

# The Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies Board of Governors Report 2009–10



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## Chairman's introduction

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Welcome to this year's annual report on the life of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies.

The Governors of the Centre are very proud of the progress made by our scholars and staff in cementing the role of the OCHS as the home of Hindu Studies at Oxford with all the attention to detail and commitment to excellence that requires. As with most charities in the past two years, finances have tightened and are a struggle, however we have continued to build the value of the Centre making sure that it is a first-class investment for those who understand the long-term need for Hindu Studies at the highest levels of academia.

We are very grateful to the students at the Centre who have invested their prodigious talents, to the staff who have invested their expertise, and to the many Friends and Benefactors of the Centre who have invested their money, time, concern, and friendship. Together, these have contributed to make the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies one of the fastest growing centres at Oxford; from suburban house to Recognised Independent Centre, teaching and research centre, and publisher in a dozen years.

And the years ahead? To paraphrase Dixit Joshi from in his essay below: austerity does not mean we must endure a poverty of aspiration. Finances notwithstanding, all aspects of the OCHS's core work are in good health: from the successes of the online education initiative to the steady growth of the library collection and from the collegial Wednesday lunches to the expanding programme of lectures, seminars, and conferences. All these and more can be seen in this report and form the foundation for continued success.

The Board of Governors is pleased to ratify this report and continues to invite people with vision to join us and all at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies in building this international institution into something we can be proud of for generations to come.

***Lord Navnit Dholakia, OBE DL***  
***Chairman of the Board of Governors***

## Dating of reports

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The OCHS Board of Governors Report covers the academic year 2009–10. The financials are reported according to our financial year (January–December, 2009).

## **OCHS: Helping to build a new society**

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### **Remarks by Dixit A Joshi, Deutsche Bank, OCHS Board of Governors Dinner, 28 June 2010**

I truly believe that the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies has made a formidable contribution to Hindu studies and its relevance to the modern world over the last thirteen years. And with our support will continue to enrich understanding of the Hindu traditions for many years to come.

I also believe we now stand at a crossroads. The failings of the market, and of the banks in particular, over the past two years have been written about at length. The choices before us reflect what has been called the 'new austerity'. But I do not believe that we must endure a poverty of aspiration, nor reduce the depth or quality of our thinking.

### **The search for balance**

Perhaps now more than ever, it is time for different perspectives and different voices to be heard in the debate about the future of our society. We face big questions: about deficit reduction; the role of the state; the best way to regulate, to tax and to spend.

These are questions that cannot be answered by recourse to the same thinking that created the financial crisis.

As a society, we must seek out and encourage alternative voices, from traditions rooted elsewhere than in Anglo-Saxon capitalism. Not because those Anglo-Saxon traditions are necessarily wrong, although they certainly have their failings, but because we must enrich the quality of our thinking and debate with the teachings of cultures and traditions that have proven they can withstand the pressures of time; traditions that draw their inspiration not from the efficiency of the machine but from the balance of the system.

What is important now is that we learn from what has happened and move forward together, as a society, to build not a new machine but a more balanced system.

Modern life is noisy and fast. We have unprecedented access to information but little time to acquire knowledge. The internet can tell me five hundred ways to do something but it cannot give me the wisdom to know which is right.

And so I believe there is a space, indeed an urgent need, in our society for a clear Hindu voice: academic in approach, broad in composition and inclusive in tone.

The Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies provides such a voice.

### **Bringing clarity to complexity**

The OCHS gives us a deeper understanding of the Hindu traditions. These traditions are complex and bear closer inspection. The OCHS provides a focus for this work and an important touch-point for Hindu scholars around the world.

I know from my professional life that the best way to understand complexity is through rigorous and detailed analysis. And we rely on some of the best minds in the business to bring clarity to the seemingly impenetrable fog of data at our disposal.

My business trades many hundreds of millions of pounds of shares a day, and yet I can know with absolute precision what the business is doing at any given moment – because our people are dedicated to a rigorous analysis of what we do and have created not just the ability to assimilate facts but to turn those facts into knowledge.

The market operates on the principle of free flowing information, publicly available to all. What makes the difference is your ability to turn that information into insight. And from insight to action.

The Hindu traditions go back thousands of years, and are a rich tapestry of knowledge and experience. To a layman it can be incredibly complex and a knowledge that is not always accessible, even to those who actively seek it.

The OCHS provides a focus for the academic study of Hinduism, and as well as bringing together an incredible range of information about the Hindu traditions, its students from all over the world provide us with an understanding of the relationship between those texts. Of seeking out not just what has passed but why it matters.

### **The connection**

The Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies provides a connection between Hindu thinking and the challenges we face as a global society.

It has always been of great interest to me that the challenges we face today have so often been faced before. The recent economic turmoil has many parallels throughout the years and what is perhaps more important now than ever is our ability to learn from the past.

The present financial crisis has not been the first and it will not be the last. From the Tulip Bubble in 1637, through the South Sea and Mississippi bubbles in 1720, to the Wall Street crash in 1929: there is no accounting for the madness of crowds.

And each of these crises had at its root the same simple causes – assumptions about risk and value that were unfounded, and an inability amongst their protagonists to learn from the lessons of the past.

This time around, the arena was property – starting with the US sub-prime housing market. But it's not so different from tulips. People underestimated the risks and overestimated the value of assets – just as they had done with Tulips in the seventeenth century and shares in the future of the new world in the eighteenth.

And what was true then remains true now: that risk exists, and the ability to manage it provides us with a way to balance the system. But for that to happen, balance has to be a specific objective. To simply perfect the mechanism only serves to speed up the crisis, to inflate the bubble faster.

Better that we understand all elements of the system, holistically, and be prepared to use that understanding to apply the brakes. To take a longer term view that considers more than just short term profit.

We do not put brakes on a car to make it go slower; they are there to enable us to go faster more safely. That is how we should view the wisdom of the past – as the brakes on our pursuit of the future, serving to get us there more safely.

### **The opportunity**

As a banker, I cannot help but see the opportunity for an investment here. In giving the centre my support, it is clear to me that the return to society far outweighs that which I could achieve alone.

For every additional student that passes through its doors, for every additional clip viewed on YouTube, for every business leader coached; there will be another voice in the debate that draws on Hindu thought.

And for every text collected and preserved, for every new insight into our past, and for every new parallel drawn to the present; there will be a stronger foundation and greater relevance for our Hindu traditions.

We have an opportunity to ignite a spark in people's minds. To help the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies reach across our society and light the fires of knowledge in all that it touches. And to build the traditions of our past into the foundations of our future.

I believe that we have before us an opportunity to invest not just in the Centre for Hindu Studies but in the quality of thought and debate that will help to shape our future.

And, for me, that's an investment opportunity too good to turn down.

## Academic report

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The academic year 2009–10 has seen a full and interdisciplinary programme of lectures and seminars. The OCHS has continued to develop and to be highly relevant to contemporary discussions about Hinduism and religion more generally. The OCHS has provided undergraduate and postgraduate teaching for the Theology and Oriental Studies faculties, has offered high quality lectures and seminar series, and has continued to develop its research programmes within the research structure formed two years ago. It has developed its publications, both books in the Routledge Hindu Studies Series and the OUP *Journal of Hindu Studies*, and has continued to attract scholars to Oxford from around the world.

### Academic programmes

During the academic year 2009-10 the OCHS offered the following programme (see appendix for full details):

#### Michaelmas Term 2009

##### ***Hinduism I: Themes and Textual Sources***

Professor Gavin Flood

##### ***Towards an existential textology of the so-called "Sanskrit epics"***

Dr. Simon Brodbeck (Cardiff)

##### ***Shivdasani Lectures and Seminars***

Professor Makarand Paranjape (JNU) offered two lectures and two seminars on Gandhi:

- The Death of Gandhi (Lecture)
- The 'Sanatani' Mahatma (Seminar)
- Hind Swaraj in Our Times (Lecture)
- Film: *Lage Raho Munna Bhai* followed by *Gandhigiri* vs. Gandhism: The Afterlife of the Mahatma in *Lage Raho Munna Bhai* (Seminar).

##### ***Readings in Phenomenology***

Professor Gavin Flood .

