



UBEROI FOUNDATION
for RELIGIOUS STUDIES



Annual Report 2010



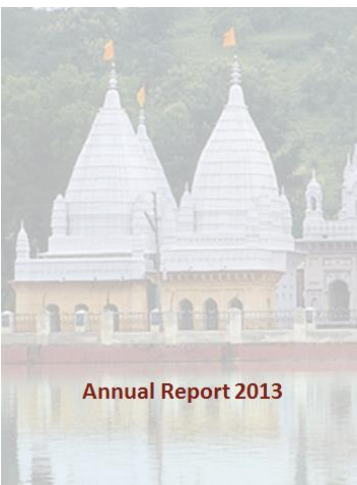
Annual Report 2010



Annual Report 2011



Annual Report 2012



Annual Report 2013



Professor Ved P. Nanda
Chair of the Board
Uberoi Foundation for Religious Studies
Denver, Colorado

December 2010

It is my pleasure to report that this year witnessed the further development of the Uberoi Foundation and gave us a glimpse of the possibilities before us.

The Foundation's Experts, gathered in Denver at the Iliff School of Theology (thanks to our colleague David Trickett's gracious invitation), engaged in nearly two full days of fast-paced discourse that revealed the considerable talents and scope of the Experts, in whom we take great pride. They demonstrated an exceptionally high level of academic rigor in their presentations and conversations. This side of the Foundation's work is particularly important, as our interpretation of Dr. Mahinder Uberoi's charge leads us to focus especially on the work of scholars in the university setting.

Deliberations at the Experts Meeting and the lively exchanges among the scholars very successfully met the lofty charge set by the organizer, Dr. Arvind Sharma, who selected the topic of "Decolonizing Indic Studies."

Our grants for this cycle, given to Dr. Staneshwar Timalsina through the San Diego State University Foundation, in support of a major book on Tantric images, and to Dr. Bal Ram Singh through the University of Massachusetts/Dartmouth, for a project on training in the four Indian Dharmic religions for US high school teachers, were quite in keeping with the mission and vision of the Foundation.

The year was topped off by a meeting of the Foundation's Board of Trustees in India. Dr. Arvind Sharma and another internationally renowned scholar from India, Dr. Kamal Kapoor, addressed the Board. A number of invited dignitaries, including the Honorable Mayor of Delhi Professor Rajni Abbi, graced the occasion with their presence.

We, the Uberoi Foundation Board, are inspired by the enthusiasm we see all around us for the work we have undertaken -- to spread the knowledge and awareness of the four Dharmic traditions -- Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism -- in North America.

And we thank you, our friends and colleagues, for your support!

Sincerely yours,

Ved P. Nanda



Annual Report 2010

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Vision and Mission

Mahinder Uberoi saw a world of many facets. He cherished the Dharmic tradition that was his birthright and felt its power as a vehicle for spiritual awakening and fulfillment. Professor Uberoi grasped the breadth of this tradition across the land of its origin and its range of experiences known as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism.

The Uberoi Foundation for Religious Studies is Mahinder Uberoi's legacy. After his death in November 2006, a will was read in which he wrote, "I leave all my assets for the scholarly study of Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, and other related religions and their music and arts." In order to honor his wishes, the Foundation was established on November 14, 2007, to encourage and support the work of scholars in these Dharmic traditions and to extend the reach of this knowledge in the United States in particular. The Uberoi Foundation for Religious Studies provides a unique opportunity for the scholars of these traditions to explore their common ties in the Dharmic source.

The mission of the Foundation is summarized in these few words: *The Uberoi Foundation for Religious Studies serves to raise awareness of the four major Dharmic religions of Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism in an effort to promote understanding, communication, tolerance, and peace among the diverse peoples of the world.*



Mahinder Uberoi: The Invisible Benefactor



Mahinder Singh Uberoi was born in Delhi, India shortly after World War I, on March 13, 1924. He ultimately earned a doctorate degree in engineering and lived for most of his adult life in the United States, primarily in Boulder, Colorado. Professor Uberoi passed away in 2006 as a retired academic having chosen to live with very little pretense and ostentation. His wealth, however, was considerable, and his assets today help to raise awareness of Dharmic religions in an effort to promote understanding, communication, tolerance and peace in the world.

Education

Professor Uberoi grew up in Sialkot, India, and received a bachelors of science degree from Punjab University in 1944. Subsequently, he studied in the United States, earning a masters degree from the California Institute of Technology in 1946 and a doctorate degree in engineering from the Johns Hopkins University in 1952.

Academic Leadership

Professor Uberoi began his academic career on the faculty of the Department of Aeronautical Engineering at the University of Michigan from 1953 until 1963. During that period, in 1958, he earned early professional distinction as a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellow at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm.

In 1963, Professor Uberoi moved to Boulder, Colorado, where he lived for more than forty years until his death in 2006. From 1963 to 1975, he served as the chairman of the Department of Aerospace Engineering Sciences at the University of Colorado. Four U.S. astronauts graduated from the Department during those years, including Ellison Onizuka who died with other members of his distinguished crew aboard the space shuttle Challenger in 1986.

As chairman, Professor Uberoi added faculty and advanced basic research in the fields of fluid mechanics, modern control systems, and the biological sciences. Adolf Busemann, the father of supersonic aerodynamics, joined the department in 1963. Much of Professor Uberoi's academic career involved research and teaching far from his adopted city of Boulder, Colorado. In 1966, he was an

exchange scientist with the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Between 1972 and 1974, he was an invited professor at the University of Quebec, followed thereafter in 1974 as a visiting scientist at the Max Plank Institute of Astrophysics in Munich. From 1975 to 1976, Professor Uberoi was an honorary research fellow at Harvard University, and he returned to the University of Colorado between 1981 and 1982 as a Croft professor.

Scientific Achievement

Professor Uberoi made innumerable contributions to scholarly literature during his career, on topics such as turbulent flow, magneto-hydrodynamics, and combustion. He was the editor of *Cosmic Gas Dynamics* by Evry Schatzman and Ludwig Bierman. He served on the steering committees associated with the Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics from 1966 to 1969 and with the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences from 1967 to 1969 at the University of Colorado. He organized the all-university Seminar on Environment and Public Policy from 1970 until 1975. He directed and organized a science of flight program of High School Honors Institute from 1968 to 1974, directed the Summer Institute for Disadvantaged High School Students in 1969, and directed and lectured in the Pre-Engineering Program for many years.

Posthumous Orientation

Mahinder Uberoi passed away on November 25, 2006. He never married and had no children. In 1986, twenty years before his death, he signed his last will and testament. In that document, Professor Uberoi ordered that his assets be used to establish a foundation “for the scholarly study of Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism, and other related religions and their music and arts.” In implementing his mission, he made it clear that his intent was not to proselytize. “Scholars need not have any particular faith or beliefs,” he wrote. To carry out his mission, Professor Uberoi intentionally left much judgment to the men and women who would be named as trustees of the foundation. Nevertheless, by way of example, he wrote, “Obvious candidates for support are persons who are regularly engaged in scholarly work, such as universities, institutes, and religious centers.”

Deploying the assets of Professor Uberoi upon his death, the Uberoi Foundation for Religious Studies requested and subsequently received authorization as a tax-exempt private foundation by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service on December 13, 2007. The five founding trustees of the Foundation wish to express particular gratitude to a former student of Professor Uberoi, Mr. Randy Nishiyama, for his tireless and selfless work in helping to lay the groundwork for the Foundation. Along with founding trustee, Parveen Setia, Mr. Nishiyama provided a most thoughtful and invaluable service in memory of the man who was once his educator.



Board of Trustees



Professor Ved P. Nanda
Chair, Board of Trustees

Professor Ved P. Nanda is John Evans University Professor and Thompson G. Marsh Professor of Law at the Sturm College of Law, University of Denver and serves as Director of the International Legal Studies Program there. In 2006 Professor Nanda was honored with the founding of the Nanda Center for International Law. He was also Vice Provost at the University of Denver from 1994-2008, and since 2007 he has served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Iliff School of Theology, Denver. He holds or has held numerous official posts in international, regional, and national professional and civil society organizations.

Among numerous national and international awards, he has received the World Jurist Association's Highest Order of Justice and its World Legal Scholar Award, the Gandhi-King-Ikeda Award for Peace-Building from Soka Gakkai International and Morehouse College, the Human Rights Award from the United Nations Association, and Civil Rights Award from B'nai B'rith. He has received honorary doctorates from Soka University in Tokyo, Japan and from Bundelkhand University, Jhansi, India. He is widely published, having authored or co-authored 23 books in various fields of international law and over 180 chapters and major law review articles. He is a frequent guest on television and radio and writes regularly on international issues for the *Denver Post*.



Mr. Parveen Setia
Vice-Chair, Board of Trustees

Parveen Setia, Vice-Chair, has been a US citizen since 1987. He is married to Minaxi Setia, sister-in-law of Anu Bhatia, and has three children, all in college. Mr. Setia graduated from Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and earned his MBA from Webster University, 2008. He is employed as Pharmacist Team Leader at the Lakeland Medical Center in Lakeland, Florida. He is actively involved in the Ekal Vidalya project to support education of children in Indian villages.



