



The Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies

Trustees Report for the period ended December 2003

The Trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31st December 2003.

Trustees

Mr Ross Andrew and Mrs Sharmila Bhattacharya-Ford retired as Trustees this year and Mr Kenneth Valpey and Miss Amanda Mills have taken their places on the Board. Mr Shaunaka Rishi Das Continues to serve as a Trustee.

The Trust Deed of the Charity governs appointment of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is authorised to appoint new trustees to fill vacancies arising through resignation or death of an existing Trustee. The Charity's trustees are named on page one of the document.

The Trustees have requested Mrs Sharmila Bhattacharya-Ford, Mrs Neerja Sethi, Prof Keith Ward, Prof Richard Gombrich, Peggy Morgan and Shaunaka Rishi Das to continue acting as members of the OCVHS Board of Governors.

Constitution, Objects and Policies

The OCHS is constituted by a Trust Deed and its objects are the advancement of education in the field of Hindu Studies.

On the recommendation of the Development Council the Board of Governors has adopted the policy of involving the OCHS in programmes and projects only if and when they are funded or pledged, so as not to pull resources from core funding. It was also resolved by the Board to change the name of the Centre to the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies.

The Appointments Committee conducted a search for an Academic Director to replace Prof FX Clooney, when his term expires in 2004. the Committee, including official representatives from the Theology and Oriental Studies faculties, offered the post to Prof Pratap P Kumar, head of Religious Studies at the University of Durban, Westerville, South Africa.

The Centre continued to develop its core academic programmes and projects, accepting new students, new visiting scholars, arranging lectures, seminars and tutorials. Significantly it also established a Continuing Education Department and is progressing with its research projects. It has also continued to successfully forge close and rewarding links with the University of Oxford. The Center re-launched its website and launched a traveling exhibition for the British Hinduism Oral History Project. The Centres aim to develop and promote the field of Hindu Studies is certainly meeting with success.

This year the Centre signed a new three-year lease with its landlord for the premises in Magdalen Street, Oxford. It has also appointed accountants Macilvin Moore Reveres, London as its auditors.

As can be seen by our accounts the Board has been successful in maintaining its responsibility to insure the true charitable nature of the OCHS. By accepting the voluntary services of its Executive Director and other administrative staff the Centre saves in the region of £94,000 per annum.

The OCHS also received the free professional services of two law firms – Bowling & Co, London and Manoj Ladwa & Co, London, a designer – Mr Rasik Varsani, a web designer – Mr P Tusler and accountants, Macilvin Moore Reveres. Stagprint services and Quest software have contributed photocopy paper and computer server maintenance. An estimate of these cost savings would be in the region of £ 7,000. Along with these are many services volunteered in terms of cooking, serving and cleaning for the well appreciated lunches, dinners and receptions the center holds in order to promote scholarly association and interaction, and the Internship programme, which began this year. These considerable savings must be noted as contributions adding great value to the Centre.

Development, Activities and Achievements

Development Council

The members of this Council, Mr Harish IK Patel, Mr Subhash Thakrar, Mr Hasu Manek, Mr Bharat Bhundia, Mr Nitin Palan, Mr Jayesh Popat and Mr Sanjay Gadhvi have all served the OCHS throughout the year. The Council has been meeting to oversee and advise on issues of fund development, budgeting and accounting and has inspired three trips to the Centre by Indian businessmen from the London area.

These trips have been successful in promoting the Centre and expanding the network of support necessary for the Centre to develop soundly in the future. The Develop Council are also of great practical assistance in offering advice on practices and processes the Centre needs to adopt in order to run efficiently and effectively.

Lectures and Seminars

Michaelmas Term

Lectures

Hindu Non-dualism (Advaita) in Theory and Practice, Dr. Godavarisha Mishra

These lectures were intended to introduce the basic tenets of Advaita tracing it from the period of Gaudapada through Sankara to the present day Advaitins. They examined the philosophical subtleties of Advaita, its enrichment through productive dialogue with other schools and also its impact on the society. These were designed for students of Indian Philosophy, Theology and Religious studies and do not require in-depth understanding of Indian scriptures.