##### ***Readings in the Jayakhya Samhita***

Professor Gavin Flood

##### ***Elementary Sanskrit***

Prof. Gavin Flood

## Hilary Term 2010

### *Hinduism II*

Professor Gavin Flood

### *'Three Worlds of the Heart: Theological and Literary Dimensions of the Bhakti Sutra'*

Dr Graham Schweig (Christopher Newport University)

### *The Majewski Lecture – 'Jaina-Hindu Syncretism in Gujarat: The Trimūrti-Temple of the Akram Vijñān Mārg'*

Dr. Peter Flügel (SOAS),

### *Shivdasani Lectures and Seminars*

Dr Diwarkar Acharya (Kyoto) offered four lectures and seminars on the early Pāñcarātra and the Upanishads.

- Early Vaishnava Texts from Nepal' (Lecture).
- Negative Flashes of 'neti neti' and Realisation of Brahman (Lecture)
- Readings in the Jayottaratantra (Seminar)
- Readings in the Jayottaratantra (Seminar)

### *Mystical Traditions in Comparative Perspective*

- 'Islamic Mystical traditions 1 – Sufis in India' Dr. Talib Muhammad (Oxford).
- 'Christian Mystical Traditions 1 – The Relevance of Christian Mysticism. Professor Oliver Davies (Kings).
- Christian Mystical Traditions 2 – Understanding Apophaticism – Prof. George Pattison (Oxford).
- The Jewish Roots of Christian Mysticism – Prof. Guy Stroumsa (Oxford).
- Buddhist Meditation – Dr Sarah Shaw

### *Hindu Theology: A series of seminars*

Prof Gavin Flood (Oxford)

### *Readings in Phenomenology*

Prof. Gavin Flood

### *Readings in the Jayakhya Samhita*

Prof Gavin Flood

### *Elementary Sanskrit*

Prof. Gavin Flood

## Trinity Term 2010

### *Shivdasani Lectures and Seminars*

Dr. Ravi Gupta (William and Mary College, USA).

- Creation and Chaos in the Bhagavata Purana (two lectures)
- Readings in the Bhagavata Purana (two lectures)

### *Wahlstrom Lecture: 'Radical Monotheism of the Qur'an and Equitheism of the Bhagavata Purana: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Allah and Krishna'*

Prof. Carl Olson (Allegheny).

### *Readings in Phenomenology*

Prof Gavin Flood

### *Readings in the Jayakhya Samhita*

Prof Gavin Flood

### *Elementary Sanskrit*

Prof Gavin Flood

## Tutorials

Throughout the year Prof. Flood has done tutorials for postgraduate students in the following programmes:

- MPhil South Asian Studies (Trinity Term, one student)
- DPhil Supervision for Theology (three students)
- DPhil Supervision for Oriental Studies (one student)
- External PhD Supervision (two students)

Dr Frazier has done undergraduate tutorials with two students.

## Research

The research programmes at the centre in the areas outlined elsewhere (namely in Hinduism and Modernity, Classical Hinduism, Comparative Philosophy and Religion, and Historical Perspectives on Hindu Cultures) have developed over the year.

Hinduism and Modernity. A welcome development in this area has been a proposed project 'Bengali Vaishnavism in the Modern Period', under the direction of Dr. F. Sardella to begin a systematic study of this tradition since the latter part of the eighteenth century. Dr. Sardella recently received a PhD from Gothenburg University on Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, a notable figure in this period, which won the best thesis award for that year, for all of Scandinavia. He will spend two terms as a visiting student to the OCHS. The project has been approved by the Academic Planning Committee.

The OCHS is heading a research project on 'Bridges and Barriers to Hindu-Christian relations in the UK', funded by the Department of Culture, Media and Sports, and commissioned by the Hindu-Christian Forum. The research will be carried out in partnership with the Oxford Centre for Christianity and Culture. The project aims to bring together both scholarly and community perspectives on the future of religious dialogue, exploring theological and practical issues that arise in the relationship between the two religions. The final report will offer perspectives on the problems, possibilities, goals, and future of inter-religious engagement between Hindu and Christian communities in the UK.

Dr Sardella has also been instrumental in developing the Sociology of Religion at Jadavpur University, Kolkata with the intellectual support of the OCHS and the University of Gothenburg. A conference was held in Kolkata in June 2009 at which Prof Flood presented a paper. The proceedings will be published. This is envisaged as the first in an ongoing series of conferences on this new area in the Indian Academy.

OCHS scholars have been active within Philosophy and Comparative Religion. Dr Frazier is completing a book on subjectivity in religions and in March, Prof Flood gave a paper at the Centre for Subjectivity Studies, University of Copenhagen, on the Phenomenology of Religion. This is part of a revival or re-imagining of the Phenomenology of Religion in the contemporary context. A follow up conference will be held in Oxford in the Michaelmas term 2010. Prof. Flood is also completing a book on the importance of religion for Wiley-Blackwell which will be published in the Autumn 2010 or possibly Spring 2011.

The OCHS held a very successful conference on categories in Indian philosophy, 'Thinking Inside the Box,' in October 2009. It was attended by some eminent scholars and the proceedings are in the process of being published. The book is being edited by Dr Frazier. The conference explored the use of categories in Indian philosophy, including



linguistic categories, aesthetic and emotional categories, universals and logical categories, metaphysical and ontological categories, and other possible processes of categorisation across different philosophical schools. The goal was to shed a clear light on the modes of reasoning in the Indian philosophical traditions, illuminating its relation to Western methods, and its unique contribution to philosophy across the globe. A list of participants is as follows:

- Prof Johannes Bronkhorst (Université de Lausanne), ‘Ontological Categories in Early Indian Philosophy.’
- Dr Jonardon Ganeri (University of Sussex), ‘The Seven Category Ontology Reaffirmed,’
- Dr. Eivind Kahrs (University of Cambridge) ‘On *Bhava* the Ultimate Category’
- Prof Stephen Phillips (University of Texas, Austin) ‘Nyaya’s Pramana (Knowledge Generators as Natural Kinds)’
- Mikel Burley (University Of Leeds), ‘The Analysis of Experience in Classical Samkhya’  
Dr Jan Westerhoff (Durham) ‘Madhyamaka and Ontological Categories’
- Dr Shashi Prabha Kumar (JNU) ‘The Concept of Categories in Vaisesika Philosophy’
- Dr Will Johnson (Cardiff) ‘From Ontology to Taxonomy, the Jaina Colonisation of the Universe’
- Chairs and respondents apart from the speakers included Dr. Jessica Frazier, Prof Christopher Minkowski, Dr Nick Allen, and Prof Gavin Flood.

Within the Classical Hinduism field of research, a project to study the Bhagavata Purana by Dr Ravi Gupta and Dr Ken Valpey was approved by the APC. Dr Gupta and Dr Valpey plan to translate key passages of the text and hold an international conference on it. Built in to the project is the possibility of developing a critical edition of the text which would be a long-term project.

‘Sakta Traditions, History, Doctrine and Practice’ is a project under the direction and management of Bjarne Oleson (Aarhus University) and Prof Gavin Flood. Research in the Saiva traditions has been quite extensively developed in recent years. Important work has been done on the Skanda Purana, the Pasupatas, the Saiva Siddhanta, the non-dualistic Saiva traditions, and their philosophical articulation in the Pratyabhijna. But less work has been done on what might be called Sakta traditions, those traditions, tantric and non-tantric, focused on an independent Goddess (Devi) or on Siva’s power (*sakti*). Research has been done on the Kubjika tradition and on Sakta oriented Saiva traditions but a sustained research programme that inquires into the history, doctrine and practices of what might be called ‘Saktism’ is a desideratum which this project seeks to address. A conference will be organised on the theme for next year (April 2011).

### **Links with other universities**

The OCHS has continued to develop links with other universities in the UK (Edinburgh, Liverpool, Reading, SOAS, Cambridge) through teaching and collaboration. Such links have also been established in India and America through Memoranda of Understanding with Jadavpur University, Kolkata, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, MSU Baroda, Aarhus University, and the University of Florida. We also hope to develop further links with JNU in Delhi and other Indian universities.

## The future

The core activity of the OCHS is the academic study of Hinduism.

This means:

- providing lectures and seminars for formal programmes within the Theology Faculty Track III and the new joint honours degree in Theology and Oriental Studies;
- providing teaching for undergraduates and postgraduates on the MSt Study of Religions and the MPhil in South Asian Studies;
- providing teaching for Sanskrit Prelims in the Theology Faculty from October 2010, which was approved by the Theology Faculty Board Hilary 2010;
- providing lectures and seminars of a more general nature (such as the continuing education programmes);
- publishing;
- public broadcasting; and
- providing reliable information for public bodies such as the BBC and government agencies.