Mrs. Anu Bhatia
Trustee

Anu Bhatia, eldest of the three nieces of Mahinder Singh Uberoi, lives with her husband and two daughters in Delhi. She graduated from the St. Ann's Convent in Hyderabad in 1979 and obtained a diploma in Textile Designing with Distinction in 1983 and went to work for four years in a textile printing house. After she married her husband in 1984 she has managed the family textile business. Mrs. Bhatia also takes a keen interest in social activities such as raising funds for under-privileged children and has taken part in discussions regarding social issues

on the national television.

Regarding her uncle's legacy, Mrs. Bhatia says, "Living thousands of miles away, the most difficult task was finding people in U.S.A. who would take interest in fulfilling our Uncle's wishes. God has been kind and we are very fortunate to have such good friends to work with. As work progresses on the Uberoi Foundation we sincerely hope as trustees that by carefully choosing the plan of action we wish to act upon, we are able to achieve the vision of our late Uncle."



Mrs. Jyothi Bhatia
Trustee

Jyothi Bhatia lives with her husband and two daughters in Noida, on the outskirts of New Delhi. She graduated from St. Ann's High School in 1980 and completed her diploma of two years in Fashion Designing in 1982. She then worked with Paris-based garment house "Jack and Jack" for five years. She travelled extensively all over the country and to Nepal between 1982 and 1987. She has her own fashion design studio and the couple has been successfully running their own business for the last 10 years.

Mrs. Bhatia and her husband were married in 1988. He is a real estate consultant in Delhi. They have two daughters -- Sahiba (20 years) who is doing her Bachelor's in Business Administration (BBA) and Vrinda (17 years) who is studying in the 10th standard.

Mrs. Bhatia is actively involved in religious activities at the "Bhakti Dham Mandir," a hillside temple and ashram in Nakuchiatal, Nainital, in the Himalayas. The ashram also serves as a school to educate poor children. She says, "I thank God for this wonderful opportunity that we have, to fulfill our uncle's wishes."



Mrs. Sneha Harjai
Trustee

Sneha Harjai is the youngest of the three sisters. She graduated from Kamla Nehru College of the University of Delhi with a BA degree in Honors English. She studied travel and tourism and worked as the Travel Assistant with the Grand Hyatt Hotel for two years. She was married in 1989 to Sunil Harjai, who recently

was awarded for his success as an entrepreneur in an Indian small industry. She brought her love and experience in travel to her work with her husband in their shoe exporting business, "Siddharth Exports," for which she handles the interactions and correspondence with foreign buyers, especially in the UK, Germany, and Italy. The couple has two children.

About the Uberoi Foundation, Sneha says, "Our uncle has left us a purpose to fulfill which we hope to achieve with the help of our dear friends who head our foundation. We would like to put in our best efforts and move towards the goal of our foundation."



Executive Staff



Mr. James T. Polsfut
Executive Director

James Polsfut currently serves as the executive director of the Uberoi Foundation for Religious Studies. In addition, he serves as the president of the Cordillera Foundation and as CEO of the U.S.-Mexico Foundation, two charitable organizations aimed at raising funds to benefit not-for-profit organizations in Mexico.

Previously, Mr. Polsfut helped to create a private bank and trust company called First Western Trust Bank, based in Denver. In that capacity, he served as president of First Western Development Corporation, a division of the bank responsible for corporate acquisitions. During his tenure there, First Western Trust Bank grew its assets to \$3 billion under management. Earlier in his career, Mr. Polsfut served as general manager for GE Capital in Mexico City and in the United States, as Denver Mayor Federico Peña's assistant for finance for the City and County of Denver, and as an associate in the public finance office of Smith Barney.

In addition to his professional responsibilities, Mr. Polsfut is active in the Denver community. Currently he chairs the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, the governing body of the 28 public universities and colleges in the State of Colorado, and he also serves on the board of the University of Denver Social Science Foundation. Previously, he served as one of two founding co-chairs of Denver's Road Home, a \$50 million plan organized in metro-Denver to combat homelessness over a ten-year period, as chairman of the board of the Urban Peak shelter for homeless and runaway youth, as treasurer of the Mi Casa Resource Center for Women, and as a board member of Open World Learning, the New America High School, the Latin American Educational Foundation, and the Arvada Council for the Arts and Humanities, among other organizations. Mr. Polsfut earned an undergraduate degree in Government from Harvard University and an MBA from Stanford University.



Mrs. Katharine Nanda
Secretary

Katharine Nanda, MA, JD, University of Denver, has practiced law for many years and is currently working in the criminal area through the Office of the Colorado Alternate Defense Counsel. She has been actively involved with many organizations serving the Indian community in Colorado, having served as the Chair of the Hindu Society of Colorado and a founding board member and Secretary of the Hindu Temple and Cultural Center of the Rockies (Denver).



Programmatic Summary

Since Program Inception in 2008

The Uberoi Foundation for Religious Studies seeks to propel the vision of its benefactor, Professor Mahinder Uberoi, in the programmatic effort which it undertakes. The Foundation focuses principally on annual Grant Awards and an annual Experts Meeting.

The Foundation does not accept unsolicited requests for funding, but rather, extends invitations to proposed applicants based on their areas of expertise and engagement within the Dharmic traditions. A review of the Grant Awards made in 2009 and 2010 appears in Section II of this Annual Report. A summary of the Experts Meeting 2010 appears in Section III.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Total</u>
2008	Uberoi Foundation, Internal Program	<i>Experts Meeting 2008: Denver, Colorado</i>	\$ 14,150
2009	Univ of Massachusetts Dartmouth Foundation Uberoi Foundation, Internal Program	<i>Teacher Training in Dharmic Traditions</i> <i>Experts Meeting 2009: Orlando, Florida</i>	\$ 94,206
2010	San Diego State University Foundation Univ of Massachusetts Dartmouth Foundation Uberoi Foundation, Internal Program	<i>Research on Tantric Culture</i> <i>Teacher Training in Dharmic Traditions</i> <i>Experts Meeting 2010: Denver, Colorado</i>	\$ 241,902
Total Programmatic Outlay Since Inception in 2008:			\$ 350,258



Grant Awards in 2009 and 2010

The Uberoi Foundation for Religious Studies serves to raise awareness of the four major Dharmic religions of Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism, in an effort to promote understanding, communication, tolerance, and peace among the diverse peoples of the world. The Foundation's primary source of grant-making revenue is investment proceeds from the perpetual endowment created by the estate of the late Professor Mahinder Singh Uberoi.

In 2009 as its grant-making got underway, the Uberoi Foundation made one initial allocation – to the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Foundation for teacher training in Dharmic traditions. In 2010, the Foundation allocated additional support for the teacher training program and added a second grant recipient, the San Diego State University Foundation.

1. **University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Foundation**

Project: *High School Teacher Training in Dharmic Traditions*
Lead: Professor Bal Ram Singh

The Uberoi Foundation sponsored a pilot program held at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth campus, during the summers of 2009 and 2010. The intended audience for the program was high school teachers, and the objective was to broaden the teachers' views of India as a country and, in particular, of the Dharmic traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism. The program's primary organizer was Bal Ram Singh, the director of the Center for Indic Studies at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, where he is also a professor of biophysical chemistry.

Over five days, individualized workshops cover a general introduction of India followed by in-depth background on Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism, and on the final day, a comprehensive conclusion. Local and regional experts lead the workshops. The participating teachers also enjoy cultural activities, such as a classical Hindustani music concert by Ms. Koyel Ghosal, a trained sitarist, a tour of a nearby Hindu temple, and a trial of Indian clothing such as saris, lehngas, dhotis, and kurtas. On the final day of the training, participating teachers showcase the two lesson plans they had been designing throughout the week as well as their plans to continue working on lessons plans designed for use in their high schools back home.

2. San Diego State University Foundation

Project: *Research on the Meaning of Images in the South Asian Tantric Culture*
Lead: Professor Sthaneshwar Timalsina

The Uberoi Foundation supports research underway by Assistant Professor Sthaneshwar Timalsina of San Diego State University. Specifically, Dr. Timalsina is investigating the meaning of images in the South Asian Tantric culture.

The outcome of Dr. Timalsina's research is a proposed book, Language of Images, bringing to light the meaning of esoteric Tantric images. The objective of the book is to introduce to both scholars and laymen the meaning of visualization in Tantras. Indian tradition has traditionally kept Tantra out of the public discourse, considering it to be a privileged, secret instruction. There have been many Western studies on categories of Tantra, the rituals and visualization, mantra, and mandala. However, the lack of enthusiasm from within the Indian tradition to bring Tantra into discourse has created ambiguity, consequently engendering a field of cultural study wherein the traditional Indian perspective is mostly absent. Dr. Timalsina's effort to read Tantric images in light of the Indian philosophical traditions is to encourage a broader cultural discourse that includes classical hermeneutics from within the Hindu culture. In the absence of indigenous understandings and interpretations, the cultural symbols carry superimposed meanings, resulting in cultural appropriation and dominion. The results of these external impositions can be seen in contemporary interpretations of the visualization of Kali, Ganesha, Bahirava, Visnu, and so on.



