Padhya, Preeti Padia, Yogindra Pandya, Ravi Parekh, Mahendra Parmar, Alpesh Patel, Govind Patel, Harish Patel, Harshad Patel, Jayant Chhaganbhai Patel, Jayesh Patel, Jyoti Patel, Kamlesh and Yaksha Patel, Nirav Patel, Parimal Patel, Pradeep Patel, Pyarelal Patel, Ragini Patel, Raju Patel, Vinit and Hema Patel, Y. M. Patel, Yogesh Patel, Ramesh Pattni, Hemang Popat, Jayesh Popat, Prashun Popat, Bimal Prodhan, Kamlesh Purohit, Dilip Raithatha, Pratibha Rajani, Rami Ranger, Sheena Rastogi, Navinchandra Raval, Redditch Indian Association, Rembrandt Hotel, John Ridge, Jim Robinson, Shaumit Saglani, Shila Sampat, Geeta Sampath, Romila Santosh, R. Saujani, Sarla Saujani, Milen Shah, S. K. Sharma, Ketan Sheth, Azad Shivdasani, Mahesh Sinhal, Nitin and Meena Sodha, Raj Somani, Ronald Staff, Diana Stevenson, Raakhi Sunak, Usha Kiran Sunak, Yash Sunak, Divyesh Tailor, Hasmukh Tanna, Navin Thaker, Pramod Thakkar, Sameer Thakkar, Atul Thakrar, Harish Thakrar, Manish Thakrar, Subhash Thakrar, Raju Thanki, Caroline Trimmingham, Shobhaben Trivedi, Ashok Unalkat, Kantibhai Unadkat, Pradeep Vasudevan, Hari Vaudrey, N Vijayakumar, Rahul Vyas, Cyril Wohrer.

## **Accounts and finance**

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The Centre has continued to benefit greatly from voluntary work and ‘in kind’ donations – these have amounted to more than £342,000 in this period – which add great value to the Centre.

Upendra Kalan, Syama Dasi, and Dev Bahl were our book-keepers for 2011–12. Our accounts were certified by Macilvin Moore Reverses, London.

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.

## **Appendix one: Organisation**

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### **Board of Governors**

Mr Shaunaka Rishi Das  
Lord Dholakia, OBE, DL  
Dr S. Bhattacharya-Ford  
Prof. Richard Gombrich  
Prof. Edmund Herzig  
Peggy Morgan  
Dr John Muddiman  
Prof. Polly O’Hanlon  
Mr Harish I. K. Patel  
Mrs Neerja Sethi  
Mr Pramod Thakkar  
Prof. Keith Ward, FBA

### **Administration**

#### **Director**

Mr Shaunaka Rishi Das

#### **Academic Director**

Prof. Gavin Flood

#### **Academic Administrator**

Dr Jessica Frazier

#### **Development Administrator**

Mr Lal Krishna

#### **Librarian**

Mr Rembert Lutjeharms

#### **Finance Administrator**

Mr Dev Bahl

#### **Administrative Secretary and Book keeping**

Miss Judit Bajusz

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Dr Gillian Evison  
Prof. Gavin Flood  
Dr Sanjukta Gupta  
Dr Sondra Hausner  
Dr Rembert Lutjeharms  
Peggy Morgan

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Prof. Francis X. Clooney, SJ  
Prof. Thomas Hopkins  
Prof. Dermott Killingley  
Prof. M. N. Narasimhachary  
Prof. Patrick Olivelle

### **Research Fellows**

Dr Jessica Frazier  
Dr Bjarne Wernicke Olesen  
Dr Brainerd Prince  
Dr Ferdinando Sardella  
Dr Kenneth Valpey  
Dr Katherine Wharton

### **Continuing Education Department**

Dr Nicholas Sutton  
Ms Anuradha Dooney

### **Patrons Council**

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Dr Karan Singh  
HE The Indian High Commissioner

### **Academic Council**

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Dr Gillian Evison  
Dr Jessica Frazier  
Dr Sondra Hausner  
Dr Rembert Lutjeharms  
Peggy Morgan  
Prof. Polly O'Hanlon  
Prof. George Pattison  
Shaunaka Rishi Das

### **Academic Advisory Council**

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Prof. Judith Brown  
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Prof. Bob Jackson  
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Prof. Julius Lipner



Prof. Eleanor Nesbitt  
Prof. Malory Nye  
Prof. Ceri Peach  
Prof. Lord Bikhu Parekh  
Prof. Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad  
Dr David Smith