We intend to see that this core activity continues and develops in the future and that we also develop in new directions.

Such directions will include:

- the continuing development of our website as a resource for academics and the wider public, a site that links to others such the University site being developed which focuses on the South Asia Studies area;
- to provide informative lectures available on line; and
- to develop the library through donations of books and funds.

The overall aim is to make the OCHS a vibrant centre where scholars can interact; which provides academic programmes of local, national, and international importance; which provides general information on Hinduism to public bodies; and provides a focus for contemporary Hindu cultural events.

Over the next five to ten years we need to develop a strong personnel base of both academic and administrative staff. Our vision for the OCHS is that it becomes the foremost centre for the study of Hinduism setting a trend for the rest of the world. We will also continue to develop the five year projection.

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## Fellows and students

### Fellowships

#### Shivdasani Visiting Fellowship

***Dr. Makarand Paranjape, Michaelmas term***

Makarand Paranjape is a Professor of English at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. A critic, poet, fiction writer, and literary columnist with over thirty books and 100 published academic papers to his credit, he is also the author of more 250 reviews, notes, and popular articles. His latest book is *Another Canon: Indian Texts and Traditions in English* (Anthem Press, forthcoming). While at the OCHS he gave a series of talks on Mahatma Gandhi.

***Dr Diwakar Acharya, Hilary term***

Dr Acharya studied Sanskrit with traditional teachers, beginning with his father, and at universities in Nepal and India (MA from Sampurnananda Sanskrit University, Varanasi), before starting his teaching career as a Lecturer at Mahendra Sanskrit University. He has also worked for the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project, and for the Nepalese-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project. In 2004 he was awarded a Ph.D. by the University of Hamburg for a thesis on Vācaspati Miśra's *Tattvasamikṣā*. A revised version of this was published in 2006. Since April 2006 he has been a Visiting Foreign Lecturer at Kyoto University. His research covers a wide range of topics in Sanskrit literature, Sanskritic religious and philosophical traditions, and Nepalese history. He is currently working on what appears to be the only surviving Solar (Saura) tantra, and on two unpublished early Pañcarātra (Vaiṣṇava tantric) scriptures—all of these works he discovered in early Nepalese palm-leaf manuscripts.

***Dr Ravi M. Gupta, Trinity term***

Dr. Gupta is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at The College of William and Mary (USA) and the first alumnus of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies to become a Shivdasani Visiting Fellow. He completed his D.Phil. in Hindu Studies at Oxford, following which he was awarded a Junior Research Fellowship at Linacre College. Dr. Gupta has taught a variety of courses in Hinduism and World Religions, and is the recipient of the David Hughes Award for excellence in teaching.

Dr. Gupta is the author of *The Chaitanya Vaishnava Vedanta of Jiva Gosvami* (Routledge, 2007) as well as several articles in academic journals. At present, he and Dr. Kenneth Valpey are working on an abridged translation of the Bhagavata Purana, to be published by Columbia University Press. Dr. Gupta lectures widely in India and the United States, and currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Society for Hindu-Christian Studies.

**New students**

**Rahul Ahluwalia**

St Benet's Hall

Rahul is studying for a BA (PPE).

**Kristian Akselberg**

Pembroke College

Kristian is studying for an M.St. in Theology.

**Wahid Amin**

Pembroke College

Wahid is studying for an M.St. in the Study of Religions. His main interests are in Islam, philosophy, Hinduism, and anthropology.

**Charlotte Batchelor**

Regent's Park

Charlotte is working on her M.St. in the Study of Religion with a focus on Hinduism and Islam.

**Hrvoje Cargonja**

St John's College

Hrvoje is a visiting from the University of Zagreb on the OSI/FCO Chevening Programme. He is studying religious experience and the phenomenology of religion.

**Beatrice Cernuta**

Worcester College

Beatrice is studying Sanskrit and classics

**Kelly A. Dhru**

University College

A graduate of Gujarat National Law University, Kelly is doing a post-graduate course in law. Her main interest is in jurisprudence and political theory with a focus on relating Hindu philosophy to legal philosophy.

**Brian Dunn**

Regents Park

Brian is studying for his D.Phil. in Theology. His main areas of interest are comparative theology, Ramanuja, Srivaisnava and Visistadvaitin thought, Anglican sacramental theology, and second-century patristics.

**Paul Gerstmayer**

Balliol College

Paul is studying for a BA in Sanskrit and Oriental Studies. His main interests are Sanskrit, Indology, and comparative religion.

**Meijia Ling**

Wadham College

Meijia is studying for a BA in Sanskrit.

**Despoina Potari**

Lady Margaret Hall

Despoina is studying for an M.Phil. in Political Theory. Her main fields of interest are political ideologies, concepts of power, and conceptions of the 'political'.

**Anna Rawlings**

Mansfield

Anna's studies include a spatial analysis of Hindutva, the relationship between the brahmin, renouncer, and king in Hindu society and narrative analysis with reference to subalternity. She also has an interest in Islam, writing the particular and universal aspects of Islam into a single narrative.

**Chao Ren**

Pembroke College

Chao is studying History on a Visiting Student Programme.

**Sitara Thobani**

St Antony's

Sitara is studying for a D.Phil. in Social/Cultural Anthropology. Her areas of interest include South Asian Diaspora Studies and Indian Classical Dance.

**Jacob Louis Waldenmaier**

Wycliffe Hall

Having previously studied at the Ashland Theological College, USA, Jacob is in Oxford studying for a D.Phil. in the Study of Religions.

**Holly Welsh**

Regents Park College

Holly is studying for a BA in Theology.

**Richard Williams**

Wolfson College

BA in Theology, Oxford University, 2009. Currently reading for a MPhil in Modern South Asian Studies. His areas of interest are Saivism, approaches to ritual possession, gender in religious literature, and Brajbhasha devotional poetry.

**Yi Zhu**

Wolfson College

Yi is studying historical linguistics and Sanskrit.

**Anton Zykov**

St Antony's

Anton is a student of Hindi, Urdu, and Indian/Pakistani history at the Oriental Institute. He has a particular interest in the history of caste and *dalits* among non-Hindu communities.

**Awards for OCHS students****Ambalal I. Patel Bursary**

Richard Williams

**Ramlal Patel Bursary**

Paul Gerstmayr

**Ashvatta Narayan Bursaries**

Beatrice Cernuta

Meijia Ling

**Gupta Dan Bursaries**

Corin Golding

Kiyokazu Okita

**Jiva Goswami Bursary**

Hrvoje Cargonja

**Krishnavarma Silver Medal**

Jason Birch

Rembert Lutjeharms

**Pandit Abaji Bursary**

Tristan Elby

**Patel Book Grant**

Yi Zhu

**Prof. Makhan Lal Roy Chaudhury Book Prize**

Tristan Elby

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**Continuing Education Department**

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**CED online**

In 2009–10 we expanded our online course offering to four courses per term to a total of 146 students compared to 78 the previous year. These courses are Understanding Hindu Identity, Vedas and Upanishads, Mahabharata and Ramayana, and Bhagavad-gita. It is expected that at least two new courses are to be added in 2010–11: 'Krishna, Vishnu, Shiva, and the Goddess: Readings from the Puranas', and 'A History of Yoga'.

Each course consists of lecture notes, audio, and video materials, and discussion forums. Tutoring has been led by Dr Nick Sutton along with Rembert Lutjeharms, and Dr Jessica Frazier.

The courses continue to be well-received and feedback is overwhelmingly positive. We currently have capacity for at least twice as many students and can scale easily with extra tutors. The great need is advertising. The courses are currently advertised on a shoestring budget through Google Ads, however the positive response suggests that better advertising could multiply our enrolment numbers.

**Classroom-based courses**

In the year 2009–10 we had 164 enrolments in our regional centres with a course taught in Neasden in the autumn, three courses this year in Harrow despite variable numbers, continuing courses in Birmingham, and final modules taught in Oxford, where teaching has now been brought to a close for the present time as our dedicated students there have completed the range of courses. We have reviewed our regional teaching after eight years of provision, and plan in future to offer one course per year in rotation across various centres. By adopting this new strategy we will be able to add new locations to our list of courses, reaching a wider community. When we are not teaching in a particular location, we will offer one lecture to the community there to maintain interest and engagement in that region.

## Partnerships

Our relationship with the Dutch business and management organisation, Avicenna, is continuing with Prof. Gavin Flood, Anuradha Dooney, and Shaunaka Rishi Das being asked to deliver lectures to groups visiting Oxford and in the Netherlands.