ANNUAL EXPERTS MEETING

Beginning in its first year of operation in 2008, the Uberoi Foundation for Religious Studies has placed a high priority on gathering together experts from the four Dharmic traditions – in one city and in one room, in order to share, collaborate, brainstorm, and engage. A brief recap of the Experts Meetings held to-date follows below.

2008: During its first year of operation, in October of 2008, the Uberoi Foundation hosted in Denver, Colorado, more than a dozen renowned scholars of Dharmic traditions. The scholars used their time together to sketch out the contours of the Foundation’s work. Representatives of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism were on hand in person, and a representative of Sikhism was present by conference call. Remarkably, the scholars noted how unusual it was for them to be together to reflect on the common threads that bind these Dharmic traditions and that, as scholars, they rarely, if ever, have that opportunity. It was a wonderful and meaningful beginning to the work that the Foundation had launched.

2009: Over two days in late October of 2009, the Foundation organized a second opportunity to meet with scholars. To participate in its “Uberoi Foundation Experts Meeting,” on location in Orlando, Florida, the Foundation invited twenty academicians to collaborate with its five-member board of trustees in three joint sessions. In the months leading up to the sessions, the Foundation announced its intention at the Experts Meeting to delve deeply into the commonalities of the four Indic Dharmic traditions as well as into the ways in which those traditions contribute to society. For the Experts Meeting, Shiva Bajpai prepared a paper on *Theism: The Ultimate Reality* and Arvind-Pal Mandair and Bal Ram Singh prepared a paper on *Karma*.

2010: The Foundation’s Experts gathered in Denver in October of 2010 at the Iliff School of Theology. Over two full days of fast-paced discourse, the Experts revealed their considerable talents and scope. In so doing, they demonstrated an exceptionally high level of academic rigor in their presentations and conversations. Deliberations at the Experts’ Meeting and the lively exchanges among the scholars very successfully met the lofty charge set by the organizer, Dr. Arvind Sharma, who selected the topic of “Decolonizing Indic Studies.”



EXPERTS MEETING 2010
DENVER, COLORADO October 8-10, 2010

“DECOLONIZING INDIC STUDIES”

AGENDA

Friday, October 8

Afternoon	Check in at Hyatt Regency Hotel, Registration, Greeting
5:00 p.m.	Meet at hotel entrance for transfer to Dinner and Program - India's Restaurant (*)
5:15 - 6:00	Reception
6:00	Welcome Prof. Ved Nanda
6:15-7:00	Session I Dr. Arvind Sharma
7:00	Dinner
7:30-9:00	Session II (during dinner) Moderator: Dr. (Ven.) Claude d'Estree Dr. Arvind Mandair Dr. Balbinder Bhogal -- Commentator

Saturday, October 9

7:30	Meet for transfer to Iliff for all-day sessions
7:45	Breakfast
8:15-9:45	Session III Moderator: Dr. R.S. Dwivedi Dr. Rita Gross Dr. Shrinivas Tilak
9:45-10:00	Break
10:00-11:30	Session IV Moderator: Dr. Yashwant Malaiya Dr. Subhash Kak Dr. Rita DasGupta Sherma
11:30-11:45	Group Picture
11:45-1:15	Lunch and Luncheon Speaker Moderator: Dr. Manohar Shinde Mr. Rajiv Malhotra
1:15-2:45	Session V Moderator: Mr. Pravin Shah Dr. Narahari Achar Dr. Siva Bajpai
2:45-3:00	Break
3:00-4:30	Session VI Moderator: Dr. Yashwant Pathak Dr. Jeffery Long Dr. Veena Howard
4:30-4:45	Break
4:45-5:30	Session VII Moderator: Mr. Jim Polsfut Professor Ramdas Lamb
5:30	Return to Hotel
6:45	Meet for transfer or walk to dinner

7:00-9:00

Dinner - Garcia's Mexican Restaurant

Moderator: Dr. David Trickett
Dr. Bal Ram Singh and Mr. Rajiv Malhotra
Presentation on Summer 2010
Teacher Training Program at UMass Dartmouth
Comments: Mr. Parveen Setia, Mr. Jim Polsfut,
and Mrs. Katharine Nanda

Sunday, October 10

7:00-8:30

Breakfast

8:30-10:00

Session VIII

Moderator: Dr. Richard Seager
Dr. Koenraad Elst
Dr. Lloyd Burton

10:00-10:15

Concluding Remarks

Dr. Arvind Sharma

10:15-10:30

Break

10:30-12:00

Presentations

Moderator: Ved Nanda

12:00

Lunch and adjournment

Final Report of the
Uberoi Foundation Experts Meeting 2010

Denver, Colorado
October 8-10, 2010



At the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado: Participants in the 2010 Experts' Meeting of the Uberoi Foundation for Religious Studies, October 9, 2010

Professor Arvind Sharma of McGill University in Montreal, Canada, organized the 2010 Uberoi Foundation Experts' Meeting. Dr. Sharma convened the many experts who have taken part in prior years as well as a number who were new to the Uberoi Foundation. The topic he selected reflected a core issue of the field -- "Decolonizing Indic Studies." His preview stated the concern succinctly:

Indic Studies, as we know it today, is primarily a product of the colonial period of Indian history, in the sense that it was produced during the period of British Rule over India. It is therefore not unlikely that some of its conclusions may have colored by this political and historical fact. This does not necessarily mean that all knowledge produced during this period is ipso facto suspect, for knowledge often possesses an objective character, but it does mean that it might be wise to interrogate some of

the knowledge produced during this period, which may be particularly liable to being influenced by this fact. The field of religious studies perhaps needs to be specially examined with this possibility in mind, for two reasons. (1) The Western notion of religion itself differs from the Indian in certain respects, but was nevertheless imposed on the Indian reality. Thus it becomes necessary to ask: Did such an act of epistemological imposition distort Indian religious reality in some way, and if so how? (2) The religion of the British rulers was Christianity, which possesses a strong missionary component. It thus also becomes necessary to ask: Was some of the knowledge about India produced during this period directly or indirectly shaped by this missionary imperative, and, if so, how?

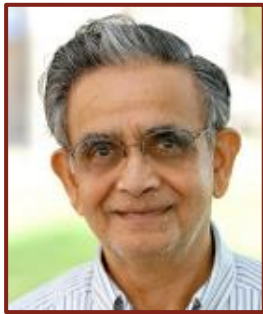
Thus, the participants were urged to reflect on both “religious reality” and on the intellectual understanding in their presentations. These are critical questions to the practitioner / believer / adherent and to the academic. Naturally, it also was asked, What is the influence on these pursuits if the scholar is or is not also an adherent? Another constant reference was the relevance of the “Eastern” or “Western” religious or scholarly point of view, which underlined the importance of this inquiry.

The field of speakers and discussants included Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Hindus. Two Buddhist scholars who had been on board to participate both had to bow out with illness, and another, a scholar of Hinduism, was injured in a fall just before departing for Denver. We sincerely look forward to all three being present next year.

As in previous Experts Meetings, the Uberoi Foundation strove to promote both cross-group and intra-group dialogue, the signature of the Foundation. One participant was heard to remark that she had never had such an opportunity to sit down and talk with other scholars of her community -- that this was a like a new “caucus” group.

Uberoi Foundation for Religious Studies Experts Meeting 2010

Presenters & Moderators



B.N. Narahari Achar, Ph.D.

Dr. B. N. Narahari Achar, originally from Bangalore, is currently a Professor of Physics at the University of Memphis. He earned his Ph D degree from the Pennsylvania State University, specializing in theoretical solid state physics. He taught at the Pennsylvania State University and Bucknell University before joining the University of Memphis. He held positions at the Argonne National Laboratory and at the NASA Glen Research Center. He has authored more than a hundred research papers in his specialty. His interest in the astronomy of ancient India was sparked when he was asked to teach a course in Astronomy for non-science majors at the University of Memphis. He pioneered in the use of Planetarium software in the study of astronomy of ancient India. His research has shown that major revisions have to be made in the accounts currently available of the history of astronomy in ancient India. One of his contributions concerns the date of the Mahabharata war, which he has shown to be a unique date based on the astronomical references in the epic.



Shiva Bajpai, Ph.D.

Dr. Shiva G. Bajpai served as Professor of History and Director of Asian Studies at California State University, Northridge, Los Angeles from 1970 to 2003. As a Professor Emeritus, he still continues to teach courses in Indian history and culture at that institution. He has been involved in teaching and research for the last 50 years. He received his B.A. (1955) and M.A. (1957) degrees from the Banaras Hindu University (M.A. Thesis on *The Chinese Buddhist Pilgrim Hsuan Tsang/Xuan Zong's India 629-644*) and obtained his Ph.D. from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, U.K. in 1967. He served as a tenured Professor of History at the Banaras Hindu University (1958-68) and was invited by the University of Minnesota to work on A Historical Atlas of South Asia Project (1967-76), with its publication (1978, 2005).

Dr. Bajpai has published many books and articles on India and Asia, and his works in progress include *The Empire-State (Raja-Mandala): Dynamics of Geopolitics in Classical India; Trade and Patterns of Commerce in early Medieval North India (c.700-1200 C.E.);* and *India through the Chinese Buddhist Pilgrims' Eyes*. Another book, *Early India in World History*, has become a top priority because of his recent (2005 and 2006) internationally publicized role in the California Textbook Controversy, involving the depiction of Ancient India and Hinduism in the sixth grade textbooks on World History. He is included in the Directory of American Scholars and Directory of International Biography, and has received various academic awards and fellowships, such as the American Historical Association's Wataumall Prize (co-recipient) for the best work in Indian history and AHS/NSF Senior Research Fellowship for research in India.