### **Fund Management Committee**

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

### **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

#### **City of London**

Pratik Dattani  
Prashant Joshi  
Dipesh Patel  
Dhruv Patel

#### **Leicester**

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

## **Appendix two: Lectures and seminars**

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### **OCHS Conference September 2011: Sakta Traditions**

#### **Keynote: The Rise of Goddess Worship in Early Medieval India**

##### **Alexis G. J. S. Sanderson**

Alexis G. J. S. Sanderson is Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics, All Souls College, University of Oxford. He is a renowned expert on the history of Saivism and on tantric traditions. After taking undergraduate degrees in Classics and Sanskrit at Balliol College, Oxford, he spent six years in Kashmir studying with the celebrated scholar and Saiva guru Swami Lakshman Joo. From 1977 to 1992 he was Lecturer in Sanskrit in the University of Oxford, and Fellow of Wolfson College. Since 1992 he has held the Spalding Chair of Eastern Religions and Ethics in the University of Oxford, and is a Fellow of All Souls College.

#### **Yoginīyoga/Yogin as Yoginī: On the sādhanā of female deities in Indian tantric Buddhism of the tenth to twelfth century**

##### **Harunaga Isaacson**

Harunaga Isaacson was born in Kuma, Japan, in 1965. He studied philosophy and Indology at the University of Groningen (MA 1990), and was awarded a PhD in Sanskrit by the University of Leiden (1995). From Fall 1995 to Summer 2000 he was a post-doctoral research fellow at the Oriental Institute, Oxford University. After holding teaching positions at Hamburg University and the University of Pennsylvania, he was appointed Professor of Classical Indology in the Department of Indian and Tibetan Studies, Asien-Afrika-Institut, Hamburg University, in April 2006. His main research areas are: tantric traditions in pre-13th century South Asia, especially Vajrayāna Buddhism; classical Sanskrit poetry; classical Indian philosophy; and Purāṇic literature.

Prof. Isaacson is a member of the board of Indo-Iranian Journal (since 2003) and the Governing Committee of the INDOLOGY Discussion Forum. He is also presently Director of the Nepal Research Centre and General Director of the Nepalese-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project (both positions held since April 2006), funded by the Deutsche Forschungs Gemeinschaft.

#### **Varieties of melaka in the Jayadrathayāmala**

##### **Olga Serbaeva Saraogi**

The encounters with yoginīs, called melaka or melāpa, constitute the core of the post-initiation tantric practice in the Vidyāpīṭha texts, and priya- and haṭha- varieties were well known to the pre-Abhinavagupta śaiva tantric literature. This presentation will explore the nature of the haṭhamelaka as it is described in the Jayadrathayāmala, including its relation to the practice of provoked possession (āveśa), as well as of some other rare varieties of melaka that can be found in this text only.

Olga Serbaeva Saraogi, Post-doc. researcher (Habilitation) at the faculty of Philosophy, Indogermanisches Seminar, Abteilung für Indologie, University of Zurich.

### **Early Śāktism and Cosmology: On the *Brahmayāmala*'s Reconfiguration of the Śaiva Cosmos**

**Shaman Hatley**

This presentation explores the cosmology of the *Brahmayāmala*, a scripture of the Tantric Śaivavidyāpīṭha. This large-scale work is among earliest extant *tantras* with a *śākta* cultic orientation. Presupposing the cosmological thought of the earliest *siddhāntatantras*, the *Brahmayāmala* engages in a radical remapping of the Śaiva universe in which various goddesses assume the functions of the mantra-deities presiding over the hierarchy of worlds and cosmological spheres. This *śākta* reconfiguration of cosmology, articulated in the context of rites of initiation and consecration, appears to represent an early experiment, and offers a fascinating window into how a cultic emphasis on goddesses was extended into doctrine.

Shaman Hatley (Concordia University, Montréal), researches the literature, ritual, and social history of Tantric Śaivism in medieval India, and religion in premodern Bengal. Hatley's dissertation, "The *Brahmayāmala* tantra and Early Saiva Cult of Yoginīs," analyses the history of the Śaiva cult of *yoginīs* and provides a partial critical edition of one of its earliest scriptural sources, the *Brahmayāmala*. Hatley is a contributor to the *Tāntrikābhidhānakośa* ('A Dictionary of Technical Terms from Hindu Tantric Literature'), and has authored several articles and book chapters concerning tantric practices and goddess cults. His current research focuses on the ritual roles and divinization of women in early Tantric Śaivism and Buddhism. He completed his Ph.D. in Religious Studies at the University of Pennsylvania in 2007, under the direction of Harunaga Isaacson.