## Library

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The OCHS Library works closely with Oxford's Indian Institute Library. It currently holds approximately 9,000 titles, mostly in the fields of Vaishnavism, Vedanta, Puranas, and comparative theology. The Library is continually expanding its collection in those areas even further, to make it a relevant research library for the Centre and the wider Oxford academic community.

The catalogue of the entire Library collection is scheduled for completion before Michaelmas 2010 and will be available online through the OCHS website.

The Library has received substantial donations this year. Donors for 2009–10 include Shaunaka Rishi Das, Ken Valpey, Kiyokazu Okita, Mandakranta Bose, Diwakar Acharya, Nilima Chitgopekar, Makarand Paranjape, and Gateen Patel.

## Internet

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The OCHS website ([www.ochs.org.uk](http://www.ochs.org.uk)) continues to be 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 most OCHS lectures and seminars since 1998 available on the OCHS website. We also have a very successful podcast of lectures and seminars.

The internet is also one of our main avenues for publicising our forthcoming lectures and seminars. These are all noted on the website and visitors may subscribe to a variety of regular email notifications. The lecture list has more than 3,000 subscribers, with new subscribers signing on regularly.

Our monthly email Friends Updates and six-monthly email Newsletter have 4,000 and 6,000 subscribers respectively, more than doubling over the past year.

## Publishing

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### The Journal of Hindu Studies

The Journal of Hindu Studies is in its third year, and has succeeded in publishing issues by respected scholars reflecting a range of topics and disciplines. Themes have included Hermeneutics, History and Historiography, and Arts and Aesthetics, and further issues on Gender and Mysticism, and Hindu Reasoning are planned for the coming academic year, with articles by scholars such as Patrick Olivelle, Mandakranta Bose, Anantanand Rambachan, and others. The Journal recognises however that it is facing a difficult financial situation in the publishing industry, and it will focus on marketing and awareness in the coming year, with an increased presence at major international conferences. The Journal will also be seeking new editors to deal with the increasing workload.

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

The Routledge Hindu Studies Series continues to grow with the publication of Mandakranta Bose's *Women in the Hindu Tradition: Rules, Roles and Exceptions* (2010). For a full list of publications see the appendix. Authors and OCHS consider the pricing policy for the series by Routledge to be somewhat expensive. OCHS has initiated discussion about this and proposed the idea that after two years authors be allowed to publish their books in paperback in India.

### **Archaeology and Text**

The proceedings of the Archaeology and Text Conference were published by Oxford University Press: Himanshu Prabha Ray (ed.) *Archaeology and Text: The Temple in South Asia* (OUP, 2010).

## **Development activities and achievements**

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### **Endowment campaign**

Since 2007 we have been laying a foundation for an Endowment Campaign. In 2009 we established an Endowment Campaign Committee consisting of Mr Ramesh Venkataraman of Bridgepoint (Chair) and Mr Dixit Joshi of Barclays Capital.

This committee's brief is to expand committee membership to include people from the corporate world, high-net-worth individuals, and those with specific expertise and networks; to plan and run our Endowment Campaign; and to identify potential donors;

We aim to have a fully-developed committee by November 2010.

### **The Bhumi Project: Plans for Generational Change for a Living Planet**

This is a partnership between the United Nations, the Alliance of Religion and Conservation, and the OCHS, resulting in a seven-year plan pioneered with UK faith communities.

Consultations with Hindu leaders, temples, and communities to develop their plans to protect their environment and educate their youth in environmental issues were facilitated by the OCHS.

One milestone in the project was a conference hosted by His Royal Highness, The Prince Philip, and the Secretary General of the United Nations, at Windsor Castle.

The Norwegian government provided funding of £10,000 to employ Gateen Patel as a part-time administrator. Devika Jina has come on board as an intern and our Leicester Friends group has pulled together over 100 volunteers to organise a major weekend event at Leicester Race-course in 2011.

### **A Walk in the Andes**

Our OCHS Board of Governors member, Harish Patel, with his wife Gitaben, took off to South America and went for a walk in the Andes, on the Inca Trail, asking their friends to sponsor their walk before they left. Thank you to Harish and Gitaben and their friends for sponsoring so generously. More than £15,000 was raised for the OCHS – a significant boost in a depressed economy.



### **Leicester Three Peaks Challenge 2010**

On a similar intrepid path are Raam Chauhan and Aarti Hansrani, two of our Leicester Friends who will be scaling the highest peaks respectively of Scotland, Wales, and England – all in twenty-four hours on 27 June! And on a similar generous note they are doing it in support of the OCHS aiming to raise £1,500.

### **Inaugural Ford Lecture**

On 1 February 2010, HE Nalin Surie, India's High Commissioner to the UK, delivered the inaugural Ford Lecture, his topic was 'India: Shifting Roles and Challenges in the New Decade'. The Ford Lecture and attendant dinner are in recognition of the years of support that Mr and Mrs Alfred Ford and family have shown to the Centre since its inception.

### **Xmas Campaign 2009**

Our annual attempt to institute a new Hindu tradition of giving at Xmas raised nearly £2000 in 2009.

### **BBC Gandhi documentary**

Dr Jessica Frazier acted as consultant on a very successful three-part BBC documentary on Gandhi, for which she and the OCHS gained credit. Not content with that, Jessica then ended up in front of the camera to present a BBC programme on Ayurveda, a kind of reality-TV-meets-ancient-medical-tradition programme.

### **Rig Veda and the Credit Crunch**

In August, Deloitte the major international accountancy and consultancy firm launched an internal Hindu Network. OCHS Director, Shaunaka Rishi Das, was asked to give the keynote address on the evening – the topic, 'The Rig Veda and the Credit Crunch'. This was later published as an article in Business India. This led to further talks at Ernst and Young and Barclay's Capital.

### **BBC Religion and Ethics Website**

Any search of the internet using words associated with Hindu traditions and culture will quickly bring you into contact with the BBC Religion and Ethics website. Discussions between BBC producers and the OCHS discerned a number of improvements that could be made to the current presentations about Hindu culture on the site.

Thus, forming a partnership, the BBC and the OCHS are working together to develop resources worthy of an international audience desirous of objective, articulate, and well presented information about Hinduism.

### **Friends of the OCHS (FOCHS)**

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

In December 2008, a gathering of CED alumni in Leicester became the inaugural meeting of the Friends of the OCHS-Leicester. Since then, monthly fund- and awareness-raising activities have been held and 30 kind Leicester Friends have signed up for monthly standing orders.

As the FOCHS-L developed from our CED courses, it's perhaps not surprising that the events have been largely educational with lectures on Hinduism in its modern contexts. Extra special thanks are due to Raj and Ramila Chauhan of Aartus and their team for making this all happen.

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

Inspired by the work of the Leicester Friends, Nitin and Meena Sodha decided to replicate the success in Birmingham with similar monthly events focussing on bringing people to the educational ethos of the OCHS and helping some of those Friends become regular donors.

### **City of London Friends of the OCHS**

Inspired by the work of the Leicester Friends and the Birmingham Friends (a pattern is developing), Pratik Dattani, Prashant Joshi, Dipesh Patel, and Dhruv Patel have got behind the formation of a City of London Friends group. The direction of Friends groups is driven by its members and the City Friends group is working towards a one-day summer school, 'A Day of Leadership from Indian Sources' to be held in Oxford on 7 August.

### **Other Friends Groups**

The Friends of the OCHS has become one of the most dynamic aspects of life at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies and a key part of our bridge-building ethic. We wish to develop the current groups and encourage new groups to form.

### **Annual Campaign Consultation**

In March, a group of concerned friends gathered in London to discuss the financial needs of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies.

The main item of business was the formation of an Annual Campaign Committee. We achieved success in attracting the first members of this Committee, namely, Yaksha Patel, London; Meena Sodha, Birmingham; Raj Chauhan, Leicester; and Pratik Dattani, City of London. We have left it up to this group to come together by email and chose their own Chair.

The remit of the Committee suggested by the meeting is one of planning, co-ordinating, empowering, and marketing the OCHS efforts at annual financial sustainability – developing friends and funds. We proposed that they gradually begin to co-ordinate the Friends of OCHS initiatives, co-opt teams and projects which can bring value to the Centre, and maximise creativity, involvement, and commitment among friends and potential friends.

It was recognised at the meeting that there is a lot of work being done for the Centre by our Friends and we are very indebted to everyone for their concern and their contribution.