Balbinder Singh Bhogal, Ph.D.

Dr. Bhogal is Associate Professor in Religion, Hofstra University, New York City and Sardarni Kuljit Kaur Bindra Chair in Sikh Studies since September 2007. Previously he has taught in Philosophy and South Asian Religions in the US, Canada, and the UK. He received his Ph.D. in 2001 at the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University, where his thesis was on *“Nonduality and Skilful Means in the Hymns of Guru Nanak: Hermeneutics of the Word.”* Dr. Bhogal lists as his interests, in addition to the Sikh tradition, hermeneutic theory and its radicalization through deconstruction, Indian philosophy, and the Animal-Human divide. His recent publications include *“Ghostly Disorientations: Translating the Adi Granth as the Guru Granth,”* *“Text as Sword: Sikh Religious Violence Taken for Wonder,”* and *“Questioning Hermeneutics with Freud: How to Interpret Dreams and Mute-Speech in Sikh Scripture?”* and *“Cross-Cultural Dialogues with Western Fictions: ‘There is no Hindu nor Muslim’ – nor Sikh.”* Dr. Bhogal is also active in New York Sikh community activities, including just recently acting as a judge for the Short Film Section of the New York Sikh Film Festival at the Asia Society.



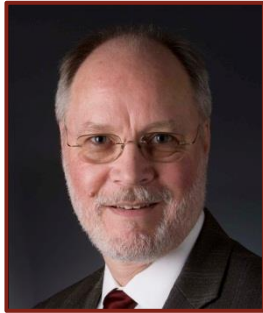
Lloyd Burton, Ph.D.

Lloyd Burton is a professor of law and public policy at the School of Public Affairs, University of Colorado Denver. There he directs the MPA program concentration in Emergency Management and Homeland Security, and the concentration in Environmental Policy, Management, and Law. He is also advisor for the school's dual degree program with the CU School of Law. He likewise holds a secondary appointment on the Environmental and Occupational Health faculty of the Colorado School of Public Health.

Prof. Burton's current research and writing agenda focuses on issues such as the environmental health impacts of energy project developments in the Mountain West, climate change and water supply in the West, and the cultural aspects of environmental law and policy. In partnership with the National Park Service, he administers the Place and Native Voice Project, which studies indigenous traditional ecological knowledge of the public lands of the West as ancient examples of environmental policy discourse.

He holds the Ph.D. in Jurisprudence and Social Policy (a teaching rather than a practicing law degree) from the School of Law (Boalt Hall), University of California Berkeley. From 1964 until 1967 he served as a U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman, including service with the Third Marine Division Ground Forces in the Republic of Vietnam. Later he taught emergency field medical care and mass casualty management at the Navy Hospital Corps School in San Diego.

Lloyd began to practice Insight Meditation in 1975, and is a co-founder of the organization that established the Spirit Rock Meditation Center, in Woodacre, California in 1985. He also co-founded the Insight Meditation Community of Colorado in 1993, for which he continues to serve as president of the board. In 2000, he completed a seminary program at Spirit Rock, and has served since that time as the senior resident teacher at the Insight Meditation Community of Denver. In addition to hosting this weekly sitting group, he also leads residential retreats at which various practices from the Theravada Buddhist tradition are taught, especially Vipassana (Insight) and Metta (Lovingkindness) meditation.



Claude d'Estree, Ph.D.

The Ven. Prof. Claude d'Estrée is a graduate of Harvard Divinity School where he focused on comparative religion and comparative spiritual disciplines at the Center for the Study of World Religions (CSWR) and served as an Assistant Director at CSWR. He was appointed as the first Buddhist Chaplain at Harvard University by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. While at Harvard he was the Teaching Fellow to Prof. Harvey Cox and Dean (Bishop) Krister Stendahl and taught for many years with The Rev. Prof. Peter Gomes. Since leaving Harvard he has also been the first Buddhist Chaplain at George Mason University, the University of Arizona, and the University of Denver. He has been a Dharma Teacher and Spiritual Director for over 30 years and was the co-founder of the first inter-faith school for the training of spiritual directors in the U.S. Prof. d'Estrée is a lineage holder in both the Gelug-pa tradition of Tibetan Buddhism and the Son (Zen) tradition of Korean (Chogye) Buddhism.

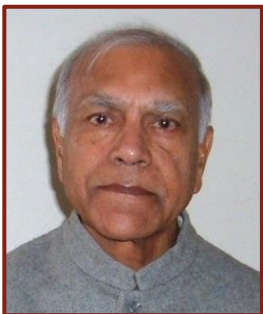
Presently he is a professor at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver. His main passion and area of research is human trafficking, forced labor and modern slavery. He is the Director of the Center on Rights Development (CORD) and the Director of the Human Trafficking Clinic (HTC), as well as the Buddhist Chaplain at DU. This year he will be leading a group of undergraduate and graduate students to work with Tibetan refugees in India as part of Project Dhramasala, sponsored by International House at the University of Denver. Dr. D'Estree is also the Senior Dharma Teacher at the Buddhist-Christian Inter-Spiritual Community (BCIC) based at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Denver, Colorado. BCIC is one of the oldest ongoing inter-faith communities in the U.S. and engages not only in Buddhist-Christian dialog, but dialog with all other faith traditions.



Mr. Abhinav Dwivedi

Abhinav Dwivedi was a founder and is currently Vice President and a Board member of Hindu University of America, based in Orlando, Florida. HUA is established to promote learning, research and understanding of Hindu culture, philosophies and religions, traditions, arts and sciences at the graduate level.

Mr. Dwivedi is originally from the State of Gujarat, India. Professionally, he has spent over 30 years in the computer industry in the USA. In his last position he was the head of a Motorola Division in India. He holds two Masters Degrees in Engineering and Computer Science, one from IIT (Bombay, India) and another from the University of California at Berkeley. He has taken early retirement from his professional work to devote full time to his passion -- education. He is actively engaged in growth and management of Hindu University of America. He routinely goes out to speak to colleges, schools, church and temples and corporations on topics ranging from various aspects of Hinduism, culture, and India in general. He currently lives in Orlando, Florida with his family.

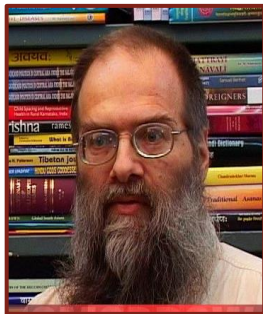


Radheyshyam Dwivedi, Ph. D.

Dr. Dwivedi is a Cell Biologist and an Emeritus Professor of Biology at Howard University, Washington, DC. During his academic career, he has been associated with USDA Beltsville Agricultural Resource Center, Beltsville, and Naval Medical Research Institute, Bethesda, in Maryland and the Universities of Illinois

(Urbana), Texas (Austin), Pennsylvania (Philadelphia) and Washington (Seattle) in USA; Saskatchewan (Saskatoon) in Canada, and CSA Agricultural University, Kanpur, and CPRI (ICAR) Shimla in India. He was a founder trustee of the Hindu Temple of Metropolitan Washington (DC) and a founder member of the Vedanta Center of Washington, DC area, a Ramakrishna Mission center.

Dr. Dwivedi is a director of the MARG Foundation and a senior editor of its bimonthly publication MARG. He is a member of the advisory council of the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS), USA, and Sanskrit Bharati, and a trustee of Sewa International, USA. He is also currently the President of the International Center for Cultural Studies (ICCS), USA Inc., an organization dedicated to academic research in ancient traditions and cultures of the world. He has also been an ardent student of literature, philosophy and religions of India all through his life.



Koenraad Elst, Ph.D.

Koenraad Elst (°Leuven, Belgium, 1959) studied Sinology, Indology and Philosophy. During postgraduate research in Indian philosophy at Benares Hindu University (1989-91), he sidelined philosophy in favour of more urgent religio-political topics, which he found to be treated very inaccurately by the reigning specialists. He interviewed numerous Indian leaders and thinkers to get a first-hand acquaintance with Hindu and Muslim politics. Without the benefit of any kind of grant, and all while raising a progeny of four, he prepared his Ph.D. dissertation on the ideological development of the political Hindu movement. He received his doctoral

degree at KUL *magna cum laude* in October 1998. He has mainly made his living by lecturing and writing, much of it in free-lance journalism and in editorial jobs with Flemish papers and periodicals. Politically, Dr. Elst grew away from the leftist positions he embraced in his youth and matured into a mildly conservative sceptic. Seven Dutch and eighteen English book titles of his have been published, as well as ten contributions to collective volumes, mostly pertaining to the interface of religions and politics, ancient Indo-European history, contemporary South- and East-Asian politics, and the big questions of philosophy.



Nicholas F. Gier, Ph.D.