### **Four Goddesses and a Liṅga: The So-called Śaktiliṅgas and Similar Sculptures**

**Gudrun Bühnemann**

The paper will discuss types of liṅgas featuring four goddesses facing outward. These include a complex Tantric sculpture from Nepal (17th century) and its possible prototypes, the so-called śakti- or devīliṅgas found in Bengal, dating from the 9th to 13th centuries. A major problem is the identity of the four goddesses and the significance of these sculptures. The paper will also address the more general phenomenon of feminine liṅgas, namely liṅgas serving as a focus of goddess cult worship.

Gudrun Bühnemann is Professor and Chair of the Department of Languages and Cultures of Asia, The University of Wisconsin-Madison. For more information, see her webpage, <http://lca.wisc.edu/~gbuhnema/>

### **The Śākta Co-option of Haṭhayoga**

**James Mallinson**

Text-critical study of the earliest texts to teach haṭhayoga (c.11th-13th centuries) shows that in its first formulations it was closely associated with traditional ascetic practice and that the aim of its techniques, which were

physical, was to boost the beneficial effects of celibacy (or, at least, continence). Śākta traditions dating to a similar period had developed a system of yoga in which the yogin visualised the rising of Kuṇḍalinī from the base of the spine up through a series of cakras. This Kuṇḍalinī yoga, together with some other techniques developed in a Śākta milieu, was overlaid onto the techniques of haṭhayoga in texts such as the Vivekamārtaṇḍa, Gorakṣaśataka and Haṭhapradīpikā. The haṭhayoga taught in the latter text in particular became definitive and since its composition (c. 1450) Kuṇḍalinī-based haṭhayoga has been the dominant form of haṭhayoga, and indeed yoga more broadly conceived.

The co-option of haṭhayoga by a Śākta tradition is representative of both the development within Śāktism of a less exclusive, more universal yoga and of the formation of the Nāth sampradāya. The first gurus associated with the Nāth order, Matsyendra and Gorakṣa, were part of a non-celibate Śākta tradition which developed in the Deccan. Out of this tradition there developed the celibate order of Nāth ascetics whose influence ranged, and ranges, over all but the southeast of the subcontinent.

James Mallinson has a BA in Sanskrit from Oxford and an MA with a major in ethnography from SOAS. His DPhil. thesis at Oxford was a critical edition of the Khecarīvidyā, a Kaula work on khecarīmudrā, an important technique of haṭhayoga. After his DPhil. he translated Sanskrit poetry for the Clay Sanskrit Library for six years. He then spent a year teaching Sanskrit at SOAS and is now helping to set up an institute of Indian classical studies at Lavasa in India while continuing his research into yoga and yogis.

### **Śākta Influence in the Goddess Cults of Malabar**

**[John] Rich[ardson] Freeman**

This paper will attempt a synthetic overview of textual, ethnographic, and historical sources in Malayalam, Tamil and Sanskrit related to the cultural historical role and adaptation of Śākta worship in the temple cults of prominent goddesses in northern Kerala. Based ethnographically in the formerly royal shrines and temples of this region, where special Śākta priests conduct daily rites of worship with blood sacrifice and alcohol, and preside annually over festivals of spirit possessed incarnations of the goddess, I will cast a textual eye back over the Indological and literary record in a survey of the cultural history that eventuated in today's ritual configuration. This region seems to have preserved important evidence for the amalgamation of a Śākta cult, with its hybrid priestly officiants, into the worship of local war goddesses under specifically royal patronage. My survey intends to highlight the nature of this evidence in its inter-relations as pointing the way forward to further Indological and ethnographic research.

[John] Rich[ardson] Freeman is a cultural anthropologist with a background and research interest in Indology (Sanskrit and Dravidian languages and literatures). He currently teaches courses on Indian civilization, Hinduism, and the anthropology of religion for the faculties of History and Religion at Duke University. His special area of research is Kerala, where he has carried out many years of ethnographic and textual work on the Teyyam

traditions of spirit possession in Malabar, the wider region's Brahmanical system of temple worship, and the literary history of Malayalam in its cultural relations with Sanskrit and Tamil.

