



“India was the motherland of our race and Sanskrit the mother of Europe’s languages. India was the mother of our philosophy, of much of our mathematics, of the ideals embodied in Christianity... of self-government and democracy. In many ways, Mother India is the mother of us all.”  
– Will Durrant, historian, 1934.

### SEMINAR ON THE CLASSICAL PERIOD (700BC-200BC)

Let us explore India’s Cultural History – III  
Saturday, October 28, 2017

9:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Bemis Hall, 15 Bedford Road, Lincoln, MA



णमो अरहंताणां। णमो सिद्धाणां। णमो आयरियाणां।  
णमो उवज्झायाणां। णमो लो ए सव्वसाहूणां।

(Samanasuttam, Jaina text, date unknown)

Obeisance to the worthy souls. Obeisance to the liberated souls. Obeisance to the preceptors.  
Obeisance to the spiritual teachers. Obeisance to all the Saints in the world.

अयं बन्धुरयंनेति गणना लघुचेतसाम्  
उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ॥

(Maha Upanisad, Samaveda ~800BC)

The distinction "This person is a friend, and this one is not" is made only by the narrow-minded.  
For those of noble conduct the whole world is one family.

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## PROGRAM

### Session I

9:30 – 12:15

Invocation recitation: Buddhist prayers - Monks from Wat Nawamintararachutis, Rynham, MA

Welcome - Dr. Bijoy Misra

*"The Message of the Buddha"* - Phra Bhavanawachirarachtis, Head Monk, Wat Nawamintararachutis, Rynham, MA

*"Seminar on the Classical Period (700BC-200BC)"* - Introduction by Dr. Sonal Jhaveri

*"Classical Period Geography and People"* - Dr. Hemendra Acharya

*"Classical Period Art and Culture"* - Mrs. Srilakshmi Srinivasan

*"The Shaiva Agama"* - Pandit Bhairavasundaram, Head Priest, Sri Kalikambai Shiva Temple, Bellingham, MA

*"Classical Period Language and Literature"* - Mr. Prem Nagar

Lunch - 12:15 - 1:00

### Session II

1:00- 4:00

*"The Concept of Soul in Jainism"* - Prof. Vimal Prakash Jain

*"Classical Period Philosophy and Religion"* - Dr. Satyendra Sharma

*"Classical Period Science and Technology"* - Dr. Bijoy Misra

*"Classical Period Economy and Politics"* - Dr. Arun Karna

IDC Q&A

Panel Q&A

Vote of Thanks – Mr. Prem Nagar

*"Kaushalya's blessings from Valmiki's Ramayana"* – rendering by Mrs. Srilakshmi Srinivasan

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"India is the cradle for human race, birthplace of human speech,  
mother of history, grandmother of legend and great grandmother of tradition.

Our most valuable and instructive materials in the history are treasured here" - Mark Twain (1897)

It is India that gave us the ingenious method of expressing all numbers by means of ten symbols,  
each symbol receiving a value of position as well as an absolute value;  
a profound and important idea which appears so simple to us now  
that we ignore its true merit. Laplace (18th century)

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## Contributors:

### Chief Guests:

**Phra Bhavanawachirawidesa V. (Venerable Mongkol Kuakool)** is the Head Monk and the First Vice President in Wat Nawamintarachutis, in Raynham, MA, the largest Thai Buddhist temple outside Thailand. He studied Buddhism and Linguistics in Thailand and India, and has been in the US since 2003. He is a renowned teacher in Buddhist meditation in Theravada school.

**Pandit Bhairavasundaram Shivacharya** hails from a long tradition of Shaiva scholars from the temple town of Madurai India. Trained in Sanskrit and Agama literature, he continued his Tantrik studies under the tutelage of Late Guru Shivamurty Shivacharya. Popular in the Shaiva community, he serves as the Head Priest in SriKalikambai Shiva temple of Bellingham, MA.

Professor Vimal Prakash Jain is a scholar of Jainism and Comparative Religions of international renown. He studied Pali, Prakrit, Sanskrit and Jaina literature. He taught languages and Jainism in India and published massively. Currently retired in the US, he remains the foremost living scholar on the Jaina saint Acharya Umasvati who lived around first century AD.

