



*Launch of the
International Edition of the*
**ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
HINDUISM**

September 2013 Special




Parmarth Niketan

Release of the International Edition 25-26th August, 2013

Sunday evening the 25th August and Monday morning the 26th August marked a historic moment in the spiritual and cultural history of India: the official launch of the international edition of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism.

The launch ceremony was organized and hosted by the University of South Carolina, Columbia, USA. A project of India Heritage Research Foundation, founded, guided, inspired and led by one of India's most revered spiritual leaders, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, the Encyclopedia of Hinduism is a colossal product of more than 1,000 esteemed scholars from around the world, totaling 11-volumes and approximately 7,000 entries.

The official, launch of the international edition, published by Mandala Earth Publications, an esteemed publisher of California, USA, was organized, hosted and sponsored by the University and presided over by Dr. Harris Pastides, the President of the University. The Encyclopedia project was headquartered at the University of South Carolina for many years during its compilation and editorial stages, and it is a beautiful and fitting full-circle for the University to be the ones to host the official launch.



From left to right: Pujya Swamiji, Shri Anna Hazare, Governor of South Carolina Hon. Nikki Haley, Dr. Meera Narasimhan, Dr. Harris Pastides and Sadhvi Bhagawati, presenting the first official set of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism to the Governor

August 25th

The launch was graced by the presence of:

- H.H. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Founder/Chairman of India Heritage Research Foundation
 - Hon. Nikki Haley, Governor of South Carolina
 - Dr. Harris Pastides, President of the University of South Carolina
 - Shri Anna Hazare, renowned social leader from India
 - Hon. Joe Wilson, Congressman for South Carolina
 - Hon. Ajit Kumar, Consul General to India
- Dr. Meera Narasimhan, Vice Dean, School of Medicine, USC, organizer of the event
 - Dr. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, Managing Editor of the Encyclopedia
 - Many esteemed scholars of the Encyclopedia and dignitaries



Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati said: “The wisdom, truths, teachings and insights of Indian and Hindu culture are not limited to or applicable to only Hindus or Indians. Rather they belong to the world and can deeply benefit the world. It is, therefore, our aim that the richness of this ancient yet timeless culture and heritage should be made available to the entire world, in a way that is authentic, academic, comprehensive and illuminating.”



Dr. Harris Pastides said: “It is a deep honor to be participating in the American release of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism. This is a remarkable work of scholarship and research. I hope that many in academia and in everyday life will turn to it as a resource to better understand the characters, the tenets, and the impact that Hinduism has had, and is having, in the world.”



Shri Anna Hazare said: “I am so happy to be here this evening. Pujya Swami Chidanandji is carrying our Indian culture to the entire world. This is a historic event here tonight. Spreading the teachings of our great tradition is a wonderful task Pujya Swami Chidanandji has undertaken and completed successfully.”

Meera Narasimhan, vice dean at the USC School of Medicine, said: “Hinduism, one of the oldest traditions of the world, has been a major influence with a focus on the ancient moral and spiritual insights and their modern developments. The EOH will serve as a comprehensive, scholastic reference for students, teachers and researchers and helps deepen the inter-cultural dialogue. As an Indian American, I have strongly been influenced by Hinduism and it’s rich rubric of spiritual, philosophical, and cultural ideas and practices that originated in India. As a physician trained in western medicine, it provided me with an abundance of knowledge to help better understand the mind, body, spirit connection that is key in understanding health as it pertains to disease and wellness.”



Subhash Kak, Regents Professor of Computer Science, Oklahoma State University, said: “Encyclopedia of Hinduism is a historic milestone in Indian studies. It will facilitate the understanding of the culture and civilization of India and its diaspora scattered all over the world.”

V.V. Raman, emeritus professor of physics and humanities, Rochester Institute of Technology and senior fellow at Metanexus Institute, said: “Indic civilization is among the brightly shining stars in the firmament of humanity’s heritage. Volumes have been written on it. There are copious commentaries on the abundant treasures of Indic culture. But one thing it has not had until now: a multi-volume Encyclopedia dedicated to it, in which the primary authors are scholars and thinkers from the Hindu tradition. That serious lacuna has disappeared as a result of this major publication. In keeping with India’s welcoming arms to one and all, Non-Hindu scholars were also invited to contribute to this international project.”

Rama Rao Pappu, senior professor of philosophy at Miami University (Ohio), said: “The EH is comprehensive in its scope by including important topics in Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism; erudite scholars from all over the world have given their expert knowledge of their discipline, at the same time making the EH accessible to other scholars and general public as well.”



Pujya Swamiji presented the first official set to the Governor of the State of South Carolina, for the State's Library. Hon'ble Nikki Haley, the Governor said: "It is so beautiful, and such a great gift, this Encyclopedia of Hinduism. I am so honored to receive these beautiful 11 volumes on behalf of the State. I am so glad to be here tonight at this historic event."



Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati said: "This is a great moment in history. The depth and breadth of the world's oldest living culture, civilization, philosophy and theology has finally been encapsulated in encyclopedic form. To have the



international edition launched by the University of South Carolina in USA demonstrates the universal applicability and universal appeal of the Hindu tradition. The launch is a great meeting of East and West. With Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and Shri Anna Hazareji here from India joining hands with the President of the University, Dr. Harris Pastides and the state congressman Joe Wilson, shows that the Hindu and Indian culture truly have no boundaries and no borders."

Congressman Joe Wilson and the Consul General Ajit Kumar were also full of praise for the Encyclopedia and the great accomplishment that Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji has achieved in conceiving of this project and then bringing it to fruition.





Dr. Harris Pastides, President of the University,
honors Pujya Swamiji for His great work



Dr. Pastides and Dr. Meera Narasimhan
honor Shri Anna Hazareji



Honoring of the Consul General,
Shri Ajit Kumar



Honoring of Joe Wilson,
Congressman for Columbia



Honoring of Raoul Goff,
the head of Mandala Publications



Pujya Swamiji and Shri Anna Hazareji bless
Dr. Meera Narasimhan for her wonderful
seva in organizing the event



Presentation of special Ganesha murti to Dr. Meera Narasimhan

Blessings & Gratitude to the Donors, Supporters and Sevaks



Drs. Naval and Nila Kant



Dr. Chandrakant Patel



Dr. Sudhir Parikh



Atulbhai and Rekhaben Mashruwala



Kishan and Veena Khandelwal



Dr. Kaushal and Arunima Sinha



Nalini Rao on behalf of HR Shah



Rakesh and Sita Goel





Dr. Subhash Kak and Dr. Rama Rao Pappu,
Executive Editors arrive at the President's house



Governor Nikki Haley with our Divine Shaktis



August 26th

The second part of the official release of the International Edition of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism took place on August 26th at the University of South Carolina.

Together with many of the scholars who worked on the Encyclopedia, University officials, and the hundreds who gathered for the release, Pujya Swamiji, Shri Anna Hazare and USC President Harris Pastides unveiled the encyclopedia's 11 volumes.

The unveiling was part of a daylong conference on Hinduism and the encyclopedia project and drew many USC faculty, staff and students.

In addition to numerous talks, the event captured the vibrancy of Indian culture with a traditional Indian lamp lighting ceremony, music and food and art.





Pujya Swamiji and Shri Anna Hazareji bless Dr. Pastides, the President of the University

President Pastides said it was a deep honor for the university to host the American release of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism.

“This is a remarkable work of scholarship and research. I hope that many in academia and in everyday life will turn to it as a resource to better understand the characters, the tenets and the impact that Hinduism has had, and is having in the world,” Pastides said.



Blessings to Dr. Hal French one of the first Associate Editors of the project and a professor emeritus at the University of South Carolina

Hal French, professor emeritus of religious studies, served as associate editor of the encyclopedia since its inception in 1987. He called the 25-year quest to document Hinduism a privilege.

“Having studied the Hindu tradition as my major research area, it has been a real privilege to work in some small way with many others in producing a work, which may be the standard comprehensive rendering of Indian tradition for years to come,” French said. “The time and effort required adds to the gratification in seeing this really monumental project come to completion.”





About the Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The Encyclopedia has been nearly twenty-five years in the making and it is the first time in history that the depth and breadth of India's great spiritual culture is made available in authentic, academic and scholastic form. It is truly a compendium of thousands of years of history, science, art, architecture, polity, religion, philosophy and culture. Further, the Encyclopedia is not limited to Hinduism as a religion, but rather provides all inclusive treatment of India's spiritual culture (including coverage of Sikhism, Jainism and Buddhism traditions in India).

The Encyclopedia of Hinduism presents - lucidly and authentically - the vast panorama of Hinduism, giving a faithful record of the world's oldest living spiritual tradition. To ensure comprehensive coverage, the entries of the Encyclopedia are conveniently prepared under the following twelve subject areas:

- 1. Art:** Architecture, Music, Iconography, Painting, Dance, Drama, Theater Performance, and Sculpture.
- 2. Hinduism in Global Context:** Nepal, Southeast Asia, Australia, Europe, North and South America, Mauritius, Africa, and the Caribbean.
- 3. History, Historiography, and Geography:** Religious Developments in Hindu Kingdoms and Empires. Epigraphy, Numismatics, Flora and Fauna, Mountains, Rivers, and other pertinent data.
- 4. Language and Literature:** Texts and commentaries in Sanskrit and in different Indian Languages, Folk Literature, Myths, Legends, and Journals.
- 5. Philosophy:** Metaphysics, Psychology, Ethics, Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, Jaina, Buddhist and Sikh Thought, Tantra, Saiva Siddhanta, and Contemporary Hindu Thought.
- 6. Polity:** Political Institutions, Judicial Systems, Economics, Law and Order, Military History, and Weapons.
- 7. Religion and Spirituality:** Knowledge Texts, Gods and Goddesses, Saints, Mystics and Teachers, Rites and Ceremonies, Holy Places, Sectarian Movements, Temples, Sacraments and Modern Developments.
- 8. Sciences:** Ayurveda, Astronomy, Astrology, Mathematics, Cosmology, Chemistry, and other relevant disciplines.
- 9. Social Institutions and Movements:** Education, Varnasrama Dharma, Tribes and their Customs, Status of Women, Sports and Pastimes, Feasts, Fasts, Festivals, Diet, Dress and Cosmetics.
- 10. Spiritual Disciplines:** Karmayoga, Bhaktiyoga, Hathayoga, and Tantra.
- 11. Scholarship in Hindu Studies:** Ideological, Theosophical, and Commentarial Tradition, Oral Tradition, Philological Studies, Sociological, Mystical, and Comparative Studies.
- 12. Women Studies:** Full coverage of issues related to the important role played by women in cherishing, maintaining, and transmitting Hindu heritage.

