



Book of ABSTRACTS



Celebration of a Timeless Tradition - Gods and Goddesses, Pilgrims and Prayers, Temples and Texts

8th – 10th October 2018
at IGNCA, New Delhi





Book of Abstracts

SAARC Research Seminar on
**Hindu Cultural Trails: Celebration of a
Timeless Tradition – Gods and Goddesses,
Pilgrims and Prayers, Temples and Texts**

8th to 10th October 2017
Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts in
New Delhi, India

**SAARC Cultural Centre,
Sri Lanka**

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Research Seminar on Hindu Cultural Trails: Celebration of a Timeless Tradition – Gods and Goddesses, Pilgrims and Prayers, Temples and Texts

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Message from the Director, SAARC Cultural Centre

It gives me immense pleasure to introduce this Book of Abstracts of the *SAARC Research Seminar on Hindu Cultural Trails: Celebration of a Timeless Tradition – Gods and Goddesses, Pilgrims and Prayers, Temples and Texts*, the second Research Seminar on the “South Asian Cultural Trails” approved by the 18th SAARC Summit held in Kathmandu in 2014. The South Asian Cultural Trails reflect the “Unity within Diversity” of South Asia where many cultural traits are shared by the SAARC Member States.

Hinduism is one of the oldest established religions in the world and has influenced the cultures of South Asia as a religion as well as through its tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Religious Tourism is one of the key fast developing sectors in the modern world where tangible heritage such as temples are receiving increased number of tourists both as pilgrims and as visitors during the festivals and ritual times, indicating an increased interest in the intangible heritage.

The SAARC Research Seminar on Hindu Cultural Trails is an endeavour to understand the cultural history, tangible heritage, intangible heritage of Hinduism and to create opportunities for the academic knowledge to be utilised in implementation of tourism programmes with cultural sensitivity and respect to the culture. The Seminar explores various facets of Hindu Cultural Trails such as pilgrimages, art, dance forms, paintings, archaeology, architecture, festivals and rituals.

Hindu cultural heritage in the South Asia has played an important and major role in creating a sense of brotherhood and fellow-feeling amongst its people. The SAARC Cultural Centre seeks to promote collaborative efforts amidst this feeling of friendship in one of the most important vibrant reflections of our society - religion. Through these series of

seminars, we aim to explore the diversity and the many echoes of the glorious historical reflections of many of the prominent religions of the world. This will help to build a better understanding of humanity, ideas and ideologies, as well as share knowledge about the respective historical past and also help to build a comprehensive future through mutual trust, respect and thoughtful cooperation.

This Book of Abstracts is a comprehensive effort to inspire, view and represent recent discoveries and to act as a platform for the spread of well-known and popular research, completed and still being conducted across the Region. Thus, the following pages of the Book of Abstract trace the innumerable paths of Hinduism in the Region and its numerous echoes which include the earliest evidences of the religion found amidst different material contexts as well as archaeological sites and historical data.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all our participants, readers and well-wishers for their very encouraging and appreciative reception towards all our earlier publications. We hope to continue to maintain the same trust and feeling of fellowship along the way as we begin our journey with this present publication.

D.K.R. Ekanayake
Director, SAARC Cultural Centre,
Colombo, Sri Lanka.

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Introduction

The SAARC Research Seminar on ***Hindu Cultural Trails: Celebration of a Timeless Tradition – Gods and Goddesses, Pilgrims and Prayers, Temples and Texts*** is a result of the “South Asian Cultural Trails” approved by the 18th SAARC Summit held in Kathmandu in 2014. SAARC Research Seminar on Hindu Cultural Trails is the second in the series of research forums organized by the SAARC Cultural Centre which aims at strengthening the cultural ties in the SAARC Region by bringing the mutual heritage of Hindu Culture under a common platform.

This Seminar will increase the understanding of the Hindu Culture in its different facets and improve the academic, cultural, religious pilgrimage and tourism relations between the Member States. This will be an opportunity for the SAARC countries to revive a dialogue about tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Hinduism through time. A dialogue which will address the issues of conserving and preserving the Cultural Trails on the one hand and how we can utilise this space to better understand our past, to enhance our present and to be economically sustainable through tourism in the future, on the other.

The SAARC Region is bound together through the shared cultural traits which have evolved through the centuries. Hinduism is one of the shared cultural characteristics in the Region, with art and architecture portraying the “unity within diversity” as seen in the evolving styles and the embracing of new characteristics through the ages. This diversity was a result of interactions that took place along the trading routes criss-crossing east and west Asia, South and Central Asia, along with the exchange of merchandise, knowledge, concepts, designs, religions, technology and other sundry of objects and ideas. It is the transfer of ideas which resulted in Buddhism, Islam,

Hinduism, Christianity and other religious beliefs as well as art and architecture associated with these different ideologies. Although the ancient trade routes have long been abandoned, the legacy of those who travelled these routes can be found in the disseminated knowledge, ideas, religions and the diffusion of culture which persists even today.

The Research Seminar on *Hindu Cultural Trails: Celebration of a Timeless Tradition – Gods and Goddesses, Pilgrims and Prayers, Temples and Texts* has garnered a lot of interest in the region with participants from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The Objectives of the Research Seminar are as follows:

1. To identify and list down a connectivity of socio-cultural and religious thought processes, cultural commonality as reflected across major tangible and intangible heritage sites in South Asia.
2. Preservation and Restitution of South Asian Cultural Property¹
3. To establish operational guidelines².
4. To facilitate access of persons visiting prominent and holy sites³.

I hope the second SAARC Research Seminar on Hindu Cultural Trails will create new research areas and establish linkages between the academics, scholars, researchers of the Region to towards a mutually benefitting future in each Member State through sustainable heritage tourism.

¹ Vide SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu Communication
SAARC/ESC/Culture/189/2016

² Ibid.

³ Ibid

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my sincere gratitude to all the participants of all Member States, SAARC Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Ministries of External Affairs, SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu and the staff at the SAARC Cultural Centre for their support, encouragement and hard work in organizing this Research Seminar.

Bindu Urugodawatte,
Deputy Director – Research,
SAARC Cultural Centre,
Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Karan Singh

Doon School, Dehra Dun, BA (University of Jammu and Kashmir), MA, PhD (University of Delhi)

Dr. Karan Singh was born heir apparent (Yuvaraj) to Maharaja Hari Singh and Maharani Tara Devi of Jammu and Kashmir and he catapulted into political life at the early age of eighteen. He held various positions in the Indian Government. At present he is a member of the Rajya Sabha (the Upper House of Parliament) from Jammu & Kashmir.

Dr. Karan Singh was the Chancellor of University of Jammu and Kashmir & Banaras Hindu University, Chairman of the Central Sanskrit Board, President of the Authors Guild of India, the Commonwealth Society of India and the Delhi Music Society. He was the President of the India International Centre, Chairman of the Auroville Foundation and Member of the UNESCO International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century. Some of the more important responsibilities he held was as the Vice Chairman of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund and Chairman of the Temple of Understanding, a major global interfaith association. He founded the International Centre of Science, Culture & Consciousness, which is emerging as an important centre of creative thought. He is the Co-Chairman of the recently established World Commission on Global Consciousness & Spirituality. He was instrumental in setting up the India Forum, consisting of concerned citizens from all parts of the country, which acts as a "Think Tank" on contemporary issues. He was recently named Co-Chairman of the Indo-French Forum with personal status of a Cabinet Minister. Dr. Karan Singh is associated with many other cultural and academic institutions. He has received honorary doctorates from the Banaras Hindu University, the Aligarh

Muslim University and the Soka University, Tokyo. He is a member of the prestigious Club of Rome and the Club of Budapest and has been lifelong conservationist, having been the Chairman of the Indian Board of Wildlife for many years and the head of the spectacularly successful Project Tiger. He is the President of the People's Commission on Environment and Development India, and Trustee of the Green Cross International.

Dr. Karan Singh is an author of distinction, having written a number of books on political science, religion, philosophical essays, travelogues and poems in English. His fascinating Autobiography, his book on Sri Aurobindo entitled *Prophet of Indian Nationalism*. Other important collections of his writings include *One Man's World, Towards A New India* and *Essays on Hinduism* which have been widely acclaimed. He has composed and recited devotional songs in his mother tongue, Dogri, and is a connoisseur of Indian classical music. He has travelled extensively throughout the country and abroad, having represented India at many important international conferences.

With his deep insight into the Indian cultural tradition, as well as his wide exposure to Western literature and civilisation, Dr. Karan Singh is recognised as an outstanding thinker and leader in India and abroad. He is a renowned orator, and has lectured in five continents on philosophy and culture, politics and the environment. His tenure as Indian Ambassador to the United States, though brief, received extensive and extremely favourable media coverage in both countries and won many friends for the country.

Programme

Monday, 8th October 2018	
9:00 – 10:00	Registration (Auditorium, C.V. Mess, Janpath)
10:00 – 11:00	Inauguration (Auditorium, C.V. Mess, Janpath)
11:00 – 11:30	Tea Break
11:30 – 13:30	Panel Discussion – Hindu Cultural Trails: Research to Implementation Issues, Concerns and Management Strategies (Conference Room, C.V. Mess Janpath)
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 16:30	Session 1 A - Intangible Heritage and Pilgrimages <i>Chinmayee Satpathy</i> Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath: A Grand ceremony in India and the World
	<i>S Chandrakumar</i> Saivism in Koothu – A Traditional Community Theatre
	<i>Rana P.B. Singh</i> Shakti pithas and Sacredscapes in South Asia: Faithscape, Spatiality and Pilgrimage Tourism
	<i>M. Varadarajan</i> Sri Ramanuja's Tirtha Yatra to Divya Desas (Vaishnava Trails)
14:30 – 16:30	Session 1 B – Archaeology and Tourism <i>Bijoy Krishna Banik</i> Durga Puja in Bangladesh: An Archaeological Analysis
	<i>Kiran Shahid Siddiqui</i> Fresco Paintings at Katasraj Temple Complex
	<i>K.C. Nauriyal</i> The sacred Cultural Landscape of Gaya: Multidisciplinary Issues and Perspectives
	<i>Achal Pandya</i> Issues of Conservation in Majuli, Assam

	Hathikote Anitha Chandrashekhar Shaiva Mural Paintings of South India - A Study of Narration of Kiratarjuniya
16:30 – 18:30	Session 2 A – Intangible Heritage Ashim Kumar Dey Hindu Cultural Trails in Bangladesh - Role of Government and Administration
	Mohammad Hashim Qureshi Hindu Cultural Trail focused through the Indian Village
	Ankur Goswami Sacred Journeys and Cultural Heritage: Evaluating Prayaga and its Kumbh Mela
	Vaishnaavi Chavan Hindu Goddess Renuka - The legend with Relevance to Penance and Panch Maha - Bhoota
16:30 – 18:30	Session 2 B – Archaeology and Architecture Mueezuddin Hakal The Glory of Hindu Shahis as Represented by Kattha Temple in District Khoshab
	D.V. Sharma Sun Temple Konark: Sarvan Kavya, Darsh Kavya
	Athul Kumar Verma Sun Deity Worship in Bihar
	Shirisha Kakarla Gods on Hindu Coins
	Worrel Kumar Bain Terracotta Folk Art and Traditional Knowledge System: An Anthropological Venture into the Panchmura Village of Bankura District, West Bengal, India
18:30 – 20:00	Evening Performance – Dhrupad (Auditorium, C.V. Mess, Janpath)
20:00	Dinner

