

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।
स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवाँसस्तूभिः व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥

Om. May we hear with our ears what is auspicious, O' Divine!
May we see with our eyes what is auspicious, O' Wise!
May we live happily with good health and strong limbs;
May we praise the glories of the Lord as long as we live!

Seminar on The Vedic Period

Saturday, January 21, 2017
9:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Bemis Hall, 15 Bedford Road
Lincoln, MA



उभ्रुवाणः...
स्तरिभिव्यो! आवांस्तुम्नेवरि
निष्यदो मुद्र लानं! नृष्टिरं
भसंनुष्यप्रप्रव्यः। प्रेतिकिं।
द्विष्टो यशसा जनेषु। यशसे
द्विमातामहोमहीषा। वि
तो सुखावतः। यतिष्ठन। वि



सीपतिस्पंदित्ससि
नेन। वाजीस्ततः। वदं
धिसुत्रि समस्तदि

Indians believe in the divine origin of the Vedas. Textual analysis of the literature has not produced any definite date or place of origin. Vedic hymns were believed to have been composed as a part of the oral literature of ancient India and were utilized for ritualistic services to connect human life to events in the cosmos. The theory of the universal nature of life and the link between all objects born and unborn became the mystic philosophical speculation in the Vedas. The legends, tales and description of the celestial events pre-date the present by several millennia. The researchers at the India Discovery Center survey the cultural history of the Indian subcontinent from the earliest times to about 700 AD, when scripting might have begun.

PROGRAM

Session I

9:30 - 12:00

Invocation recitation: sections from *Taittirīyopaniṣat* – R Anantakrishnan

Welcome – Bijoy Misra

Nāsadīyasūktam – Musical rendering - Srilakshmi Srinivasan and Ravi Mosurkal

Seminar on the Vedic Period – Introduction by C. Gopinath

The Vedas and India's Religious Life - Pandit Krishna Bhattar

Vedic Period Geography and People - Reshma Ghanekar

Vedic Period Language and Literature - Prem Nagar

Vedic Language and Classical Sanskrit - Thomas Burke

The Rudram – Recitation from the Vedas - K. L. Kodandapani

Vedic Period Philosophy and Religion - V. Ramapriya

Lunch - 12:00 - 1:00

Session II

1:00- 4:00

India Discovery Center(IDC) - update – Chandrika Govardhan

IDC Object Design – Call for participation - Sajed Kamal

Vedic Period Art and Culture - Paromita De

Arunaprasnaḥ – Recitation from The Vedas - Giri Bharathan

Vedic Period Science and Technology - Bijoy Misra

Vedic Period Economy and Politics - Raghavendra Sarangapurkar

Ahunavar – Recitation of selections from Avesta Gatha - Firoze Jungalwala

Panel Q&A

Hiraṇyagarbhasūktam – Group singing - IDC

Vote of Thanks – Sanjeev Tripathi

Concluding Vedic chants- Assembly

*Nor there was unreal, or was there anything real,
Nor there was air, or was there any space, however small,
What was the covering? Who made it? Where was it?
Was there deep water everywhere? Mysterious, secret!
Nor was there death, neither was there rejuvenation,
No night, no day, no signal, nor there was any motion,
That One breathed itself, supported all by itself.
Nothing else was there! Alone, it sustained itself!*

Vedic hymn of Creation, Nāsadīyasūktam, Rgveda (X.129, 1500BC)

इन्द्रं मित्रं वरुणामग्निमाहुरथो दिव्यः स सुपर्णो गरुत्मान् ।
एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्त्यग्निं यमं मातारिश्चानमाहुः ॥ (Rigveda 9.164.46)

They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, and he is heavenly nobly-winged Garutman.
To what is One, sages give many a title, they call it Agni, Yama, Matarisvan. (Tr. Ralph Griffith, 1889).

Contributors:

Chief Guests:

Thomas Burke is a language scholar with expertise across several languages including English, German, Latin, Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Hindi, Arabic and Urdu. After studying in the US and Germany, he spent many years in India teaching at Government Sanskrit College at Calcutta and Sanskrit University at Varanasi. He served as an Administrator in Harvard University with part-time faculty appointments in teaching Sanskrit. He is an iconic resource and guide to the students of Sanskrit in the Boston area.