Gratitude

- The Encyclopedia of Hinduism, conceived, inspired and guided by Pujya Swamiji, and a project of India Heritage Research Foundation, has been made possible through the great dedication, commitment, generosity, and selflessness of innumerable people and organizations. We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the following for being invaluable, essential assets to the project:
- All of the generous donors and particularly the Platinum Pioneer donors
All of the past and present Board of Trustees of IHRF
- All of the scholars who wrote articles, edited, reviewed and finalized the articles All of the sevaks who gave their time and energy in Encyclopedia offices around the globe assisting with a wide variety of crucial, administrative tasks.
- Dr. K.L. Seshagiri Rao, Chief Editor, Dr. Kapil Kapoor, Editor-in-Chief, and Late Pt. Dr. Vidya Niwas Mishra, Editor-in-Chief, for being the encyclopedia behind the Encyclopedia and guiding the teams of national and international scholars in bringing this project to fruition.
 - The University of South Carolina, Columbia, USA, Pittsburgh University, Pittsburgh, PA, USA, Parmarth Niketan Ashram, India and so many colleges, universities and institutions around the world for their great support and assistance.
 - The team at Rupa & Co. Publications for bringing out the Indian Edition and the team at Mandala Earth Publications & InsightEditions for bringing out the International Edition.
 - Special thanks also to all of the international media -- print media and broadcast media -- for covering this launch and this project so extensively with such dedication, devotion and grace. Special thanks to AP and PTI -- you have brought this wonderful news to the entire world.
- All of the revered saints who have blessed this project from its inception and carried it forth to its fruition.

In the Press

To see all the press clippings on the Encyclopedia of Hinduism from around the world, please click here.

Desi Talk

THE Indian AMERICAN
An International Voice for Hindus in the Times, Day In and Day Out
Fri Aug 28, 2012

BREAKING NEWS

Encyclopedia of Hinduism Unveiled at University of South Carolina

By ALBERT FORTINO

— COLUMBIA, S.C.
Hundreds of scholars, dignitaries, Hindu leaders and students converged on the University of South Carolina campus here Aug. 25 and 26 to witness the release of the latest edition of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism.

The much-anticipated and definitive 11-volume guide is conceived, compiled and produced by the India Heritage Research Foundation and published by the California-based Sanshodhan Prasthhan, according to a press release issued by the university last. Its Indian The Dalai Lama launched the Indian edition in April 2010 in Kolkata.

The two-day conference coinciding with the release focused more of recent prominent Indian scholars who discussed the significance of the encyclopedia and the richness and diversity of Indian culture that truly have their roots in people worldwide, the release said.

Those in attendance included Govanind Saraswati, founder and chairman of India Heritage Research Foundation; N. Bal Raju, Governor of South Carolina; Dr. Harry Postell, president of the University of South Carolina; Anita Hazare, renowned social leader from India; Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C.; Aji K. Kumar, Consul General of India in Atlanta; Dr. Meera Narasimhan, a professor and chairman of neurophysiology and vice dean at the School of Medicine; Dr. Sushil Bhagwati Sarawati, former ping editor of the Encyclopedia; Dr. Rishiraj Parikh, publisher of New India Times and recipient of India's Padma Bhushan award.

With more than 22 years in the making, the encyclopedia, written in English, encompasses more than 7,000 entries that span Indian history, civilization, language and philosophy; architecture, art, music and dance; medicine, science and social institutions; and religion, spirituality and the role of Hindu women.

Additionally, more than 1,000 color illustrations and photographs bring the Hindu traditions and culture alive for readers and provide an all inclusive treatment of India's spiritual culture including coverage of Sikhism, Jainism and South Asian traditions in India.

The encyclopedia project, also called the "Project of the Third Millennium," began in 1989 under the leadership of Chandrasekhar Mahalingam, who had passed away at the University of South Carolina for many years during its completion and editorial stages, the release said.

Board of editors include Dr. Subhash Kak, Regents Professor of Computer Science, Oklahoma State University; Dr. P. V. Sankar, professor of physics and humanities, Rochester Institute of Technology and senior fellow at Metamemorial Institute; Dr. Rama Rao Datta, senior professor of philosophy at Miami University in Ohio and Dr. Satya Sahai, senior fellow, The Encyclopedia of Buddhism.

Hal French, a University of South Carolina distinguished professor emeritus of religious studies, has served as associate editor of the encyclopedia since its inception.

"It has been an ambitious undertaking," French said. "The Encyclopedia of Hinduism is a milestone in research for this culture and religion, reflecting the very best in India and Western scholarship."

French was among nearly 1,000 scholars from India, the United States and Europe who wrote, edited and compiled the encyclopedia, which provides the first standardized and objective presentation of the panorama that is Indian culture.

According to Chakrabarti and Saraswati the wisdom, truths, teachings and insights of Indian and Hindu culture are not limited to or applicable to only Hindus or Indians, but belong to the world and can deeply benefit the world.

"It is, therefore, our aim that the richness of the ancient yet timeless culture and heritage should be made available to the entire world, in a way that is accurate, academic, comprehensive and illuminating," he said.

"It is a deep honor to be participating in the American release of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism," Dr. Postell, who presided over the launch, said. "This is a remarkable work of scholarship and research. I hope that many in academia and in everyday life will turn to it as a resource to better understand the character, the tenets, and the impact that Hinduism has had, and is having, in the world."

Chakrabarti and Saraswati presented the first official set to the Governor of the State of South Carolina, for the State's library.

Sushil Bhagwati Sarawati, president of the India Heritage Foundation and managing editor of the encyclopedia, said the conference, like the encyclopedia, aims to deepen connections among cultures as part of India's quest for spiritual unity. "The Indian cultural and spiritual traditions, encompassed within the religion known as Hinduism offer some of the deepest and most universally applicable insights, truths and teachings. Unfortunately, these tend to be misunderstood in the West. The Encyclopedia of Hinduism brings together, in a format open to all and accessible to people of all cultures, all religions and all walks of life, the depth and breadth of this ancient yet timeless heritage," she said.

Dr. Narasimhan, who led efforts to organize the conference described the encyclopedia as a comprehensive compilation of the spiritual and cultural heritage of India, providing a rich tapestry of Hinduism to the global nation. "It is an honor for the University of South Carolina to have served as host of higher learning for this monumental project," she said, adding, "I am thrilled to be associated with the launch of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism both as an Indian-American and a Christian."

Rep. Wilson and the Consul General, Kumar were also full of praise for the encyclopedia and the great accomplishment that the India Heritage Foundation has achieved in moving it to fruition and thus bringing it to fruition.

The University of South Carolina also announced Carolina's celebration of India through a series of fall and spring events led by the College of Arts and Sciences Walker Institute, Carolina Sanskrit serving campus and community understanding of India's growing importance as the world's largest democracy and a rising global economy. In addition to visiting scholars, the special "Mahatma Mahatma" (celebration of India) will feature film festivals, lectures, concerts and exhibits.

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North AMERICAN Newsline

The Indian EXPRESS

AUGUST 15, 2011

11

Nikki Haley, Anna Hazare unveil Encyclopedia of Hinduism

PRANSHU K. SHYAM

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

A 25-year quest to document and present one of the world's oldest living religions came to fruition when the Encyclopedia of Hinduism was unveiled by a galaxy of speakers and scholars including South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, Columbia Area Hindus and Indian Consul General in Atlanta Ajit Barter at the University of Southern Carolina campus here.

Hundreds of scholars, dignitaries, Hindu devotees, students and the public converged on the university's campus to witness the release of the much-anticipated and definitive 11-volume guide compiled, researched and produced by the India Heritage Research Foundation and published by Worldview Publishing in California.

The two-day conference coincided with the release featured a series of events to present Indian education and education's significance of the encyclopedia and the richness and diversity of Indian culture. The book is one that one million people worldwide. The event is the launch of the international edition of the encyclopedia of Hinduism. The Indian Daily I Am launched the Indian edition in April 2010 in Hyderabad.

Dr. Morris Fendley, President of the University of South Carolina (USC) and that is the first time in the world as the encyclopedia being launched on the campus. "It is a deep honor for me participating in the American release of the encyclopedia of Hinduism. This is a remarkable work of scholarship and research. I hope that every scholar and layperson will want to read it as a resource to better understand the civilization, the values and the impact that Hinduism has had, and is having in the world."

Chief Minister Ajit Barter said India and Hinduism are the world are grateful to the University of South Carolina for the launch of the monumental work.

The Comprehensive encyclopedia of one of the world's major religions has 11 volumes, text covers Hindu spiritual beliefs, practices and philosophy, and is the culmination of a 25-year academic effort. The encyclopedia is written in English and includes about 1,000 articles on Hinduism and its practices. The work also deals with Indian history, language, art, music, dance, architecture, medicine, and women's issues. The main encyclopedia contains more than 1,000 illustrations and photographs.

English colored images of Hinduism defines its entire pages, with footnoted explanations of the same and present God can take in the religion. "The goal was to have something pretty definitive — not just about Hinduism, but about the whole South Asian tradition," said University of South Carolina professor Ed French, who met a small group of scholars in 1987 to offer academic support for the project.

"This book's study has been arranged by French" said French an interdisciplinary, discipline professor presiding of religious studies in the cultural and an academic value. "It is a milestone of research that brought together both Hindus and Western scholars."

French, who specializes in the religion of Asia and served as an executive editor of



Sahel Magarwal, President Morris Fendley, Chairman Saravall, Anna Hazare, Meera Narasimhan and Congressman for India - all from left to right in front of French & French & French



Chairman Saravall presents the first copy to Governor Nikki Haley while Anna Hazare, Dr Meera Narasimhan, President Morris Fendley and Sahel Magarwal Saravall look on.

the encyclopedia, and the primary inspiration is one of India's most revered spiritual leaders, Swami Chakraborty Saravall.