The Majewski Lecture

The Hindu Imagination and Imaginary Hinduisms

Dr David Smith, Lancaster University

(Dr Smith is author of the recent, *Hinduism and Modernity*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford)

21st November, at 5pm

The Wahlstrom Lecture

Madhvacarya's Mitigated Monotheism

Dr Deepak Sarma, Yale University, USA

In this lecture Dr Sarma will examine the distinguishing characteristics of Madhva Vedanta, a school of Hindu theism that was developed in the 13th century by Madhvacarya. He will explore, in particular, the kind of God that Madhvacarya envisioned.

31st October

Science & Religion Lecture

Intelligent Design & Darwinian Evolution

Dr William A. Dembski, Baylor University, USA

(Dr Dembski is the author of "The Design Inference: Eliminating Chance Through Small Probabilities", Cambridge University Press, 1998).

This lecture introduced the key concepts of Intelligent Design and showed how it differs from the Darwinian Theory of Evolution. Jonathan Edelmenn briefly responded to Dr Dembski's presentation.

30th October, at 12pm

Sanskrit Readings

***Bhagavata Purana*, Skandha X, Chapters 29, 31-33**

Prof. M. Narasimhachary, *Shivdasani Visiting Fellow*

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9.45am – 10.45am, commencing 14th October

Oriental Institute

Sankara's, *Upadesa Sahasri*

Dr Godavarisha Mishra, *Shivdasani Visiting Fellow*

Mondays and Wednesdays, 11.00am – 12.00pm, commencing 13th October

Oriental Institute

Hilary Term

Lectures

Hinduism 1: Primary Texts in Translation, Prof. Francis X. Clooney SJ

In this course Prof. Clooney introduced to students the textual study of Brahminical Hinduism. The course examined the early wisdom of Reality, God, and Self in the Upanishads, the theological system of nondualism offered in *The Vivekaxudamani* or Sri Sankaracarya, the ritual theory in language and practice, living the orthodox life: *The Laws of Manu*, the world of Rama and Sita: *The Ramayana* of Valmiki, the knowing, acting, and loving Krsna: *Bhagavad Gita*, and the approach to the religion of Shiva.

The Majewski Lecture

What Makes a Temple Unique? The Construction of Spatial Particularity

Prof. Friedhelm Hardy

In this course, Prof. Hardy emphasized the cultural modes of developing a meaningful, logistical universe or how to make sense of stones. The course focused on the literary material associated with the South Indian Varada temple in Kanchipuram. The lecture also looked at wider South Indian context, that may relativise claims of uniqueness or may take a polemical stance.

Seminars

Inter-Disciplinary Seminar in the Study of Religion

“Hindu Goddesses and Christian Theology: With Special Attention to Two Tamil Hymns in the Antati Style”

Francis X. Clooney, S.J.

Tuesday, February 25th, 5 PM, Christ Church

OCHS Seminars

February 12th: *“Faith and Reason in the Scholarship of Tamal Krishna Goswami”*

(Francis X. Clooney, S.J. and Kenneth Valpey, D.Phil. Cand.)

February 19th: *“Jesuits and Brahmins in 16th-18th Century India,”*

(Francis X. Clooney, S.J.)

February 26th: *“Second Generation Hindus: Foreign Diplomats in the Everyday Mela's of the Multiculture”*

(Savita Bhanot, University of Birmingham, D.Phil. Cand.)

March 5th: *“The Apirami Antati and Mataracamman Antati: Hindu and Christian theological hymns in a Tamil style”*

(Francis X. Clooney, S.J.)

Trinity Term

Lectures

A Christian Theology of Religions in Light of Hinduism, Francis X. Clooney, S.J.

These lectures delineated the methods and goals of a Christian theology of religions informed by the faith, practice, and theologies of another religious tradition. In the limited space of these lectures, the Christian tradition will be discussed primarily in its Roman Catholic form; (certain strands of) Hinduism will serve as the example of another religious tradition. The lectures were intended primarily for students in theology and religious studies, although no background in the aforementioned areas of study was required to take the course.

Hindu Domestic Rituals, Dr S Ramaratnam

These lectures introduced the key traditional and current rituals performed by Hindus in the home setting and in relation to the life of the family. The rituals were described and also analysed in terms of the contextual and theoretical issues related to the actual practice. Attention was given to the organization of these rituals according to age, family position, and gender.