Tuesday 9th October 2018	
09:00 – 11:00	Session 3 A – Archaeology & Architecture Rabindra Gope Art, Architecture and Archaeology of HCT in Bangladesh
	Anil Kumar The Forgotten Archaeological Remains at Mandar in Early medieval context: Its implications
	Paramu Pushparatnam Recently Discovered Ruins of Chola Hindu temple with Tamil inscriptions at Thirumangalai In Trincomalee District, Sri Lanka
	Poonam Chaudhary Intangible Heritage of Cultural Routes of Jammu and Kashmir: Road towards Sustainable Development
	Deekonda Narsingh Rao Ancient Temples in Telangana State
9:00 – 11:00	Session 3 B – Pilgrimages Archana Barua Re-interpreting the Deeper Significance of Tirtha Yatra in Light of Some Basic ideas of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankaradeva, the Founder of Eka Sarana Nam Dharma in Assam
	D.P. Dubey Pilgrimage: The visitation to Places where Heaven and Earth meet
	Shanhi Swaroop Sinha Shaiva Trails: Timeless Tradition of Hindu Culture
11:00 – 11:30	Tea Break
11:30 – 13:30	Session 4 A – Temples, Traditions and Pilgrimages Vasana Premachandra, P.M. Renuka Priyadarshani & Kalpa Asanga Identification of Hindu Temples in Northern Province Kilinochchi District Sri Lanka

	<p><i>Madhu Khanna</i> Some Insights of Cultural Trails as Reflected in the Goddess Tradition of Newar Tantrism in Nepal</p>
	<p><i>Prasad Pawar</i> Reflection of Hindu Culture in Ajanta and its Preservation Through Digital Media</p>
	<p><i>Umesh Sharma</i> Vaishnav Tirth: Sentimental Geography of Braj</p>
11:30 – 13:30	<p>Session 4 B – Geography, Governance, Education & Healing</p> <p><i>Arya P. Adityan</i> Indic Pilgrimage Tradition and Sacred Geography</p> <p><i>Advaitavadin Kaul</i> Sacred Geography of Kashmir</p> <p><i>Bipin Kumar Thakur</i> Relevance of Shanti Parva for the Present-day Polity and Governance in India</p> <p><i>Saurav Kumar Rai</i> Historizing the Eternal Healing System: Ayurveda, Myth and Reality</p> <p><i>Sharad Kumar Pandey</i> Role of School Education in Strengthening Cultural Ties Among SAARC Countries through the Hindu Cultural Trails: An Analytical Study of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) Text Books</p>
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch (Open air singing by Two Singers from Himachal Pradesh on Shiva, Rama and Krishna)
14:30 – 16:30	<p>Session 5 A – Gods, Goddesses & Pilgrimages</p> <p><i>Hasibul Hasan Sumi</i> The Role of Hindu Cultural Trails to Reconstruct the Cultural heritage of Bangladesh</p> <p><i>Manwendra Singh Bartwal</i> Goddess Nanda Devi Pilgrimage and Rupkund Mystery</p>

	<i>Mayank Shekhar</i> Looking into the Sacred Site of Goddess Sarada
	<i>Ananya Barua</i> From Bleeding Goddess to Bleeding Hearts
	<i>R. Nagaswamy</i> Worship of Panca Brahmans
14:30 – 16:30	Session 5 B – Intangible Cultural Heritage & Tourism <i>Rajaratnam Kargen</i> Trends of Hindu Religious Pilgrimage between Sri Lanka and India
	<i>Santhoshi Subrahmanyam</i> The Influence of Vaishnava Cult on Bharathiya Natya Shastra: A Special Reference to Yakshagana
	<i>Sharodi Saikia</i> Intangible Cultural Heritage of Assam - Sattriya: The Path Pristine
	<i>Aiswaria Wariar</i> The Confluence of Vaishnava and Shakta Traditions in Mohiniyattam
	<i>S. Shyamkishore Singh</i> Sankirtana of Manipur: Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity
16:30 – 17:00	Closing Ceremony
17:00 – 17:30	Tea
17:30 – 19:00	Evening Performance (Manipuri Ras Lila (Auditorium, C.V. Mess, Janpath)

Wednesday 10th October 2018 - Cultural Tour to Vraj

Abstracts

Arya P. ADITYAN

Indic Pilgrimage Tradition and Sacred Geography

India is home to a network of pilgrimage sites. Every region in India has referential or inter-referential, ancient or modern, complex or minimalistic places of worship which has myths, stories and memories attached to it. Millions of people set forth for the journey of worship every year to be able to connect to the various deities that they prefer. This paper explores the conception of Sacred Geography resulting from the practice of this pilgrimage system, especially in Hinduism. The literal translation of the word *tirtha* is “crossing over”. In the context of Indian Pilgrimage tradition, *tirtha* is a place where people offer visits to worship the Gods, which were traditionally places of worship situated on the banks of a river or a lake. Nowadays, it means any place where there is a dialogue between humans and the Gods, any temple for instance is a *tirtha*. It is said to be the essential crossing to the world of Gods by a worshipper. As per the belief, at this spiritual crossing place, “one’s prayers are amplified, one’s rites are more efficacious, one’s vows more readily fulfilled¹”. Evidently, the geographical features associated here are sacred. The *tirthas* give rise to a Sacred Geography leading to the creation of a passage of conversation and crossing between the different worlds that are believed to inhabit the Hindu, Buddhist or Jain pilgrims and believers. It is also believed that this passage is a medium for spiritual transition and transformation from this world to what is called the World of Brahman, the Supreme, the world illuminated by the Light of Knowledge. The paper makes an attempt to picturize

¹ Eck, Diana L., *India: A Sacred Geography*, Harmony Books, 2012.

the journey of a pilgrim through a cyclic pattern which leads to the creation of a Sacred Geography. An attempt is also made to link the pilgrimage tradition of past with the present and to analyse the similarities and differences.

Worrel Kumar BAIN

Terracotta Folk Art and Traditional Knowledge System: An Anthropological Venture into the Panchmura Village of Bankura District, West Bengal, India

Art is the outcome of human cognition and imagination and is a creative process through various stages of modification. It is a manifestation of human's creative skill and the medium of communication and expression of their behaviour, emotions, ideas and different aspects of life. Beginning from rock paintings, categorized as immovable art, humans have discovered various media of expressing their creative impulses. Clay, as portable art, was the most popular mediums due to its easy moulding nature. Terracotta art is the earliest form of plastic art which originated several thousand years ago. India has a long tradition of terracotta tracing back to over 5000 years since the days of Indus Valley Civilization. Since then, it has been used for innumerable purposes. Terracotta art in India is rooted into folk culture. Folk arts of India are the visual expression and technological processes of people living at different cultural, religious and sociological levels; arts based on archaic technological processes and skills created by the artisan communities to fulfil the functional needs of village societies; processes that until recently had remained static for over thousands of years. West Bengal is a lucrative region for terracotta art form and it has a long, rich and continuous presence from ancient times up to the present day which has a complex and multi-layered significance. As a river basin, West Bengal is abundant with clay as raw

material for the tradition of terracotta manufacture. In West Bengal, Bankura district has a long tradition of terracotta folk art. Panchmura village of this district is famous for its distinct terracotta art which bear the signature of artistic skills for centuries. From realistic and naturalistic to ritualistic and symbolic, this art form is unique in their style. *Kumbhakar* the traditional potter artisan community is engaged with this craft work through generations. This art work is governed by traditional knowledge system which is transmitted from one generation to another through family tradition. Based on empiricism this paper highlights the traditional knowledge system that survives in a meaningful way in the folk-art forms.

Bijoy Krishna BANIK

Durga Puja in Bangladesh: An Archaeological Analysis

The goddess Durga is one of the principal forms of *Shakti* in Hindu mythology. The Durga Puja is the largest religious festival of the Hindu community in Bangladesh. It is well known and popular among all communities of Bangladesh. Now-a-days it is considered a public festival. Devi Durga is invited to *Mahalaya* (the beginning of the festival) through recitation of verses from Holy Chandi, blowing of *Shankha* (conch shells) and beating of *dhak-dhols* (drums) in different temples and *mandaps*. The worshiping of *Mahashashthi* starts through *Bodhan* (understanding), *Amontran* (invitation) and *Adhibas* (abode) of goddess Durga and ending through the sacrifice of the idols of goddess Durga into the water of canals, ponds and rivers, etc. Generally, Durga Puja begins from the 6th day of the bright fortnight (when the moon is increasingly visible) in the month of Aswin or Kartik (sixth or seventh month of the Bengali calendar) and runs to the 10th day of bright fortnight. These five days are titled accordingly

Mahashashthi, Mahasaptami, Mahastami, Mahanavami and *Vijayadashami*. This bright fortnight is called *Devi-Paksha* and starts from the day of previous last day of the dark fortnight. This day is known as *Mahalaya*. Basically, Durga Puja is a five-day long festival. It starts from *Mahalaya* and ends through *Kojagari* (the day of the full moon in the month of Aswin-Karttik) Lakshmi Puja. There is a big question regarding the origin of the tradition of Durga Puja in Bangladesh. Most of the scholars believe that Durga Puja in Bangladesh originated between 11th to 12th century CE. There is an ongoing study based on Mythological, Literary, Historical, Archaeological artefacts and data. Mythological and Literary works give us data that are culturally very significant but which tends to be less historical and more legendary. This information has to be checked, verified and consolidated from the historical works and archaeological artefacts. This research discusses the origin of Durga Puja in Bangladesh which can be dated to as early as 7th century CE.

Manwendra Singh BARTWAL
Goddess Nanda Devi Pilgrimage and Rupkund Mystery.

This paper is an attempt to highlight the Nanda Devi pilgrimage organised in Central Western Himalaya (Garhwal and Kumaon region) and its links with the ‘Rupkund’ mystery. Rupkund is a glacial lake of Garhwal Himalayas where hundreds of human skeletal remains are lying on the shore of the lake, even today some of the skeletal remains can be found with attached flesh and hairs on it. Material culture such as bamboo stick as resting sticks and bamboo strips perhaps being used in weaving of umbrellas locally known as *Chantoli* are in vogue during the procession of Goddess “Nanda Devi” popularly known as ‘Nanda Devi Raj-Jat’ in Central Himalaya, Uttarakhand. Wooden pieces which might

be used as a storage container or may be used as musical instrument, locally known as ‘*Damaru*’, a percussion instrument, rings, pieces of bangles, long sized leather sleepers, pieces of decayed cloths and few Mughal period coins have also been recovered from the site.