### **Snakebite Goddesses in the Śākta Traditions: Roots and Incorporations of Tvaritā, Kurukullā, and Bheruṇḍā**

**Michael Slouber**

Goddesses associated with snakes and healing snakebite are well known to anthropologists of modern Śākta traditions; Manasā in the Northeast and Nāgāttammaṅ in the South come immediately to mind. In Jainism we have Padmāvātī, and in Buddhism various goddesses like Jāṅgulī, Kurukullā, and Mahāmāyūrī specialize in curing snakebite. The origins of many of these goddesses remain obscure, but my research into the largely unedited Śaiva Gāruḍa Tantras suggests that some of them were popularized by this early corpus. In this paper I focus on those snakebite goddesses of the Gāruḍa Tantras who were incorporated into the wider and increasingly influential Śākta traditions of the 8th–12th centuries: Bheruṇḍā, Tvaritā, and Kurukullā. What do we know about their early identities and how did incorporation as nityās transform them? The latter two were also incorporated in Jain and Buddhist Tantra and are still worshipped today. My paper will likewise present evidence that Purāṇic chapters on Tvaritā and other nityā goddesses are directly borrowed from Tantric sources.

Michael Slouber is a Ph.D. candidate in South and Southeast Asian Studies at UC Berkeley. His research interests include Śaivism, Śākta Traditions, and History of Medicine.

### **Devī worship as point of departure for a comparative project**

**Marianne C. Qvortrup Fibiger,**

In the history of religion especially in the comparative study of religion goddess worship is a very underestimated and under prioritized exploratory field. General books on the history of religion either mentions goddesses in the periphery as the spouse of a god or as seen in a evolutionary scheme, where goddess worship is either placed as part of the archaic state of religion, as a part of a primitive fertility cult or maybe mentioned in relation to small isolated non patriarchal societies. And some scholars even tries to explain the nowadays veneration of goddesses as for example the Virgin Mary in Christianity as weak survivals of these earlier stages. My paper will try to outline how research on devī-worship in the Hindu tradition is a very important exploratory laboratory to overcome this deficit. It is not only a fact that among the world religions, Hinduism has by far the most vigorous and diverse goddess mythology as well as independent goddess worship, it is also a fact that in Hinduism we find the most elaborated understanding of the Goddess.

Marianne C. Qvortrup Fibiger, Ph.D. and associate professor at the Section of Religious Studies at the Faculty of Arts at Aarhus University. She is especially interested in contemporary Hinduism and has done fieldwork different places in India as well as in Sri Lanka, Kenya, England, Mauritius and

Denmark. She is interested in Śāktism from at least three perspectives: 1) As an important part of the Hindu tradition also in Diaspora 2) How or if local goddess worship corresponds with or relate to the textual background. 3) How research on Śāktism could be an important stepping stone in an understanding of Goddess worship as such.

### **Yoginis at Hirapur, and in general**

**Dr David Smith,**

This paper attempts an overview of yoginis, taking the Yogini temple at Hirapur, Orissa as starting point; and widening out from an art history centre, to go on to consider as a whole yoginis both as found in texts and in other sites; then within the context of other instances natural and supernatural of female multiplicity; and finally from the perspective of Hindu eroticism in general as presented in the book on that theme that I am currently writing.

Dr David Smith, Reader in South Asian Religions, Dept of Politics, Philosophy and Religious Studies, Lancaster University.

## **Lectures and Seminars Michaelmas Term 2011**

### **Hinduism 1**

**Prof. Gavin Flood**

### **Sanskrit Prelims**

**Prof. Gavin Flood**

### **Readings in Sanskrit Commentaries**

**Dr Rembert Lutjeharms**

### **Further Sanskrit**

**Prof. Gavin Flood**

### **Theories of the Text**

**Prof. Gavin Flood**

### **Majewski Lecture: How *japa* changed between the Vedas and the bhakti traditions: the evidence of the *Jāpakopākhyāna*(Mbh 12.189–93)**

**Prof. John Brockington**

The term *japa* is one that has a long history within the family of Hindu traditions but the difference between the murmuring of Vedic *mantras* as an accompaniment to sacrificial rituals and the meditative repetition of a divine name in *bhakti* traditions is considerable. In an attempt to find some evidence for the development process involved, I shall examine the *Jāpakopākhyāna* (MBh 12.189–93), a text which seems in some ways incongruous in its context, and will also survey the occurrence of *japa* and its cognates throughout the *Mahābhārata*. I seek to unravel the textual history of the passage and the logic of combining its parts, as well as the message that it conveys. The prominence of Brahmā in the passage may form one key to its interpretation, while the fact that the next highest (though much lower) frequency of *japa* and related terms is in the *Nārāyaṇīya* seems to offer

another clue, especially in conjunction with the significance of *japa* in the developed Pāñcarātra system.