The Majewski Lecture

Body as Text: Experience and Tradition in Hindu Tantra

Prof. Gavin Flood, *Stirling University*

(Prof. Flood is author of *Introduction to Hinduism* [Cambridge University Press] and the new Blackwell Companion to Hinduism)

23rd May, at 5 pm

Oriental Institute

Seminars

First Week (30th April)

Jan Olof Bengtsson, D.Phil. Student, St Cross College

“Person’ as an Intellectual Category in the West, and as Applied to India”

Second Week (7th May)

Dr Stephanie Jamison, University of California, USA

“On the new translation of the Rig Veda”

Third Week (14th May)

“Siva in sculpture, painting and dance”

Dr Anne-Marie Gaston, (Oriental Inst, Lecture Room 1)

Forth Week (21th May)

“De-mystifying the Divine: The early Brahmanical pantheon”

Dr Madhuvanti Ghose, (Ashmolean Museum)

Fifth Week (28^h May)

Savita Bhanot, D.Phil. Student, University of Birmingham,

“Second Generation Hindus: Foreign Diplomats in the Everyday Mela's of the Multiculture”

Seventh Week (11th June)

Rev Dr Murray Rogers

“Fifty Years of Ashram Life: Reminiscences from Jyotiniketan”

Continuing Education Department

The OCHS Continuing Education Department (CED) has been formed this year to facilitate excellence in Hindu Studies in the UK and to make a broad-based educational approach available to as wide an audience as possible. It has grown out of the successful pilot projects launched last year in London and Oxford and is based on a response to a popular demand.

Educational Ethos

This course is notable for the distinctive ethos underpinning the teaching and learning process. The broad aims are twofold. Firstly, it provides a high degree of factual knowledge about the belief systems and religious practices embodied in Hindu *dharma*. Secondly, it utilises this basis to encourage examination of the very notion of Hindu identity. Students will thus be invited to use the detailed knowledge they acquire as a means of exploring the essential meaning of the Hindu life as practiced in this country and elsewhere.

British Hinduism is in a state of evolution and development as a new generation raised in this country reaches adulthood. It is our hope and expectation that young and old alike will see this course of study as a way through which knowledge and understanding of the Hindu tradition is disseminated within and outside the community. Through a thorough exploration of the spiritual and religious resources that Hinduism makes available, this course will be able to play a significant role in the emergence of a vibrant expression of British Hinduism that is both faithful to its traditions and entirely appropriate for the modern lifestyle.

Overview of the Hindu Studies Course

The Certificate in Hindu Studies is being offered by the OCHS in partnership with the University of Wales Lampeter (UWL), an acknowledged centre for theology and religious studies in the UK.

A full degree is composed of 360 credits awarded at three different levels, which correspond to the three years of study generally undertaken for a university degree course. In the first year, students study at Level 1, in the second year at Level 2, and in the third year at Level 3.

As well as degrees, universities also award Certificates and Diplomas. A Certificate is awarded for 120 credits at Level 1 (or one third of a degree) and a Diploma is awarded for 240 credits at Levels 1 and 2, (or two thirds of a degree). Thus a student who completes the Certificate then has 120 credits and thus needs 120 more credits to complete a Diploma. A student who has been awarded a Diploma has completed 240 credits and thus needs 120 more to make up the full 360 for a B.A. degree. Higher Education courses are divided into modules of study for which credits are awarded. For example, the first module 'Understanding the Hindu Identity' is for ten credits. To achieve these credits, students have to participate in 14 hours of classes (although reasonable absences are acceptable), do a certain amount of personal study and then submit one piece of written course work. To gain the Certificate in Hindu Studies, students need to complete 12 such courses, which are equivalent to one year's full time university study. Once this has been achieved a second group of 12 modules is studied at Level 2 in order to gain a further 120 credits for a Diploma in Hindu Studies.

The great advantage of studying with the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies is that students can work at their own speed. So, depending on the amount of time you have available, you can complete between 1 and 6 modules each year and build up gradually to the Certificate and then Diploma level.

The department Director is Dr Nick Sutton and teachers this year have included, Anuradha Dooney, Amanda Mills, Prof FX Clooney, Prof M. Narasimhachary, Prof Godabarisha Mishra and Dr S., Ramaratnam. Currently the course is being taught in Harrow, Ilford and Leicester.