According to local legends the remains belongs to the unfortunate king of Kannoj, Jashdhawal who went on a pilgrimage along with his pregnant wife, his courtesans and some dancing girls enraged the Goddess Nanda for violating the rules and sanctity of sacred land, therefore, all of them including his courtesans, wife and children perished near ‘Roopkund Lake’. Some scholars believed that this might be the army of an emperor proceeding through this region to attack Tibet or China. The Royal Procession or Raj-jat of Goddess Nanda originated around 9th century CE by the King Ajay Pal to please his family Goddess Nanda for wellbeing of his country and people, to safeguard his boundaries. Thus, in relevance of ‘Nanda Devi Raj-Jat’ it implies that the victims of Roopkund tragedy were zealous pilgrims taking part in the procession of ‘Nanda Devi’ when they were stuck in a snow storm or an avalanche with no shelter and without any room for escape, resulted into the mysterious mass skeletons of Rupkund tragedy.

Ananya BARUA

From Bleeding Goddess to Bleeding Hearts

‘Bleeding Goddess to Bleeding Hearts’, is an attempt to explore the various *gunas* (qualities) that a *Stree* (woman) (*Satvika + Tamasika + Rajasika*) is endowed with. That women are *Stree* only when they adhere to the norms of purity or *satvika* and outgrows the other two of *tamasika* and *rajasika* segments will be discussed. Regional princess of Northeast India Hidimba (her son, Ghataoch who ruled the

place of Hidimbapur in turn Dimapur which is now known as Dimapur) and Ulipi (serpent princess whose progeny are known as the Nagas) will be brought in to express the *tamasika* and *rasika gunas*. Further the connection of Khasis, as to why they are matrilineal with a strong historical connection with Kamakhya temple of Assam will be explored. In Khasi, the words ‘*Mei*’ is Mother, ‘*Ka*,’ She’ and ‘*Kha*’, birth which they hold as their ancient temple Ka+Mei +Kha (Kamakhya). From tracing the state of ‘*Stree*’ from our folklore to the state of women in contemporary times, I would explore if the women of Meghalaya are the privileged lot or are they the cases of open bleeding hearts? The final highlight of this paper would be to unearth if the gap between the bleeding Goddess and bleeding hearts like the many Hidimbas and Ulupis of today’s can be bridged. In this connection, Sankardev’s notion of Vaishnavism would be mentioned to see if the concept of empathy makes an easy entry here.

Archana BARUA

Re - interpreting the Deeper Significance of Tirtha Yatra in Light of Some Basic Ideals of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankaradeva, The Founder of Eka Sarana Nām Dharma in Assam

During the 14th and the 15th century, India witnessed a revival of the Bhakti movement and Assam too was flooded by this movement that succeeded in promulgating the doctrine of Bhakti far and wide in India. Srimanta Sankaradeva (1449 – 1568 CE) initiated the Bhakti movement in Assam. Bhakta Saints have contributed to the preaching of Vishnu – Krishna glorifying simple modes of worship with *sraavana* and

*kirttana*¹ and with other modes of Bhakti that itself was a replacement of the earlier phase of elaborate and ceremonial pattern of worship of majestic images of the Hindu pantheon, refocusing more on the true spirit of *Sanatana Dharma* that “peace and concord”, not “hatred and discord”, is the true religiosity of mankind.²

While *tirtha yatra* reintegrated sense of being connected with the great tradition of *Bhaartvarsha*, Sankaradeva sings the glory of that great tradition of *Sruti* not for its caste rigid *Smarta* rituals but to nurture the path of Bhakti, the true religiosity at heart. Sankaradeva laid down the ideal of loving servitude and all surrendering spirit of unconditional Bhakti in his scheme of *niskama Bhakti* that inspires Gita’s ideal of *niskama karma* with a sense of dedication to the Lord.

A pilgrimage, *tirtha yatra* is a journey to a holy place referred to as a ‘ford’ (*tirtha*), a place for ‘crossing over ‘where the divine world touches the human world. Mahapurush Sankaradeva’s pilgrimage to Jagannatha, Dwaraka and other sacred places of India cannot be interpreted in the conventional sense ‘where devotee can see the image, pray, and can cleanse one’s sins³!’. For Sankaradeva, more than an idol, it is the living devotee who alone purifies *murti* and also *tirtha*. In this sense, only pilgrimages to holy places could be made by a Bhakta Saint, a living devotee of God, not for acquiring religious merit but for

¹ A Book of Devotional Songs written by Sankaradeva.

² Tripathi, Chandra Dhar, “Medieval Assam: The Neo Vaishnava Movement and Sri Sankaradeda; His role in National Integration”, in Dr Suresh Ch Bora Ed. *Mahapurisa Jyoti*, Vol. V, (Srimanta Sankardeva Sangha Nagaon, Assam), 2003, pp. 22 -36.

³ Granoff, Phyllis, “Pilgrimage as Revelation: Sankaradeva’s Journey to Jagannatha Puri”, in *Pilgrims, Patrons and Place: Localizing Sanctity in Asian Religions*, eds. Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara, UBC Press, 2003, pp. 181-203.

re-assessing the deeper significance that a sacred place should be able to convey so that it remains an “extended voyage of discovery – discovery of self, discovery of truth, discovery of India itself.”¹

Sundaralingam CHANDRAKUMAR
Saivism in Koothu – A Traditional Community Theatre

In the contemporary context of globalization, imperialism and multinational organizations, multi - religious worship systems prevail in developing countries and are pivotal in strengthening the common culture of the world, which includes the adaptation of the English language, Westernized trends, behaviours and practices. Though the ancient *Koothu* was based on the Sri Lankan religions such as Hinduism, Christianity and Islam in the Tamil areas of the Island, the initiatives to emphasize Saivism in *Koothu* has become rare.

The *Koothu* theatre that this paper deals with is one example. The written texts such as epics like *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* on which the *Koothu* theatre draws but also the bulk of orally transmitted texts convey religious values, ideologies and worship practices to communities. Since *Koothu* is a community art form, it was used as a device by different religious groups to spread their religions. But even before the colonial period, many texts were written by Sri Lankan poets, that incorporated religious concepts of Hinduism with the support of mythological stories that had a connection with the community they resided in.

¹ Granoff, Phyllis, “Pilgrimage as Revelation: Sankaradeva’s Journey to Jagannatha Puri”, in *Pilgrims, Patrons and Place: Localizing Sanctity in Asian Religions*, eds. Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara, UBC Press, 2003, pp. 181-203.

There is a significant influence of Saivism on *Koothu* Theatre. *Koothu* texts are replete with references to Lord Shiva, ways of worship, blessings, the relationship between humans and Lord Shiva, and Lord Shiva and other gods as well as the *Koothu* performance. The *Koothu* Theatre is implemented as a community endeavour from the time of production until the time of final *Aranketram*¹. The *Koothu* Theatre decentralizes the Saivism, the absolute nature of it, the methods of worship as well as the other related concepts, in the places where the Antic is being trained.

This paper argues that ancient written and oral texts continue to play a major role in influencing the worship of Lord Shiva. In particular, it looks at *Vadamodi Koothu* texts such as “*Kurukkethiran poar*” and “*Aruchchunai Paasupatham*”, and the experience gained when taking part in dancing during the *Koothu* performance. I shall conclude that components of *Koothu* theatre such as *Kappu*, *Viruththam*, dancing, singing and other performance styles inform people’s ideas on Saivism, worship, involvement of particular *Koothu* community and the absolute nature of Lord Shiva.

Hathikote Anitha CHANDRASHEKHAR

Shaiva Mural Paintings of South India – A Study of Narration of Kiratarjuniya

Saivism is one of the religious sects of Hinduism and the concept of Siva has been developed at length in the epics and the *puranas*. The *puranas* wove legends to explain all characteristics of Siva and in the classical age he is a full-fledged god with myths and a cult round him. The early iconographic manuals like *Tantrasara* describe several

¹ Aranketram is the Tamil name for the final performance of a *Koothu*.

aspects and forms of Siva all of which are anthropomorphic in character. The iconographic representations of Siva in twenty-five forms are categorized into four groups: *shristi*, *samhara*, *anugraha* and *nritya*. These forms appear in the visual narratives like sculptures and murals on the sacred walls and ceilings of temples in India. Siva as Anugrahamurti in the Kiratarjuniya legend describes the combat between Arjuna and Siva as Kirata, a hunter. Quoted in thirty-ninth chapter of *Sivapurana* and also in Vanaparva episode in *Mahabharata* epic, illustrates the fight between the two for the hunted boar. The legend has been represented in many temples of South India at different points of time bringing popularity to this narrative of Saiva as Kiratarjuniya. The present paper chooses some of the South Indian temples like Veerabhadreshwaraswami in Lepakshi, Andhra Pradesh, Terumalleshwaraswami in Hiriyuru, Karnataka, Mahadeva temples in Chemmanatitta and Pallimanna in Trissur, Kerala and attempts to discuss the visual aspects in the narratives exhibited in these mural paintings. With ample review of literature and the secondary sources this paper will be supported by visuals, photographs, data collection and interviews by the scholar at the sites.

Poonam CHAUDHARY

Intangible Heritage of Cultural Routes of Jammu and Kashmir Road towards Sustainable Development.

The rich cultural and religious heritage of Jammu and Kashmir attracts global tourists belonging to different socio-economic backgrounds. The religious intangible heritage is reflected in the lifestyles of the native communities inhabiting the zones of cultural trails of the different Hindu pilgrim centres such as Mata Vaishno Devi, Amarnath cave, Shankra Charya temple, etc. Most of the shrines are controlled by

their Individual Shrine Boards which takes care of the needs of the pilgrims. However, these pilgrim centres and their routes are considered to be rich in cultural heritage but they have little impact on community planning and economic development.

This is particularly true of the lesser known pilgrim routes in Jammu and Kashmir where the rich intangible heritage of the local community can be used as a tool of sustainable development through community museums, eco-museums, cultural tourism etc. Community support is important for community planning and development, as it is an activity that affects the entire community. This paper will try to find out the scope of intangible heritage of cultural routes as an important vehicle of sustainable development taking the reference from Machail Mata and others in Jammu region in India. Machail Mata is a Goddess Durga shrine. Thousands of people visit the shrine every year. The area is home to many communities like Kishtwari, Nagseni, Padyar, Padderi, Bhot, etc. The practice, expression, knowledge, skill, as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts, and cultural spaces of the local communities of the cultural trails of Jammu can provide a platform for development.

Vaishnaavi M. CHAVAN

Hindu Goddess Renuka - The legend with relevance to Penance and Pancha Maha-Bhoota

Indian Mythologies evolve around the concept of penance. The story of Parvati marrying Shiva as a fruit of her persisting penance and the ascendance of the river Ganges following severe penance of Sage Bhageerata to mention a few. This paper refers to the penance of Renuka, the wife of Sage Jamadagni and its relation to collecting of water in an unbaked earthen pot. Water, which is one of the *pancha*

Maha Bhootas requires a container. The containers can be made of different materials like metal, wood or baked earthen vessels. Unless the vessels made of earthen ware are baked aptly water cannot be held in it. Sage Jamadagni takes to celibacy, Renuka as an obedient wife accepts it and her penance of chastity gives her the power to fetch water in unbaked earthen pot for her husband's ritual oblations. This continues until the instance when her mind wavers when seeing a couple in an intimate act on the banks of the river, after which she fails to make the pot of unbaked earth and fill it with water. Ordered to behead her by Jamadagni, she is brought to life with fixing the head of a village goddess, giving Renuka the status of a village Goddess. Goddess Renuka is worshipped in three forms; as Renuka, Yellamma and Mariamma. The present paper attempts to analyse the changing characteristics of the two of *Pancha Maha-Bhootas* being Earth, Water due to Renuka's penance.