### **Board of Governors Dinner**

The 2010 Board of Governors Dinner will be held on Monday 28 June at Oxford Town Hall. This year we again invited Friends and Benefactors of the Centre to sponsor tables of twelve seats for £400 with principal sponsorships of £1000. Sponsors this year

include, Dixit Joshi, Anita Martins, Nitin Palan, Harish Patel, Kirit Patel, Jayesh Popat, Vikas Pota, Divyesh Tailor, and Markand Upadhyaya.

This year's special guest speaker is Dixit A. Joshi, Managing Director and Head of European Equities at Barclays Capital. Mr Joshi is an active philanthropist and also a leading member of the OCHS Endowment Campaign Committee.

## Interns

This year we were very pleased to welcome Mr Gateen Patel as an intern for six months. Gateen has been a good friend of the Centre since 2001 when he arrived in Oxford to study at Oxford Brookes University. Since then he has gone on to complete an MA at King's College, London, and spent time travelling in India. His role at the Centre went on to become a paid part-time post administering the Bhumi Project.

This year we are pleased to welcome Devika Jina as our new intern working on the Bhumi Project.

Internships provide value to the Centre and allow young people to gain valuable experience and contacts. We have an interns page on the website at [www.ochs.org.uk/faculty-and-staff/internships](http://www.ochs.org.uk/faculty-and-staff/internships) encouraging new recruits.

## 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 £264,500 this year.

Gateen Patel worked for seven months on the Bhumi project on a voluntary basis ensuring the project kept its momentum.

The OCHS was very fortunate to receive the services of a very talented film-maker, Mr Pavel Tomanec, at greatly reduced rates. Pavel 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.

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 and our printers Aartus Ltd, Leicester. Savings from these sources amount to £20,000.

Special thanks are also due to David Smith, Washington DC, who funds and maintains our web server, including transferring all our sites to a new server this year. David has been the backbone of our website since its inception, in 2002, and is responsible for keeping us online in hardware and software, directing and guiding us, and developing our website to its current success. These services saved us £6,000.

Danny Patel and Showki Aziz, from Quest Software have kept our server going since 2003. We would like to thank them for their work, maintaining the server, and donating computers for our student room all together saving us £7,200.

A new friend of the Centre this year is Mr Matthew Poe (USA) who came forward to edit all our new audio lectures to a high standard.

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 Syama Dasi (book-keeping), Dr Nicholas Sutton (teaching and curriculum development), Anuradha Dooney (teaching), Meru Ostlund (cooking), Sanjay Gadhvi (mobile phone contract), and Jyoti Soneji (CED Student Secretary). The Director also continues to work on a voluntary basis.

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.

Total donations for 2009–10 (at 14 June) exceeded £140,000.

Kamal Adatia, Sudershna Aggarwal, Vallabh Aghera, Hemal Amin, Navneet Arora, Arnab Banerji, Bipana Bantwana, Nilesh Bathia, Veronica Benjamin, Sandy Bharat, Prakash Bhundia, Bharat Bhundia, Mandakranta Bose, Jugdish Budhan, Babu Chandarana, Ashwin Narandas Chandrani, Ramila Chauhan, Raj Chauhan, Raam Chauhan, Ritesh Chauhan, Hitendra Chudasama, Sandhya Chundhur, Pursottam Dabasia, Mahaprabhu Das, Urvashi Dattani, Anuradha Dooney, Emma Flood, Sunil Gadhia, Suresh Gohil, Kanu Gohil, Nitesh Gor, Martin Haigh, Aarti Hansrani, Gaby Hock, Rachappa Ingalalli, Jay Jina, Ranjit Johri, Vijay Kumar Juneja, Ashwin Kagdadia, Upendra Kalan, Krishna Kalyan, Ramesh Kansagra, Deepan Khiroya, Bharatraj Kiri, Ketan Kotecha, Gopal And Elizabeth Krishna, Bhavini Ladwa, Ananya Lahiri, Jayendra Lakhani, Yashvant Lodhia, R. N. Majithia, Eric Makinen, Mayuri Mandavia, Anjna Mandora, Anita Martins, Bhavit Mehta, Sunil Mistry, Jitendra Mistry, Maaya Modha, Harsit Nakarja, Sachin Nandha, Dennis Nichols, Bjarne Olesen, Vinod Pabari, Hemant Kumar Padhya, Preeti Padia, Ravi Parekh, Mahendra Parmar, Govind Patel, Jyoti Patel, Kamlesh Patel, Pyarelal Patel, Raju Patel, Rajnikant Patel, Surendra Patel, Harish Patel, Ragini Patel, Jayesh Patel, Parimal Patel, Jayant Chhaganbhai Patel, Y. M. Patel, J. J. Patel, Nirav Patel, Yogesh Patel, Kamlesh Patel, H Patel, Umesh Patel, R Patel, Dipesh Patel, Jagruti Patel, Manoj Patel, Hemang Popat, Jayesh Popat, Prashun Popat, Kamlesh Purohit, Priti Raichura-Tailor, Dilip Raithatha, Prafulla Raja, Bheeshma Rajagopalan, Pratibha Rajani, Rami Ranger, Navinchandra Raval, Dechen Rochard, Satish Ruparelia, Shyam Ruparelia, Shaumit Saglani, Shila Sampat, Geeta Sampath, Neerja Sethi, Nirmal Sethia, Milen Shah, Chuni Shah, S. K. Sharma, Pravir Sharma, Azad Shivdasani, Shalini Sinha, Mahesh Sinhal, Nitin Sodha, Rajesh Somani, Saket Soni, Chitresh Soni, Diana Stevenson, Raakhi Sunak, Usha Kiran Sunak, Divyesh Tailor, Mohammed Talib, Has Mukh Tanna, Navin Thaker, Pramod Thakkar, Sameer Thakkar, Manish Thakrar, Subhash Thakrar, Atul Thakrar, Chandra Thanki, Manish Thanki, Raju Thanki, Shobhaben Trivedi, Peter Tutt, Ash Unadkat, Markand Upadhyaya, Pradeep Vasudevan, Sushil Wadhvani

BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, Bhaktivedanta Manor, East London Bhakta Mandal, Euro Car parts, FOCHS Leicester, ISKCON Leicester, Kagdadia & Co., Kingsland Hotel, Medicentre UK, N. Sethia Foundation, Phoenix Hotel, Popat Vaishnava Heritage Trust, Rags and Svets Ltd, SKS Swaminarayan Temple, Shaheed Nanak Singh Foundation, Sunak Ltd

## **Accounts and finance January–December 2009**

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The Centre's finances continue to recover from effects of the global economic difficulties which led to a number of regular donors being unable to maintain previous levels of giving.

The Centre has continued to benefit greatly from voluntary work and 'in kind' donations – these have amounted to more than £264,500 in this period – which add great value to the Centre.

Upendra Kalan and Syama Dasi were our book-keepers for 2009. Our audit continues to be done by our accountants, 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 current Annual Revenue Campaign undertaken by Friends and Benefactors of the Centre.

Although there is no legal requirement for the OCHS to have its accounts audited, the Board has always considered it important to do so. Such prudence is important to inspire trust from the public, our principle source of support.

## **Approval**

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This report was approved by the Board of Governors and Trustees on 28 June 2010 and signed on its behalf by Prof. Richard Gombrich.