Research Projects

British Hindu Oral History Project

After successfully being launched two years ago this project has progressed by conducting interviews in different locations around the country. The BHOHP will attempt to achieve a good gender balance, Indian ethnic balance and a broad geographical mix.

Our first researcher, Shalini Sharma retired this year, and was replaced by Miss Draupadi Stewart. Miss Stewart has brought creativity and dynamism to the project, which is scheduled to end next year.

Thus far prospective interviewees and community leaders have enthusiastically welcomed the project. It serves to increase awareness of the unique journey that the Asian community has made in this country and to develop the community's historical consciousness.

Digital Shikshapatri Project

The Digital Shikshapatri was officially launched in November of this year, in Oxford and at two Swaminaryana temples in London. The site can now be viewed at www.shikshapatri.org.uk. With its learning resource, which will set the manuscript in historical and cultural context; the site has become an important model for collaboration between scholars and the community. The learning resource uses material collected by members of the of the project's Content Advisory Committee.

The site provides a wide variety of online resources which set the Shikshapatri in its historical, cultural and religious context. It is designed to help people of all

backgrounds to better understand the significance of this manuscript, which receives hundreds of visitors every year.

High praise for the project came in March with the launch of EnrichUK (www.EnrichUK.net), a gateway to a lottery-funded collection of 150 sites supported by the New Opportunities Fund, including the Digital Shikshapatri. The combination of an ancient university library, a digitized manuscript and members of the Hindu community in the UK caught the imagination of the press and the Digital Shikshapatri featured in the Guardian's article of Mar 6th on the EnrichUK Portal. Baroness Blackstone, Minister of State for the Arts formally opened the EnrichUK portal and singled out the Digital Shikshapatri for special mention as one of the most interesting of the NOF funded digitization initiatives.

The message of the project was summed up by Dr Gillian Evison, Head of the Indian Institute library and project director, at the launch in Oxford, where she said, "Lord Swaminarayan gave his copy of the Shikshapatri to Sir John Malcolm to help promote better understanding between cultures and I believe that the Digital Shikshapatri has continued this tradition. People from a number of different religious and cultural backgrounds have collaborated on the site and in working together on the project have gained a better understanding of each other's traditions.

As a result of this project, Lord Swaminarayan's manuscript can now be present wherever in the world there is a computer connected to the Internet. May we hope that the love and understanding that accompanied the original gift to Sir John Malcolm also accompanies the Digital Shikshapatri as it now reaches out across the World Wide Web."

Hindu Youth Survey

The Hindu Youth Survey is an OCVHS research project undertaken by Dr Savita Vij and Romila Santosha. A sample of 400 participants took part in the survey, which was conducted in July and August 2001 during the Hindu Youth Festival. Each of the respondents filled out a 16-page survey and a further sample of young people took part in ten hours of recorded interviews. The data collected has provided an invaluable insight into the way the British Hindu community is developing. Dr Vij and Romila Santosha have published two papers, written in collaboration with Dr Leslie Francis, Director of the Welsh National Centre for Religious Education and Professor of Practical Theology at the University of Wales and Mandy Robbins, Teaching and Research Fellow at the Welsh National Centre for Religious Education, University of Wales.

A booklet containing results of the survey and these papers, with an initial print run of 200 copies, was launched on the 10th July at the House of Lords. The launch was attended by community leaders, representatives of Hindu youth groups and the press. The results will serve as the first opportunity for the community, researchers and others to study scholarly research on youth opinions in the community.

OCHS Library

In the academic year 2002-2003, the library has continued to grow with the addition of the collection of the late Tamal Krishna Goswami and the contribution of a set of the Ancient Indian Tradition & Mythology series of translations of the Puranas, among other books from the late Mrs. Jane Metman.

Books from the OCHS library that are on undergraduate reading lists for Modern History and the Hinduism reading lists for Theology have been added to OLIS, the

online union catalogue of Oxford University libraries. OCHS has also been in discussion with Kate Alderson-Smith, librarian of the Theology Faculty about ways in which the OCHS library might support the growing need for books on Hinduism to support courses within the Faculty.

