

World Association for Vedic Studies, Inc.

Fifth International Conference: “India’s Intellectual Traditions in Contemporary Global Context”

July 9 – 11, 2004 -- Washington, DC, USA

Press Release

The Conference was organized by ‘*World Association for Vedic Studies, Inc*’ (WAVES), a USA based tax-exempt society, at the University of Maryland, Shady Grove Campus, Rockville, MD. This was the fifth biennial international conference of WAVES. The four previous International Conferences were held at Atlanta (GA) in 1996, Los Angeles (CA) in 1998, Hoboken (NJ) in 2000, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth (MA), in 2002.

The Conference received a very enthusiastic response from world scholars of Indian/Vedic Studies. For the first time there came four scholars from Bali, Indonesia. According to the Treasurer of WAVES, Mr. Dharendra Shah, the conference had over 450 participants.

Over 200 papers were accepted for presentation and their abstracts, printed in the Conference Souvenir, were circulated to the participants. Persons from several different countries, including those from Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Indonesia, Nepal, and USA - participated in this successful conference.

In all there were 47 sessions and 152 presentations made. There was a good mix of persons of Indian and non-Indian scholars.

In the inaugural session, after President Professor BhuDev Sharma briefly talked about the WAVES and the Conference, following three distinguished scholars spoke:

1. **Professor T. S. Rukmani** Professor and Chair, Hindu Studies, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada -- *Indian Intellectual Tradition- Religion & Philosophy in Vedic Literature*
2. **Professor B. B. Lal**, Former Director General, Archaeological Survey of India – *Flora and Fauna in RigVeda: Still More Evidence Negating the Aryan Invasion Theory*
3. **Professor Cromwell Crawford**, Chair & Professor, Department of Religion, University of Hawaii, Honolulu - *Gene Transfer Therapy or Enhancement, A Hindu Perspective*

There were following two keynote speakers –

1. **Professor Shiva G. Bajpai**, Professor of History, California State Uni., Northridge, CA – *The Burden of Bad Ideas: Some Critical Issues in the Vedic-Harappan Historiography*
2. **Professor Harold French**, Professor Emeritus of Religion, Uni. of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, USA -- *Ramakrishna: A Model of Historical Renewal Through Incarnational Consciousness and Role Playing*

Also, there were following two public lectures, attended by participants and other invitees to the cultural program and Banquet respectively:

1. **Mr. Rajiv Malhotra**, Infinity Foundation, Princeton, NJ – *Hinduism's Challenges and Blind Spots in the Globalization Era*
2. **Professor Shri Kant Mishra** – *Strategic Adaptation of Ayurveda in North America*

Some of the other speakers, mainly from different universities, included:

1. Professor Satish Bhatnagar, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NE
2. Professor Sidheshwar Bhatt, Professor of Philosophy, University of Delhi, India
3. Professor Suresh Chaturvedi, Professor of Ayurveda, Mumbai, Mumbai, India
4. Professor Rahul Peter Das, Professor, Institute fur Indologie und sudasienwissenschaften, Martin-Luther-Universitat, Halle, Germany
5. Dr. K. K. Dwivedi former Vice Chancellor and currently science and technology counselor, Indian Embassy, Washington, DC
6. Professor Hope Fitz, Professor of Philosophy, Eastern Connecticut State Uni., CT
7. Dr. Peter N. Gillette, State Uni. of New York, Brooklyn, NY
8. Professor Madan L. Goel, Professor of Political Sci, Uni. of West Florida, FL
9. Professor Malinee Goswami, Professor of Sanskrit, Gauhati Uni., Assam, India
10. Dr. Julia Jean, Dept of Sociology and Anthropology, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA
11. Professor Kusum Ketkar, Professor of Economics. Stillman School of Business, Seton Hall Uni., South Orange, NJ
12. Professor V. Krishnamurthy, former Dy. Director, Birla Inst. of Technology, Pilani, India
13. Professor June McDaniel, Professor, Dept. of Phil. & Religion, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC
14. Professor Sabita Dutta Majumder, Head of the Dept. of Mathematics, Kolkata, India
15. Dr. Bala Manyam, Professor & Director, Dept. of Neurology, Texas A & M, Temple, TX
16. Professor Krishna Murari Mishra, Professor of Hindi, Aligarh Muslim Uni., India
17. Professor Shri K. Mishra, Professor of Neurology & Coordinator Integrative Medicine, USC, LA, CA
18. Professor Triloki N. Pandey, Professor of Anthropology, Uni. of California, Santa Cruz, CA
19. Professor Ramesh Rao, Professor of Communication, Truman State Uni, Kirksville, MO
20. Professor T. R. N. Rao, Louisiana State University, Lafayette, LA