The encyclopedia's release was from 100 to 100 that "50 pages, from 100 copies are all being issued in the first printing and will be of interest to students, religious institutions, and those studying Indian culture around the world, French said.

Dean of Letters, Dr. Subhojit Koo, Program Professor of Columbia University, Columbia State University, Dr. VV Ramana, senior professor of physics and Mathematics, Rochester Institute of Technology and senior fellow at Metropolitan Institute, Dr. Rama Mani Prasad, senior professor of philosophy at Miami University in Ohio and Dr. Ramesh Lakshmi, senior fellow, Encyclopedia of Hinduism spoke on the project dedicated to the world.

The encyclopedia is the brainchild of French and Chakraborty Saravall, president of the Worldview Publishing in Hyderabad and founder of the India Heritage Research Foundation, former of Chakraborty Saravall and the

editor of the encyclopedia was not to convert religion to Hinduism but help others become a good citizen. It presents Hinduism as a living religion with application to modern times and contains over six million words and 1,000 original photos. "It's for the parents who have no answers in the spirit of their inquisitive children about Hinduism and wish also to educate themselves on their own religion," he said.

Some of the subjects covered include art, architecture, iconography, painting, history, philosophy, language and literature, public spirituality, sciences, social institutions and spiritual disciplines.

Sahel Magarwal Saravall, president of Divine Media Foundation and managing editor of the encyclopedia, said the endeavor, for the encyclopedia, will be a deep and comprehensive living cultural part of India's quest for spiritual unity.

"The values of our Indian spiritual traditions, incorporated within the religious history in Hinduism" offer some of the deepest and

most spiritually applicable insights, truths and teachings. Unfortunately, these tend to be marginalized in the West. The Encyclopedia of Hinduism brings together in a format comprehensive and accessible to people of all cultures, all religions and all walks of life, the depth and breadth of this ancient yet timeless heritage," he said.

The encyclopedia, also called the "Project of the third millennium," began in 1987 under the leadership of Swami Chakraborty Saravall. The office for the project was located at the University of South Carolina.

Ed French, a University of South Carolina distinguished professor emeritus of religious studies, has served as executive editor of the encyclopedia since its inception. "It has been a wonderful undertaking," French said. "The Encyclopedia of Hinduism is a reference work for the future and today, reflecting the very best of India and Western scholarship."

French has among nearly 1,000 scholars from India, the United States and Europe who wrote, edited and compiled the encyclopedia, which presents the first worldwide and objective presentation of the practices that is Indian culture.

In one word, the encyclopedia summarizes more than 7,000 articles that span Indian history, civilization, language and philosophy, architecture, art, music and dance; medicine, education and social institutions; and religion, spirituality and the role of Hindu women. Additionally, more than 1,000 color illustrations and photographs bring the Hindu traditions and culture alive for readers.

Dr. Meera Narasimhan, Vice Dean of Graduate Studies, College of Medicine at University of South Carolina School of Medicine has led efforts regarding the launch and the completion.

"The Encyclopedia of Hinduism," a comprehensive compilation of the spiritual and cultural heritage of India, provides a rich tapestry of Hinduism in the global context, a great gift to mankind," Narasimhan said. "It is an honor for the University of South Carolina to have served as a part of Indian learning for this monumental project. I am thrilled to be associated with the launch of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism both as an Indian American and a Christian."

While the Encyclopedia of Hinduism is the culmination of one project, its launch is the beginning of another. Board Chair, Secretary of publisher of Insight Editions, Meera Narasimhan said the aim was to present the comprehensive structure of Hinduism as a total life experience covering not only textual material and oral traditions but the whole spectrum of Hinduism, including its regional forms and variations of Hindu spirituality. The University of South Carolina and Government College of Arts and Sciences through a letter of Fall and Spring terms.

Launched by the College of Arts and Sciences, Worldview Institute, Columbia Area Hindus and community understanding of India's growing importance in the world's largest democracy and a rising global economy, in addition to creating jobs, the special "Hinduism for America" presentation of India will feature film festivals, lectures, concerts and exhibits, and theme weekends, a collaboration of Carolina project.

ft freetimes

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News

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USC & HIGHER EDUCATION

Encyclopedia of Hinduism Is Definitive Work on the Topic

USC Hosts Conference for Launch

By Rodney Welch
Wednesday, August 21, 2013 | 8 Comments

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The international edition of the 11-volume Encyclopedia of Hinduism will be launched Aug. 26 at the University of South Carolina, concluding a 25-year project to create a definitive resource on one of the world's great religions.

A daylong conference linked to the launch will bring together 200 to 300 Indian visitors and scholars from around the world.

The encyclopedia, with contributions from over a thousand scholars and experts, covers 12 subject areas, including art, history, politics, philosophy, the sciences and women's studies.

The Dalai Lama launched the Indian edition of the encyclopedia in 2010.

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, president of Divine Shakti Foundation and managing editor of the encyclopedia, said the project came about in 1987 partly as a result of Western influences on Hindu families who moved to America.

"That time was really the beginning of this huge population of professionals and experts in a variety of fields coming from India to America," she says.

The founder and guide of the project, Swami Chidanand Saraswati (no relation), who is president of Parmarth Niketan Ashram in the Himalayan city of Rishikesh, came to America in 1980 as the spiritual head of a new temple under construction on the outskirts of Pittsburgh, Pa.

He soon discovered that Indian children educated in America were questioning their own religious heritage.

"In Indian society, most young people don't ask questions," says Sadhvi Bhagawati, who was born the daughter of a Jewish family in Los Angeles. "It's considered sort of rude for kids to question their elders."

By contrast, Indian children in American schools would come home asking about their traditions, and parents wouldn't always know the answers.

Misunderstandings were common. Hindu children might learn at school that they were part of a polytheistic tradition, where adherents worshipped many gods and goddesses.

Not so, Sadhvi Bhagawati says; Hindus believe in and worship only God — who can be manifested in different forms.

It's a key point underscored by Meera Narasimhan, professor and chairman of neuropsychiatry and vice dean at USC School of Medicine, who is helping to organize the Monday conference.

"Hinduism permits worship of multiple God forms, endowed with different looks, powers, but in reality, represents the One God," she says.

Also, Sadhvi Bhagawati says, people think "the caste system is somehow an inherent part of the Hindu tradition, and it's not." While Hindu scripture does describe a structured society where people play different roles, "there is nothing hereditary and nothing hierarchical about it."

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pdf of the article.

With the idea of an encyclopedia in place, Swami Chidanand Saraswati appointed a scholar, K.L.S. Rao, professor emeritus from the University of Virginia, as a chief editor for the academic side of the project.

From there, they travelled the world for the next seven years, meeting and interviewing scholars who would help bring the project to fruition. Along the way, they requested academic assistance from the religious studies department at USC, which not only provided the academic infrastructure but also offices, library services, other facilities, and housing to register and writing scholars, according to Narasimhan.

Hal French, USC's distinguished professor emeritus of religious studies, served as associate editor of the encyclopedia.

The encyclopedia proved unique in another way: It's not just about a religion, but a country. Both a geographically limited, Sadhvi Bhagawati says, considering that Hinduism is not only India's dominant religion but the essence of other religions such as Jainism, Sikhism and Buddhism.

The early editorial challenges were enormous. The Internet was yet to be born, computers were not in common use among many people, and the authors were most definitely old school.

They weren't garden-variety comparative religion majors. They were advanced scholars steeped in centuries-old tradition, who hand-wrote articles in their regional languages — ranging from Bengali to Tamil to Sanskrit — which had to be translated into proper English.

"What we wanted," Sadhvi Bhagawati says, "was the actual authentic wisdom from the people who were able to read it and understand it in its primary language at its source, not people who had claimed knowledge based on what someone else had translated in someone else's commentary. So that added a lot of challenges; a lot of years."

That doesn't even begin to account for the many arguments over finer points of interpretation. Articles went through endless revisions between scholars in the hope that everyone would finally agree. They finally had to settle for a majority of agreement.

The result, she says, tackles the complexities of the Hindu tradition but is also approachable by general readers.

"India has over a billion people," she says. "We're talking about more than a seventh of the world's population." Regardless of the topic, "you no longer can ignore the Indian and Hindu tradition. So our goal is to have this be a tradition that is understood by everybody."

A searchable online edition of the encyclopedia is also under preparation.

All proceeds from the encyclopedia will go to a charitable organization devoted to cleaning up the rivers of India. The Monday launch will also signal the beginning of Carakedia, a celebration of India that will continue through next year and will sponsor speakers, concerts, exhibits and a film festival at the Nickelodeon.

The conference for the launch of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism will be held Monday, Aug. 26, at the University of South Carolina's Capstone House, from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. This event is free and open to the public.

LIFE EVENTS AND PHOTOS: CHRONICLE/PHOTO BY WELCH

AP Photo/Anand Gopal

25 Years in Making, Hindu Encyclopedia Is Complete

COLUMBIA, S.C. August 24, 2013 (AP)

By SUSANNE H. SCHAFER Associated Press



A comprehensive encyclopedia of one of the world's major religions is set to be unveiled next week in South Carolina. The 11-volume work covers Hindu spiritual beliefs, practices and philosophy, and is the culmination of a 25-year academic effort.

The encyclopedia is written in English and includes about 7,000 articles on Hinduism and its practices. The work also deals with Indian history, languages, art, music, dance, architecture, medicine, and women's issues. The entire encyclopedia contains more than 1,000 illustrations and photographs.

Brightly colored images of Hinduism's deities fill entire pages, with foot-noted explanations of the forms and powers God can take in the religion.

"The goal was to have something pretty definitive — not just about Hinduism, but about the whole South Asian tradition," said University of South Carolina professor Hal French, who met with a small group of scholars in 1997 to offer academic support for the project.

"This hadn't really been attempted before," said French, 83, a distinguished professor emeritus of religious studies at the school and an associate editor. "It is a milestone of research that brought together both Eastern and Western scholarship."