In May of this year a sub-committee of students was formed to oversee the running of the library lending, acquisition and organisation policies.

Students

The centre welcomed three new students this year. Below we outline their backgrounds and present focus.

Nadeem Ahmed, UK

BA in Religious Studies and Urdu, School of African & Oriental Studies, London, 1993.

Currently pursuing an MLitt in Philosophy, Oxford University.

Rembert Lutjeharms, Belgium

Undergraduate and Graduate Degrees in Oriental Studies (Indology), University of Ghent, Belgium, 2003. Thesis: "Hamsaduta of Rupa Goswami. A Study in Translation".

Currently pursuing a DPhil in Theology, Oxford University.

Kiyokazu Okita, Japan

B.A. in Religious Studies, International Christian University, Tokyo, 2001.

Thesis: "The Necessity for and the Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue".

Currently pursuing a MSt., in the Study of Religion, Oxford University.

Degrees Awarded

The following students successfully completed their thesis and were awarded degrees from Oxford University:

Martin Ganeri O.P., UK (2001 - 2003) was granted a DPhil in Theology focusing on the doctrines of God and creation in the thought of St Thomas Aquinas and Ramanuja. Fr Ganeri is a member of the Dominican Order within the Catholic Church. He is currently Catholic chaplain to the University of Edinburgh and the Edinburgh College of Art. While in Oxford lectured in Hebrew at Blackfriars. He is also involved in promoting Hindu-Christian dialogue and is a member of the Catholic Bishops' Committee for Other Faiths.

Anuradha Dooney, IRL (2002-2003) was granted an MSt in the Study of Religion, Oxford University, her thesis was titled, "Clouds, Creepers and Krishna: The flourishing of faith in Vishvanatha Cakravarti's Madhurya Kadambini". Anuradha is currently a faculty member of the OCHS Continuing Education Department. She teaches the CED Hindu Studies Certificate Course in London, Birmingham, Cambridge and Leicester.

Visiting Fellows

Shivdasani Fellowship Awards

Mr Azad Shivdasani, a London-based entrepreneur and an alumni of Oxford University, offered an annual Fellowship for Indian scholars to visit Oxford and spend a term, based in the Centre. The Fellowship will greatly enhance the aim of the

OCHS to build bridges between Indian and Western scholarship. The visiting scholars will be able to use the important resources of Oxford University and develop relationships with scholars here to help further their scholarly work. They will also be able to offer lectures and seminars to the university and tutorials to students of the Centre. We thank Mr Shivdasani for his vision and commitment in establishing this opportunity.

Shivdasani Fellowship

Dr. Godabarisha Mishra hails from Orissa, (Eastern India) and is currently a Professor, Department of Indian Philosophy, University of Madras, Chennai and earlier to it, worked at Kuppaswami Sastri Research Institute, Chennai as the Editor. He has been teaching Indian Philosophy especially Vedanta for over two decades. His areas of Research Interest include Buddhism, inter-school dialectics in Vedanta, and textual studies and editing of rare Sanskrit texts. He has contributed a number of articles in National and International Journals and authored a few books which include Anubhutiprakasa of Vidyananda and Advaitamakaranda of Lakshmidhara. He had his Ph.D. degree in Sanskrit from University of Madras and also studied traditional texts in Advaita and Nyaya under noted traditional scholars. He was a Charles Wallace Fellow at the University of Oxford and gave a few lectures on the Tarkapada of Brahmasutrabhasya of Sankara in 1995.

Shivdasani Fellowship

Dr. M. Narasimhachary recently retired as the Head of the Department of Vaishnavism at the University of Madras. His specialist subjects include the Pre-Ramanuja Religion and Philosophy, Pancharatra Agama Literature, Telugu and Sanskrit Literature and popularisation of Sanskrit as a spoken tongue. He has published a number of articles and monographs in academic journals on topics such as the Samskrita Svapnah, Bhakti & Prapatti in Srivaishnava Philosophy and the Pancaratra-kantakodhara.

Shivdasani Fellowship

Professor S., Ramaratnam (Ph.D. Sanskrit, University of Madras) is Principal of the Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda College in Chennai (Madras), India. His wide range of publications and research interests include Sanskrit grammar and poetry, and the practice and theory of Hindu domestic ritual.