Professor Brockington is emeritus Professor of Sanskrit in the School of Asian Studies (of which he was the first Head) and an Honorary Fellow in the Centre for South Asian Studies. He has written several books and around 75 articles on his special area of research, the Sanskrit epics, as well as on other topics. He is the Secretary General of the International Association of Sanskrit Studies and was the chair of the organising committee of the 13th World Sanskrit Conference, held at Edinburgh in July 2006. Among his many publications are *The Sacred Thread: Hinduism in its continuity and diversity*, (1981); *Righteous Rama: the Evolution of an Epic; Hinduism and Christianity; Epic and Puranic Bibliography (up to 1985)* (1992); *The Sanskrit Epics* (Handbuch der Orientalistik, 2.2.12; *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Sanskrit and other Indian Manuscripts of the Chandra Shum Shere Collection in the Bodleian Library, Part II, Epics and Puranas; Epic Threads: John Brockington on the Sanskrit Epics*, ed. Greg Bailey and Mary Brockington (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 2000); *Indian Epic Traditions – Past and Present (Papers presented at the 16th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, Edinburgh, 5–9 September 2000)* ed. by Danuta Stasik and John Brockington (2002); *The Intimate Other: Love Divine in Indic Religions*, ed. by Anna S. King and John Brockington (2005); and *Rama the Steadfast: An Early Form of the Ramayana*, tr. by John Brockington and Mary Brockington (2006).

**Shivdasani Lecture: The Problem of Evil and Western Theodicy: But what says Indian Theism and Non-theism to the challenge?**

**Prof. Purushottama Bilimoria**

**Shivdasani Seminar: Hinduism’s Transnational Diasporias (aporias of diaspora): the view from Oceania**

**Prof. Purushottama Bilimoria**

**Shivdasani Lecture: The Logical Illumination of Mīmāṃsā and Nyāya (to Navyanyāya): evolution of thinking, metaphysics and theology (apauruṣeya, apūrva, padārthas, Īśvara, vādavivāda, hetutarka)**

**Prof. Purushottama Bilimoria**

**Shivdasani Seminar: Indian Practical Ethics: Law, Gender, Justice, Ecological and Bioethical Challenges**

**Prof. Purushottama Bilimoria**

This seminar will explore the reading of traditional texts and the applications of classical theories in ethics, law, politics, and medical ethics to contemporary issues and challenges, including abortion euthanasia, care ethics, norms and motions around death, etc.

Purushottama Bilimoria, PhD is Professor of Philosophy and Comparative Studies at Deakin University in Australia and Senior Research Fellow, University of Melbourne. Visiting Professor and Lecturer at University of California, Berkeley and Dominican University, San Anselmo, and Shivadasani Fellow of Oxford University. His areas of specialist research and publications cover classical Indian philosophy and comparative ethics; Continental

thought; cross-cultural philosophy of religion, diaspora studies; bioethics, and personal law in India. He is an Editor-in-Chief of *Sophia*, Journal of Philosophy of Religion, Springer. He also edits a book series with Springer on Sophia: cross-cultural studies in Culture and Traditions, Recent publication is *Indian Ethics I*, Ashgate 2007; OUP 2008, and *Sabdapramana: Word and Knowledge (Testimony) in Indian Philosophy* (revised reprint), Delhi: DK PrintWorld 2008; 'Nietzsche as 'Europe's Buddha' and Asia's Superman, *Sophia*, vol 47/3 2008; *Postcolonial Philosophy of Religion* (with Andrew Irvine, Ken Surin et al) Springer 2009. Teaches and publishes on Hindu religious philosophies. Also works on political philosophy, pertaining to ethics of rights, theories of justice, capabilities, education and gender issues in third world, particularly South Asian, contexts.

**“Which wise man would worship beings who are tormented by sorrow and fear?” Powers and Weaknesses of Gods in Buddhist Literature**

**Dr Ulrike Roestler**

Buddhists do not deny the existence of gods, but they regard them as beings who are subject to karma and saṃsāra and are therefore not free from the fetters of cyclic existence. Their life is extremely pleasant, but when they die they experience horrible agonies, and Buddhists say that there is no greater suffering in the world than that of a god who is dying. In early legends, gods like Indra and Brahma appear as supporters of Buddha Shakyamuni. Some later Buddhist authors, on the other hand, point out their weaknesses, describing them as “beings who are tormented by sorrow and fear, are devoid of compassion, bear various weapons and raise them with the intention to kill” – as opposed to Buddha Shakyamuni, who works solely for the welfare of others. The lecture will illustrate these multi-faceted views with examples from Buddhist literature.