French, who specializes in the religions of Asia and served as an associate editor of the encyclopedia, said a primary inspiration for the work is one of India's most revered spiritual leaders, Swami Chidanand Saraswati, who is coming to the USC conference that will celebrate the work's launch.

Swami Chidanand founded the India Heritage Research Foundation, which became the parent organization behind the encyclopedia effort. He is president of the Parmarth Niketan Ashram, spiritual retreat in Rishikesh, India, and travels to visit with Hindu followers in the United States several times a year.

The encyclopedia's volumes run from 600 to more than 700 pages. Some 3,000 copies are being issued in the first printing and will be of interest to libraries, religious institutions, and those studying Indian culture around the world, French said.

Hinduism is the world's third-largest religion, with 1 billion followers, according to a Pew Research Center study published this year. Christians number 2.2 billion and Muslims 1.6 billion, the study showed.

Hinduism's basic teaching is that the soul never dies, but is reborn each time the body dies. The soul may be reborn in human or animal form. The cycle of death and rebirth continues until a soul reaches spiritual perfection, and is united in total enlightenment and peace with the supreme being.

Many Hindus who settled around the world have found that they need a comprehensive source of information on the religion for their children, said Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, managing editor of the encyclopedia and a secretary of the India Heritage Research Foundation.

Children came home from schools where a teacher may have discussed whether Hinduism is a belief in one god, or many gods, and need the proper background to explain it, Sadhvi Bhagawati said in a telephone interview.

"They wanted a source to go to so they could pass the correct information to their children," she said.

She explained that the encyclopedia project took more than 20 years because "it began in pre-computer days."

"If we started today, it might just have taken a few years," said Sadhvi Bhagawati, who describes herself a disciple of Swami Chidanand.

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25 years in making, Encyclopedia of Hinduism unveiled in US



August 27, 2013: A 25-year quest by nearly 1,000 scholars to document and present one of the world's oldest living traditions came to fruition when the 'Encyclopedia of Hinduism' was unveiled in US on Tuesday.

Hundreds of scholars, dignitaries, students, Hindu leaders and the public converged on the University of Southern California campus to witness the release of much anticipated and definitive 11-volume guide conceived, compiled and produced by the India Heritage Research Foundation.

Those present on the occasion included South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, Indian Consul General in Atlanta Ajit Kumar and Gandhian Anna Hazare. The two-day event coinciding with the release featured some of the top Indian scholars who discussed the significance of the encyclopedia and the richness and diversity of Indian culture that binds more than one billion people worldwide.

The event is the launch of the international edition of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism. Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama had launched the Indian edition in 2010 in Rishikesh. The comprehensive encyclopedia has 11-volume work and it covers Hindu spiritual beliefs, practices and philosophy, and is the culmination of a 25-year academic effort. The encyclopedia is written in English and includes about 7,000 articles on Hinduism and its practices.
(Source: PTI)

BBC



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MURALI BALAJI Hindu American Foundation's Director of Education and Curriculum Reform

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An Encyclopedia of Hinduism? Just One More Step in Understanding and Preserving the Religion's Legacy

Posted: 09/02/2013 3:31 pm

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This week, the University of South Carolina hosted a conference celebrating the launch of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism. To be sure, it's more than just an encyclopedia -- it's an effort to tell the life story of the world's oldest active major religion.

In an age where we can "wiki" just about anything, an encyclopedia of this magnitude might seem dated, but in reality, that's far from the truth. That's because many Hindus in the United States, especially second, third, and fourth generation Americans, need a resource such as this to understand the diverse and expansive nature of the religion. Heck, 11 volumes might not even come close to covering all the intricacies of a religion that has evolved over 5,000+ years. This is an important step in preserving the philosophies and practices of Hinduism that meets both community needs and academic standards.

Hal French, a longtime professor of religion at the University of South Carolina and an associate editor of the project, emphasized the diversity of voices incorporated in the project. He noted that the India Heritage Research Foundation, which compiled the encyclopedia, welcomed different perspectives and did not limit its focus to Hinduism. Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism and even Abrahamic religions are given space in the encyclopedia.

"Hinduism has been a fertile seedbed from which many ideas have emanated," French said, referring to the rise of traditions such as Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism. "I think that's true of India as a whole."

What makes the Encyclopedia even more significant is that it combines both Eastern and Western scholarly perspectives, an important step in reconciling some of the long-held tensions between the two.

"They've recognized the validity of insider and outsider voices," he said. "It's an interfaith effort."

But this reconciliation among academics is only part of the story. The larger issue is how the encyclopedia is part of an ongoing effort to articulate the religion to those outside of temples and ashrams.

The problem for many Hindus is that the narrative of the religion has been in the hands of others for centuries. Since 19th century Orientalist Max Muller's depiction of Hinduism and its subsequent acceptance within academia, scholars in Europe and the United States whose views challenge such assumptions face an uphill battle in trying to get their views accepted. Just as significantly, there has at times been an acknowledgement by scholars that undermining Hinduism and Indian history was in the best interests of maintaining a Eurocentric narrative of world history, namely the lionization of civilizations such as the Greeks and the Romans. As the late American art historian Thomas McEvilley noted, "Through such chronological manipulations, the threat that the Indian past presents to the Greek miracle is defused by chronology."

It also has not helped that many Hindu Americans, particularly those educated in the post-colonial era in countries such as India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Guyana, to name just a few, have largely accepted the frameworks of religion imposed upon them by others. As a result, Hinduism has been oversimplified, distorted, and reduced to talking points -- caste, curry, cows and karma as many like to call it -- among even its adherents. It's hard to change people's perceptions of Hinduism when the reductionist version of the religion has been accepted at face value.

Of course, there have been numerous attempts by Hindu groups and individual Hindu Americans to challenge the narrative and try to assert agency in articulating the religion, but some of these attempts have become politicized, dismissed as reactionary, poorly organized, or seen as fighting rationality and scientific evidence with emotion. The dismissive responses from scholars who embrace Eurocentric models of Hinduism are often based upon the (false) premise that the religion can only be studied objectively by those outside of it. However, some attempts to challenge inaccurate and downright racist frameworks of Hinduism have been successful, such as when a group of Hindu American parents worked with the public schools in Fairfax County, Va., to develop a supplemental packet to counter distortions in textbooks. The packet was the culmination of a collaborative effort among parents, the Fairfax County school board and several noted academics in the region. That's why an academic effort to reassert the voice of Hindus on the meanings and significance of the religion is both welcome and long overdue.

While the Encyclopedia of Hinduism's publication should be celebrated, it's just one more step in the long journey of Hinduism into the core of the American public sphere.

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The Wall Street Journal

Tuesday, September 3, 2013 6:24:35 GMT
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September 3, 2013 9:57 AM

Q&A: The Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Article Comments

By Tripti Lahiri

Vyasa
Hinduism is in consistency with right action or dharma.
Vyasa's include gambling, anti-social actions and addiction to drugs, tobacco and other harmful things. According to Mahatma, vyasa's are produced by passion and anger. There are ten vyasa's...



The entry for 'Vyasa' in the encyclopedia

Hinduism is famous for being a religion full of concepts that are difficult to pin down, largely because the religion doesn't have a single authoritative text but many different scriptures and streams of belief.

That may be why it took a collection of Hindu scholars and spiritual leaders a quarter-century to create a new illustrated encyclopedia of Hinduism. The encyclopedia was a project of the [India Heritage Research Foundation](#), a nonprofit founded by an Indian spiritual leader who is based in the northern Indian town of Rishikesh.

The full U.S. edition, which was unveiled at the University of South Carolina last week, runs to 11 volumes and some 7,000 pages. The event was [attended](#) by an eclectic group of people that included Hindu holy men and women, anticorruption activist Anna Hazare and South Carolina governor Nikki Haley, who is of Indian origin.

While there have been other efforts to catalogue and define Hinduism, this project's managing editor, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, argues that their encyclopedia is one of the most comprehensive guides to a religion practiced by hundreds of millions of people.

"There's not a paragraph that I can see us cutting and still being able to say it includes everything," said Sadhvi Bhagawati, an American who visited India during her graduate studies in psychology and converted to Hinduism as a result, adopting a new name along the way.

The encyclopedia is massive because it attempts to categorize multiple aspects of Hindu civilization, including the spheres of art, culture, music, dance, philosophy and medicine, she said.

The Wall Street Journal spoke to Sadhvi Bhagawati, who lives in an ashram in Rishikesh, and who is a disciple of the guru who conceived of the encyclopedia project. The term "sadhvi" refers to a woman who has renounced marriage and committed to a life of prayer and service.

Edited excerpts.

The Wall Street Journal: Why have an encyclopedia of Hinduism?

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati: There was a lack of authentic sources for answers to the questions that so many of the Indian youth [growing up in America] had. Many Indians moved to the United States in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly young qualified professionals. So their children were being raised in a system that encouraged questions.

They would go home and ask their parents the same kinds of questions they would ask at school and their parents didn't have the answers.

But also India today — more so today but even at that time — has become part of the global scene and people are really interested in all of these sorts of things. People have been really, really fascinated by the land of India.

So this is not an encyclopedia by Hindus for Hindus. It is an encyclopedia of Hinduism for that audience, Hindu and non-Hindu, who have questions and inquiries about this tradition.

WSJ: Why did it take so long?

Sadhvi Bhagawati: The vast majority of articles were hand-written in the native tongue of the scholars, whether that was Hindi, Sanskrit, Bengali, Tamil. In the early 1990s, you couldn't say to these various experts to type. They didn't type. The definitions had to be translated, had to be typeset and then of course we entered rounds of in-depth substance editing.

By the early 2000s the work had come to a place where we had most of the articles back from the scholars and we were getting to a phase of editing and finalization.

The last 10 years of the project you can say were headquartered in India. [The original chief editor] had passed away many years ago. Kapil Kapoor had been appointed chief editor — he was rector of Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi. He appointed his own team of associate editors, bringing together scholars from across India and from across the world to review the articles. Every article has been edited eight or 10 times.

brought up and educated. He traveled there throughout the whole country. During this period, he defused scholars in a debate in Vijayanagar and also won laurels in the court of Vijayanagar. He attracted a large number of followers because of his teachings of devotional love towards Lord Krishna, as the visible form of the Brahman, the Ultimate Reality.