Dr. Nicholas F. Gier was Professor of Philosophy at the University of Idaho for 31 years and Coordinator of Religious Studies for 23 years. He was also Senior Fellow in the Martin Institute for Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution for 10 years. He has published four books, 38 articles, and eight book chapters. Dr. Gier published *Wittgenstein and Phenomenology* (SUNY, 1981) and *God, Reason, and the Evangelicals* (University Press of America, 1987). Two sabbaticals and a third research trip to India led to Gier's most recent books: *Spiritual Titanism: Indian, Chinese, and Western Perspectives* (SUNY, 2000) and *The Virtue of Non-Violence: from Gautama to Gandhi* (SUNY, 2004). He is currently working on a book on the origins of religious violence, draft chapters of which can be read at www.class.uidaho.edu/ngier/orv.htm.



Rita M. Gross, Ph.D.

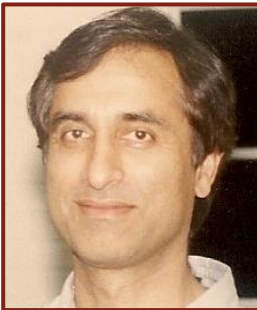
Rita M. Gross is a Professor of Comparative Studies in Religion and a Buddhist dharma teacher teaching within the Lotus Garden sangha headed by Her Eminence Jetsun Khandro Rinpoche. Throughout her long career she has focused on issues pertaining to gender and religion and on issues surrounding religions

diversity. Author of more than 150 articles and essays, she has also written and edited several influential books including *Unspoken Worlds: Women's Religious Lives* (with Nancy Auer Falk), *Buddhism after Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism*, and her most recent book, *A Garland of Feminist Reflections*.



Veena Rani Howard, Ph.D.

Veena Rani Howard's expertise lies in Hindu thought, comparative religion, and the Gandhian philosophy of ascetic activism. Her current research is on ideological debates that take place within the native discourse of Indian thought, as well as in the interactions between native and Western interpretations. She received her higher education in India and the US and has master's degrees in Indian Philosophy and Eastern Classics. She received her Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Lancaster University, UK, and her dissertation focused on Mahatma Gandhi's Ascetic Activism. She teaches at the University of Oregon and Lane Community College. She has translated two books of the Saint Tradition of Northern India, *Moksha Darśana (The Philosophy of Liberation)* and *Sarvadharmā Samanvya (Harmony of All Religions)*. Her articles have been published in various essay collections and journals, including: *Who Exactly Is the Other? Western and Transcultural Perspectives*, University of Oregon Books (2002); *Asceticism, Identity and Pedagogy in Dharma Traditions*, Contemporary Issues in Constructive Dharma, vol. 3 (2006); and *Religion Compass*, Blackwell (2007). She is a frequent presenter at national and international conferences. Most recently, she gave a plenary address at the 2009 Annual Conference, Exploring the Power of Nonviolence, Marquette University, Wisconsin; a presentation at the WAVES Conference in Trinidad/Tobago (2010); and an invited lecture at Miranda House, Delhi University, India (2010). She is currently working on her manuscript exploring the intrinsic relationship between Gandhi's asceticism and his nonviolent political activism.



Subhash Kak, Ph.D.

Subhash Kak is Regents Professor and Head of Computer Science Department at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. Apart from numerous research papers on science and Indology and 18 books, he has written on science for the general public and his work has been showcased in the popular media including Discovery and History channels, PBS, Dutch Public TV OHM, and most recently in a documentary on music (www.ragaunveiled.com). Amongst his awards are British Council Fellow (1976), Science Academy Medal of the Indian National Science Academy (1977), Kothari Prize (1977), UNESCO Tokten Award (1986), Goyal Prize (1998), National Fellow of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study (2001), and Distinguished Alumnus of IIT Delhi (2002).



Ramdas Lamb, Ph.D.

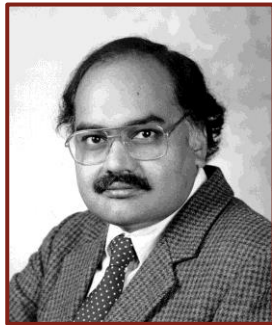
Ramdas Lamb is an associate professor of Religion at the University of Hawai'i, where he has been teaching for the last 20 years. From 1969 to 1978, he was a sadhu in the Ramananda Sampraday in North and Central India. After returning to the U.S., he began his academic training and earned a doctorate in Asian religions from the University of California at Santa Barbara. During the last 30 or so years, he has returned to India almost every year to continue and further his understanding of the land, of Hinduism, and of the various religious and cultural

traditions there. Professor Lamb's academic research focus has been primarily been on the Ramanandis and other ascetic groups, low caste religious movements and groups in central India, and the problems with contemporary Indian studies.



Jeffery D. Long, Ph.D.

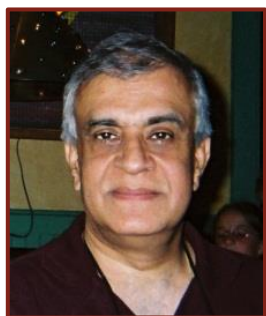
Jeffery D. Long is Associate Professor and Chair of Religious Studies and Co-Director of Asian Studies at Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania. He is the author of *A Vision for Hinduism: Beyond Hindu Nationalism*, *Jainism: An Introduction*, and the forthcoming *Historical Dictionary of Hinduism*. Long is currently Co-chair of the North American Hinduism unit of the American Academy of Religion. He previously served as Chair of the Steering Committee of DANAM (the Dharma Academy of North America) and is a regular consultant for the Hindu American Foundation. Long received both his master's and doctoral degrees from the Divinity School at the University of Chicago. He is a member of the Vedanta Society and a regular contributor to *Prabuddha Bharata*, the journal of the Ramakrishna Order.



Yashwant Malaiya, Ph.D.

Dr. Yashwant K. Malaiya is a Professor in the Computer Science Department at Colorado State University, Fort Collins. He has published widely in the areas of his professional discipline and on Jain history. He has been an invited speaker at the Biennial JAINA (Jain Associations of North America) Conventions for 2001, 2003, 2005, and 2007 conventions and is the coordinator for office of Alumni Affairs for ISSJS (International Summer School for Jain Studies). He was the founder of the India Association of Northern Colorado and has served as its President for two terms. Dr. Malaiya was the creator of the first website on Hindi language, and the first major website on Jainism. And he is the moderator of a forum on Indian Archaeology.

He has served as a general chair for several international conferences in the USA, India, and China. He received the IEEE Third Millennium Medal in 2000 and IEEE CS Golden Core Award in 1996.



Mr. Rajiv Malhotra

Mr. Rajiv Malhotra is the founder and president of Infinity Foundation. An Indian-American entrepreneur, philanthropist and community leader, he has devoted himself, for the last ten years, to clarifying the many misperceptions about Indic traditions in America and amongst Indians. He is an active writer, columnist, and speaker on a variety of topics, including the traditions and cultures of India, the Indian Diaspora, globalization, and East-West relations. Mr. Malhotra has been appointed to the Asian-American Commission for the State of New Jersey, where he serves as the Chairman for the Education Committee, which was created to start an Asian Studies program in schools. He also serves on the Advisory Board of the New Jersey Chapter of the American Red Cross and has volunteered in local hospice and AIDS counseling. He also chairs the Board of Governors of The Center for Indic Studies.



Arvind-Pal Mandair, Ph.D.

Dr. Arvind Mandair completed B.Sc. and Ph.D (1989) in Chemistry and worked for several multinationals as a research scientist. He has taught in the Physics Department at the University of Warwick, UK.

In the mid-90's he changed his academic field to study religion and philosophy and completed an MA, followed by a Ph.D in Philosophy (1999) from the University of Warwick, specializing in Sikh Studies. In 2001 Dr. Mandair was appointed Assistant Professor of Religion and named first holder of the S.K.K. Bindra Chair in Sikh studies at Hofstra University, New York. He later moved to the University of Michigan to become the inaugural holder of the S.B.S.C. Chair in Sikh Studies.

Dr. Mandair is founding co-editor of the journal *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture and Theory*. He currently serves as Assistant Editor of the journal *Culture and Religion* and on the editorial board of the journal *Religions of South Asia*. He has published extensively books, journal articles, and book chapters. His 2009 book is entitled *Religion and the Specter of the West: Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality and the Politics of Translation*, and he has another book, *The Politics of Religion-Making* forthcoming in 2010.

Though grounded in the study of South Asian culture, Dr. Mandair's research and teaching interests include areas such as Continental Philosophy; Theory of Religion, Post-colonial Theory; Translation studies and Political theology. In addition he has extensive experience of working with the Sikh community in North America and the UK and, shortly after 9/11, appeared as an expert witness in several landmark court cases concerning the Sikhs.



Veena Talwar Oldenburg

Veena Talwar Oldenburg is Professor of History, Baruch College & The Graduate Center of the City University of New York and very recently a Fellow at Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Advanced Study. She has received many prestigious fellowships before this one--from Rockefeller Foundation, American Philosophical society, New York's Social Science Research Council and the American Institute of Indian Studies, the Smithsonian Institution and the National Endowment for the arts in the U.S. All her research interrogates the structures and functioning of colonial India, and its impact and response of indigenous in both urban and rural settings. Apart from her book, *Dowry Murder*, which will be republished by Penguin in October, she is also the author of the now classic work on colonial urbanization, *The Making of Colonial Lucknow* (published by Princeton, 1984 and in the Oxford Lucknow Omnibus, 2001), and editor of *Shaam-e-Awadh: Writings on Lucknow* (Penguin, 2007). She has also published many scholarly articles and essays on women and colonialism.