Ulrike Roesler obtained a PhD in Indian Studies from the University of Münster (Germany). She held teaching positions in Indian and Tibetan Studies at the Universities of Marburg and Freiburg (Germany) and in Buddhist Studies at the University of Oxford, and has recently been appointed the Lecturer in Tibetan and Himalayan Studies at the University of Oxford. Her research interests are in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, the history of the Kadampa school of Tibetan Buddhism, and narrative and biographical literature. Her most recent publication is the volume *Lives Lived, Lives Imagined: Biographies in the Buddhist Traditions*. Ed. by L. Covill, U. Roesler and S. Shaw. Boston: Wisdom Publications 2010.

## **Lectures and Seminars Hilary Term 2012**

### **Post-Ramanuja Developments in Shri Vaishnavism (two lectures)**

**Professor M.N. Narasimhachary**

### **Readings in Ramanuja's Sribhashya**

**Professor M.N. Narasimhachary**

Professor Narasimhachary is founder Professor and Head (Retired), Department of Vaishnavism, University of Madras, India. His specialist



subjects include the Pre-Ramanuja Religion and Philosophy, Pancharatra Agama Literature, Telugu and Sanskrit Literature and popularisation of Sanskrit as a spoken tongue. He has published a number of articles and monographs in academic journals on topics such as the Samskrita Svapnah, Bhakti & Prapatti in Srivaishnava Philosophy and the Pancaratra-kantakoddhara. Important Publications include: The Contribution of Yaamuna to Visistadvaita [Pub; Jayalakshmi Publications, Hyderabad]; Critical Edition and Study of Yaamuna's Aagamapraamaanya [pub: Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Baroda]; and an English translation of Sri Vedanta Desika's Padukasahasram and all of his 32 Stotras. Prof. Narasimhachary received the Certificate of Honour for Proficiency in Sanskrit from the President of India for the year 2004.

### **Readings in Kavya**

**Professor M.N. Narasimhachary**

### **Transforming Traditions 1: The Dramatic God: New Approaches to the Metaphysics of Divinity in the Aesthetic Vedanta of Rupa Gosvami**

**Dr Jessica Frazier**

### **Transforming Traditions 2: Krishna's Broken Contract: a Bhakti Reading of the Afghan Invasions in the 18th century**

**Richard Williams**

### **Transforming Traditions 3: Innovation in the Theology of Madhusudana Sarasvati**

**Sanjukta Gupta**

### **Transforming Traditions 4: 'Why do we still sift the husk-like Upanisads?': Revisiting Vedanta in Early Caitanya Vaisnava Theology**

**Dr Rembert Lutjeharms**

### **Prelims Sanskrit**

**Dr Rembert Lutjeharms**

### **Hinduism II (Paper 21 Bhakti Vernaculars)**

**Dr Rembert Lutjeharms**

These lectures will take up where Hinduism 1 left off, examining in particular conceptions of liberation and paths leading to it in the post-classical, post-Gupta period. After an introductory lecture that raises some theological questions about the relation of path to goal and the importance of ritual and asceticism, we will begin with an examination of the Vedanta. We will trace the development of devotion (bhakti) in the Vaishnava traditions. Here we will also examine the importance of ritual texts and the relation between ritual, devotion and yoga. Lastly we will trace the themes of liberation and path with examples from selected tantric traditions within Vaishnavism and Shaivism. We will end with an examination of contemporary Hinduism at village level and in its interaction with modernity. These lectures are aimed at students of theology and religious studies.

### **Graduate Seminars: Yeats and the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali: The Poet as Orientalist**

#### **W. David Soud**

Yeats once wrote 'I know nothing but the novels of Balzac and the aphorisms of Patanjali'. In setting a worldly French novelist against a Indian mystical philosopher, Yeats is not merely recasting the dialogue of self and soul that has governed so much of his poetry; he is signaling that one side of the debate has staked out its position in India, and that the terms of the discussion have changed. Though he had found poetic inspiration in India earlier in his career, Yeats's final and most productive foray into Indic traditions would challenge his conceptions of self, God and destiny. In pursuit of Indic wisdom as he conceived it, Yeats left a trail of questions and assertions in letters and essays. These texts, especially those that touch on the Yoga Sutras of Patañjali, reveal not only what the poet most sought to learn from Indic philosophy, but also where, how and why he failed to grasp it. This seminar will explore these issues.