The period of Vallabha (1473-1531 C.E.) synchronized with that of Sultan Sikandar Lodi, who held sway over the region watered by the rivers, Yamuna and Ganga. The holy places of Hindu flourished on the banks of these holy rivers. Holy cities like Vrindavan, Mathura, and Varanasi were governed by Lodi's governors, who adopted a tyrannical attitude towards the Hindus. The situation, however, changed after Sultan Ibrahim occupied the throne after the death of his father. He was indifferent to the religious activities of the Hindus. During his period, the Vraja region enjoyed peace. Vallabha asked his followers to complete the building of a temple of Sri Natha at Nathadwara in Udaipur, which became the center of the devotional activities of the Vallabha sect. Vallabha based his teaching on the philosophy of love between Kishna and Krishna.

Courtesy India Heritage Research Foundation

An illustration accompanying the entry under "Vallabha Sect." Vallabha is described in the encyclopedia as a celebrated saint who was born in the 15th century.

WSJ: What sources did you draw on? Were they written or oral?

Sadhvi Bhagawati: To us what was most important was that the authors be people not just who had got a master's at this or that university but people who could give information from primary sources.

We weren't looking for people who could pick up a whole bunch of secondary or tertiary sources and combine them. We were looking for articles from people who were themselves steeped in the wisdom of primary sources. These were people who were reading scripture, philosophy, treatises.

I would say the source matter is in almost every case things that have been written down. We are now at a period in history where the vast majority of that which had been oral has now been transcribed. Even though many of the scholars may have received knowledge orally, it had also been written down.

What was really important was that this be a project that has impeccable scholastic and academic integrity. There's no article that's going to say, "I know this because my grandfather passed it down." Every article has a bibliography.

We now really have a source that is authentic, that is comprehensive that is unbiased and that is agreed upon by more than 1,000 of the top scholars around the world.

WSJ: How did you reconcile different understandings of concepts in Hinduism?

Sadhvi Bhagawati: There was nothing where we had to concede and say, "Okay leave that as it is." We weren't prepared to. If the scholars we've chosen are all experts there must somewhere be a meeting point.

You tend to have more competing views among followers [who are not familiar with primary sources]. Then you have religion and dogma being like a game of telephone and as it gets passed along, it changes.

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That said, there are so many different ways of looking at things when you're translating an original text. When you're translating Sanskrit, which is such a rich, rich language, people will say 'That could mean that, or it could mean this.'

And this particular transition isn't necessarily in conflict with that translation. The original writer maybe actually meant all of these things. When you're looking at aspects of philosophy particularly ... that's going to have a variety of different views.

A definition for something as short and fundamental as the Bhagavad Gita is going to be completely different from a saint who's steeped in the [Ishavasya tradition](#), versus steeped in the [Yajurveda tradition](#). We weren't about choosing one over the other.

WSJ: Were you able to draw on sources of Hinduism from different countries?

Sadhvi Bhagawati: There are many, many articles on Hinduism in the diaspora as well as Hinduism in different countries and regions across the world. There are articles, for example, on Hinduism in the Caribbean compared to Indonesia compared to in the Philippines.

WSJ: Is there going to be an online version?

Sadhvi Bhagawati: Absolutely. There's two different ways to go about the online version — we may actually end up doing both of them.

The first way is the easier — what you do is take that which has already been prepared and simply make it available online in a wiki type of system.

But then there's another way of doing it in a much more interactive, multimedia way.

In the encyclopedia, in an article on the [the elephant-headed god] Ganesh, let's say you'd have an article on Ganesh and you'd have an image or two images. But once you go online, with what multimedia can do these days, as you roll the mouse over different parts of Ganeshji, you'd have text pop up saying 'Here's what the broken tusk means, here's what the belly symbolizes.'

WSJ: How do you see people accessing the encyclopedia?

Sadhvi Bhagawati: I see it getting disseminated in a couple of different ways. It should be in every library, in every institution. I also see it being something that every Hindu family or every family interested in Hinduism or multiculturalism would have.

Here are brief extracts from some of terms defined in the encyclopedia (in each of the following cases the explanations run to multiple pages). They have not been altered except to drop special characters that could not be reproduced.

Ahimsa

literally, non-violence or non-injury to living beings.

The first reference to ahimsa (non-violence) is found in *Acarangasutra*, a Jain text, dating from the 4th century B.C.E. Buddhist texts from the 3rd century B.C.E. also explicate the principle of non-injury. *Acarangasutra* states that all beings desire to live, and outlines the practice of not harming any person, animal, plant, or the microscopic beings found in water, fire and air. To facilitate ahimsa, Jains adopt the practices of sweeping the area where one sits, sleeps and walks to protect small life forms from potential harm, and wearing a face mask to prevent the inhalation of small creatures and to soften the force of air exhaled from the body.

The adherence to vows of Ahimsa affects every aspect of Jain life. Jains choose professions that minimize violence such as law, manufacturing, publishing and trading in goods, art and textiles (except silk). Until the last few decades, due to prohibitions against distant travel, all Jains lived in India. However, tens of thousands of Jains now live in North America and Europe, applying their philosophy of non-violence to modern lifestyle.

Aum

the sacred sound-symbol of Brahman, the Supreme Being.

This monosyllable is understood to be the source of all sound and speech. Aum permeates all words, like ribs permeate a leaf, according to Chandogya Upanisad (II.23.3). Since all objects are nameable, all objects are aum. Before reciting Vedas or names of gods and goddesses in worship, aum should be uttered. Taittiriya Upanisad describes aum as *anumati* (permission). Traditionally, aum and *atha* were uttered by Brahm, the Creator, and are considered to be the most auspicious. Apastamba wrote that the syllable aum is the gateway to paradise.

Moksa

liberation from the worldly bondage of birth and death.

Hindu sages have envisaged *purushartha catustaya* (four-fold goals of human life), which are — *dharma* (duties for social sustenance and individual good), *artha* (means of maintenance and prosperity), *kama* (enjoyment within moral premises), and *moksa* (liberation from the transient and attainment of the eternal). Out of these, moksa, liberation from the pains and sufferings of life and also from the bondage of the vicious cycle of birth and death, has been evaluated as the supreme goal of every human being and the ultimate destiny of all living beings whatsoever.

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India Abroad

INDEX

Letters to the Editor	A2
People	A2
Immigration	A28
Business	A24
Community	A33
Magazine	M1
Sports	A32

Pages: 40+12+6+88

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World | India

US varsity to launch encyclopaedia of Hinduism

Encompassing more than 7,000 articles, the encyclopaedia also covers Indian history, civilisation, language and philosophy

IANIS
Published: 16:08 August 25, 2013 **GULF NEWS**

     5

Washington: An 11-volume Encyclopaedia of Hinduism, outlining the beliefs and traditions of one of the world's major religions, is set to be unveiled at a conference of Indian scholars at the University of South Carolina (USC) on Monday.

Culmination of a 25-year academic effort, the definitive guide is conceived, compiled and produced by the India Heritage Research Foundation and published by Mandala Publishing, according to the university.

Encompassing more than 7,000 articles, the encyclopaedia also covers Indian history, civilisation, language and philosophy; architecture, art, music and dance; medicine, sciences and social institutions; and religion, spirituality and the role of Hindu women.

Additionally, more than 1,000 colour illustrations and photographs bring the Hindu traditions and culture alive for readers.

"It has been an ambitious undertaking," said French Hal French, a USC distinguished professor emeritus of religious and associate editor of the encyclopedia.

"The Encyclopaedia of Hinduism is a milestone in research for this culture and religion, reflecting the very best in India and Western scholarship."

French was among nearly 1,000 scholars from India, the US and Europe who wrote, edited and compiled the encyclopaedia, which provides the first standardised and objective presentation of the panorama that is Indian culture.

On Monday's event marks the launch of the international edition of the encyclopaedia. Dalai Lama launched its Indian edition in April 2010 in Rishikesh, India.

The daylong launch conference will feature some of most prominent Indian scholars, who will discuss the significance of the encyclopaedia and the richness and diversity of Indian culture that binds more than one billion people worldwide.

Among the speakers will be Indian social activist Anna Hazare and Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, president of Parmarth Niketan Ashram in India and founder of the India Heritage Research Foundation.

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, president of Divine Shakti Foundation and managing editor of the encyclopedia, said the conference, like the encyclopaedia, aims to deepen a conversation among cultures as part of India's quest for spiritual unity.

At Monday's launch event, the university will announce another India project called "CarolIndia", a celebration of India through a series of fall and spring events.

Led by the College of Arts and Sciences' Walker Institute, CarolIndia aims at elevating campus and community understanding of India's growing importance as the world's largest democracy and a rising global economy, the university said.

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Encyclopedia of Hinduism released in South Carolina University

Swami Chidanand's initiative results in historic scholastic achievement

By OUR STAFF REPORTER

DEHRADUN, 26 Aug: On 25 and 26 August, the official launch took place of the international edition of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism. The launch ceremony was organised and hosted by the University of South Carolina, Columbia, USA. A project of India Heritage Research Foundation, founded and led by Swami Chidanand Saraswati, the Encyclopedia of Hinduism is a colossal product of more than 1000 esteemed scholars from around the world, totaling 11 volumes and approximately 7000 entries. The Encyclopedia has been nearly twenty-five years in the making and it is the first time in history that the depth and breadth of India's great spiritual culture is made available in authentic, academic and scholarly form.

It is truly a conglomeration of thousands of years of history, science, art, architecture, polity, religion, philosophy and culture. Further, the Encyclopedia is not limited to Hinduism as a religion, but rather provides an inclusive treatment of India's spiritual culture (including coverage of Sikhism, Jainism and Buddhist traditions in India).



The official launch of the international edition, published by Heart's Earth Publications of California, USA, was held at the University of South Carolina. It was organised, hosted and sponsored by the University and provided spear by Dr Harris Pastides, the President of the University.

The Encyclopedia project was headquartered at the University of South Carolina for many years during its completion and editorial stages, and it was fitting full-circle for the University to be the site to

host the official launch.

