
September 2013 Special

Parmarth Niketan
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.
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 Saraswatiji 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 Metanenexus 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
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.
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.

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.”
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.


8. **Sciences:** Ayurveda, Astronomy, Astrology, Mathematics, Cosmology, Chemistry, and other relevant disciplines.


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.
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

Click on the individual news story to go to the full, clear, large-size web or pdf of the article.
Nikki Haley, Anna Hazare unveil Encyclopedia of Hinduism

FRANK M. SWAMY

CITIZEN SOUTH CAROLINA

A 25-year quest to document and preserve one of the world’s oldest and most significant religious traditions has come to fruition when the Encyclopedia of Hinduism was unveiled by a galaxy of scholars and educators including South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, Chairperson Anna Hazare, and Indian Consul General in Atlanta Anurag Kumar at the University of South Carolina on Sunday.

Hindus, scholars, journalists, Hindu historians and students, and the public converged on the university’s campus to observe the release of the much-anticipated and definitive 11-volume guide to Hinduism, compiled and published by the Hindu Heritage Research Foundation and published by Mantra Publishing in California.

The two-day event coincided with the unveiling of some of the most prominent Hindu traditions worldwide. The event featured the launch of the international edition of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism, which is an invaluable resource for a wide range of audiences, from students to policy makers.

The event was held in partnership with the South Carolina Indian Community and the University of South Carolina. The event featured a variety of speakers and discussions on topics related to Hinduism, including its history, culture, and spirituality.

Sahaj Biswas, president of the Hindu Heritage Research Foundation, said the launch of the encyclopedia marks a significant milestone in the effort to preserve and promote Hinduism around the world.

“With the release of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism, we have taken a major step towards preserving the rich cultural heritage of Hinduism,” Biswas said. “This is a monumental project that has been in the works for more than two decades, and we are proud to have played a part in bringing it to fruition.”

The event was also attended by a host of prominent leaders and dignitaries, including South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, who spoke about the importance of preserving cultural heritage.

“Hinduism is one of the world’s oldest and most significant religious traditions, and it is essential that we continue to preserve and promote it for future generations,” Haley said. “This encyclopedia is a testament to the strength of our community and the importance of preserving our cultural heritage.”

The encyclopedia is available online and is available in both digital and print formats. It is a comprehensive resource for anyone interested in learning more about Hinduism and its significance in the world today.

The Indian Express

Click on the individual news story to go to the full, clear, large-size web or pdf of the article.
हिंदू धर्म विश्वकोष का अमेरिका में हुआ लोकार्पण

कालानुक्रमिक वेदांत तथा हिंदू धार्मिक संस्कृति का अनुसंधान, विश्वकोश, हिंदू जनता की जीवनसाथी भूमिका नष्ट नहीं हो रही है।

ग्रामीण भारतीय संस्कृति से विक्षण का सम्बंध करार दिए विश्वकोष

इस में विवेक की महत्वपूर्ण स्थिति जो ही है।
Encyclopedia of Hinduism Is Definitive Work on the Topic
USC Hosts Conference for Launch

By Rodney Welch
Wednesday, August 21, 2013 | 0 Comments

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 1,000 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.

Sadhviji Bhagwati Saraswat, 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 Hinduism and its diaspora communities.

"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 Saraswat (no relation), who is president of Parmarth Niketan Ashram in the Himalayan city of Rishikesh, came to America in 1986 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 Bhagwati, 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 Bhagwati says. Hindus believe in and worship only one God — who can be manifested in different forms — and the spiritual leader themselves, the One God, she says.

Also, Sadhvi Bhagwati 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 hierarchical and nothing hierarchical about it.”

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

From there, they traveled the world for the past seven years, meeting and interviewing scholars who helped 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 and facilities, but also housing for regular and visiting scholars, according to Rawe.

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

The encyclopedia proved unique in another way: It’s not just about a religion, but a country. Both are inclusively limited, Sadhvi Bhagwati says.

"I consider Hinduism not only India’s dominant religion but the source 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 mostly definitely old school.

They weren’t given any comparative religion maps. They were advanced scholars steeped in centuries of 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 Bhagwati says, "was the actual authentic wisdom from the people who were able to read it and understand it in primary language at its source, not people who had learned knowledge based on what someone else had translated in someone else’s commentary. So that added a lot of challenges, a lot of more..."

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 locale, “you’ve got to ignore the Indian and Hindu tradition. So our goal is to have this be a tradition that’s 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 dedicated to cleaning up the roots of India.

The Monday launch will also signify the beginning of an exhibition in 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 Mankind will be held Monday, Aug. 26, at the University of South Carolina’s Capitol House. From 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. This event is free and open to the public.

For event and ticket information, please visit this website.
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 1987 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 Saraswatiji, 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 Saraswatiji, 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.