David Soud has degrees in English Literature and is pursuing a DPhil in the English Department at the University of Oxford. His research is on the spiritual dimensions of three poets, Yeats, Eliot, and David Jones.

### **Graduate Seminars: The Importance of Aurobindo for the Contemporary Study of Religion**

#### **Brainerd Prince**

The contemporary academic study of religion, dominated by both a call for the abandonment of the category 'Religion' and the dismantling of the discipline of Religious Studies, is thus faced with an impasse. In this paper, I explore the conditions that have brought about this impasse and argue that Aurobindo's integralism offers a way forward.

Brainerd Prince is completing his PhD on Sri Aurobindo's Integral Philosophy under Professor Gavin Flood. He has interests in phenomenology and hermeneutics and in reconceiving the academic study of religion.

### **Majewski Lecture: God, Being and Beyond: Outlines of a Comparative Theology**

#### **Professor C. Ram-Prasad**

While the differences between Sankara's and Ramanuja's systems as found in their respective commentaries on the Brahmasutras are relatively well-known, much commented on and highly influential in the living traditions, there has been surprisingly little attention paid to a comparative understanding of their Bhagavad Gita commentaries. Yet, in those works, they offer interpretations particular to the nature and structure of the Gita that do not map directly onto their other standard works. Using an interpretive vocabulary that engages with currents in postmodern Christian theology, I offer readings of each of their treatments of the relationship between the self-declared nature of the divine person, Krsna and his diverse mentions of the mysterious brahman. I suggest that strikingly original views of theology and its connections to metaphysics are found in these great

commentaries - views that can contribute to the actual content (and not just the metatheory) of comparative theology.

### **Vaishnava Features of Traditional Hatha yoga**

#### **Dr. James Mallinson**

The history of hatha yoga is only now becoming clear through close attention to the textual tradition. This seminar examines the Vaishnava roots of some hatha yoga practice.

Dr James Mallinson has a BA in Sanskrit from Oxford and an MA with a major in ethnography from SOAS. His DPhil. thesis at Oxford was a critical edition of the Khecarividya, a Kaula work on khecarimudra, an important technique of hathayoga. After his DPhil. he translated Sanskrit poetry for the Clay Sanskrit Library for six years. He then spent a year teaching Sanskrit at SOAS and is now helping to set up an institute of Indian classical studies at Lavasa in India while continuing his research into yoga and yogis.

## **Lectures and Seminars Trinity Term 2012**

### **Elementary Sanskrit**

#### **Dr Rembert Lutjeharms**

This course continues from the Elementary Sanskrit course of last term. The class is designed to introduce students to the basics of Sanskrit grammar, syntax, and vocabulary through a reading of the *Bhagavad-gita*.

### **Spoken Sanskrit**

#### **Prof. M. Narasimhachary**

Founder Professor and Head (Retired), Department of Vaishnavism, University of Madras, India. His specialist subjects include the Pre-Ramanuja Religion and Philosophy, Pancharatra Agama Literature, Telugu and Sanskrit Literature and popularisation of Sanskrit as a spoken tongue. He has published a number of articles and monographs in academic journals on topics such as the Samskrita Svapnah, Bhakti and Prapatti in Srivaishnava Philosophy and the Pancaratra-kantakoddhara. Important Publications include: The Contribution of Yaamuna to Visistadvaita [Pub; Jayalakshmi Publications, Hyderabad]; Critical Edition and Study of Yaamuna's Aagamapraamaanya [Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Baroda]; and an English translation of Sri Vedanta Desika's Padukasahasram and all of his 32 Stotras. Prof. Narasimhachary received the Certificate of Honour for Proficiency in Sanskrit from the President of India for the year 2004.

### **Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati and the West**

#### **Dr Ferdinando Sardella**

This year marks the 75th anniversary of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati's (1874–1937) passing away. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati was the founder of the Gaudiya Math and the inspirator of a wide range of Vaishnava movements that have been established in the West from the 1930s and onwards, among others ISKCON or the Hare Krishna Movement. The lecture discusses the relationship of Bhaktisiddhanta with modernity, his theological ideas in

relation to Christianity, and his approach to Western culture. Bhaktisiddhanta launched a missionary effort in the 1930s to London that involved members of the British cabinet. The lecture will also present some of the latest research on Bhaktisiddhanta featuring the recent discovery of his diary and an autobiographical sketch. The lecture is based on Sardella's monograph titled "*Modern Hindu Personalism: The Life, Place and Works of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati*" to be published by Oxford University Press.