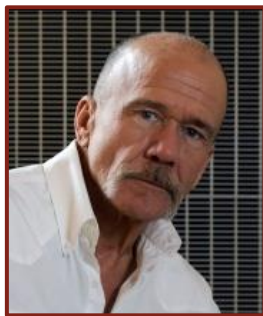


Yashwant Pathak, Ph.D.

Dr. Yashwant Pathak completed his education (M.S., Ph.D. in Pharmaceutical Technology) from Nagpur University, India. He is Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, Chairman and Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the College of Pharmacy, Sullivan University, Louisville, Kentucky. With extensive experience in

academia as well as industry, he has to his credit more than 100 publications, including a book in his professional field and several book chapters.

Dr. Pathak has travelled extensively and is actively involved with many cultural organizations, including as the founder and International Coordinator for the International Center for Cultural Studies. He has organized several international cultural conferences, including the World Hindu Conference at Durban in 1995, attended by more than 45,000, people and addressed by President Nelson Mandela. Actively involved in academic research on ancient traditions of the world, he has recently organized a conference on Hindu-Buddhist Dialogue to be attended by Buddhist monks from six different countries, on the theme “Martial Arts, Non Violence and Spirituality,” which will discuss all the Dharmic traditions of the world including the Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist traditions. Dr. Pathak also serves on a number of boards and advisory committees for several cultural organizations in India and the USA.



Richard Seager, Ph.D.

Dr. Richard Seager received his PhD in the study of religion from Harvard University with a concentration in the Religions of the Modern West. His primary publications focus on the history of Asian religions coming to the United States which include *The World’s Parliament of Religions: the East / West Encounter, Chicago 1893* (Indiana, 1995); *Buddhism in America* (Columbia, 1999); and *Encountering the Dharma: Daisaku Ikeda, the Soka Gakkai, and the Globalization of Buddhist Humanism* (University of California, 2006). His secondary areas of research and teaching are religion and environmentalism in a global perspective and religions and cultures on the border between Mexico and the U.S. Dr. Seager is currently the Bates and Benjamin Professor of Classical and Religious Studies at Hamilton College in central New York state.



Mr. Pravin Shah

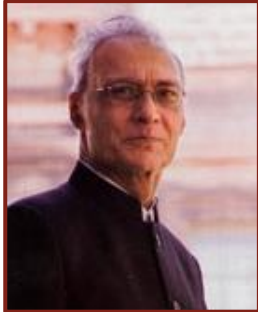
Mr. Pravin K. Shah is a founding member of Jain Study Center of North Carolina (Raleigh). He is a chairperson of JAINA Education Committee and adviser to YJA and YJP youth organizations. He is also a member of the Harvard University Pluralism Project Advisory Council and director of Triangle Interfaith Association. He is an Electrical Engineer, retired from IBM and lives in Raleigh North Carolina, USA.

Mr. Shah is a Jain scholar, vegan and activist against animal cruelty. He has published several articles and books on Jain philosophy, cruelty to animals, and comparative religions. His primary objective is to provide Jain religion education to Jain youths borne in the Western world. He offers two-day workshop on Jainism to prepare teachers for Jain Pāthashālā (Sunday school).

As a chairperson of Jaina Education Committee, Mr. Shah has published a complete set of Pāthashālā Educational Material covering from elementary level to college level education. Today more than 3500 Jain Pāthashālā students across North America use this material. He is also the author of the books: (1) Jainism - a Religion of Ecology and Non-violence, (2) The Book of Compassion and (3) Essence of World Religions.

Mr. Shah established the Jain BBS (electronic Bulletin Board Services) in 1993, which later expanded to the Jain eLibrary website www.jaineLibrary.org, providing Jain religious information worldwide

electronically. At present more than 2000 books (700,000 pages) of Jain literature information are available on this site. The literature covers many aspects of Jain philosophy and religion such as Jain scriptures, commentaries, rituals, conduct, art and architecture.



Arvind Sharma, Ph.D.

Dr. Arvind Sharma is the Birks Professor of Comparative Religion in the Faculty of Religious Studies at McGill University in Montreal Canada, where he teaches courses in World Religions and Indian religions. He has also published extensively in these areas. His latest book, of which he is the contributing editor, is entitled: *Why I Am A Believer* (Penguin India, 2009). Dr. Sharma is currently engaged in promoting the adoption of a Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the World's Religions.



Rita D. Sherma, Ph.D.

Dr. Rita Sherma holds a Masters in Religion and a Ph.D. in Theology and Ethics from Claremont Graduate University. She is the co-founder of: the *Institute for Indic Philosophy and Culture* at Claremont Graduate University; the *Hinduism Program Unit at the American Academy of Religion*, and the *Dharma Academy of North America (DANAM)*. She is also the founding director of the *Institute for Theology Beyond Boundaries*. She is visiting professor at Binghamton University, and executive director of the School of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Taksha University. Dr. Sherma has written numerous academic essays, book chapters, and articles in the field of religious studies. She is the co-editor of six volumes on aspects of the indigenous religious systems of India (Dharma Traditions), including *Woman and Goddess in Hinduism*. Her forthcoming book is *Eros, Ecology, and Enlightenment: An Eco-theology of Shakti*.



Manohar Shinde, M.D., Ph.D.

Dr. Manohar Shinde studied medicine in Hyderabad, India, where he did General Psychiatry and Child Psychiatry and completed his Ph.D. in Psychoanalysis in 1989. He has served on the clinical faculties at UCLA and USC Schools of Medicine and at the Institute for Contemporary Psychoanalysis (ICS) in Los Angeles, and has also served as Medical Director at various institutions and has been in private practice in L.A. since 1984. His specialization is in Eating Disorders.

Aside from his professional/medical career, Dr. Shinde has a deep interest in Spirituality, mysticism, Hindu/Vedic Philosophy, History and Contemporary Civilizational concerns. He pursues an active collaboration with many like-minded institutions, through such commitments as sitting on the board of The Foundation for Indic Studies at Clairmont University, Los Angeles, CA, closely supporting the activities of Infinity Foundation, Princeton, N.J., the Indic Foundation at the University of S. Massachusetts at Dartmouth, and the annual conference series of The Human Empowerment Conference. Dr. Shinde is part of an adhoc committee to explore starting of a Vedic University in Los Angeles and is a founding member of The Global Foundation for Civilizational Harmony (GFCH), a forum

to facilitate inter-civilizational dialogue as a conflict resolution model. He is also actively involved in several socio-cultural institutions.

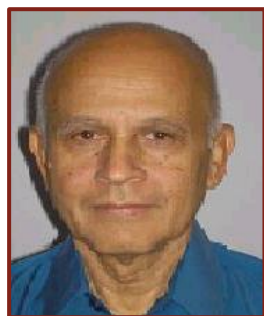


Bal Ram Singh, Ph.D.

Dr. Bal Ram Singh is the Director of Center for Indic Studies at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, where he teaches a course on Science of Kriyayoga. As a Professor of Biophysical Chemistry and Henry Dreyfus Teacher-Scholar at University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, and the Director of Botulinum Research Center, he has been conducting research for 19 years at UMass Dartmouth on the molecular mode of action of botulinum and tetanus neurotoxins, and lately also on yoga, mind, and consciousness. He has been teaching a graduate course on Chemistry of Mind for the past nine years. His research on biodefense and biotechnology is internationally recognized, and he has served on many national and international scientific panels. Dr. Singh has published about 175 research articles, has edited three books, and has obtained three patents. He is the Editor of The Botulinum Journal.

Dr. Singh received his B. Sc. from Avadh University in India in 1977 in Biology and Chemistry. He received his M.Sc. and M. Phil. Degrees from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India in Life Sciences during 1979-1982, and his Ph.D. in Chemistry from Texas Tech University in 1987. He completed his post-doctoral training at the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1990 and joined the faculty at UMass Dartmouth the same year. He received the First Scholar of the Year Award at UMass Dartmouth in 1996 and the 2004 University Service Award given by the UMass Dartmouth Alumni Association. He is President of BBTech, Inc., Dartmouth, and Managing Director of BBTech Herbal in India. He is also manager of a girls school, Kuruom Vidyalaya, which he has established in his native village in India.

Over the years, Dr. Singh has served on expert panels of National Institutes of Health, Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security. He has been actively involved in several socio-cultural organizations. He has published over three dozen scholarly articles on issues related to Indian tradition, culture, and philosophy, and contributes to a regional newspaper for Indian Americans. He also currently serves as an Associate Editor of the International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management.



Shrinivas Tilak, Ph.D.

Dr. Shrinivas Tilak is an independent researcher based in Montreal. Holder of Ph D in history of religions from McGill University, Montreal, Dr Tilak's publications include (1) *The Myth of Sarvodaya: Study in Vinoba's Concept* (Breakthrough Publications, New Delhi, 1985); (2) *Religion and aging in the tradition of India* (State University of New York Press, Albany, New York, 1989); (3) *Understanding karma in light of Paul Ricoeur's philosophical anthropology and hermeneutics* (International Centre for Cultural Studies, Nagpur; 2006), and *Reawakening to a secular Hindu nation: M.S. Golwalkar's vision of a dharmasapeksha Hindurashtra* (BookSurge, Charleston, SC, 2009). He has also written several chapters for books in the field of Indology edited by distinguished scholars.