Present at the launch were Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Founder/Chairman of India Heritage Research Foundation, Nikki Haley, Governor of South Carolina, Dr Harris Pastides, President of the University of South Carolina, Anna Hazzara, social activist, Jon Wilson, Congressman for South Carolina, Ajit Kumar, Consul General to India, Dr Sadvi Bhagawati Saraswati, Managing Editor of the Encyclopedia as well as many other esteemed scholars and dignitaries.

Swami Chidanand Saraswati said, "The wisdom, truths, teachings and insights of Indian and Hindu culture are not limited to or explainable to only Hindu or Indians. Rather

they belong to the world and can deeply benefit the world. It is, therefore, our aim that the richness of this ancient yet timeless culture and heritage should be made available to the entire world, in a way that is authentic, academic, comprehensive and fascinating."

Dr Harris Pastides said: "It is a deep honour to be participating in the American release of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism. This is a remarkable work of scholarship and research. I hope the many in academia and in everyday life will turn to it as a resource to better understand the character, the tenets, and the impact that Hinduism has had, and is having, in the world."

Anna Hazzara said: Swami Chidanand is carrying our

Indian culture to the entire world. This is a history event here tonight. Spreading the teachings of our great tradition is a wonderful task. Swami Chidanand presented the first official set to the Governor of the State of South Carolina, for the State's Library, Governor Nikki Haley. "It is so beautiful, and such a great gift, this Encyclopedia of Hinduism. I am so honored to receive these beautiful 11 volumes on behalf of the State."

Sadvi Bhagawati Saraswati said: "This is a great moment in history. The depth and breadth of the world's oldest living culture, civilization, philosophy and theology has finally been encapsulated in encyclopedic form. To have the international edition launched by the University of South Carolina in USA demonstrates the universal applicability and universal appeal of the Hindu tradition."

The Encyclopedia was produced and blessed at a huge ceremony in India by the Dalai Lama and hundreds of India's most revered spiritual, social and national leaders.

Swami Chidanand is also the president and spiritual head of one of India's largest spiritual institutions, Paramarth Niketan Ashram in Rishikesh. He is also the founder of the Ganga Action Parishad, a world-wide network of people committed to serving, preserving and protecting the sacred and life-giving Ganga.

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US University launches year-long celebration of India

IANS | Aug 27, 2013, 08.04 PM IST

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President of University of South Carolina Harris Pastides, Anna Hazare and Swami Chidanand Saraswati light the traditional lamp at the launch of the year-long CarolIndia celebrations in Columbia on Monday. (PTI Photo)

WASHINGTON: The University of South Carolina launched year-long, a year-long celebration of India, as it unveiled the international edition of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism at a conference on one of the world's oldest major religions.

Hundreds of Hindu families travelled to Columbia in South Carolina, to watch Indian social activist Anna Hazare, Hindu spiritual leader Swami Chidanand Saraswati and university President Harris Pastides unveil the 11-volume encyclopedia Monday.

Culmination of a 25-year academic effort, the definitive guide is conceived, compiled and produced by the India Heritage Research Foundation and published by Mandala Publishing, according to the university.

"This is a remarkable work of scholarship and research. I hope that many in academia and in everyday life will turn to it as a resource to better understand the characters, the tenets and the impact that Hinduism has had, and is having in the world," said Pastides.

Hal French, professor emeritus of religious studies, who served as associate editor of the encyclopedia since its inception in 1987, called the 25-year quest to document Hinduism a privilege.

The conference also marked the beginning of Carol India, a year-long celebration of India as part of the university' expanding internationalization programme that would focus on a single country every year.

Robert Cox, director of the university's Walker Institute for International and Area Studies, said the university chose India for its first year because of the university's and state's increasing ties with the country and for its importance as the world's largest democracy and rising economic power.

Cox said his greatest hope is that university students come to think of India as familiar place, not an exotic one.

Carol India will feature film festival, lectures, concerts and exhibits. Among the many visitors to campus will be filmmaker Mira Nair. Students also will have the opportunity to engage with faculty with Indian research and teaching interests.

More than 1,000 scholars have contributed to the seminal work documenting one of the world's oldest living traditions.

Encompassing more than 7,000 articles with over 1,000 colour illustrations and photographs, the encyclopedia also covers Indian history, civilization, language and philosophy; architecture, art, music and dance; medicine, sciences and social institutions; and religion, spirituality and the role of Hindu women.

The Dalai Lama introduced the Indian edition in April 2010 in Rishikesh, India.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism unveiled in US after 25-year quest

COLUMBIA (US) A 25-year quest by nearly 1,000 scholars to document and present one of the world's oldest living traditions came to fruition when the 'Encyclopedia of Hinduism' was unveiled at the University of Southern California on Tuesday.

Hundreds of scholars, dignitaries, students, Hindu leaders and the public converged on the university campus to witness the release of much anticipated and definitive 11-volume guide conceived, compiled and produced by the India Heritage Research Foundation. South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, Indian Consul General in Atlanta Ajit Kumar and Gandhian Anna Hazare were present.

The two-day event coinciding with the release featured some of the top Indian scholars who discussed the significance of the encyclopedia and the richness and diversity of Indian culture that binds more than one billion people worldwide.

The event is the launch of the international edition of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism. Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama had launched the Indian edition in 2010 in Rishikesh.

Dr Harris Pastides, President of University of South Carolina, said that he was humbled to see the encyclopedia being launched in his campus. "It is a deep honour to be participating in the American release of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism. This is a remarkable work of scholarship and research. I hope that many in academia and in everyday life will turn to it as a resource to better understand the characters, the tenets, and the impact that Hinduism has had, and is having in the world," he said.

Consul General Kumar said India and Hindus all over the world are grateful to the University of South Carolina for the launch of the monumental work.

The comprehensive encyclopedia has 11-volume work and it covers Hindu spiritual beliefs, practices and philosophy, and is the culmination of a 25-year academic effort. The encyclopedia is written in English and includes about 7,000 articles on Hinduism and its practices.

The work also deals with Indian history, languages, art, music, dance, architecture, medicine, and women's issues. It contains more than 1,000 illustrations and photographs.

The encyclopedia's volumes run from 600 to more than 700 pages. Some 3,000 copies are being printed in first edition. Hinduism is the world's third-largest religion, with 1 billion followers, according to a Pew Research Center study. Christians number 2.2 billion and Muslims 1.6 billion.

Press Trust of India

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

25 years in making, Hindu encyclopedia is complete

AP Wire Staff, 11/11/2004 EDT



(The 11-volume work covers...)

COLUMBIA: A comprehensive encyclopedia of one of the world's major religions is set to be unveiled next week in the US. The 11-volume work covers Hindu spiritual beliefs, practices and philosophy, and is the culmination of a 25-year academic effort.

The encyclopedia is written in English and includes about 7,000 articles on (Hinduism and its practices. The work also deals with Indian history, languages, art, music, dance, architecture, medicine, and women's issues. The entire encyclopedia contains more than 1,000 illustrations and photographs. Brightly colored images of Hindu deities' deities fill entire pages, with foot-noted explanations of the forms and powers God can take in the religion. "The goal was to have something pretty definitive ... not just about Hinduism, but about the whole South Asian tradition," said University of South Carolina professor Hal French, who met with a small group of scholars in 1987 to offer academic support for the project.

"This hadn't really been attempted before," said French, 53, a distinguished professor emeritus of religious studies at the school and an associate editor. "It is a milestone of research that brought together both Eastern and Western scholars." French, who specializes in the religions of Asia and serves as an associate editor of the encyclopedia, said a primary inspiration for the work is one of India's most revered spiritual leaders, Swami Chidanand Saraswati, who is coming to the University of South Carolina conference that will celebrate the work's launch.

Swami Chidanand founded the India Heritage Research Foundation, which became the parent organization behind the encyclopedia effort. He is president of the Paramarth Niketan Ashram spiritual retreat in Rishikesh, India, and travels to visit with Hindu followers in the United States several times a year. The encyclopedia's volumes run from 500 to more than 700 pages. Some 3,000 copies are being issued in the first printing and will be of interest to libraries, religious institutions, and those studying Indian culture around the world, French said. Hinduism is the world's third-largest religion, with 1 billion followers, according to a Edy Research study published this year. Christians number 2.2 billion and Muslims 1.8 billion, the study showed.

Hinduism's basic teaching is that the soul never dies, but is reborn each time the body dies. The soul may be reborn in human or animal form. The cycle of death and rebirth continues

until a soul reaches spiritual perfection, and is united in total enlightenment and peace with the supreme being.

Many Hindus who settled around the world have found that they need a comprehensive source of information on the religion for their children, said Sadhvi Bhagwati Saraswati, managing editor of the encyclopedia and a secretary of the India Heritage Research Foundation. Children come home from schools where a teacher may have discussed whether Hinduism is a belief in one god, or many gods, and need the proper background to explain it, Sadhvi Bhagwati said in a telephone interview.

"They wanted a source to go to so they could pass the correct information to their children," she said. She explained that the encyclopedia project took more than 20 years because "it began in pre-computer days." "If we started today, it might just have taken a few years," said Sadhvi Bhagwati, who describes herself a disciple of Swami Chidanand.

Sadhvi Bhagwati said some of the experts who contributed to the encyclopedia wrote their articles by hand in the script of their original languages. She said they included authors who wrote in Tamil - spoken in southern India, Sri Lanka and Singapore - or Bengali - spoken in other regions of India and Bangladesh.

The articles had to be typed and translated, and translators into English had to be checked again. "Each article ended up being edited eight to 10 times," Sadhvi Bhagwati said. Dr. Madra Narasimhan, vice dean of the USC School of Medicine and chairman of the department of neuropsychiatry, said she met Swami Chidanand several years ago, learned about his and USC's involvement in the project, and has been working to support it ever since. "I regard this as a legacy that will be left behind for generations to come," she said, studying the first set of volumes to arrive at the university on Wednesday. They are to be donated to the university's library system.

The physician is a specialist in mind-body connections, and she spearheaded the organization of Monday's conference. A native of Bangalore, India, Narasimhan began her medical studies there, went to Yale University for her residency and fellowship, and has been at USC since 2004.