Dr Ferdinando Sardella is based at the Department of Theology, Uppsala University (Sweden) and is a Research Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies

### **Wahlstrom Lecture: The Concept of Laksmi in Srivaisnavism**

#### **Prof. M. Narasimhachary**

This lecture aims at presenting a holistic picture of Laksmi covering the earliest and later phases of the development of this concept. She, known by another popular name Sri, is the embodiment of all the powers which make the Lord her consort, a veritable ruler of the world. She, as the repository of benign love, plays the role of mother of all living beings. She plays a vital role in the redemption of the erring humanity by interceding on their behalf and mitigating the rightful wrath of the Lord in which act her motherly nature gets fully manifested.

### **Shivdasani Lecture: Buddhists and Brahmins at Vikramaśīla**

#### **Prof. Parimal Patil**

It is so well-known that Buddhist philosophers in India argued with their non-Buddhist opponents that it is hardly worth mentioning. Yet, despite the centuries-long history of such polemics, Buddhist philosophers in India rarely explained what they hoped to gain in critically engaging their opponents through such arguments. In this lecture, I discuss why Buddhist epistemologists at Vikramaśīla thought it was important to argue with their Brahmanical opponents.

Parimal G. Patil is Professor of Religion and Indian Philosophy at Harvard University, where is Chair of the Department of South Asian Studies. His primary academic interests are in Sanskrit philosophy and the intellectual history of religion in India. In his first two books, *Against a Hindu God* and *Buddhist Philosophy of Religion in India*, he focused on interreligious debates between Buddhists and non-Buddhist philosophers in the final phase of Buddhism in India. Currently, he is working on early modern Sanskrit philosophy, especially the work of the New Epistemologists.

### **Shivdasani Seminar: On How To Argue with a Buddhist**

#### **Prof. Parimal Patil**

In this seminar, we will explore what was at stake, both philosophically and otherwise, for Brahmanical philosophers in debates with Buddhist opponents. We will focus, in particular, on Nyāya arguments for the existence of Īśvara and Buddhist counterarguments.

## **Graduate Seminar: Bishop Appasamy and Comparative Theology in India**

### **Brian Dunn**

A.J. Appasamy (1891-1975) was a Harvard, Oxford and Marburg trained Tamil Christian theologian who served as an Anglican priest and seminary professor in India before Independence, and post-Independence, as the first Bishop of Coimbatore in the Church of South India. Working from the premise that doctrines and theological systems are largely cultural and linguistic negotiations, and therefore provisional rather than permanent constructs, Appasamy's earliest interest was in recasting Christianity as a living bhakti ('devotional') tradition in the Subcontinent. As his comparative practice matures there is a noticeable shift in his thinking away from larger generalized groupings of 'religions,' such as 'Christianity' and 'Hinduism,' and increasingly towards particular interaction with specific thinkers, texts and traditions. Concurrent to this he began to develop a methodology by which to do so that employs the Vedantic epistemological categories known as pramanas ('evidences'). This paper will consider how Appasamy's theological project and method might fruitfully be applied to the field of scholarship known today as 'comparative theology,' especially as it pertains to the Indian context. Building on Appasamy's use of the pramanas, I will add my own proposal that comparative theologians from all traditions might draw further benefit from the clarity of the dialectical structure of the Vedantic commentarial tradition.

Brian Dunn is currently pursuing his doctoral research in the field of comparative theology at the Theology Faculty, Oxford. His present focus is on the life and writings of a South Indian Christian theologian, Ayadurai Jesudason Appasamy, and his particular comparative interaction with Hindu philosophical and theological conceptions of divine embodiment.

## **Shivdasani Lecture: Why Argue About Mokṣa**

### **Prof. Parimal Patil**

In this lecture, I consider some of the philosophical issues that were a stake for late pre-modern and early modern Hindu intellectuals in debates about the nature of liberation (*mokṣa*) and the path to it.

## **Shivdasani Seminar: Motivation to the Means in the Philosopher's Stone**

### **Prof. Parimal Patil**

This seminar is an exploration of theories of religious action and meta-ethics in late pre-modern Indian philosophy of religion. We will focus on these theories as they are introduced by the Nyāya philosopher Gaṅgēśa in his *Tattvacintāmaṇi*.

## **Krishna In Dance and Miniature Paintings**

### **Anne Marie Gaston**

The representation of Krishna in Indian dance is inspired by miniature paintings. What does the dancer see when she looks at a miniature painting.? How close is the connection between dance and painting?. This lecture demonstration includes video, images and dance to convey a rich mythic and artistic experience.

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