21. Professor Vaman Rao, Distinguished Prof of Economics, Western Illinois Uni, Macomb, IL
22. Dr. Lothar Schafer, Uni. of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR
23. Dr. Graham Schweig, Director, Indic Studies Program, Dept. of Religious Studies, Christopher Newport Uni., VA
24. Professor BhuDev Sharma, President WAVES, Clark Atlanta Uni., Atlanta, GA
25. Dr. Somvir, Udayana University, Bali, Indonesia
26. Professor Jagdish N. Srivastava, CNS Research Professor, Colorado State Uni., Fort Collins, CO
27. Professor Betsy Singh, Southern California Uni of Health Sciences, Whittier, CA
28. Dr. Shashi Tiwari, Dept of Sanskrit, Uni. of Delhi, Delhi, India
29. Dr. Uma Vaidya, Head of the Dept. of Sanskrit, Wilson College, Mumbai, India
30. Professor Anand K. Yadav, Fort Valley State University, Fort Valley, GA
31. Professor Dr. I. Wayan Wita, Rector, Udayana University, Bali, Indonesia

And from streams outside universities included:

1. Dr. Anand Samir Chopra, Head of the Clinical Department, Wicker-Klinik Ayurveda, Kassel, Germany
2. Mr. Bhola Nath Yogi, Principal, Hindu Vidyapeeth, Kathmandu, Nepal
3. Dr. Bhupendra K. Modi, President, Indian Council of Religious Leaders
4. Mr. Rajiv Malhotra, Infinity Foundation, Princeton, NJ
5. Dr. Alex Alexander, MD
6. Mr. John Engstrom, President, Inst. of Constitute of Consciousness, Fairfield, Iowa
7. Ms. Sandhya Jain, Journalist, New Delhi, India
8. Dr. Yvette Rosser, Educationist
9. Thomas Vallomtharayil, CEO, Kerala Ayurveda GmbH and Vallomed Health Care, Castrop-Rauxel, Germany

There were many other experts and scholars that included university academics, authors, researchers, journalists, intellectuals and practitioners who presented papers and participated in deliberations.

Amongst other highlights were symposia on '*Vedas and Consciousness*', '*Philosophy*', '*Academic Study of Indian Religion in US*', '*Indian Diaspora Experience*', '*Gita in 21st Century*', '*Hinduism and Clash of Civilizations*', '*Ayurveda in Public Health Care Systems in Western Countries*', '*Ayurveda: The Art & Science of Healthy Living*', '*Yoga and Meditation*', '*Youth & Dharma*', '*On Some Western Writers on India.*'

There were sessions on 'Ramayana', 'Mahabharat', 'Peace and Universal Vedic Messages', 'Vedic Mathematics & Sciences', 'Ayurvedic Medicinal Plants', etc.

Sessions on '*Hinduism & Clash of Cultures*', which brought a good discussion on current state of terrorism and its effects, '*On Some Western Writers on India*', whose writings provoked allegations of distortions and misrepresentations of Hindu gods and heroes from many scholars worldwide, as also '*Consciousness*' and those discussing '*Indians &*

Influence of India in the World', drew quite some attention. An important feature this year was participation of IndiaDiaspora group, and youth group.