Click on the individual news story to go to the full, clear, large-size web or pdf of the article.
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)
An Encyclopedia of Hinduism? Just One More Step in Understanding and Preserving the Religion's Legacy

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 encyclopedic 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, it 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.

H. French, a long-term 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. Sikhs, Jews, Buddhists, and even Ahbharshik 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 limitation of civilizations such as the Greeks and the Romans. As the late American art historian Thomas McEvilly noted, “Through such chronological manipulations, the threat that the Indian past poses to the Greek miracle is deflected by chronology.”

Click on the individual news story to go to the full, clear, large-size web or pdf of the article.
Q&A: The Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The Wall Street Journal

By Tipto Latte

Vyasana

Hindusim 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 text was updated by an eclectic group of people that included Hindus holy men and women, antiterrorism activist Anna Hazare and South Carolina governor Nikki Haley, who is of Hindu origin.

While there have been other efforts to catalogue and define Hinduism, this project’s managing editor, Sadhvi Bhagwati Saraswat, 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 say we cut and still be able to say it includes everything,” said Sadhvi Bhagwati, an American who visited India during her doctoral studies in psychology and converted to Hinduism as a result, adopting a 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 Bhagwati, who lives in an ashram in Rishikesh, and who is a disciple of the guru who conceived of the encyclopedia project. The term “sadhu” 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 Bhagwati Saraswat: There was a lack of authoritative sources for answers to the questions that so many of the Indian youth [growing up in America] had. Many Hindus 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 Bhagwati: 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 anciles 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 around the world to review the articles. Every article has been edited eight or 10 times.

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

Sadhvi Bhagwati: To us what was most important was that the authors be people not just who had 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 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 word.

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

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

You tend to have more compelling 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.

Click on the individual news story to go to the full, clear, large-size web or pdf of the article.
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 translation isn't necessarily in conflict with that translation. The original writer maybe actually meant all of those 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 Vedic tradition versus steeped in the Purana 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 many in different countries and regions across the world. There are articles, for example, on Hinduism in the Caribbean compared to Indonesia compared to 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 what 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 [elephant-headed god] Ganesha, let's say, you'd have an article on Ganesha 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 Ganesha, 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 the main definitions 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 the Caraka Samhita, a Jain text, dating from the 4th century B.C. Buddhist texts from the 3rd century B.C. also explicate the principle of non-injury. Caraka Samhita 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, Janas adopt the practice of sweeping the area where one sits, steps 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. Janas observe generosities 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 Janas lived in India. However, tens of thousands of Janas now live in North America and Europe, applying their philosophy of non-violence to modern lifestyle.

Aum

The sacred sound symbol of Brahmam, the Supreme Being.

The resonable in understanding to be the source of all sounds and speech. Aum permeates all words, like ribs permeate a leaf, according to Chhandogya Upanishad (13.1.3). 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 Upanishad describes aum as anamati (memoria). Traditionally, aum and aaha were uttered by Brahmin, the Creator, and are considered to be the most auspicious.

Apanamata wrote that the syllable aum is the gateway to paradise.

Moksha

liberation from the worldly bondage of birth and death.

Hindu sages have envisaged samsara as the four stages of human life, which are — dharma (duties for social sustenance and individual good), artha (means of maintenance and prosperity), kama (enjoyment within moral precepts), and moksha (liberation from the transient and attainment of the eternal). Out of these, moksha, 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.

Click here to read more posts by Tripti. Follow her on Twitter @Tripluia. Like India Real Time on Facebook here and follow us on Twitter @IndiaRT.
Click on the individual news story to go to the full, clear, large-size web or pdf of the article.
US varsity to launch encyclopaedia of Hinduism

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

IANS
Published: 16:00 August 25, 2013

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 encyclopaedia.

"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 Saraswatiji, president of Deive Shakti Foundation and managing editor of the encyclopaedia, 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 “Carolina", a celebration of India through a series of fall and spring events.

Led by the College of Arts and Sciences’ Walker Institute, Carolina 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.
Swami Chidanand’s initiative results in historic scholastic achievement

By OUR STAFF REPORTER
DEHRADUN, 23 Aug: On 25 and 26 August, the official launch took place 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 and led by Swami Chidanand Saraswaté, the Encyclopedia of Hinduism is a colossal product of more than 10006 eminent 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 compendium of thousands of years of history, science, art, architecture, poetry, 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 Buddhist traditions in India).

The official launch of the international edition, published by Mandala Earth Publications of California, USA, was held at the University of South Carolina. It was organized, hosted and sponsored by the University and provided for by Dr. Harris Pastides, President of the University. The Encyclopedia project was headquartered at the University of South Carolina for many years during its compilation and editing stages, and it was fitting full-circle for the University to be the venue to host the official launch. Present at the launch were Swami Chidanand Saraswaté, Founder-Chairman of India Heritage Research Foundation; Nikki Haley, Governor of South Carolina; Dr. Harris Pastides, President of the University; Anna Hazare, social activist; Joe Wilson, Congressman for South Carolina, Ajit Kumar, Consul General to India; Dr. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswaté, Managing Editor of the Encyclopedia as well as many other advanced scholars and dignitaries.