Ashim Kumar DEY

Hindu Cultural Trails in Bangladesh-Role of Government and Administration.

Bangladesh is a Muslim majority nation with secularism as its basic principles and freedom of religion guaranteed by its constitution. In terms of population, Bangladesh is the third largest Hindu state in the world after India and Nepal. In nature, Bangladeshi Hinduism closely resembles the forms and customs of Hinduism practiced in the neighbouring Indian state of West Bengal. Durga Puja is the largest Hindu festival of Bangladesh and it is nationally celebrated with officially declared holiday. With the help of the government and local administration thousands of pandals (*mandaps*) are set up in various cities, towns and villages to mark the festival. The number of Puja pandals has been increasing every year. The

Muslims and other religious groups living in Bangladesh also join in this festival with great joy. It makes the festival a universal festival enjoyed by all. In the occasion of Saraswati Puja, major Hindu temples, schools and other educational institutions including universities stage with traditional gaiety and religious fervour. The whole country gets a festive look. The rally on the occasion of Janmashtami is remarkable in Bangladesh. People from every religion spontaneously join the rally. The other festivals of Hindu community in Bangladesh are Kali Puja, Shivratri and Rathayatra etc. All of these festivals are being celebrated in a joyful and peaceful manner because of the willingness of the government and assistance from the administration. Therefore, the festival of Hindu community is not limited to only practitioners only but rather to members of every community in Bangladesh which celebrates the festival spontaneously. This is the uniqueness of Bengali nation and its culture. This uniqueness helps to keep the country away from every kind of religious conflict. This study shows the universal celebration of Hindu cultural festivals in Bangladesh with the assistance of government and local administration and also its vast impact on nationally as well as globally.

D.P. DUBEY

Pilgrimage: The Visitation to Places where Heaven and Earth meet

Pilgrimage to sacred places occupies an important place in the list of duties presented for their followers by various religions. It is an extremely interesting socio-religious phenomenon of Indian cultural tradition. It is directed to sanctified spaces during specific auspicious times. Noted scientist Einstein has observed that space and time are one and the same. What is popularly termed as ‘time’ is nothing else but the placement

of our earth at a certain place on its path round the sun with other planets of the solar system and stars occupying a certain space in our galaxy. As the *Mahabharata* (XIII.111.16) states, “Just as certain parts of the body are called pure, so are certain spots on the earth and certain waters called holy.” Lawrence observes, “Different places on the face of earth have different vital effluence, different vibration, different chemical exhalation, different polarity with different stars; call it what you like. But the spirit of place is a great reality.” ‘The spirit of place’ as Edward Relph states ‘lies in its landscape.’ In the words of Mircea Eliade, a holy place is a hierophany, a place where Heaven touches the Earth, where sacred and profane meet. Throughout the Indian subcontinent there are places wherein culture, geography and cosmos interact with each other to create a landscape that is infused with meaning and transcendent power. These places are called *tirthas* which are of extensive mythological associations where many believe that spirit can cross between different realms. This paper focuses on these places which are worthy of devotion, loyalty and esteem of society and how the process of journey to them has fostered the idea of the essential fundamental unity of Indian culture and of India also.

Rabindra GOPE

Art, Architecture & Archaeology of HCT in Bangladesh

The aim of this work is to analyse the evolution of the concept of Hindu cultural heritage. In the last decades of the 20th century, the term “heritage” was characterized by expansion and semantic transfer, resulting in a generalization of the use of this word, frequently used in the place of another, such as, monument and cultural property. However, all these terms are not able to cover the same semantic field. Starting with

the reflection on the semantic evolution of the notion of Hindu Cultural Heritage in Bangladesh, we approach the international definition of heritage given by the directives, charters and international resolutions in order to define a global outline of the meaning of heritage that is not just limited to a particular national dimension. From a purely normative approach, one went to a less restrictive approach, one based on the capacity of the object to arouse certain values that led the society in question to consider it as heritage and therefore, to a further step in which heritage is no longer defined on the basis of its material aspect. This development has also made it possible to recognize intangible cultural heritage, which was ignored for a long time, as heritage to be protected and safeguarded. Due to the prestigious background of Hindu Culture, it is both ancient and modern at the same time. Hinduism gave us epics such as *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, *Veda* and *Puranas*, *Panchalis*, *Puthis*, *Naamkrittoms* and a lot of cultural assets. Hindu culture made us wealthy by giving Sora Chitra, Ghot Chitra, Poto Chitra, Musk, Nakshi Katha, Nakshipitha, Nokshichach, Shankha art, Wall art, Alpona, dolls, Terracotta and other forms of art. Beside that we are grateful to Hindu culture for gifting us Naam Kirtton, Boishnob Podaboli, Mongal Kabbyo, Padma Puran, Panchalis to praise gods and goddesses, and a lot of folk songs Kotho Kotha, Krishna Jatra, Jugi Jatra and arts. The folklore and culture of Bangladesh is grateful to Hinduism for nourishing and enriching it from the ancient time. Fairs are also centred by Hinduism, till now most of the fairs are related with Hindu occasions. The main focus of this paper is the contribution of Art and Architecture of Bangladesh to the Hindu Cultural Trails.

Ankur GOSWAMI

Sacred Journeys and Cultural Heritage: Evaluating Prayag and its Kumbh Mela

Situated at the confluence of holy rivers Ganga-Yamuna and mythical Saraswati, the ancient city of Prayag (Allahabad) is a *tirtha* (riverfront sacredscape) known as *tirthraja* (king of all holy places). It is here that the largest gathering of mankind, the *Kumbh Mela* takes place every 12 years. As religion plays a vital role in the Hindu quest for understanding and practicing harmony between nature and humanity, resulting in a cosmological awakening, the paper explores the multifaceted connections between people, place and religion ranging from the experiential qualities of ‘sensing’, to ‘practicing’ the sacred through rituals, to ‘creating’ the sacred in the mind, and ultimately the sacred in the air, water and land.

It explores how *tirtha yatra* reproduces and transforms a city’s landscape, into a cultural landscape often referred to as ‘sacredscape’. Such cultural landscapes testify to the creative genius, and the imaginative and spiritual vitality of humanity. They are part of our collective identity, expressing a long and intimate relationship between peoples and their natural environment. Therefore, the paper asserts that cultural heritage is recreated and passed to the next generation in *Kumbh Mela* by communities and groups, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

Mueezuddin HAKAL

The Glory of Hindu Shahis as Represented by Kattha Temple in District Khoshab

The architectural monuments linked to the religious or mythological significance, always represent the degree of cultural maturity and affiliation to a particular belief system of any society. Such monumentally built historical temples in the plains and hilly areas connected to the Salt Ranges, significantly mark the glory of Hinduism in this area, mainly under the royal patronage of Hindu Shahis. A similar sacred site at Khatta Sagral in District Khoshab, in the south of mentioned chains of hills, loudly speaks about its religious importance, which adds the main body of knowledge of archaeology and art history of the region. This erection is appearing to be connected to its past and assimilated to its contemporary architectural styles, which have role to inspire the art works later periods. This effort is an attempt to present the temple here in relation to other similar examples in the connected areas, with historical reference to Buddhist architecture of Gandhara, known structures from the age Ori Rajas or Hindu Shahis, and similar constructions of succeeding periods.

Shirisha KAKARLA

Gods on Indian Coins

“Numismatics” is the study or collection of coins, notes etc. Thousands of ancient coins have survived up to the modern era. Some of those coins depict gods and goddesses. The Numismatic material/artefacts means the Coins and Currency notes of a time. Numismatic material depicts the different aspects of the society like history, culture and civilization. Coins are important to understand socio political aspects of a

country. We find many images or symbols on the obverse and reverse of the coins. These images symbolically represent different beliefs and faiths. The symbols also present the religion, the changes which were gradually introduced in religious practices of the Hindus. This paper aims to document some important coins with gods. These coins ranged from ancient time to modern era. The paper discusses the coins from ancient times to the present time, which are minted with gods or goddesses.

Rajaratnam KARGEN

Trends of Hindu Religious Pilgrimage between Sri Lanka and India

In Hinduism there is a large number of sacred sites visited by pilgrims on festival occasions. There is a convergence of counting of devotees and pilgrims at the sites. Hindus of Sri Lanka also travel on pilgrimage to most of the sites located in different parts of the sub-continent. Himalayas, Badrinath, Kasi/ Banaras, Thakshineswaram are some of the important sacred places visited by them in India. There is also a large number of temples in South India which has become the favourite sites of the Sri Lankan Hindus from ancient times. The sanctity of the site is determined by priority awarded to them in Tamil sacred literature which consists of twelve books, called “*Thirumurai*”. Kanjipuram, Eakamparamanathar temple, Kalakasthi, Thiruvidai Maruthoor, Thiruvananthapuram, Vedaranyam, Maurai Meenakshi Amman temple, Thirupathi are the places frequently visited by the Sri Lankan Hindu Pilgrims. However, the most sacred centre of attraction for Saiva / Hindu pilgrims is Chidambaram.

The centres of Muruga worships are also visited by highest number of pilgrims from Sri Lanka. Those are

Thiruchendur, Thiruparankunram, Palani, Thiruthani, Thiruverakam and Pazhamudircholai. The *Puranas* or *Thala Puranas* which glorify some of these temples are still recited by the Hindus in Sri Lanka.

In the same manner, Hindus from India had been going to the Sri Lanka on pilgrimage. Two saiva Nayanmars (saints) namely Thirugnana Sampanthar and Suntharamoorthy nayanar had sung hymns in praise of God Shiva in shrine that are known Thiruketheeswaram and Thirukoneswaram. There are also references in the *Thiruvasagam* of Manikkavasagar and the *Periya Purana* of Sekkilar to these temples.

The great medieval saint Arunagirinathar has composed Hymns on three temples in the island, those are Nallur Kandaswami Temple which was during his time the principle temple of the royal court, temple at Trincomalee and Kathirkamam. Descriptions of Kathirkamam synthesizes the philosophical ideas of Muruga worship. Now a days, there is large number of pilgrims visit the Sabarimalai Aiyappan temple in Kerala. Most of them undertake it annually.

Hindu pilgrimages are considered important in the religious tradition of south Asia. There is great flow of pilgrims from Sri Lanka to India and vice versa. Because of foregoing considerations, this article will analyse the trend of pilgrimage between Sri Lanka and India. Cultural, economic and tourism related facts of Hindu religious pilgrimage are evaluated in detail.