Tamal Krishna Goswami Visiting Fellow

This year's TKG Fellowship has been awarded to **Dr. Vidya Sayinath** of the University of Madras. Dr. Sayinath acquired her degree of Doctorate in the System of Vedanta of Indian Philosophy. Her thesis refers to the epistemological aspect as elucidated by Sankara and Ramanuja. Her work highlights the significance of knowledge as expounded by the two philosophers, which served as the substratum for their Ontological structure. Presently she is engaged in the study of Ramanuja's Philosophy. This study examines the Concept of Devotion as the cementing factor of the various aspects of his System. Dr Sayinath writes articles on religion for various publications, including several articles for the Encyclopedia of Hinduism.

OCHS Visiting Fellow

Deepak Sarma, Visiting Lecturer, Department of Religious Studies, Yale University (B.A., Reed College; M.A., University of Chicago, The Divinity School, Ph.D., University of Chicago, The Divinity School) is a Lecturer in Religious Studies and specializes in Hinduism and Indian Buddhism. His areas of teaching and research specialization include Indian philosophy, Vedanta, Hindu theology, and the comparative philosophy of religions. His expertise is in the Madhva School of Vedanta, of which he is a member, and he is a research scholar of the Purnaprajna

Samshodana Mandiram, the research wing of the Purnaprajna Vidyapitham (a Madhva monastery), in Bangalore India. In addition to articles in the Journal of Indian Philosophy and The Journal of the American Academy of Religion, he is the author of An Introduction to Madhva Vedanta (Ashgate Pub. Ltd, to be released in December 2003) and Epistemologies and the Limitations of Philosophical Inquiry: Doctrine in Madhva Vedanta (Curzon-Routledge, forthcoming). Among his current projects, he is writing An Introduction to Vedanta (under contract with Columbia University Press). Sarma is the vice-president of the Society for Hindu-Christian Studies and will become president in 2005. He has taught previously at Vanderbilt University and Connecticut College. He has held fellowships from the American Academy of Religion and the Fulbright Commission (USA-India).

Board of Governors Meeting and Dinner

The annual Board of Governors meeting was held in June, with all members available to attend. The meeting was followed by a dinner held in Oxford Town Hall. One-hundred people, including representatives from the Indian High Commission, prominent Indian business people, senior academics from Oxford, Cambridge, London and Leeds, and students of the University, attended the Dinner. Speakers included Lord Dholakia, Mr Alfred Ford and Prof Keith Ward.

In Memorandum: Benefactors and Friends of the Centre

Mrs Jane Metman (1934 - 2003)

Mrs Metman, a sincere and enthusiastic friend of the OCHS, passed away in September 2003. As soon as she discovered that she was gravely ill Mrs Metman arranged to donate her library to a worthy home. The Centre received a large collection of books on Hinduism.

Mrs Metman was a gifted musician and linguist. Her studies often took her to India and Nepal. After her husband Philip's death in 1967 she worked as a therapist and music teacher. She was recognised as an associate of the Royal College of Music in 1953. We will always be grateful to Mrs Metman for her generosity and her support.

Aleksander Majewski (1955– 2003)

A Polish businessman and a long time supporter of the OCHS, Aleksandra Majewski passed away in September 2003. He provided inestimable support for the Center by investing in the beginning of its development, and displayed much faith in the overall vision of the future of the Center. By sharing this broad-minded vision of how the Center could be expanded he has provided us with a great impetus for future developments.

In recognition of his service to the Centre the Board of Governors has decided to establish 'The Majewski Lectures', to be held annually in Oxford. We hope this offering will continue to mark his dedication and enthusiasm for the academic study of Hinduism.

Statement of Trustees responsibilities

The trustees are required to comply with their obligations under the Charities Act 1992 (or any statutory or modification of that Act) with regard to:

1. The keeping of accounting records for the Charity
2. The preparation of annual statements for the Charity
3. The auditing or independent examination of the statements of account of the Charity

4. The transmission of the statements of account of the Charity to the Commissioners.

The Trustees are also responsible for the preparation and submission of an annual report and return to the Charity.

Approval

This report was approved by the board of directors and trustees on,

and signed on its behalf by,