### Moderator:

**Dr. Sonal Jhaveri** studied Physics, Mathematics, Psychology and Neuroscience. She is in the Faculty of Brain and Cognitive Science at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and, also is associated with the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. She teaches writing and science communication. She has been an Associate of India Discovery Center from its early inception.

### Research Presenters:

**Dr. Hemendra Acharya** is a geophysicist and an environmental scientist. His father was an associate of Mahatma Gandhi. Interest in India, philosophy and culture is part of his family heritage. He was the Editor of "Hindu Vishwa", a publication of Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America, for several years, as well as a regular columnist for India New England News.

**Mrs. Srilakshmi Srinivasan** is an artist, performer, composer and a poet. She puts effort as a Program Coordinator in the New England Chapter of the Ekal program that is engaged in mass education. She is an entrepreneur and runs a small business of clothing and accessories. She is married with two children and remains active in singing and volunteering in the local temples.

**Mr. Prem Nagar** is a technology professional and works for the Oracle Corporation. Born in to family interested in music and art, he developed himself into a musician and a musicologist. He is a researcher in the field of cognitive science and contributes scientific papers in the field. He is a poet and a scholar in Hindi. He serves as a Director of India Discovery Center.

**Dr. Satyendra Sharma** comes from a family of scholars in Rajasthan, India. He was trained in Physics, and earned a doctorate in atmospheric studies from Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, India. He works as a technical professional in a local company. Bred in philosophy and literature, he is an avid participant in the religious and devotional events in the area.

**Dr. Bijoy Misra** is a physicist, Sanskrit scholar and a poet. He takes interest in education and taught children in various capacities in the local schools. He is in the Faculty of Harvard University and has been responsible for the outreach activities in the earlier Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies. He is the Founder and President of India Discovery Center.

**Dr. Arun Karna** is a research analyst in capital markets. He worked as a Principal at the Advanced Research Center of State Street Global Advisors and at Pioneer Investments in Boston. Currently he independently contributes to the investment management research. He keeps interest in Sanskrit and Hindi literature and is an Associate of India Discovery Center.

***“Study of the Classical Period (700BC-200BC)” is the third seminar offering in a series entitled “Let us Explore the Cultural History of India”***

**Synopsis of the tracks in today's seminar:**

**Geography and People:** Empires were established that eventually covered the entire Indian subcontinent. The expansion helped develop the cultural unity among the people. Challenges to the prevailing religious thoughts led to the growth of Buddhism and Jainism. Alexander’s invasion brought India in contact with the Greek ideas. Ashoka sent missionaries abroad to propagate the message of peace.

**Art and Culture:** Arts proliferated in all aspects of Indian life. Creative patterns and geometric designs were carved on pottery, wood and stone. Arts transcended to music and dance converting the simple acts of storytelling to elaborate poetry ensembles and festivals of performing arts. Culture followed the arts closely to analyze the finer aspects of human living in language, architecture and iconography.

**Language and Literature:** The period comprised of systematization of Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali, Tamil and other local languages. Enumeration of a phonetic alphabet through the articulation of sound was prescribed. The script for writing system as pictographs evolved to syllabic scripts. Diverse literature as folk, poetry, prose, religious, shastra and sutra were developed. Knowledge systems were encoded.

**Philosophy and Religion:** Post-vedic India was a land of philosophical analysis and religious discourse. Scholars engaged themselves in interpreting the Vedas and created fundamental theories about the universe, objects and man. Ritual procedures were codified to create functioning through social structures. Separate cosmologies evolved to make Buddhism and Jainism, independent of the Vedas.

**Science and Technology:** Sciences flourished in many areas. Fundamental innovations in health sciences and nutrition transformed society to productivity and creativity. Interpretations of the Vedic ideas through language analysis, grammar and prosody created a wholesome organic view of life based on the cosmic principles. Observational astronomy gave rise to geometry and arithmetic.

**Economy and Politics:** With the formation of the Janapadas, the economy centered at the population centers creating an integrated whole. The great Kautilya compiled and enunciated the rules for the society and the administrative procedures for the State. Both internal and external trade was popular. Democratic institutions evolved that negotiated conflicts and add taxation. There was peace and stability.

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