Advaitavadini KAUL
Sacred Geography of Kashmir

In complete continuum of the speculation and constant contemplation of the Vedic seers, Kashmir is observed as a

land of Sati, the consort of Shiva. She nourishes the valley in the form of the sacred Vitasta (river). While Shiva in the form of Mount Mahadeva stands tall and strong to inspire the inhabitants of this beautiful vale. Satisara was the name of the vast lake out of which Risi Kashyapa created Kashmir. The gods who assisted Kashyapa were Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The *Nilamatapurana* is the oldest available source for recording the sacred sites in ancient Kashmir. It describes details about the temples and the *tirthas* of Kashmir as they existed at that time. Then there is the *Mahatmya* literature compiled under Brngisha Samhita depicting the sites forming part of the physical geography of Kashmir as consecrated by myth and tradition. The realistic character of these locations keeps them naturally apart from cosmographic conceptions in the *Puranas* lacking many a times the recognisable counterparts in the physical world. In the *Rajataranginis* also the knowledge about the geographical facts prevails. Kalhana in the 12th century records by saying that there is no space even measuring a grain of rice which is not a *tirtha* in Kashmir. There is yet another category of sacred places in Kashmir which differs from the common types of sanctified *tirtha*. For example, Vitasta is also addressed as Yamuna. There exists in Kashmir even the Ganga and the Prayaga and Pushkara. There are many other such sacred place names recorded in the local texts which find physical identification in the valley. Abundant traces of important place names related with the *Ramayana* can also be identified. My presentation will focus on the presence of various gods and goddesses on the physical map of Kashmir.

Madhu KHANNA

Some Insights on Cultural Trails as Reflected in the Goddess Tradition of Newar Tantrism in Nepal

The Tantric tradition among the Newar in the Kathmandu Valley is central to the understanding of Newar Shaktism. Many aspects of Newar Shaktism is a direct outcome of a process of synthesis and syncretistic fusion that was underway in various Tantric cults of the goddess in India. The paper will survey some of the important Tantric cult figures such as the goddess Tripurasundari, Guhyeshvari, Vajravarahi, and the eight Matrikas Shaktis. The presentation is divided into two sections. The first explores the goddesses of “Civic Spaces” and public religion, who figure in the sacred geographies of Kathmandu & Bhaktapur and protect the boundaries of the ancient cities.

The second section will trace the Tantric traditions of the goddesses of the inner secret worship carried out by the Vajracharyas and Karmacharyas centered on the cult goddesses and the secret yogic practises that accompany them.

The broad survey is based on the premise that the Kaula tradition of Shakti worship in Nepal cannot be understood without tracing their cultural trails in to the Trika - Kaula Shaivism of Kashmir as the Newars have a long history of assimilating forms of Tantric deities from North India

Anil KUMAR

The Forgotten Archaeological Remains at Mandar in Early Medieval Context: Its Implications

Brahmanical religious reform movement and the reaction against the dominant Buddhist ideas flourished during the

early medieval period of lower Ganga valley due to the changed socio-economic and political conditions of the period. Economic prosperity of early medieval period left people with sufficient surplus produced from the agrarian sector and time for intellectual as well as religious activities. Inscriptions and seals found in various places of lower Ganga valley testify to the phenomenal growth of Vaisnavism, Shaktism and Saivism during the Gupta age. In this economic and social background religious centres developed, which further led to the construction of temples by the rulers as well as by the locally powerful communities. Various excavations and exploration reports by archaeologists indicate that temple structures of this period have been discovered. The question as to why such a large number of temples came up during this period which is spread over the whole of contemporary lower Ganga valley, particularly near the important Buddhist sites, was never posed. Moreover, the question why the Pala rulers who were known for their Buddhist inclination later extended critical support to Brahmins has also remained unaddressed. Not only Vaisnavism, but other branches of Brahmanical religion were equally popular in this region. Icons of several forms and representations of Shiva have been found in a number of places like Basarh, Bhagalpur, Nalanda and Gaya. Other than these Shaktism is known from the inscriptions and images in Barabar hills. There are clear evidences for Sun worship from various places i.e. two seals from Basarh, image of Surya from Rajaouna Chowki, Barauni, etc. The existence of the votaries of the Sun in Gaya, Shahabed and Bhagalpur, a temple of the Sun at Deo-Barunank and Nalanda are enough to prove the popularity of Sun God among the masses.

The Mandar hill ($24^{\circ}48' N/87^{\circ}02' E$) is located in the Kaswa Mandar village under the police station of Bounsi in the modern Banka district of south Bihar. Geologically, it is an offshoot of the Vindhyan range and composed of huge granite stone overgrown near the summit with low jungles. It is approximately 700-800 feet in height and situated between

the two big seasonal river the Chandan and the Chir and 52 ponds. The Mandar hill occupies a unique and glorious position in the cultural and religious history of lower Ganga valley. It is generally associated with the famous story of the *Samudra-manthana* or the ‘Churning of Ocean’ by the *Devas* and the *Asuras* in the Brahmanical legends and this hill is said to have used as the ‘Churning rod’. The different *Puranas* such as the *Varaha Purana*, the *Kurma Purana*, the *Garuda Purana*, and the *Vamana Purana* state that Mandar hill has been a renowned centre of the *Bhagavatas* or the *Vaisnavas*. This paper looks at the archaeological remains at Mandar in a multi-disciplinary manner.

R. NAGASWAMY
Worship of Panca Brahmans

Man lives in space and time. Neither of them has any form or colour. Yet he adores the nature’s power, as it exists eternally. The first visual form of divine power is fire, Agni, which has two inherent and inseparable powers of heat and light, which were given names as Agni and Vishnu. Agni is Rudra and so the initial forms were combined form of Siva and Vishnu.

According to the Saiva philosophy the five directions are the five Brahmans, Tatpurusa, Agora, Sadyojada, Vamadeva and Isana. These are represented either by four (or five) faces of Siva called *panca mukha* or *caturmukha lingas*. All the five are jointly named Sadasiva, designated as Sabda Brahman, because the formless Siva is now given *Nama* and *Rupa*. The upper direction of space is generally called the *Akasa* which is symbolical of all knowledge (*sarva vidya*).

This evolution is seen in the *Vedic*, *Upaniṣads*, but is applied to Saiva, Vaishnava, Shakta, Buddhist and Jain branches of Indian thoughts. For example, in Buddhism, the

Panca Brahmans are called *Panca* Buddhas or *Tatagatas* as Vairocana, Akshokhya, Ratnasambhava, Amognasiddhi and Amitabha. There may be slight variations in colour or forms, but symbolically they are identical. Similarly, we have the concept of *Chaumukh* in the Jain tradition. If there is one fundamental syncretic divine principle in the whole of South East Asia, it is this ultimate form of Godhood.

Madhya Pradesh in India is praised as the heart of Bharat. The Saiva worship took a variant stance due to environment that called for worship of a fierce form of Bhairava which is found in major part of North India including Kashmir. This cult also spread to the whole of South East Asia, and we have even deification of kings as Bhairava became a common practice. Inscriptions testify to the dancing form of *Nṛtta Bhairavas* in the invocatory verses of Cambodia.

K.C. NAURIYAL

The Sacred Cultural Landscape of Gaya: Multidisciplinary Issues and Perspectives

With our antiquarian instincts, we observe cultural heritage as a wholesome resource, a vibrant component of a sacred legacy of a civilisation. Though this resource has had run its own course of trials and errors through time, it has substantially contributed to essence of mind over matter, nourishing and sustaining cultural ideals of humanity — offering opportunities to reinstate a universal principle of mutual coexistence in harmony with environment. The sacred cultural landscape of Gaya (in Bihar, India) conceals and reveals, preserves and promotes an earthly odyssey of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism - the three mainstreams of Indian religions within common ecological boundary. Despite changed perceptions and perspectives, the three religions are

historically known to have lived side by side at several locales, celebrating their individual timeless traditions. This phenomenon happened in an atmosphere of wisdom, despite the fact that while Hinduism chose to follow canonical doctrines, Buddhism and Jainism followed Sramana traditions (ones practiced by the seekers). This divergence sprang from the roots in history and culture and rediscovered through archaeology.

The paper is broadly divided in two main parts: (a) Archaeological Heritage, and (b) Religious Tourism, based on field studies and empirical evidence, with a focus on *Tirtha Yatra*. As per UNESCO's Operational Guidelines 2008, Annex 3, the Sacred Cultural Landscape of Gaya embraces a diversity of manifestations of interaction between humankind and its natural environment. The paper attempts to achieve long-term conservation of hallowed archaeological remains amid prevailing ecosystems, while encouraging sustainable growth, enhancing resilience of communities in the landscape, with an objective of safeguarding cultural linkages among the pilgrims and local populace.

Sharad Kumar PANDEY

***Role of School Education in Strengthening Cultural ties
among SAARC countries through the Hindu Cultural
Trails: An analytical study of National Council of
Educational Research and Training (NCERT) Textbooks***

In any nation, the textbook plays an important role enabling the understanding of history and culture of its people, and to know about other cultures to understand the common core between civilizations. This paper presents how the textbooks can play an important role to build and strengthen relationship between nations and its people, if they have faced common force of changes in the past viz Hindu Cultural Trails (HCT).

This is discussed in this paper with the example of Hindu Cultural Trails which have evolved through the centuries in the different parts of India, SAARC countries and beyond and how it is depicted in Indian (NCERT) school textbooks. This paper is based on critical analysis of NCERT textbooks, where history and culture in general and Hindu Cultural Trails in particular, are presented. This has been discussed in light of National Curriculum Framework, Sustainable Development Goals, Global Citizenship Education and 21st Century Skills, which aim at strengthening cultural ties in the region and beyond (global) through a walk into the shared past and shared heritage.

NCERT's entire textbooks in general and history textbook in particular, designed and developed on this philosophy, and very few countries in the world have been able to succeed in this attempt. This paper analyses the NCERT textbooks and throw light on how these shared heritage concerns with regard to HCT have been addressed and dealt at school level, since school education is the base of higher education.

Achal PANDYA

Issues of Conservation in Majuli, Assam

Majuli is known as the oldest and the largest inhabited riverine island of the world. This island is surrounded by the mighty Brahmaputra river. On the basis of certain geographical evidences and literary accounts, it may be presumed that Majuli took its shape as an island in the 13th century CE, during the rule of the first Ahom King, Sukapha in 1228 CE. It was formerly known as "Majali".

King Aurangzeb's biographer Muhammad Kazim during the mid-17th century CE estimated Majuli's land area

as 100 miles. A. J. Mafat Mills recorded in “*Report on Province of Assam*” that Majuli island was extended to a land area of 2,82,165 acres in 1853. As per the land survey records conducted by the Government of India of 1950 the total habitable landmass of Majuli was 1245.12 sq. kms. as compared to 421 sq. kms in 2016. Population according to 2011 Census was 1,67,304.

The island is a centre of both tangible and intangible heritage. Its beautiful nature and biodiversity, culture, infrastructure, lifestyle, people, festivals and monuments add value to the heritage. The different types of heritage in Majuli can be categorized as Natural Heritage, Satra, Festivals, Dance and Drama.