David Trickett, Ph.D.

Dr. David Trickett is a native of the Deep South in the United States. He began his higher education at Emory University, where—among other things—he ended up as a student volunteer with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. On a steep learning curve with the civil rights movement in the US, he found that one of his most heart-searing experiences was helping in a very modest way to facilitate some of the functions to mark the funeral of Martin Luther King, Jr. He shifted from the study of physics to theology after being introduced to the field

of “sacred story.”

Dr. Trickett has worked in all sizes of congregations, in ministry and teaching. At the end of the 1980s he began a small undertaking to address leadership needs among those being educated in theology and those who would be served by the graduates, which led him to form The Jefferson Circle, a global teaching practice that focused on providing accessible theology for daily life in corporations, governments, and NGOs on several continents.

This phase of globe-trotting got Dr. Trickett into various deeply conflicted situations...and that led him to chair the Center for World Religions, Diplomacy, and Conflict Resolution within the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University, from which he was elected to serve as the 13th President of the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado. At Iliff, one of thirteen United Methodist-related graduate schools of theology, he also serves as the Henry White Warren Professor of Ethics and Leadership.

**2010 EXPERTS MEETING
of the
Uberoi Foundation for Religious Studies**

**DENVER, COLORADO
October 8-10, 2010**

“DECOLONIZING INDIC STUDIES”

LIST OF ABSTRACTS

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Narahari Achar

Abstract

Revisiting the Astronomy of Vedic Times with Planetarium Software

The historical study of Vedic literature in general and RigVeda in particular, is a direct outcome of the interest of the Western scholars and influenced by the colonial rule. The date of ~1500 BCE for RigVeda, for example, which is favored by most Western scholars (and their Indian followers) is the immediate result of the so-called AIT. This chronology is in direct conflict with the traditional Indic chronology on the one hand and with the chronology based on astronomical data derived by Tilak, Jacobi and their modern counterparts. The high chronology based on astronomical data was denied by the esteemed scholars such as Thibaut and Whitney with concomitant misrepresentations of the astronomical knowledge in the Vedic times. These misrepresentations continue to be put forth by Pingree and his school and Witzel and his followers. The present paper summarizes the results of a study undertaken to reexamine the astronomy of the Vedic times with the help of modern computer software known as Planetarium Software, which can project the view of the sky at any time and at any place in the world at the click of a mouse and thus can bring the investigation of astronomy to anybody who is interested and not just the well trained astronomer. These studies which have been underway for the past several years show that

- (i) Contrary to the prevalent belief the entire list of Nakshatras is known in RigVeda and the scheme of naming months such as Chaitra, Vaishakha etc can be traced to RigVeda
- (ii) A new scheme for identifying the Vedic Nakshatras with modern names of asterisms is presented after examining some 900 New Moon days and about an equal number of Full Moon days for identifying the position of the moon and the asterisms
- (iii) The dates of Shatapatha Brahmana and Vedanga Jyotisha are established. The date for Shatapatha Brahmana ~3000 BCE is consistent with the date given earlier by Dixit and the date for Vedanga Jyotisha ~1800 BCE is earlier.
- (iv) The date of the Mahabharata war is established as a unique date 3067 BCE based purely on the internal evidence of astronomical references in the epic, which are shown to be coherent, systematic and consistent with the Vedic tradition of omens (as opposed to the prevalent view among all scholars that the astronomical references in the epic are confusing, contradictory and almost bordering on absurdity, 'fit for a mother goose's tale').
- (v) The astronomical references in the Vedic texts are reexamined and a consistent chronology is developed with the date of the Mahabharata war as the sheet anchor. This chronology, while consistent with the chronology given by Tilak, Jacobi, Frawley and Kazanas among others is in conflict with the chronology given by Talageri.

Shiva Bajpai

Abstract

Decolonizing Indian history: Some Recent Controversies.

My presentation examines the problems and prospects of Decolonizing Indian History in education and

public sphere in the context of The California Textbook Controversy (2005-2006) and subsequent two law suits by the Hindu American Foundation vs. California State Board of Education and Department of Education and a federal court law suit: California Parents for the Equalization of Education Materials vs California State Board of Education and Department of Education. It would also utilize the Rama Setu Controversy in India (2008) and the most recent Ayodhya Verdict of the last month in order to highlight the critical role of history and historians in the public arena.

Koenraad Elst

Abstract

The benefits of Orientalism for the Indic religions

Edward Said's influential book *Orientalism* is riddled with factual errors and conceptually flawed (partly but not only by the impact of the author's political compulsions), as has been argued by many and definitively documented by Ibn Warraq. Exploring how some of Said's critique developed for the field of Islamic studies could meaningfully apply to Indian studies has nonetheless proved useful. But there, very soon, we run into instances where the Orientalist project has actually proved *beneficial* to the Indic religions in the colonial and post-colonial situation and may still do so today. After acknowledging the truism that the discovery and glorification of Sanskrit by mostly German Orientalists has played a role in triggering the Hindu Renaissance, we re-evaluate that bogey-boy of postmodernist critique, the much-maligned "essentialism" which Orientalists allegedly infused into the outside perception and self-perception of the Indic religions. Whereas the postmodern approach belittles textual studies of religion and favours the anthropological assumption that "Islam is simply what we observe Muslims as doing" or "Buddhism is simply what self-described Buddhists do", the Orientalists accepted the textual core as normative for a religion,— just as most spokesmen for those religions themselves would. In the case of Hinduism, the situation is more complex and admittedly more conducive to the approach of simply defining it as "everything that non-Abrahamic Indians do". But there, the Orientalist emphasis on the textual tradition has greatly helped in giving Hindu reformers a guideline for popularizing a normative essence of Hinduism. The result is not uniformly good-looking, witness the slanted and monomaniacal summaries of the "essence" of Hinduism in various sectarian catechism books (e.g. non-violence according to Gandhians; yoga according to missionary yoga societies; tolerance, etc.), but it holds promise. Today's Hindu revivalists, in particular, could learn some lessons from the Orientalists, whom they now alternately quote (when in praise of Hinduism and India) and malign. They are often accused of peddling the very European message of nationalism in Hindu guise, a questionable simplification, and arguably a very "Orientalist" one in Said's pejorative sense of the term, in that it denies to South-Asian "natives", fixed in their pre-modern (and pre-nationhood) essence, a political project that it takes for granted in Europe. The best Hindu revivalist thinkers have not coincidentally been men who were thoroughly acquainted with European thought including its digestion of the Oriental heritage. The much-needed completion of the project of decolonizing the Hindutva mind, now cramped in anachronistic anti-Westernism, would benefit from a reappraisal of the labour and dispassionate inquisitiveness of the Orientalists. Most of all, the Orientalist assumption of a universal common denominator on which to place and judge the various world traditions, as contrasted with the postmodern particularism of incommensurable "identities", should no longer be seen as a form of European aggression but as, on the contrary, a point of consonance between the best in the European and Indian schools of thought.

Rita Gross

Abstract

Indigenous, Non-Western “Feminisms” in Early Buddhist Literature

Those opposed to any change or improvement in the status of women in Asian religious traditions often use the argument that such changes would involve nothing but an imposition of Western values on Asian traditions. This argument amounts to a claim that, by themselves, members of Asian religious communities would never protest or seek to ameliorate the low status and limited opportunities that women in these traditions sometimes face.

However, this is not the case, at least not for many segments of the Buddhist world. In this paper, I will explore writings in the world of Theravada Buddhism that elevate the most important women in the life of the historical Buddha, his foster mother Prajapati and his wife Yashodhara, to a nearly equal status with the Buddha himself. These stories are found in Theravada sources despite the fact that in the more familiar canonical sources, these women, especially the Buddha’s wife, have only minor status and were not the subject of much interest or story-telling. If someone today were to create such stories, they would immediately be castigated as merely the results of foreign Western feminist input. But these stories first began to be told nearly two thousand years ago and have been added to ever since. Thus, one cannot reject contemporary “feminist” changes to Asian religions because they must always be contrary to the Asian essence of these traditions. There are many examples of “feminist-like” innovations throughout the history of Buddhism, at least. I suspect that such innovation is also found in the other major Asian traditions.

Veena Howard

Abstract

Understanding Gandhi’s *Brahmacarya* Practice as the Foundation of His Nonviolent Activism: Hermeneutical Challenges

Gandhi’s principles of *ahimsā* (nonviolence) and *satyagraha* (passive resistance) have received broad attention in the fields of nonviolent activism and Gandhian scholarship. However, Gandhi’s ascetic disciplines such as *aparigraha* (non-possession) and *brahmacarya* (celibacy)—which he considered integral to his nonviolent activism—are either ignored as being his personal religious practices, or considered irrelevant to the secular pursuit of Gandhian principles. In the arena of academics, Gandhi’s ascetic practices have primarily been studied under the purview of Western hermeneutics. For example, scholars use various interpretive methods—from psychoanalytical to political to anthropological—to assess the reasons for Gandhi’s unconventional vow and practice of *brahmacarya*. In the field of politics, Gandhi’s so-called “obsession” with celibacy has caused scholars of various disciplines to speculate on the reasons behind it—including guilt, lack of human love, and concern for national health. All seem to be motivated by the “hermeneutics of suspicion,” and because of this process, Gandhi’s own reasons, including his philosophical presuppositions rooted in Hindu dharma, have been overlooked. The result: A study of Gandhian literature reveals that the ever-evolving narrative of the Gandhian legacy also represents a movement toward isolating Gandhi’s political methods from his renunciatory practices.