"This brings together my Indian heritage, my work as a physician in America and as a Genevook," Narasimhan said, using the sports nickname for USC supporters.

Monday's conference is attracting scholars, Hindu religious leaders and those of Indian heritage from around the globe, she said. It is free and open to the public.

"This encyclopedia will have a very wide reader base because it covers such a range of subjects," Narasimhan said.

All proceeds from the encyclopedia are going to a charitable organization dedicated to the environmental cleanup of rivers in India, she said.

World

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WORLD REACTS

Hindu encyclopaedia published

Columbia(South Carolina), Aug. 24: A comprehensive encyclopaedia of one of the world's major religions is set to be unveiled next week in South Carolina.

The 11-volume work covers Hindu spiritual beliefs, practices and philosophy, and is the culmination of a 25-year academic effort. The encyclopaedia is written in English and includes about 7,000 articles on Hinduism and its practice. The work also deals with Indian history, languages, art, music, dance, architecture, medicine, and women's issues.

The encyclopaedia contains more than 1,000 illus-



Dr Meera Narasimhan, vice dean of the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, with the Hindu encyclopaedia. —AP

trations and photographs. Brightly coloured images of Hinduism's deities

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"The goal was to have something pretty definitive — not just about Hinduism, but about the whole South Asian tradition," said University of South Carolina professor Hal French.

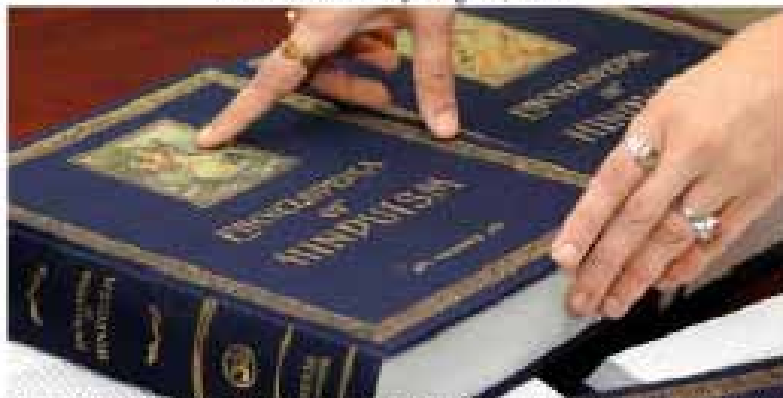
"This hadn't been attempted before," said Mr French, 83, a professor emeritus of religious studies at the school and an associate editor. "It is a milestone of research that brought together both Eastern and Western scholarship." —AP

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Hindu encyclopedia is complete after 25 years

6:14 AM Sunday Aug 25, 2013



The 11-volume work covers Hindu spiritual beliefs, practices and philosophy and includes about 7,000 articles. Photo / AP

A comprehensive encyclopedia of one of the world's major religions is set to be unveiled next week in the U.S. The 11-volume work covers Hindu spiritual beliefs, practices and philosophy, and is the culmination of a 25-year academic effort. The encyclopedia is written in English and includes about 7,000 articles on Hinduism and its practices. The work also deals with Indian history, languages, art, music, dance, architecture, medicine, and women's issues. The entire encyclopedia contains more than 1,000 illustrations and photographs.

Highly colored images of Hinduism's deities fill entire pages, with fact-based explanations of the forms and powers God can take in the religion.

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*Saxena, M. Saxena/ can be reached via Twitter at <http://bit.ly/can/saxenawriting>

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Milestone in research on Hinduism, 25 years in the making

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Encyclopedia of Hinduism unveiled

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25 years in making, Hindu encyclopedia is complete

Published: 2013-08-25 Updated: 2013-08-25

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India

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Guardian

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Hinduism in the Rainbow Land: an affirmative view

Published: Monday 19 November 2012

I read with great interest Raymond Ramcharitar's recent piece in the commentary page of the Guardian titled *Divali in the Creole world* and I am tempted to write my view, not as a reactor, for Raymond's writing is immaculate and I admire his style, but as a complement to where he left off in the intellectual narrative.

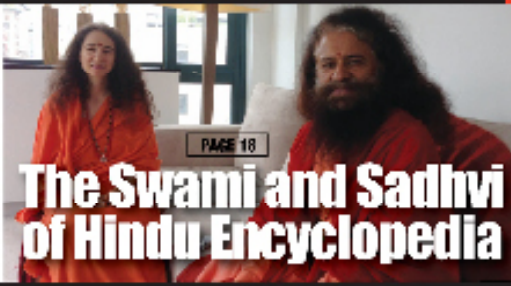
Dhyendu Sinha's Widow Testifies in 2010 Murder and Assault Case **PAGE 10**



Visiting former Army Chief of Staff Gen. V.K. Singh says Indian soldiers are best in the world.

PAGE 18

A General's Assessment



PAGE 18

The Swami and Sadhvi of Hindu Encyclopedia



Rapper's REVOLUTV recruits Queens-born Indian-American video journalist

PAGE 26

Amrit Singh Goes P. Diddy

August 23, 2013
New York, NY
Vol. XVII, No. 34
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11

August 23, 2013

CITY VIEWS

DESI TALK

The Evolution of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism

By SHAMKA CHAKRABARTY

NEW YORK

One of the most unique books on Hinduism this week (over a five-year period) in the making with contributions from well over 1,000 academic scholars from across the world is the Encyclopedia of Hinduism with 11 volumes and approximately 7000 entries. It formally saw the light of the day at a gathering event at Kalyan Seva Mandir (KSM) in Decaturville, IL, on July 17. The Encyclopedia was conceived, inspired and blessed by Swami Chidambaram Saraswati of

was published by India Heritage Research Foundation.

Swamiji and his disciple Sadhvi Bhagwati Saraswati spoke about the book to DesiTalk at an exclusive interview on August 18 in New York City.

The idea of having such an encyclopedia emerged in the 1970s, Sadhvi Saraswati said since Indian parents living in the U.S. were faced with questions from their children about the various beliefs and symbolisms associated



with Hinduism. Swamiji came up with the idea of creating an encyclopedia in a form of a book where answers to questions relating to Hinduism could be found.

It took close to 20 years to identify the appropriate qualified scholars who could write on topics encompassing the width and breadth of the culture and religion.

"We were aware of the uniqueness of the Hindu religion in the fact that it is different from other religions since it can be identified with the culture and tradition of India. It is intertwined with

Indian culture in every aspect," said Sadhvi. "We only going to assume that as the book is written as the original contribution from the scriptures to avoid any personal biases or imperfections," she added noting that every aspect of Indian life has flavors of Hindu philosophy, science and culture intertwined with it.

The publication will be available on Amazon, you can order other non-physical resources as well as in most libraries across the country. Proceeds from the book sale will be used to fund the Ganga and Yamuna River Project as well as conservation of other rivers of India.

Full, International Coverage of the Launch of the International Edition of the Encyclopedia*

Click on the individual links to go to the full, clear, large-size web or pdf of the articles.

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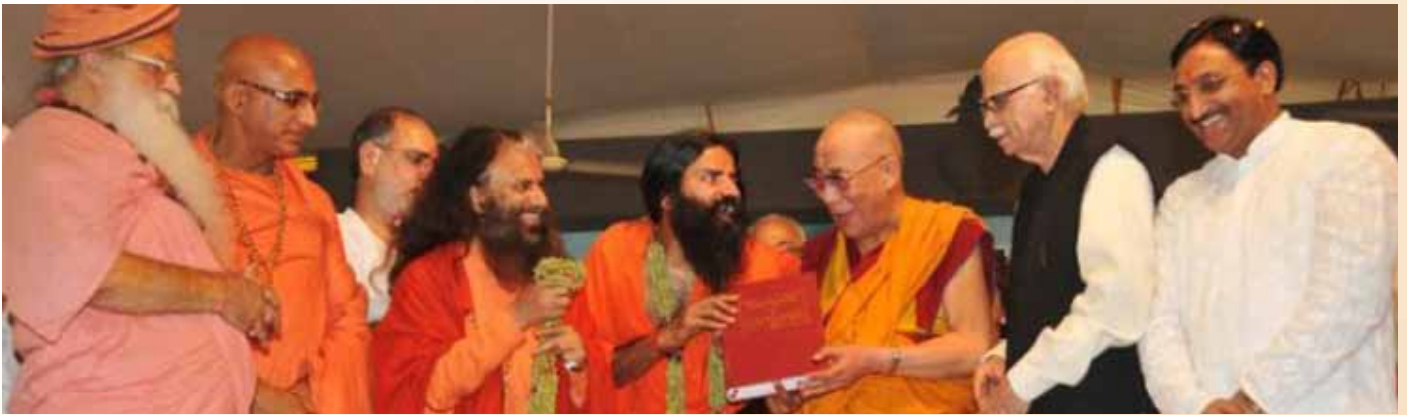
India Tribune, "Encyclopedia on Hinduism launched by Swami Chidanand at MSM," 28th July, 2013

India Post, "Encyclopedia of Hinduism to be launched in Chicago," 25th July, 2013

** Please note - this list is not fully complete. As more news stories come we will add them to this list and to our website.*

Other Important Events of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Preview & Blessings Ceremony, 3rd-4th April 2010



By the grace of God, under the guidance and inspiration of Pujya Swami Chidanandji, we held a special Preview and Blessings Ceremony for the Encyclopedia of Hinduism on the 3rd and 4th April, 2010 by the hands of H.H. the Dalai Lama with Pujya Swami Chidanandji and many other revered saints and dignitaries. ***Click here*** to read a special newsletter covering this event.