Satrabs are the religious Vaishnavites monasteries which have helped in preservation of culture of not just Majuli but the whole of Assam. Satras are the custodian of intangible heritage of Assam. Cultural activities like devotional music, acting, song and dance forms are the major intangible heritage, commonly practiced in the Satras. In 15th century CE Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva along with his chief disciple, Madhabdeva, laid the foundation of the Satra culture in Majuli, which ushered in an era of distinctive religio-cultural heritage.

Prasad Chhagan PAWAR

Reflection of Hindu Culture in Ajanta & it's Preservation through Digital Media

Hindu Prince Siddhartha in his last reincarnation as Lord Buddha is the prevailing deity of Ajanta caves, carved and developed during the reigns of Hindu kings Saatvahan and Vaakatak. Ajanta has many *Jatak Kathas* (stories from the earlier births of Lord Buddha), reflecting the Hindu culture

Abstracts

prior to birth of Lord Buddha and later era. Buddha idols has evolved as per the Buddha philosophy on similar lines found in evolvement of 33 crores Hindu Gods and Goddesses. We observe the Hindu cultural traditions in the forms of symbols, tokens, dreams, divine, godliness, nonviolence, meditation, peace, temples, viharas, chaityas, prayers etc. In the Bhagavatprasuti story found in Cave no 2, the dream of Queen Mahamaya showing Lord Bramha and Lord Indra carrying newly born Lord Buddha in Lumbini park depicts the presence of Hindu Gods.

Communication should be established with the Hindu culture which is expressed without any language, but imparting real experience through colours, lines, forms and preserving the cultural grandeur over thousands of years. Hindu culture is understood through the rich written literature in various languages, paintings and sculpture. Thousands of written words cannot give real experience of Jataka stories, but the Ajanta *Jataka* story paintings showcases the actual Hindu culture.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) will not permit the paintings of the Ajanta UNESCO World Heritage site to be touched. These paintings will gradually disappear in the future due to passage of time. The limited lighting available in the caves makes it difficult to see the details of the paintings. The paintings are on rock, soil and lime and the intention to change the medium of depiction by using modern technology and retaining the original beauty, form, colour and publish Hindu culture through the new age lasting technique. Different mediums are to be used for working against the natural ageing process of deterioration saving the Ajanta Hindu culture.

Vasana PREMACHANDRA, Kalpa ASANGA & Renuka PRIYADARSHANI

***Identification of Hindu Temples in Northern Province
Kilinochchi District Sri Lanka***

The ethnic conflict, which prevailed for more than three decades in North and East of Sri Lanka, ended in year 2009. Attention was drawn for the first time after three decades in the year 2010 to the archaeological monuments in these areas. Accordingly, action was initiated for the identification and mapping the monuments found in Northern province.

During this exploration, two Hindu Temples (Kovils as it is commonly called in Sri Lanka to differentiate from the Buddhist temples), which had been abandoned due to the mists of time were identified. The significant factor of these two Hindu Temples are the fact that they have not undergone any modifications or renovations. Normally Hindu Temple are modified and renovated annually and such modifications cause for the destruction of its ancient forms and make it difficult to identify the ancient features and original construction dates.

Maninthali Shivan Kovil is situated in Maninthali village, in the Goutharmunai Grama Niladhari Division of the Punkakarin Divisional Secretariat Division in the Killinochchi District. Goutharmunai Shivan Kovil is situated in Goutharmunai village of the Goutharmunai Grama Niladari Division in Punakarin Divisional Sectary Division, of Kilinochchi District. Both these two Kovils are about 300 years old and provide an example of the architectural styles and details of Hindu Kovils of 300 years ago.

Research on ancient Hindu Temples in Sri Lanka is a difficult exercise. At present most of the Hindu Temples have been modified, changing their ancient architectural features. However, these two Hindu Temples have not been modified and are still remaining as ruins of a village Kovil. This

research paper, makes a careful study on the architectural features of ancient Hindu Temple of Sri Lanka.

Paramu PUSHPARATNAM

Recently Discovered Ruins of Chola Hindu Temple with Tamil Inscriptions at Thirumangalai in Trincomalee District, Sri Lanka

During the Chola rule for 77 years in Sri Lanka (from 993CE to --1077CE) with Polonnaruwa as the capital, Hindu temples built outside of Polonnaruwa outnumbered the temples within Polonnaruwa. Yet, most of these temples have not been identified, studied and documented so far. Recently discovered ruins of Sivan temple in Thirumangalai forest area in Trincomalee District stand testimony to this fact.

This temple was constructed with granite stones and bricks with the adoption of Chola art tradition. Presently all portions of the temple except the lobby right in front of the Sanctuary (Ante-chamber to the inner sanctuary of a Hindu temple) are in a state of ruin. The granite pillars with artistic workmanship, bricks, Avudais (wherein the Linga is placed), pedestals, shrines for Minor Gods and Tamil inscriptions found among the ruins are evident of the fact that this temple has been bigger than the second Sivan temple in Polonnaruwa.

So far five Tamil inscriptions have been discovered among the temple ruins. Three inscriptions among them belong to 11th century CE. These inscriptional evidences confirm that this temple was very important during the Chola period. The other two inscriptions state about the donations offered to this temple in 15th and 16th century CE. These evidences make us ascertain that this temple continued its influence even after the Chola period.

It is learnt that Bronze images of God, statues and sculptures from ruins of this temple were removed to other places by people. The temple bell with the name “Thirumangalai Sivan temple” inscribed on it now at Kankuvely in Trincomalee district proves this theory of moving of the items of the temple. Hence, it is hoped that more details about the Thirumangalai Sivan temple could be brought into light if further excavation is carried out in the location of this temple.

Mohammad Hashim QURESHI

Hindu Cultural Trail Focused through the Indian Village

It is a common notion that India lives in villages. The scenario has undergone change since Gandhi had averred this statement and talked about creating as many village republics as there were villages in the country. Even now 597,369 (2011 Census) villages accommodate about 60 percent of the population of the country. Indian villages are not simply settlements accommodating rural population, but they embrace a long history in which are deeply rooted but at the same time they represent a long cultural trail. The Indian village has its *raison d'être* the following basic traits:

That every village has its *Gram Devata* belonging, not necessarily to larger tradition but generally belonging to the local smaller tradition. This *Gram Devata* may not be known to or recognized by outsiders, but it remains embedded in the consciousness of the people and appears in the rituals performed on auspicious occasions. It is worshipped at the time of marriages in the village wherein it becomes an integral part of the ritualistic celebrations. While *kul devata* of individual residents may be different but *Gram Devata* belongs to the village as a whole. The *Deeh*, *Than* and *Pind* as suffix in the names of the villages in different languages

signify the cultural roots which is embedded deep down in time and space.

The social structure of the village is characterized by a dominant Caste. This dominance may be numerical or economic. Caste is an all-pervading social institution but more so in the village social structure which is also the basis for social stratification.

Agriculture remains the basic occupation and the dominant crops are an important factor in deciding the food habits of the village folk. This is another important characteristic of the Indian village.

This paper will be an attempt to trace the cultural trail keeping the Indian village in the focus.

Saurav Kumar RAI

Historicizing the ‘Eternal’ Healing System: Ayurveda, Myth and Reality

Juxtaposition of essential and useful knowledge with prevailing belief system and religious faiths was an integral part of pre-modern knowledge system. Indian sub-continent was not an exception to this phenomenon. One can find healing practices integrally linked with religious myths and magical charms and spells in the ancient Indian healing system(s). Exemplary to this is the origin myth of ‘Ayurveda’ – the ‘Sanskrit’ or the ‘Hindu’ healing system. The purpose of the present paper is to deconstruct this origin myth and attempt the historical journey of Ayurveda. While doing so the paper broadly argues that Ayurveda is a system of healing carrying within its fold multiple influences. These influences are often so strong that to locate ‘the core of Ayurveda’ and its ‘origin point’ is extremely difficult. It is a system of

healing which developed over centuries and incorporated the medical knowledge of various groups, castes, class and communities which was Brahmanised, ritualized and Sanskritised in due course of time to maintain the power equations of the hierarchical society. Simultaneously, the present paper also emphasizes the need of approaching Ayurveda as a system of healing meant for pragmatic necessities of human life and not as a part of belief system. Only then one can look for the real scientific appraisal of Ayurveda and to attempt its enrichment which, in turn, would clear the path for its progress.

Deekonda Narsinga RAO
Ancient Temples in Telangana State

Telangana State is situated in the central part of the Indian peninsula. This is the youngest state of India and was formed on 2nd June 2014 as the 29th state of India. The word Telangana is derived from the ‘Trilinga’. According to the legend, Lord Shiva’s lingams are found on three mountains - Srisailam, Kaleshwaram and Draksharama which line the boundaries of Telangana.

Another interpretation of the name Telangana with a historical linguistic reasoning is that during the reign of Nizams, the region was known as *Telugu Angana*, as the people of this place speak Telugu. The reference to the word “*Telugu Angana*” is to differentiate it from the areas where Marathi was spoken.

Telangana State has many ancient temples including both Shaiva *dharma* and Vaishnava *dharma*. Some of the temples are on the banks of Godavari and Krishna rivers. Some of the popular temples in the State are Shri Sita Ramachandra Swamy Temple, Bhadrachalam (Bhadradri

Kothagudem district), Shri Rajarajeshwara Swamy Temple, Vemulawada (Rajanna Sircilla district), Shri Lakshmi Narsimha Swamy Temple, Yadagirigutta (Yadadri Bhongir district), Shri Lakshmi Narsimha Swamy Temple, Dharmapuri (Jagityal district), Thousand Pillared Temple of Shri Rudreshwara Swamy, Hanamkonda (Warangal district), Jogulamba Devi temple situated at Alampur (Jogulamba Gadwala District) and many others.

Jogulamba Devi temple situated at Alampur (Jogulamba Gadwala District) is one of the (18) Shakti *Pithas* of goddess ‘Shakti’. The Shakti *pithas* are believed as the holy places of cosmic power. ‘Shakti’, the female principal of Hinduism and the main deity of the Shakta sect.

Sharodi SAIKIA

Intangible Heritage of Assam - Sattriya: The Path Pristine

The term *Sattriya* refers to an enduring tradition of dance, music, play, customs, rituals, religious practices, social bindings etc., followed by the *Sattriya* institutions of Assam for the last six centuries. It was Shrimanta Sankaradeva, the poet-playwright-musician-dance-sculptor-painter-saint-philosopher all rolled into one and his principal disciple Shri Madhavdeva who laid the foundation of this culture by bringing about a stream of Neo-Vaishnavite movement into the region, after studying many holy scriptures and visiting almost all the holy places of the country.

Shrimanta Sankaradeva with his futuristic vision to bring the masses under the umbrella of his movement composed a vast treasure of devotional music, a number of plays called *Ankia Nat*, adopted scriptures like *Shrimad Bhagavat* etc. The enactment of the *Ankia Nat* are called *Bhaona* which are in its true sense are dance, music and

dialogue built around the life of Shri Krishna, the principal deity of *Sattriya* Culture.