## **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

**Finance Administrator**

Mr Upendra Kalan

**Academic Administrator**

Dr Jessica Frazier

**Librarian**

Mr Rembert Lutjeharms

**Development Administrator**

Mr Lal Krishna

**Administrative Secretary**

Miss Judit Bajusz

**Domestic Bursar**

Meru Ostlund

**Book keeping**

Syama Dasi

**Fellows**

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Prof. Gavin Flood  
Dr Jessica Frazier  
Dr Sanjukta Gupta  
Mr Rembert Lutjeharms  
Peggy Morgan  
Dr Kenneth Valpey

**Senior Associate Fellows**

Prof. Francis X. Clooney, SJ  
Prof. Thomas Hopkins  
Prof. Joseph O'Connell  
Prof. M. N. Narasimhachary

**Continuing Education Department**

Dr Nicholas Sutton  
Ms Anuradha Dooney

**Patrons Council**

HE The Indian High Commissioner  
Baroness Prasher, CBE  
The Maharaja of Jodhpur

The Maharaja of Puri  
Mr Ranjit Sondhi, CBE

### **Academic Council**

Prof. Gavin Flood (Chair)  
Dr Gillian Evison  
Dr Jessica Frazier  
Mr Rembert Lutjeharms  
Peggy Morgan  
Prof. Polly O’Hanlon  
Prof. George Pattison  
Shaunaka Rishi Das

### **Academic Advisory Council**

Dr N. J. Allen  
Dr Rohit Barot  
Prof. John Brockington  
Prof. Judith Brown  
Prof. F. X. Clooney, SJ  
Dr Gillian Evison  
Prof. Bob Jackson  
Dr Dermot Killingley  
Prof. Ursula King  
Prof. Kim Knott  
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**

#### ***Directors***

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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### **Michaelmas Term, October–December 2009**

#### **Hinduism I: Themes and Textual Sources**

##### **Professor Gavin Flood**

This course offers a thematic and historical introduction to Hinduism for students of theology and religious studies. Focusing on the brahmanical tradition we explore the textual sources, categories, practices and social institutions that formed that tradition. Primary texts in translation provide the basis for reflection on issues such as dharma, renunciation, caste, and concepts of deity. We then move on to some of the major philosophical developments of the tradition, with particular emphasis on the Vedānta. The course raises theological and cultural questions about the relation between reason and practice, person and world, and society and gender. We conclude with a consideration of Hinduism and modernity.

#### **Shivdasani Lectures**

##### **Mahatma Gandhi at the OCHS**

##### **Dr. Makarand Paranjape**

1. The Death of Gandhi (lecture)
  2. Hind Swaraj in Our Times (seminar)
  3. The 'Sanatani' Mahatma (lecture)
- Film Lage Raho Munna Bhai



#### 4. Gandhigiri vs. Gandhiism: The Afterlife of the Mahatma in Lage Raho Munna Bhai (seminar)

These four, interrelated talks on Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) may be considered as an attempt to understand and articulate the coherence of an exemplary life. Given how he regarded it himself – ‘My life is my message’ – Gandhi invites to be read in terms of a consistency in his anubhav (original experience), vichar (thought and ideas), and achaar (conduct and action). To that extent, his is a life which sets itself up almost in opposition to modernity—almost, because it might be reductive to see Gandhi merely as an opponent of modernity. But if the primary tendency of modernity, as Gandhi himself described it in *Hind Swaraj* (1909), is centrifugal, then Gandhi’s lifework was contrary to modernity in being centripetal. The 100th anniversary of *Hind Swaraj*, then, affords us a special occasion to re-examine key facets of Gandhi’s life in an integral, rather than fragmentary fashion, asking what he has to say to our own times.

#### **Readings in Phenomenology**

##### **Professor 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 seminar series seeks to engage with some of the literature and fundamental concepts of phenomenology which underlie much work in theology and the phenomenology of religion. While the readings themselves are not directly about the phenomenology of religion, in order to understand it, we need to address these fundamental ideas and raise the basic questions of phenomenology. The aim is not so much a comprehensive overview of the phenomenological movement, but rather an attempt to come to grips with key phenomenological ideas that influence theology, the phenomenology of religion, and other areas in the human sciences.

#### **Readings in the Jayakhya Samhita**

##### **Professor Gavin Flood**

We continue reading through this long text; the ritual sections from chapter 10.

#### **Towards an Existential Textology of the so-called ‘Sanskrit epics’**

##### **Dr Simon Brodbeck, University of Cardiff**

The Ramayana tells of the war, on distant soil, between Rama Dasharatha of Ayodhya and Ravana’s demon hordes—in which Rama was the victor. The Mahabharata tells that story too, amongst many others, and orders business chronologically such that the righteous war Rama won is followed, as the generations pass, some distance northwest of Ayodhya, by the massacre of the inhabitants of Khandava Forest by Arjuna and Krishna, the massacre of practically all kshatriyas by the Pandavas as advised by Krishna at Kurukshetra, and, as the generations pass, by Janamejaya’s massacre of snakes at Takshashila, which was suspended on condition that the surviving snakes behave themselves. And in the meantime Krishna and the Vrishnis have all killed each other at Prabhasa. And the Harivamsha tells of what Krishna did before and after the business at Kurukshetra, which included licking various miscreants into shape.

## Hilary Term, January–March 2010

### Hinduism II

Prof. Gavin Flood

#### Three Worlds of the Heart: Theological and Literary Dimensions of the Bhakti Sutra

Dr Graham Schweig

Perhaps the shortest of the well-known sutra texts among Hindu traditions is The Bhakti Sutra of Narada, consisting only of 84 aphorisms. This work, however, possesses the most expressive and least cryptic aphorisms, as compared to other sutra texts, while providing the seeds for a remarkably comprehensive bhakti theology. Graham Schweig, while preparing his new translation of the work for publication with Columbia University Press, will present his findings on the ways in which the literary and theological aspects of this text work together synergistically to express some of the deepest dimensions of bhakti. He will also make some intertextual connections and resonances by drawing from the *Bhagavad-gita*, *Bhagavata Purana*, and the *Yoga Sutra*, in order to illuminate dramatic theological moments of the *Bhakti Sutra*. And further, he will offer some closing reflections on why no traditional commentaries were ever written for this work.

Graham M. Schweig is a scholar of comparative religion who focuses on the religions of India. He is a specialist in love mysticism and bhakti traditions. Schweig did his graduate studies at Harvard University and the University of Chicago, and received his doctorate in Comparative Religion from Harvard. Schweig has taught at Duke University and University of North Carolina, and was Visiting Associate Professor of Sanskrit at the University of Virginia. He is currently Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies and Director of the Indic Studies Program at Christopher Newport University, on the Virginia peninsula. He has contributed numerous pieces to encyclopaedia volumes, journals, and books. His book, *Dance of Divine Love: India's Classic Sacred Love Story*, was published by Princeton University Press (2005), and more recently, *Bhagavad Gita: The Beloved Lord's Secret Love Song*, was published by HarperOne/Harper Collins Publishers (2007). He has several more books coming out with Princeton University, HarperOne, and Columbia University Presses.

#### The Majewski Lecture: Jaina-Hindu Syncretism in Gujarat: The Trimūrti-Temple of the Akram Vijñān Mārg

Dr Peter Flügel

The Akram Vijñān Mārg, or Stepless Path to Salvific Knowledge, is a highly innovative religious movement. It originated in the 1960s in Bombay and is slowly spreading throughout Western India and the Gujarati diaspora in East Africa, North America, and the United Kingdom. The founder of the Akram Vijñān Mārg was Ambalal Muljibhai Patel (1908–1988), a contractor, who experienced enlightenment while waiting for his return train to Mumbai at Surat. His new religious movement offers a new synthesis of Hindu and Jain ideas and practices. The lecture will explore ways in which his teachings are enacted in the context of the rituals at the *trimūrti* temples of the movement in India.

Dr Peter Flügel (MA Dr Phil (Mainz)) is a lecturer in the department of the study of religions at SOAS. He is an expert in Jainism and has done textual work and fieldwork. He is the Chair of the Centre for Jaina Studies and a member of the Centre for South

Asian Studies and the SOAS Food Studies Centre. Apart from Jaina studies, he has broad interests in religion and society, social anthropology, sociology, philosophy and Indology more broadly.

### **Shivdasani Lectures**

#### **Lecture 1: Early Vaiṣṇava Texts from Nepal**

**Dr Diwakar Acharya**

Exploring early palm-leaf manuscripts from the NGMPP collection, I came across some rare Vaiṣṇava Tantras which were hardly known from any other source. In this lecture, I will talk about four of such texts: the *Svāyambhuvapañcarātra*, *Devāmṛta-pañcarātra*, *Jayottaratantra*, and the *Vāsudevakalpa* of the *Mahālakṣmṃhitā*, which are preserved in palm-leaf manuscripts of the 11–14th centuries.

The first three texts are earlier than the texts which are regarded until now as the earliest Pāñcarātra texts. The fourth text, the *Vāsudevakalpa*, is exclusively concerned with the composite form of Lakṣmī and Vāsudeva, and is comparable to early Śāktatantras in certain aspects in its structure and contents.

These texts together provide a broader picture of Vaiṣṇava Tantricism, and suggest that what was happening in the Śaiva fold was very similar to what was happening in the Vaiṣṇava fold. I will briefly present the contents of all these texts and discuss specific features of them.