Plenary panel discussion on '*Directions for Healthy Academic Study of Vedic Traditions*', with six panelists representing academics, journalists, educationists and public leaders was another highlight of the conference. Panelists and participants greatly appreciated the work of WAVES and gave several suggestions for undertaking further.

A general theme running throughout the conference reflected on the deep intellectual traditions in the life of Vedic people, and the culture of celebrated diversity commonly visible in today's India.

Professor BhuDev Sharma, President of the WAVES', was the overall coordinator of the conference and he organized the academic program, helped by organizers of various symposia – Professor Hope Fitz, Professor June McDaniel, Professor Jagdish Srivastava, Professor TRN Rao, Professor Madan Goel, Prof Rahul Peter Das, Professor Shri Mishra, Dr. Vishnu Purohit & Dr. Kaushik Shastri, Dr. K. Sadananda & Satya P. Agarwal, and Sanjay Garg.

Local Organizer Dr. Satish C. Misra, did a magnificent job. In this he was helped by Dr. Ghanshyam Gupta, Dr. Hari Har Singh, Dr. Parthasarthy Pillai, Dr. Prasad Reddy, Dr. Lalji Mishra, Dr. Kaushik Shastri, Dr. Yogendra Gupta, Dr. Bishnu Poudel, Dr. Jagdish Sharma, Dr. Anita Dubey, in looking after local arrangements – facilities, hospitalities, transport, food, cultural program, banquet, etc.

During Banquet time on July 10, 2004, after the public lecture, many persons coming from different places were introduced and following persons were honored for their services to WAVES:

1. **Professor Bal Ram Singh**, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, MA, a Joint Secretary of WAVES: For being local organizer of the Fourth International Conference, 2002;
2. **Mr. Ramendra N. Nandi**, Jersey City, NJ, a former Secretary of WAVES: For being local organizer of the Third International Conference, 2000;
3. **Dr. Deen Bandhu Chandora**, Atlanta, GA, a former Treasurer: For being local organizer of the First International Conference 1996, and for active role in founding the WAVES;
4. **Dr. Shashi Tiwari**, New Delhi, India, Secretary, India Branch: For Organizing seven India Conferences and a conference in Nepal.

The Proceedings of the conference, carrying edited papers shall be published as was done for earlier conferences. The organizers have invitations for holding next conference in Canada, Bali (Indonesia) and a couple of places in USA.

During the Conference, on the evening of July 9, was organized a culturally rich entertainment program featuring *Sitar-vaadan*, *Kuchipudi* style *Bharat Natyam*, a play, a

folk dance, and a dance-drama on ten-incarnations of Vishnu. Dr. (Mrs.) Anita Dubey organized and presented this program, with brief appearance of Patti Tripathi, former Anchor Person of CNN and Director, ANN.

World Association of Vedic Studies (WAVES) is a multidisciplinary academic society. WAVES is *not* confined to study related to Vedas alone or to India alone. Waves explores worldwide traditions commonly called Vedic - past, present and future. It brings together academics from universities and institutions of higher learning and knowledgeable other persons on its platform to share their views and researches. It is a forum for all scholarly activities and views on any area of 'Vedic Studies' popularly called as Indian Studies or Indology. It is open for membership and for participation to all persons irrespective of their color, creed, ethnicity, and country of origin or any other kind of persuasion.

WAVES has on its Governing Council persons from USA, India, China, and Europe. Its next India Conference will be held at Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, Dec 31-Jan 2, 2004-2005. There are plans to hold conferences in China, Netherlands, Germany and Bali (Indonesia), in coming years. Also, the Society has announced book-awards, scholarships for higher studies and research and is building a 'Speakers Bureau' for widely and authentically educating and informing people world wide of about India and Indians in all its fields, past and present.

Organizers thank numerous participants for conveying their overwhelming compliments for organizing a conference with grand success.

For additional Information, please contact:

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