Sattras, or the hub of socio-religious-cultural activities of the devotees came into being after the saint. These are the institutions governed by strictly laid rules, leading a simple pious life, studying scriptures, practicing and preserving dance and music. Some of the *sattras* are monastic in life style whereas the others are run by married *sattradhikars* and *Bhakats*.

The Trail can be recognized in the saints' pilgrimages, studying the scriptures including the Bharata's *Natya Satra*, spending days in places like Shrikshetra Jagannath and watching the culture over many places and bringing selected elements to be amalgamated with local elements (from tribes having their origin in the South-Eastern Asia) and compose the unique dance style coupled with music, both vocal and percussionist.

Sattriya, developed by the saints after a thorough Trial shows no outside influence and remains a pure path of salvation which is the aim of all *Bhakats*, '*Bhagavat Bostuk Powar baat*' — way to be one with God – the Path Pristine!

All the above and some more would be discussed in the presentation with the help of audio-visual technology.

Chinmayee SATPATHY

Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath: A Global Ceremony

Lord Jagannath is worshiped as one of the prime deities of the *Sanatana Dharma* or Hindu Religion. Lord Jagannath is known as Purusottama and is identified as Lord Krishna. Among many other rituals, the *Rath Yatra* of Lord Jagannath is a unique grand ritual, observed every year during June or

July. Today *Ratha Yatra* is a global event which is observed not only in Puri but in different states of India and in different countries across the world such as USA, UK, Japan, Russia, Australia, Singapore and Thailand etc.

The origin and history of *Rath Yatra* is quite ancient. The concept of “Chariot” (*Ratha*) as vehicle of the Gods is mentioned in the *Rigveda*, *Bhagwat Geeta* and many other Hindu religious scriptures. The chariot is associated with the Sun God. In the 4th century BCE, Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* talks about chariots of Gods. In 5th Century CE, Fa Xian illustrated about the Chariot Festival of Buddha. The Jains talk about chariot festival of *Tirthankaras*. The celebration of this mega event gives the message to bring multi-cultural harmony and universal brotherhood. During the occasion of *Rath Yatra*, Lord Jagannath as the Lord of the universe come out of the temple to give *darshan* to all, irrespective of caste, creed and colour and to shower his divine blessings and to relieve them from the sorrows and sufferings of the world.

This paper gives illustration about celebration of *Rath Yatra* of Lord Jagannath in different parts of India and the world with special reference to United States.

D.V. Sharma

Sun Temple Konark: Sarvan Kavya - Darsh Kavya

The Sun Temple at Konark, a magnum opus of Indian temple architecture and an inscribed UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1984, has seen over two centuries of preservation and conservation endeavours and over three decades of international scientific expertise regarding major issues related to its conservation problems and their remedies. After inclusion in the list as centrally protected monument by Archaeological Survey of India (AST) in 1915, this

stupendous monument's values and significance have been continuously preserved through efforts related to conservation of its structure, fabric and its surrounding environment as well as landscape. Approaching the 150th Anniversary of ASI, and 3rd decade of UNESCO inscription of the site, an International Workshop on Conservation of the Sun Temple at Konark, aims to assimilate expertise of high degree, to review current knowledge on its history, values and significance; effects and present status of implementation of previous technical experts' recommendations; and identifies relevant issues and priorities that would guide us to determine future course of action.

Umesh Chandra SHARMA

Vaishnav Tirth: Sentimental Geography of Braj

Braj *bhoomi* is known as extra-terrestrial land on earth, the word “BRAJ” been described as comprehensiveness or immanency. Braj means something which has a vast impact or spirit, therefore this extra-terrestrial land was named Braj. The word *Brajanam* is cited in “*Skanda Purana*” identifying Braj which also means mobility.

Vaikunth (the other world or Heaven) and Golok (Braj) are extraterrestrial lands, both have much higher value than their geographical periphery. Mathura, Braj and Vrindaban are extra-terrestrials geographical incarnations situated on earth. These geographical incarnations are so vibrant and immense that the presence of physical geographical sense becomes less important or ignored. Due to extra-terrestrial sentiments or faith “*the Nikunj*” (Arbour) attains much higher position in comparison with other geographical periphery of Mathura and Vrindaban.

Gradually, when divine sentiments and divine grandeur (*Braj Bhoomi*) come closer to each-other or we can say when divine sentiments connect to divine places (*Braj*) then geographical divine sentiments grows at its zenith.

Further, in the same sequence, the great grandson of Lord Krishna, Shri Bajranaabh established total twelve temples in Braj, under the guidance of Guru Sandilya. Out of these twelve temples, he made temples for Vishnu, Shiva and Devi. Mostly devotees and worshipers of these temples are Vaishnavaas. The temples established by Shri Bajranaabh are still following the tradition of Vaishnav methods for practicing daily routine rituals inside the temple. With this legend, we can simply understand that the traditions of Shaiva (followers of Shiva) and Shakta (followers of Shakti) are merged in Vaishnav stream (followers of Vishnu) in Braj.

Mayank SHEKHAR

Looking into the Sacred Site of Goddess Sarada

Indian tradition conceives Sarada as the goddess who bestows knowledge. Sarada is synonymous with Sarasvati also. *Rgveda* depicts goddess Sarasvati in three-fold forms, namely, as a river that purifies everything, as a river goddess who bestows prosperity and as the deity of divine speech.¹ We can explore various references of Sarasvati scattered in *Aranyaka* and *Brahmana* texts. But the *Puranas* on the other hand, we come across with a different notion. *Puranas* offers eighteen or sixty-four *Shakti pithas* in which it has been mentioned that the right hand of the corpse of goddess Sati fell down at a place in Kashmir which is known as the place of goddess Sarada or Sarasvati. The place i.e. Sarada *Pitha* is located at

¹ *Rgveda* I.3.10-12

Sardi village where the three rivers Kisanaganga, Madhumati and Sarasvati meet each other.¹ The text of *Sankaradigvijayam* mentions Sarada *Pitha* as a place where knowledge of a person who wishes to enter inside the *pitha* has been tested from time immemorial. Even Sankaracarya had also gone through an intense debate with scholars at this place before entering the *pitha* and adorning the *sarvajna pitha*, another name of Sarada *Pitha*. Kalhaṇa (in his *Rajatarangini*), Xuan Zang (Chinese Buddhist traveller) and medieval traveller Al-Biruni provides a rich account of this *pitha*.

The proposed paper endeavours to explore various aspects of Sarada *Pitha* primarily based upon the text of *Saradamahatmya* (the glory of goddess Sarada), *Rajatarangini* and other texts. The paper will also try to conceive it as a symbol of Indian civilisation.

Kiran Shahid SIDDIQUI

Fresco Paintings at Katasraj Temple Complex

The majority of heritage sites in South Asia are known for their fresco paintings. The themes of these fresco paintings are Hindu, Buddhist or Jain. Hindu temples of Salt Range, in Punjab province of Pakistan, dating from 6th to 11th century CE, exhibits interesting fresco paintings. Among the temples of the Salt Range, Malot, Amb, Kallar, Shavganga, Nadna and Katas are notable. The Katas Raj Complex, located in the Chakwal district, comprises of *satgraha* (seven temples), tank and *haveli* (traditional townhouse/mansion). Katas Raj tank needs a special mention because it occupies a sacred place in the Hindu faith. The site is believed to date back to the *Mahabharat* period when the Pandavs stayed here during their

¹ *Rajatarangini* 1.35 & *Rajatarangini* 1.37

exile. According to Hindu mythology, the tank or pool at Katas Raj is dedicated to Siva who lived with his wife Sati here. When Sati died, Siva wept a lot and from his tears a pond was formed. The Hindu visitors consider it sacred and take bath in this tank to seek forgiveness. The pond is surrounded by a number of temples out of which few were recently built. The older temples date from 6th to 10th century CE. The Temples were richly adorned with fresco paintings depicting the floral motifs, gods and goddesses of Hinduism. These frescoes had suffered at the hands of time and are in poor condition at present. Several efforts are being done in different times by the Government of Pakistan for the restoration of this important site. The restoration of temples by repainting them is leading to the destruction of important works of art from the past destroying its originality. The present paper focuses on the fresco paintings of Katas Raj temples and the work done for their restoration.

Rana P.B. SINGH

*The Shaktipithas and Sacredscapes in South Asia:
Faithscape, Spatiality, and Pilgrimage-Tourism*

The locations of all places attributed to goddesses in the map of South Asia projects the idea of sacrality with respect to spatiality, symbolism and land affinity in a distinctive way — culturally best represented as the 51 Shakti *pithas*, of which 41 are in India ('Mother'), and the rest in the nearby countries. In terms of interaction between universality and locality, two levels may be identified: (1) from local to regional, pan India level and finally the infinity symbolizing the 'march from micro to macro cosmos'; and (2) from pan-India to local level — the 'march from macro to micro cosmos'. This system is regulated, kept functional and attentive and overall maintained by the tradition of

pilgrimage. The multitude of goddess shrines, in the frame of the 51 Shakti *pithas*, should be properly linked to deep human conscience and awakening. A case study of Vindhyaachal represents an archetypal representation of 51 Shakti *pithas*; its pilgrimage at regional level is very popular among devout Hindus. Pilgrimage, pilgrimage sites and their related festivities, in combination, are the driving motivations for domestic and international tourist travel and the source of much interest in both heritage and its conservation. The new attention to the conservation of sacred sites also bears witness to the resurgence, redefinition and modernization of a previously repressed Hindu culture.

Salam Shyamkishore SINGH

Sankirtana of Manipur: Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

The UNESCO report, dated 3rd December 2013 included “*Sankirtana ritual singing and dancing of Manipur*” in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in recognition of its value and significance as a living heritage of unique socio-cultural and religious importance.

Manipur is a small state situated at the Eastern region of India on the Myanmar border. About 80% of the majority of Manipuri Meitei people follow Vaishnava Hinduism, propounded by Caitanyaadeva of Bengal. For the followers of this religious faith, *Kirtana* or *Hari Sankirtana*, singing the *nama* (name) and *kirti* (glory) of Lord Krishna is the only means for God-realization. For the Manipuri Hindus, *Sankirtana* occupies an important place in their life and world, more particularly in their life-cycle ritual celebrations, seasonal religious observations, in consonance with their supreme faith in the efficacy of *Kirtana* as the sole gateway to spiritual realization.

Sankirtana is generally known as *Natasankirtana*, since *nata* and *nrta*, acting with dance is an essential component of the ritualistic performance along with *geetam* or singing, *vadyam* or drumming. *Natasankirtana* is *sangeet* in the true sense as per the *Sastras* (*Geetam vadyam tatha nrtam tryam sangita mucyate*). Manipuri *Natasankirtana* adheres to the norms and practices of the Hindu classical texts in several respects, while repositioning full faith upon *Srimad Bhagavatam* as the holy scripture, and the Vaishnava holy texts for showing the path (*marga*).