#### **Lecture 2: Negative Flashes of Nēti Nēti and Realisation of Brahman**

**Dr Diwakar Acharya**

The *Mūrtāmūrtabrāhmaṇa* (II.3) of the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* introduces the *nēti nēti* formula and explains it. From Sanskrit commentaries we can gather that this formula was traditionally interpreted in two ways. The second of them, the one adopted by Śāṅkara, has become the favourite of most of the modern translations; the first interpretation has not attracted the attention of a modern scholar.

On the other hand, a very competent scholar like Geldner (1928) has made an exception and interpreted the formula in an extra-ingenious way, as double negation, which was never considered in the tradition. This interpretation has now been revived in Slaje 2009. This asks us to re-examine the issue, and I will do so in my lecture by rereading the related portions of the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*.

Diwakar Acharya studied Sanskrit with traditional teachers, beginning with his father, and at universities in Nepal and India (MA from Sampurnananda Sanskrit University, Varanasi), before starting his teaching career as a Lecturer at Mahendra Sanskrit University. He has also worked for the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project, and for the Nepalese-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project. In 2004 he was awarded a Ph.D. by the University of Hamburg for a thesis on Vācaspati Miśra's *Tattvasamīkṣā*. A revised version of this was published in 2006. Since April 2006 he has been a Visiting Foreign Lecturer at Kyoto University. His research covers a wide range of topics in Sanskrit literature, Sanskritic religious and philosophical traditions, and Nepalese history. He is currently working on what appears to be the only surviving Solar (Saura) tantra, and on two unpublished early Pañcarātra (Vaiṣṇava tantric) scriptures—all of these works he discovered in early Nepalese palm-leaf manuscripts. He is also a contributor to the *Tāntrikābhidhānakośa*.

## Shivdasani Seminars

### Readings in the *Jayottaratantra*

#### Dr Diwakar Acharya

Recently I have located a 14th century palm-leaf manuscript of *Jayottaratantra* in the National Archives, Kathmandu, and am preparing an edition of it. Previously, we had no access to this text though the title appears in the list of Āgamas found in the *Pādma-* and *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā*, and also in the *Pañcarātrarakṣā* of Vedāntadeśika. The *Jayottaratantra*, in fact, serves as the foundational layer of the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā*, one of the earliest available Vaiṣṇava Tantras. The *Jayottaratantra* is quite concise and contains approximately 400 verses. Unlike the printed version of the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* that contains nearly 5000 verses, it is coherent and consistent. I will report on special features of this text along with those of other three early Vaiṣṇava Tantras from Nepal, in one of my lectures.

However, in these two seminars, I propose to read the ninth chapter that deals with Yoga from my edition of the text. We will interpret the text, occasionally discuss philological problems, and compare the text with the corresponding chapter of the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā*.

### Mystical Traditions in Comparative Perspective

Mysticism is a term that has fallen out of use in recent years, partly due to the critique of essentialism in the history of religions, partly due to the recognition that mysticism is particular to tradition and culture and partly due to the orientation to understand religion in terms of a politics of culture that sees religion purely in constructivist terms. The abstraction 'mysticism' is a problematic category that has been developed from Christian mystical theology (in contrast to dogmatic or natural theology). Viewing other religions through the lens of 'mysticism', particularly the religions of India and China, has tended to give a distorted picture to the West, underlined by Radhakrishnan's claim, among others, that the east is 'spiritual' while the west is 'material'. Of course, the historical reality of religious traditions is much more complex than this. Nevertheless, religious traditions are interested in, and develop, keen senses of inwardness that lay stress upon a direct understanding or experience of transcendence. While acknowledging the problematic nature of the category 'mysticism,' this series of seminars intends to explore the mystical traditions of specific religions in dialogue with Hinduism. The series is seen as an exercise in comparative theology. Short lectures on the mystical traditions would be followed by a response from a Hindu perspective and general discussion.

#### 1. Islamic mystical traditions – Sufis in India

Dr Talib Muhammad

#### 2. Buddhist Meditation

Dr Sarah Shaw

#### 3. Christian mystical traditions 1 – The Relevance of Christian Mysticism

Prof. Oliver Davies (Kings)

#### 4. Christian mystical traditions 2 – Understanding Apophaticism

Prof. George Pattison

#### 5. The Jewish Roots of Christian Mysticism

Prof. Guy Stroumsa

## **Hindu Theology**

**Prof. Gavin Flood**

This series of seminars examines the idea and possibility of Hindu theology. It would survey the history and constructive theological thinking in Hindu traditions. For some scholars both terms 'Hindu' and 'theology' are impositions upon South Asia of western categories while for others we can speak about 'Hindu theology' in a coherent way. While the course would certainly wish to problematise the category, the main focus would be textual and hermeneutical. If a discipline is defined by its object and/or its method then we might say that theology is a discipline whose object is not a *theos* but rather 'revelation.' Such a definition does not necessarily entail intellectual commitments to theism or the truth of 'revelation' but rather roots the discipline in a textual history which develops different kinds of reasoning. Hindu theology would therefore focus on the interpretative and commentarial traditions in the history of Hinduism and encourage critical reasoning about them. In practical terms this would mean that the course would concentrate on classical and medieval periods, particularly the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava theological traditions that have come down to us in Sanskrit commentaries and independent works. It is hoped that the seminars will provoke theological and philosophical reflections on the meaning of the text studied. The seminar series raises questions about the nature of theology, the nature of reasoning, and the task of theological reading in the contemporary context.

## **Readings in Phenomenology**

**Professor Gavin Flood**

## **Elementary Sanskrit**

**Professor Gavin Flood**

## **Readings in the Jayākhyasaṃhitā**

**Professor Gavin Flood**

## **Trinity Term, April–June 2010**

### **The Shivdasani Lectures: Creation and Chaos in the Bhagavata Purana (two lectures)**

**Dr Ravi Gupta**

A potter gently shapes a lump of clay upon his wheel. A carpenter hews and joins measured pieces of wood. Creation, we see, is often a process of reasoned thought and careful construction. And yet, just as often, creation arises in far more unpredictable circumstances—from chaos, transgression, and failure. This lectures series will examine the interplay of creation and chaos in narratives of the Bhagavata Purana. We will pay special attention to the Bhagavata's account of the churning of the ocean (a fine example of creation from chaos), as well as the narrative of Jaya and Vijaya's fall from grace (chaos from creation).

Dr. Ravi M. Gupta is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at The College of William and Mary (USA) and an alumnus of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies. He completed his D.Phil. in Hindu Studies at Oxford, following which he was awarded a Junior Research Fellowship at Linacre College. Dr. Gupta has taught a variety of courses

in Hinduism and World Religions, and is the recipient of the David Hughes Award for excellence in teaching.

Dr. Gupta is the author of *The Chaitanya Vaishnava Vedanta of Jiva Gosvami* (Routledge, 2007) as well as several articles in academic journals. At present, he and Dr. Kenneth Valpey are working on an abridged translation of the Bhagavata Purana, to be published by Columbia University Press. Dr. Gupta lectures widely in India and the United States, and currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Society for Hindu-Christian Studies.

### **The Wahlstrom Lecture: Radical Monotheism of the Qur'an and Equitheism of the Bhagavata Purana: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Allah and Krishna**

**Professor Carl Olson**

This narrowly focused essay proposes to compare the Islamic god Allah as depicted in the Qur'an with the Hindu deity Krishna in the Bhagavata Purana. This paper concentrates on how these two respective texts define the two deities. More precisely, this essay focuses on such issues as transcendence and immanence, creative power and play, obedience and love, and the relationship between God and humans. These various themes are examined from the perspective of comparative theology, which can be defined as an articulation of truths and a realization of a more complete knowledge of God in so far as it is possible by means of theology conceived broadly as inter-religious, comparative, dialogical, and confessional. This paper proposes to use a hermeneutical dialogue, which is an interpretative approach that is intended to lead to better cross-cultural understanding. Such a dialogue is risky because it entails entering the margins between oneself and the other. When the interpreter brings together the representative texts of different traditions, she forms a triadic relationship and dialogue with the context of a marginal situation.