As a counter to this trend, I argue that if we are to take Gandhi's strategies of nonviolent activism seriously it behooves us to closely analyze his own words (now collected in more than 50,000 pages) in order to understand the value of his ascetic practices in nonviolent activism. I seek to engage with Gandhi's words as a unique hermeneutical approach that provides not only the religio-mythical underpinnings of Gandhi's practices but also a comprehensive account of his historical, personal, religious, and political reasons for these practices. This rather unconventional "inside out" approach (studying Gandhi in his own terms) may appear naïve or even artless but its simplicity allows for a serious study of Gandhi's complex and multifaceted ascetic practices, with a specific emphasis on *brahmacharya*. This paper address three main points: first, Gandhi's understanding of the concept of *brahmacharya*, which he believed represented comprehensive self-control; second, various underlying religious and ethical connotations of this practice as described by Gandhi; and third, the practical value of this vow and practice in his nonviolent political activism. This textual analysis deepens our understanding of Gandhi's religious philosophy, tied inextricably to his political philosophy, as well as expands our understanding of the pragmatic value of renunciatory practices in contemporary nonviolent activism.

Subhash Kak

Abstract

Conflicting Narratives of Indian Science

There exist conflicting narratives on India's scientific contributions. One of these narratives that arose in the period of colonial historiography is that the scientific attitude is generally absent in Indian culture and Indian science itself is derivative. This narrative has been internalized by the Indian elite and it informs India's educational system. The paper will examine this narrative in light of recent research in India and the West.

Ramdas Lamb

Abstract

The topic of Indian studies has become very popular during the last several decades, with new departments and centers opening up in dozens of universities and colleges. However, a significant number of those who teach in these have a relatively little direct understanding of Indian history, culture, religion, and society. Instead, their understanding and subsequent interpretation has come primarily from texts written by others with a similarly distanced perspective. Many use colonialist writings or texts which have drawn their information and understanding from colonialist writings, and thus perpetuate the biased perspectives that eighteenth and nineteenth century British and other Europeans developed and promoted. For the purpose of this paper, my focus will be on the way Hinduism has been and is taught in western universities, who teaches the subject, what sources are typically used, and what can be done to make it more reflective of the indigenous reality.

Jeffery D. Long

Abstract

HINDU THEOLOGY AND THE DECOLONIZATION OF INDIAN STUDIES

Addressing Three Common Objections

In this paper, I propose embracing the category of *Hindu theology* as a means of asserting Hindu agency in a way that is constructive, positive, and universal. Tapping into and building upon the argument of my first book, *A Vision for Hinduism: Beyond Hindu Nationalism*, I argue here that the category of Hindu theology, while in several senses a colonial distortion and imposition, has the capacity to be liberating for both Hindus and non-Hindus in India and to unleash the hidden potential of Hinduism to be a major force for positive global change and a world religion in the full sense of the term.

Arguing persuasively for the category of Hindu theology is, of course, an uphill battle that must be fought on many fronts simultaneously. There is aversion to the term *theology* among both Hindus and secular scholars of religion because of its association with Christianity—which, in turn, has strong associations with colonialism. There is also an assumption that theology is an inherently non-rational discourse, a kind of inferior cousin of philosophy. And there is also an association of Hindu assertiveness of any kind with militant Hindu nationalism, with its attendant violent rhetoric—and, at times, actual physical violence—against non-Hindu communities in India. This paper is dedicated to addressing these objections.

Arvind-Pal Mandair

Abstract

In my recent book, *Religion and the Specter of the West: Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality and the Politics of Translation*, I have argued that intellectual movements, such as deconstruction, postsecular theory, and political theology, have different implications for cultures and societies that live with the debilitating effects of past imperialisms. In doing so I have tried to unsettle the politics of knowledge construction in which the category of "religion" continues to be central. The main part of the study deploys a case study of Sikhism to present an extended critique of religion as a cultural universal. At the same time, I have tried to highlight how certain aspects of Sikh tradition were reinvented as "religion" during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

India's imperial elite subtly recast Sikh tradition as a *sui generis* religion, which robbed its teachings of their political force. In turn, Sikhs began to define themselves as a "nation" and a "world religion" that was separate from, but parallel to, the rise of the Indian state and global Hinduism. Rather than investigate these processes in isolation from Europe, the book shifts the focus closer to the political history of ideas, thereby recovering part of Europe's repressed colonial memory.

In addition to this, *Religion and the Specter of the West* attempts to rethink the intersection of religion and the secular in discourses such as history of religions, postcolonial theory, and recent continental philosophy. Though seemingly unconnected, these discourses are shown to be linked to a philosophy of "generalized translation" that emerged as a key conceptual matrix in the colonial encounter between India and the West. I have tried to demonstrate how this philosophy of translation continues to

influence the repetitions of religion and identity politics in the lives of South Asians, and the way the academy, state, and media have analyzed such phenomena.

Veena Talwar Oldenburg

Abstract

Reinvestigating Dowry Murder

Tentative Title: “From Safety Net to Noose: Tracking Dowry and Female Infanticide in Colonial Punjab”

Based on her book, *Dowry Murder: The Imperial Origins of a 'Cultural' Crime* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) Professor Veena Talwar Oldenburg will talk of the 'discovery' of female infanticide in the Punjab in 1852 and how this widespread phenomenon was framed and interpreted as an ordained high caste 'Hindoo' practice linked to the custom of giving dowries to their daughters. Her own 'discovery' of these early papers on dowry and marriage expenses, and female infanticide alleged as 'dowry murder', sheds new light on how British Bureaucrat-Ethnographers covered up the effects of their own revenue policies that exacerbated this crime by seeking native informants who colluded in certifying female infanticide as a Hindu cultural crime. Uncovering the political and economic imperatives that motivated these allegations and subsequent policy is the burden of the book, and in summary, of this paper. She reinvestigates (and rewrites) a hoary 'cultural' whodunit that also illuminates how 'Hinduism' is misrepresented and critiqued by colonial officials.

Rita D. Sherma

Abstract

Lost in Transmission? The Perils and Promise of Dharma in the West

We stand at a crossroads of human civilization, at what could be a watershed moment in human history. What is this moment and what does it signify? It is moment of the transmission of a specific form of knowledge from one civilization to another. History has known many such crucial junctures, but not during a point in time where communication technology has brought the corners of our world in intimate communion with each other. It can be argued that a similar process occurred during the modern era transmission of the scientific method. That would be a false parallel because it took place in a time of colonial domination and without the advantage of the immediate global distribution of information brought about by the technological revolution.

Nevertheless, it is a somewhat apt analogy because of the immense transformative impact of the worldwide dissemination of scientific epistemology. This same epistemology, however, has given rise to crises that call for a different hermeneutic lens and an alternate epistemology. The technologies of transformation, indigenous to Dharma traditions, that alter our experience of life itself, offer a systematic alternative to the current epistemic culture. Such a systematic transmission is a positive viral

infusion of a cultural meme in a new host. It cannot, however, be properly incorporated without adequate adaptation and the integration of certain foundational components of the host itself. At the same time, a massive alteration of the memetic constitution (self-replicating mechanism) of the original cultural meme will lead to distortions that will seriously damage the process of transmission. In the case of Dharma epistemologies and methodologies of transformation, there are currently many cases of such damage in transit. When much is lost in transmission, more is lost in the potential for transformation. This paper examines the emergence of such dangers; what they comprise; and how they can be diffused.

Shrinivas Tilak

Abstract

Deorientalizing Dr. Ambedkar

In the interface between colonialism and nationalism in India, Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891-1956) intervened critically in two distinctive but opposing ways re-shaping, in the process, India's political and social fabric. The platform of the untouchables and their distinct identity, in which Dr Ambedkar invested much of his later life's work from 1930 onwards, was to become his launching pad for advancing their political and material interests. Ambedkar rationalized and justified this line of action by re-interpreting the caste system and its relationship with Hinduism in light of what is known as the Orientalist discourse, which subsequently led him to demand a separate electorate for the untouchables and to encourage their conversion to Buddhism. The purpose of this paper is (1) to initiate a process of deorientalizing Ambedkar's thought by recovering and bringing to the attention of the scholarly community what Ambedkar did retain (and cherish all along) from his Hindu heritage that was (and remained) unorientalizable and non-negotiable: loyalty and commitment to a culturally nuanced nation rooted in Dharma; and (2) to shed light on the constructive path of social reforms through sanghatan, satyagraha, and Sanskritization within the inclusive framework of Hinduism that Ambedkar had started on but soon abandoned in favor of a more combative and confrontational stance that privileged short term political gains.

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