Sankirtana is an inalienable aspect in the life-cycle rituals of the Hindu Manipuris, especially on the occasion of *Lugun Thangba* (sacred thread ceremony), marriage ceremony, and death ceremonies. It is also essential during such seasonal religious ceremonies, such as, *Rath Yatra*, *Jhulon* and *Holi* festivals. Manipuri *Rasa Lila* dance performance, which forms an important aspect of the collective and individual worship of the Hindu Manipuris in temples on special seasonal celebrations starts with *Nata-Nankirtana* ritual singing as the prelude (*purvaranga*) which is compulsory.

What is unique about *Sankirtana* is that it continues to be a living cultural heritage of the Meitei Manipuri people in Manipur, Assam, Tripura, Bangladesh and Bengal for about three hundred years forming an inalienable aspect of their life-cycle celebrations and religious practices in all its cultural and artistic dimensions.

Shanti Swaroop SINHA

Shaiva Trails: Timeless Tradition of Hindu Culture

Shiva, known also as Rudra was dynamic and most popular deity as *Lokadevata* from the time of Sindhu-Sarasvati and

Vaidik Culture/Civilisation, which went through the centuries in terms of expansion and extension in reference to concept and forms and also their visual manifestation in India as well as in the art of SAARC countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh. What made Shiva gradually developing into Shaiva pantheon and tradition was the basic concept of *Shivatva* or Welfare of All. Shiva through the various names and actions like Mahadeva, Mahesha, Panchanana becomes the Supreme God and cause of primeval elements (*Panchatattva*). Hence as supreme deity (*Devadhideva*) on one hand he was also penetrating into lower strata of the Indian society and commanded the respect of the common people as Bhutanatha, Pashupatinatha and at the same time as Mahayogi and as Dakshinamurti and Nataraja.

The all prevailing character of Shiva made him popular in Nepal and Bangladesh right from the time of 7th century CE onwards. The Pashupatinatha temple in Nepal and Samrajeshvara Nepali temple (1843 CE) in Varanasi bears close affinity and reveals continuity of Shaiva trails. The popularity of Shiva is not merely related to past but is in the present also to be seen in several SAARC countries. *Shiva-Ratri* celebration, *Kavada-Yatra*, *Mansarovar-Kailash Yatra* are some examples of Shaiva trails to continuity of the tradition, strengthening of mutual relations, economy and the promotion of tourism today. Thus, it is integral for the understanding of the past of the Hindu culture and also for enhancing our present Hindu Cultural Trails.

The above and several other points of Shaiva trails in terms of gods and goddesses, their temples and texts will be discussed in the paper and presented through the PPT (power point presentation).

Santhoshi SUBRAHMANYA

The Influence of Vaishnava cult on Bharathiya Natya Shastra: A special reference to Yakshagana

Indians have always been the lovers of song and dance. *Veda*, *Vedantha*, *Brahmanas* and historical evidences of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* shows that we were the land of Festivals and Entertainment. Dance, music, poetry was always a part of us from time immemorial.

To support this view, we have *Shatapatha Brahmana* mentioning about entertainers. Many entertainers such as Suta, Shailusha, Kari, Vanshanarthi and a number of players on musical instruments were there right from the Vedic age. Panini's *Ashtadhyayi* mentions the *Nat Sutras* of Shilali and Krishashva. The historical evidences of Valmiki's *Ramayana* and Vyasa's *Mahabharata* mentioned *nata*, *narthaka*. Lava-Kusha singing at the time of Rajasuya Yajna shows that Valmiki recognised the Vedic traditions of singing ballads in Yajnas. *Mahabharata*'s Virata Parva mentions *Natya*, *Natyamantapa* and Arjuna engaging himself in the art of teaching Dance. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* also mentions many such folk entertainers and their performances are also described.

Bhasa, the first known dramatist of India, whose work takes influence from *Mahabharata*, especially from the life of Sri Krishna. It is interesting to note that Krishna is called a Sutradhara or the holder of string of this Universal Drama of life. Another great Dramatist of Gupta period, Kalidasa in his *Malavikagnimitra* says through his character Ganadasa that Chalik, again associated with Krishna, is his Kulavidya and is the most beautiful Dance offering to God. Jayadeva, the 12th century poet wrote *Githagovinda* and eternally established the Vaishnava cult in Indian Psyche through his songs of Govinda. It had the theme of love between Radha and Krishna with a *duthi* or *Sakhi* as their messenger.

The Theatre in India is influenced by many Gods/Deities, as the Theatre in India is not just for Entertainment but also for the propagation of Religion and its Rituals. Since Krishna and Rama plays a pivotal role in the Indian Psyche, it has thus spread to our main source of entertainment that is our theatres. The objective of the present article is to critically study the influence of Vishnu cult or Vaishnavism on Indian Theatre with a special reference to *Dashavathara Ata* which is now simply called, *Yakshagana*.

Hasibul Hasan SUMI

The role of Hindu Cultural Trails to Reconstruct the Cultural Heritage of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a small country situated at the north-eastern part of south Asia. The total area of Bangladesh is 1,47,570 square kilometres. Hinduism is the second largest religious affiliation in Bangladesh, with about 8.96% of the population being Hindus according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics for 2011. In terms of population, Bangladesh is the third largest Hindu state in the world after India and Nepal. The cultural history of Bangladesh has devolved from the operation of the several forces and elements. Of these, the most basic forces are geography, socio-culture and religion. In the religious life of ancient Bengal, geography also had produced definite, far-reaching and more profound effect. Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, in Bengal, imbibed local characteristics of non-Aryan origins and thereby attained a character from its exogenous fundamental entity. Hinduism is a diverse system of thought with beliefs spanning monotheism, ditheism, pantheism and atheism among others and its concept of god is complex and depend upon each individual and the tradition and philosophy followed. Gods and Goddesses of Hinduism include Shiva, Vishnu, Durga,

Lakshmi and many others. Hindus believe that all living creatures have a soul. Hinduism has the strongest presence of the divine feminine in world religion from ancient time to the present. The goddess is viewed as the heart of the most esoteric Saiva tradition. The God and Goddesses occupy houses as well as the temples. It is not only a temple but it is also an institution. We have so many institutions like as Kantajee temple Dinajpur, Siva temple Rajshahi, Baro Bari temple Sirajgonj, Kali temple Faridpur, Chandi Mura temple Comilla, Dakershory temple Dhaka and many others. In Bangladeshi Hinduism ritual bathing, vows, and pilgrimages to sacred rivers, mountains, and shrines are common practice. Durga Puja, held in September-October, is important festival of Bangladeshi Hindus and it is widely celebrated across Bangladesh.

Bipin Kumar THAKUR

Relevance of Shanti Parva for the Present-day Polity and Governance in India

The *Mahabharata*, written by Vyasa, is the longest and perhaps the greatest epic written in Sanskrit language and has been a constant source of spiritual strength to the people of India for many centuries. The epic is divided into several books called *Parvas*. In the context of the proposed presentation, a study on polity and governance – *Shanti Parva* becomes the most relevant. It has helped in the evolution of doctrines related with present day polity and governance in India. The proposed study will investigate the contribution of *Shanti Parva* in shaping the present-day polity and governance by exploring the following ideas expressed in the ancient literature:

A theory of State,
The importance of State and the Science of Politics,

The Origin of State,
 The functions of the Government,
 The Welfare State,
 Obligations of the subjects/residents,
 Politics, morals and duties of the King in time of distress.

Apart from the above-mentioned important themes, the study will explore other ideas mentioned in the ancient epic which has the potential to change the political discourse about the modern polity and governance. Moreover, an attempt will also be made to recommend important messages of *Shanti Parva* which remains relevant today.

M. VARADARAJAN

Sri Ramanuja's Tirtha Yatra to Divya Desas (Vaishnava Trails)

The cultural heritage of India is based on religion and philosophy. Since the advent of Bhakti movement in the 6th century CE, Divine Saints, twelve in number, stressed the importance of *Tirtha Yatra* to *Divya Desas* through their hymns. The Divine saints considered 108 *Divya Desas* – the Vaishnava Trails as sacred spots and sung in praise of each deity and its surroundings. Among the Divine Saints, Tirumangai Alwar, Tirumazhisai Alwar and Kulasekhara Alwar advised the Bhaktas to have *Tirtha Yatra* to Vaishnava *Divya Desas*. In this way the necessity of visiting sacred places was highlighted by the Alwars.

Since the beginning of the 10th century CE, Sri Vaishnava Acharyas had significantly contributed through their visits to various *Divya Desas* and left a permanent and indelible impression. They also established the rituals and customs that have to be practiced from time to time.

Among Sri Vaishanva *Acharyas*, Sri Ramanuja's *Tirtha Yatra* is enlivening. Sri Ramanuja, a crusader of Sri Vaishnavism, followed the footprints of the Alwars in visiting various places in India and Nepal and propagated the cultural heritage and spirituality among the people. He began his visit from South to North, covering various *Divya Desas* like Badrinath, Saligram, Ayodhya, Triveni, Srikurram, Srikakulam, Warangal, Simhachalam, Bapatla, Ahobilam and Tirumala are noteworthy. He left an indelible impression by way of visiting 108 *Divya Desas* during 25 years.

Atul Kumar VERMA
Sun deity worship in Bihar

The image of Sun is worshipped in many different forms in Bihar. Not only tangible aspects regarding Sun deity have been highly revered by the natives of Bihar, but the intangible aspects like folk stories, music, fasts and feast etc., related to Sun worship are of considerable importance in the culture of Bihar. Archaeological evidences suggest that worship of Sun is prevalent in this region from the ancient times. Earliest archaeological evidence of Sun worship was found from Chirand, a Neo-Chalcolithic site of Ganga plain of Bihar region. From the Bodh Gaya railings of 200 BCE we found figurative manifestations of Sun deity. In this very region especially the Magadhan region of Bihar, in present times, a large number of Sun deities in iconic forms are present. There are many temples like Deo Barunark and Deo Markandeya (Aurangabad), Ongari (Nalanda) , Baragaon (Nalanda), Pratyush Madhyanna (Gaya) etc., still existing in these parts. The *Chatth* festival that relates to Sun deity worship has been performed every year with religious fervour and enthusiasm in this region. In this paper an attempt has been made to bring

forward the ancient glory that exist in tangible and intangible aspects related to Sun deity worship in Bihar.

Ayswaria WARIAR

The Confluence of Vaishnava and Shakta Traditions in Mohiniyattam

The classical dance style of Mohiniyattam stands unique from the other solo dance styles of India mainly because of its feminine grace and lyrical charm. It has adherence to the *Margi* principles of the *Natyasastra* and at the same time it is deeply rooted in its *Desi* (local) traditions. The confluence of the Aryan and Dravidian cultures in ancient Kerala led to the birth of several highbred varieties of Performance Art. On the one hand Kerala has architecturally inspiring temples such as the Padmanabhaswamy Kshetram wherein the main deity is Lord Visnu, on the other is the co-existence of the Kaavu or village grooves developed into temples, wherein the Goddesses are worshiped. This article explains the inherent strength of Mohiniyattam, a highly expressive dance style of Kerala. It throws light on the Vaishnava and Shakta influences on the content, form and philosophy of the dance form and how the two different cultural trials amalgamate to strengthen and widen the scope of the art form.

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