Presenting the Encyclopedia of Hinduism to President of India, Smt. Pratibha Patil

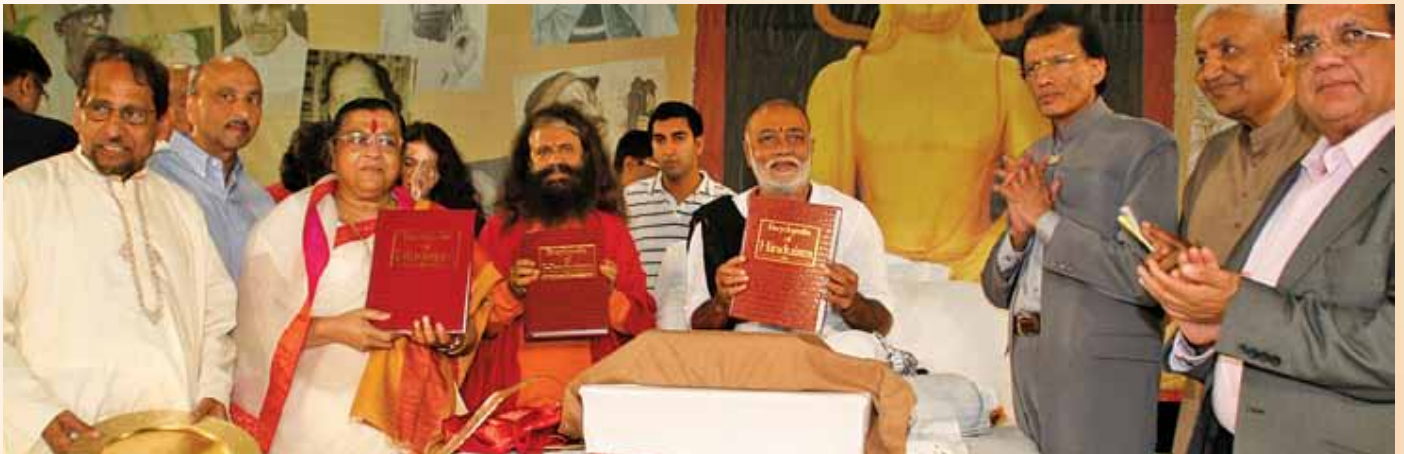


First Volume of Encyclopedia Presented



Prior to going for print, the first volume of the Encyclopedia was presented by the Encyclopedia team to Pujya Swamiji and Pujya Sant Shri Rameshbhai Oza (Bhaishri) during Pujya Bhaishri's katha at Parmarth Niketan Ashram in Rishikesh. Pujya Acharya Balkrishnaji, Pujya Swami Asanganandji and other revered saints were also present.

Preview & Blessings Ceremony, 3rd-4th April 2010



Serendipitously, the first USA preview took place in the same hall of the same center where a special yagna for the Encyclopedia had been performed at the very beginning of the project in 1993. The first three volumes of the Encyclopedia were previewed and blessed in New Jersey, USA during a sacred and auspicious Rama Katha by Pujya Sant Shri Morari Bapu. Pujya Swamiji, Pujya Bapuji and Pujya Goswami Indira Betiji blessed and preview the volumes.

“Soft” Launch in Chicago, 27th July 2013 at Manav Seva Mandir



A “soft-launch” of the Encyclopedia was performed in Chicago, IL on the 27th July at the Manav Seva Mandir. A special event was held on the theme of: “Spirituality in Daily Life: The Eternal Message of Sanatan Dharma.” Spiritual discourses were given by Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji prior to the unveiling of the Encyclopedia.

News Coverage:

Click on the individual news story to go to the full, clear, large-size web or pdf of the article.



“Soft” Launch in Louisville, KY, 21st July, 2013



A “soft-launch” was also performed in Louisville, Kentucky where the volumes were unveiled by Mr. Greg Fischer, the Mayor of Louisville. Mayor Fischer officially declared the 21st July as the “Day of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism” and issued an official Proclamation which proclaims that July 21st will always be celebrated as the “Day of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism.”

News Coverage:

Click on the individual news story to go to the full, clear, large-size web or pdf of the article.

The Indian EXPRESS

North AMERICANNewslines

AUGUST 21, 2013 11

Nikki Haley, Anna Hazare unveil Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Dr. Manu Prasad, President Ramji Parthasarthy and Rajiv Shrivastava unveil the

PRASAD IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

A 70-year quest to document and present the world's oldest living tradition came to fruition when the Encyclopedia of Hinduism was unveiled in South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, Chairman Anna Hazare and India's Consul General Anil Kumar at the University of South Carolina on Sunday.

Hundreds of scholars, dignitaries, Hindu devotees, students and the public gathered for the university's auspicious ceremony to witness the release of the much-anticipated and eagerly awaited 11-volume public reference, compiled and edited by the India Heritage Research Foundation and published by Bharatiya Prakashan in Hyderabad.

The one-day ceremony coinciding with the release featured a series of events performed before a gathering who showcased the significance of the encyclopedia and the richness and relevance of Indian culture that has thrived through various periods, centuries. The event is the launch of the monumental culture of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism into the world.

Dr. Manu Prasad, President of Hindu Society of South Carolina (HSC) said that he was honored to see the encyclopedia being launched in his country. "It is a great honor to be participating in the spectacular launch of the encyclopedia of Hinduism. This is a remarkable work of scholarship and research. I hope that many in academia and in corporate life will see it as a concrete tribute that transcends the cultures, the beliefs and the impact that Hinduism has had, and is having on the world."

Consul General Anil Kumar said that he and Hazare had over the world are grateful to the University of South Carolina for the launch of the monumental work.

The Encyclopedia encompasses one of the world's oldest religious texts, 10 volumes, with a total of 110 million words, and the culmination of a major academic effort. The encyclopedia is written in English and includes about 1,000 articles and Hinduism and the past, the world and Hinduism and the present, the world and Hinduism and the future, and the world and Hinduism and the future.

The encyclopedia is a monumental work of scholarship and research, and it is a tribute to the rich and diverse culture of India. It is a work that will be read and studied for generations to come.

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more nationally significant insights, trends and teachings. Unfortunately, these tend to be marginalized in the West. The Encyclopedia of Hinduism brings together in a first-of-its-kind comprehensive and accessible to people of all cultures and religions, and of all ages, the depth and breadth of the nation's rich and vibrant heritage.

The encyclopedia, also called the "Project of the Great Indianness," began in 1997 under the leadership of South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley. The project was located at the University of South Carolina.

The Project, a University of South Carolina initiative, is a landmark project of education, research, and scholarship. It is a work of scholarship and research, and it is a tribute to the rich and diverse culture of India. It is a work that will be read and studied for generations to come.

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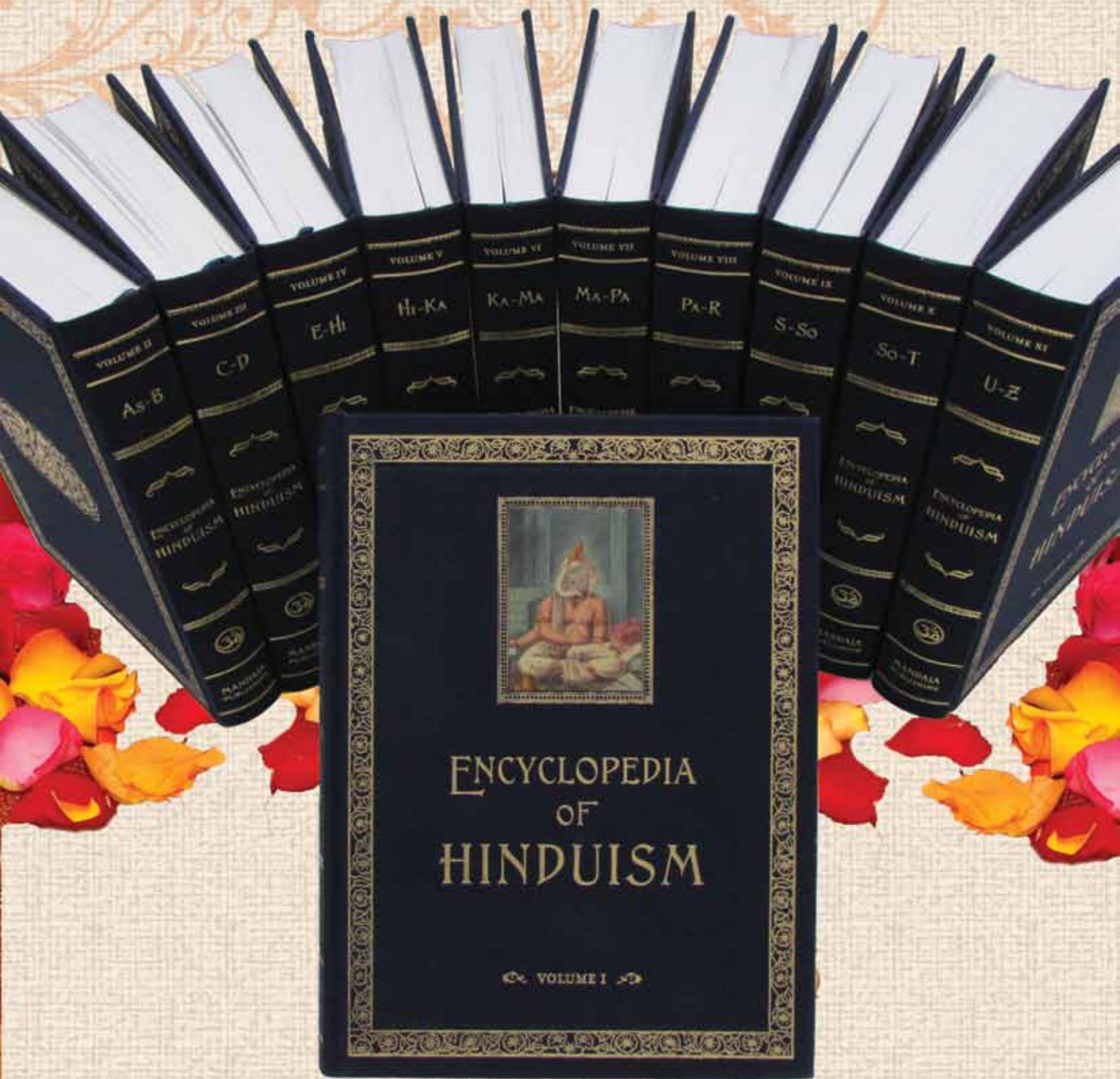
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For more information about
the Encyclopedia of Hinduism
and to order, please email to

info@ihrf.com