Pandit Krishna Bhattar is the principal among the Hindu religious leaders in the greater Boston area. Born in an ancestral priestly family in Karnataka, India, he spent his early years in training himself in Sanskrit language and literature. He is an expert on the āgama studies and has traveled around the world for ritual services and temple installations. He is a teacher and interlocutor on the religious scriptures of India. He is a resident priest at Srilkashmi Temple in Ashland since 1989.

Moderator:

C. Gopinath is on the faculty of Suffolk University, Boston. His teaching and research interests are in strategic management and international business. A student of Sanskrit and Indology, he helped organize the Outreach Lecture Series based at Harvard University for many years. He is currently studying how Gandhi managed his ashrams.

Research Presenters:

Reshma Ghanekar traveled around the world at an early age. She took a degree in dentistry from Boston University and professionally helped out clinics in India. She is a painter and volunteers for children's causes in teaching and cultural education. She tries to understand ancient India's history and art as revealed through archaeology.

Prem S 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 literature and cognitive sciences in the language research group in India Discovery Center. He serves as a Contents Librarian for the Center.

Vrittamani Ramapriya retired as a Mechanical Engineer having worked in the areas of power and fuel. He was raised in a religious family and studied Sanskrit through his school and college. He has been active in the Chinmaya Mission International for more than three decades. He is known for his participation in the events of religious recitations and chanting in the greater Boston area.

Paromita De was groomed with the ideals of Swami Vivekananda through her upbringing as a person of India descent born and brought up abroad. She studied in Washington University, St. Louis and Brown University. She has been a researcher in education with several groups including projects at Harvard School of Education. She is interested in the issues of spirituality in life.

Bijoy Misra is a physicist and a Sanskrit scholar. 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 Department of South Asian Studies. He is a researcher in Sanskrit literature and creates a new translation of the Valmiki Ramayana for children.

Raghavendra Sarangapurkar grew up in Telengana, India, and remains connected to his home through volunteer and social activities. He studied Computer Science at University of Massachusetts in Dartmouth and led the Indian Students Association there. He works as a Technology professional and keeps interest in the scriptures and the comparative studies on culture.

**“Study of the Vedic Period” is the second 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: Vedic period population movement appears to be associated with climatic variations. Later habitation in the Gangetic plains can be associated with the de-urbanization of the Indus communities. The societal structure was hierarchical based on spiritual code of belief. Genetic studies do not support any large scale modification of people.

Language and Literature: The composition period of the Vedas are difficult to determine. They comprise of philosophical dialogues, popular legends, myth, ritual chants and invocation. Generations of poets contributed to the compositions which were organized into books at a much later time. The early compositions are in meters, again of undetermined origin. The language and grammar appear local in origin.

Philosophy and Religion: The Vedas believed in the principle that there is One God who embodies many divine personalities that provide wealth, comfort, protection and happiness to beings. They do not project any religious dogma and are profoundly rational in the philosophical analysis. A Vedic ritual is used as a medium to express gratitude and to offer prayers for continued prosperity.

Art and Culture: In the Vedic Period, spirituality in India manifested in everyday life. The arts and culture valued understanding of the connection between nature and life, equality, and spiritual exploration. This presentation looks at the modes of the arts, crafts, and culture through which the people expressed creativity and engaged in society-building.

Science and Technology: Science was fundamental in the Vedic society. People took an analytic view of life and the cosmos. Astronomy and Mathematics developed through sky mapping. The role of mind in human conduct was discovered and analyzed. Research was in grammar, phonetics and speech. Technology developed through food processing, agriculture, textiles, health sciences and material science.

Economy and Politics: Economic activity in the Vedic period was centered around physical activities with a relationship to the cosmic beliefs. Focus was on individual prosperity and wealth with a larger goal of prosperity and wealth of the community. The society was organized with the kings and noblemen at the head who had the responsibility to look after the welfare of the society.

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