Professor Carl Olson teaches Religious Studies at Allegheny College where he offers courses on Hinduism, Buddhism, Religions of China, Zen Buddhism, and comparative phenomena, such as the self and death. Besides over a hundred and eighty reviews and essays in journals, books and encyclopedias, he has published over a dozen books on such topics as the goddess, Mircea Eliade, methodology, comparative philosophy, the Indian renouncer, and the Indian holy man Ramakrishna. His more recent books include the following: *Zen and the Art of Postmodern Philosophy: Two Paths of Liberation from Representational Mode of Thinking* (SUNY Press, 2000); *Indian Philosophers and Postmodern Thinkers: Dialogues on the Margins of Culture* (Oxford University Press, 2002); *The Different Paths of Buddhism: A Narrative-Historical Introduction* (Rutgers University Press, 2005); *Original Buddhist Sources: A Reader* (Rutgers University Press, 2005); *The Many Colors of Hinduism: A Thematic-Historical Introduction* (Rutgers University Press, 2007); *Hindu Primary Sources: A Sectarian Reader* (Rutgers University Press, 2007); *Celibacy and Religious Traditions* (Oxford University Press, 2008), *Historical Dictionary of Buddhism* (Scarecrow Press, 2009), and *Religious Studies: The Key Concepts* (Routledge, forthcoming 2010). While at Allegheny College, Professor Olson has been appointed to the following honors and positions: Holder of the National Endowment for the Humanities Chair, 1991-1994; Holder of the Teacher-Scholar Chair in the Humanities, 2000-2003; Visiting Fellowship at Clare Hall, University of Cambridge, 2002; and elected Life Member of Clare Hall, University of Cambridge 2002.

**Elementary Sanskrit**  
**Professor Gavin Flood**

**Readings in the Jayakhya Samhita**  
**Professor Gavin Flood**

**Readings in Phenomenology (4 seminars)**  
**Professor Gavin Flood**

**Readings from the Bhagavata Purana (two seminars)**  
**Dr Ravi Gupta**

In these seminars, we will read sections of the Bhagavata Purana that are relevant to the theme of the Shivdasani lectures – creation and chaos. We will focus on the account of Jaya and Vijaya’s fall from Vaikuntha, paying special attention to issues of translation as well as theological concerns raised by commentators.

**Mysticism in Comparative Perspective: Sufi Mysticism**  
**Dr Samer Akkach**

Dr Samer Akkach is Associate Professor of Architecture and Founding Director of the Centre for Asian and Middle Eastern Architecture (CAMEA) at the University of Adelaide, Australia. He was born and educated in Damascus before moving to Australia to complete his PhD at Sydney University. As an intellectual historian, Samer has devoted over twenty years to the study of Ibn ‘Arabi’s mystical thought and intellectual legacy, and especially to their later revival by ‘Abd al-Ghana al-Nabulusi (d. 1731). His *Cosmology and Architecture in Premodern Islam: an Architectural Reading of Mystical Ideas* (SUNY 2005), traces the influence of Ibn ‘Arabi’s thought on the spatial sensibility of premodern Muslim architects; while his *‘Abd al-Ghan al-Nabulusi: Islam and the Enlightenment* (Oneworld 2007), and *Letters of a Sufi Scholar: The Correspondence of ‘Abd al-Ghana al-Nabulusi* (Brill 2010), examine the intellectual contributions of an influential and prolific Sufi master who considered Ibn ‘Arabi to be his spiritual master and source of inspiration.

**Comparative Theology in Global Perspective**  
**Professor Keith Ward**

Professor Keith Ward has developed comparative theology and religion in many of his publications over the years. He is particularly interested in comparative theology, the dialogue between religions and the interplay between science and faith. Keith has had a renowned and rich academic career; he taught at Glasgow, St Andrews, London, he was Dean of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, he was the F.D. Maurice Professor of Moral and Social Theology at the University of London, Professor of History and Philosophy of Religion at King’s College London, and Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford. He was also visiting professor at the Claremont Graduate University, he has delivered the prestigious Gifford Lectures at the University of Glasgow, and was the Gresham Professor of Divinity at Gresham College. In this seminar Keith will share some of his thoughts on comparative theology and its future direction.

## **Appendix three: Journal of Hindu Studies**

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### **Volume One**

#### **Introduction to the Journal of Hindu Studies**

Gavin Flood

#### **Hermeneutics in Hindu Studies**

Jessica Frazier

#### **Abhinavagupta's Philosophical Hermeneutics of Grammatical Persons**

David Peter Lawrence

#### **'Icon and Mother': An Inquiry into India's National Song**

Julius J. Lipner

#### **Rsis Imagined Across Difference: Some Possibilities for the Study of Conceptual Metaphor in Early India**

Laurie L. Patton

#### **Theologising the Inaugural Verse: Slesa Reading in Ramayana Commentary**

Ajay K. Rao

#### **Buddhism in Modern Andhra: Literary Representations from Telugu**

Velcheru Narayana Rao

#### **Philosophical Hermeneutics within a Darsana (Philosophical School)**

T. S. Rukmani

#### **Two Whiffs of Air: A Critical Essay**

Frits Staal

#### **Book Reviews**

Dermot Killingley, Brian Black, Christopher Key Chapple, W. J. Johnson, Kiyokazu Okita, Nicholas Sutton, Rashi Rohatgi

### **Volume 2, No. 1**

#### **An Alternative Historiography for Hinduism**

Wendy Doniger

#### **Dark Matter in Vartaland: On the Enterprise of History in Early Pustimarga Discourse**

Frederick M. Smith



**Narratives of Penance and Purification in Western India, c. 1650–1850**

Rosalind O’Hanlon

**The Shrine in Early Hinduism: The Changing Sacred Landscape**

Himanshu Prabha Ray

**The Solidarities of Caste: The Metaphysical Basis of the ‘Organic’ Community**

Ankur Barua

**Book reviews**

Shashiprabha Kumar, Abhishek Ghosh, David Buchta

**Volume 2, Number 2, November 2009**

**Why Did Hariscandra Matter in Early Medieval India? Truth, Fact, and Folk Narrative in the Sanskrit Puranas**

Adheesh Sathaye

**Modern Hinduism and the Middle Class: Beyond Reform and Revival in the Historiography of Colonial India**

Jason D. Fuller

**Rewriting the Sacred Geography of Advaita: Swami Chinmayananda and the Sankara-Dig-Vijaya**

Reid Locklin and Julia Lauwers

**Kill and be Killed: The Bhagavadgita and Anugita in the Mahabharata**

Herman Tieken

**Fate Hangs on a Particle: The Hermeneutics of Bhagavadgita 9:32–3**

Katherine K. Young

**Book reviews**

**Beyond Compare: St Francis de Sales and Sri Vedanta Desika on Loving Surrender to God**

Martin Ganeri

**Kapila: Founder of Samkhya and Avatara of Visnu (with a Translation of Kapilasurisamvada)**

Mikel Burley

**Recipes for Immortality: Medicine, Religion, and Community in South India**

David Gordon White

## **Volume 3, Number 1, April 2010**

### **Arts and Aesthetics in Hindu Studies**

Jessica Frazier

### **Mirabai Comes to America: The Translation and Transformation of a Saint**

Nancy M. Martin

### **Beauty and Words Relating to Beauty in the Ramayana, the Kavyas of Asvaghosa, and Kalidasa's Kumarasambhava**

David Smith

### **Hagiography and Community Formation: The Case of a Lost Community of Sixteenth-Century Vrindavan**

Heidi Pauwels

### **Mohiniyattam: An Embodiment of the Aesthetic and the Religious**

George Pati

### **Indian Classical Dance: A Sacred Art?**

Alessandra Lopez y Royo

### **Kerala's Mahabharata on Stage: Texts and Performative Practices in Kutiyattam Drama**

Bruce M. Sullivan

### **Book reviews**

### **The Caitanya Vaisnava Vedanta of Jiva Gosvami: When Knowledge Meets Devotion**

Rebecca J. Manring

### **The Character of the Self in Ancient India: Priests, Kings, and Women in the Early Upanisads**

James M. Hegarty

### **Consciousness in Indian Philosophy: The Advaita Doctrine of 'Awareness Only'**

Hazel Collinson

### **The Self Possessed: Deity and Spirit Possession in South Asian Literature and Civilisation**

Stuart Ray Sarbacker

## **Volume 3, Number 2, October 2010**

### **Telling Stories: Hindu-Muslim Worship in South India**

Afsar Mohammad

**Female Immigration as a Catalyst for Ritual Practice: A Social History of Hinduism in the United States**

Amanda Huffer

**Sasthi: Between the Forest and the Lying-in-Chamber: The Formation of a Goddess**

Saswati Sengupta

**Jalaram Bapa: The Public Expression of Regional, Vernacular Traditions among Gujarati Hindus in the U.K.**

Martin Wood

**Found in Translation: Revisiting the Bhagavad-gita in the Twenty-first Century**

Kenneth Valpey

**Appendix four: Routledge Hindu Studies series**

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Deepak Sarma

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