Swami Chidanand Saraswaté said: “The wisdom, truths, teachings, and insights of Indian and Hindu culture are not limited to or applicable only to 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 be made available to the entire world, in a way that is authentic, accurate, comprehensive and illuminating.”

Dr. Harris Pastides said: “It is a great 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 around the world will turn to it as a resource to better understand the character, the tenets, and the profound impact that Hinduism has had, and is having, in the world.”

Anna Hazare said: Swami Chidanand is carrying out Indian culture to the entire world in a momentous and historic way. The depth and breadth of the world’s oldest living culture, civilization, philosophy and theology has finally been encapsulated in an encyclopedia form. To have the international edition launched by the University of South Carolina in USA underscores the universal applicability and universal appeal of the Hindu tradition.

The Encyclopedia was presented 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, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama in Rishikesh. He is also the founder of the Gaana Action Partner, a worldwide organization serving, promoting and protecting the sacred and inspiring Ganga.

Click on the individual news story to go to the full, clear, large-size web or pdf of the article.
US University launches year-long celebration of India

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 Chinmayanand 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 Mardala 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.

Hai 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's 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 1,300 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 2013 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 Ajiit 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 encyclopaedia 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.
25 years in making, Hindu encyclopedia is complete.

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 online encyclopedia contains more than 1,000 illustrations and photographs. Brightly colored images of Hindus’ clothes 188 pages, with footnoted 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, 85, 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 specialized in Chinese and Jewish religion and served as an associate editor of the journal, said a primary inspiration for the work is one of India’s most revered spiritual leaders, Swami Chinmoyanand Saraswati, who is coming to the University of South Carolina conference that will conclude the world’s launch.

Swami Chinmoyanand founded the India Heritage Research Foundation, which became the parent organization behind the encyclopedia effort. He is president of the Maramth Nukot Ashram, a 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 Hindus 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 Sadhu Bhagawan Saraswati, managing editor of the encyclopedia and a secretary of the India Heritage Research Foundation. Children are born to 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. Sadhu Bhagawan 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 25 years because “it happened in pre-computer days.” If we started today, it might just have taken a few years,” said Sadhu Bhagawan, who describes herself a disciple of Swami Chinmoyanand.

Sadhu Bhagawan 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, ayokan 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 translated into English had to be checked again. “Each article ended up being edited eight to 10 times,” Sadhu Bhagawan said. Dr. Manev Narasimhan, twins head of the USC School of Medicine, and chairman of the department of psychiatry, said she met Swami Chinmoyanand 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 2010.

“This brings together my Indian heritage, my work as a physician in America and as a Gamecock,” 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 clean-up of rivers in India, she said.

Click on the individual news story to go to the full, clear, large-size web or pdf of the article.
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 illustrations and photographs. Brightly coloured images of Hinduism’s deities fill entire pages, with footnoted 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.

“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

Dr Meera Narasimhan, vice dean of the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, with the Hindu encyclopaedia. — AP
Hindu encyclopedia is complete after 25 years


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.

Brightly colored images of Hindus at their daily rituals 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, 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 Saraswatii, who is coming to the University of South Carolina to speak at the encyclopedia’s launch.

Swami Chidanand Saraswatii 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 as the United States several times a year.

The encyclopedia’s volumes ran 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 stated.

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 reunited 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 Saraswatii, managing editor of the encyclopedia and a secretary of the India Heritage Research Foundation.

Children came home from school where a teacher may have discussed whether Hinduism is a belief in one god, so many gods, and needs 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.

Sadhvi Bhagawati 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, Sinhala and Sinhagiri or Bengali spoken in other regions of India and Bangladesh.

The articles had to be typed and translated, and translations into English had to be checked again. "Each article ended up being edited eight to 10 times, Sadhvi Bhagawati said.

Dr. Munir Naranathan, vice dean of the USC School of Medicine and chairman of the department of neurosurgery, 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 spearheaded the organization of Monday’s conference. A native of Bangalore, India, Naranathan 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 Gamecock," Naranathan 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," Naranathan said.

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

Source: M. Schoeberly can be reached on Twitter at http://twitter.com/manooshelorby.
Click on the individual news story to go to the full, clear, large-size web or pdf of the article.

The National

Milestone in research on Hinduism, 25 years in the making

The Japan Times

The Korea Herald

25 years in making, Hindu encyclopedia is complete

Oman Tribune

Encyclopedia of Hinduism unveiled in US after 25-year quest

Guardian

Hinduism in the Rainbow Land: an affirmative view
Click on the individual news story to go to the full, clear, large-size web or pdf of the article.

**The Windsor Star**

After 25-year international effort, ‘Encyclopedia of Hinduism’ to be unveiled next week

**Vancouver Desi**

After 25-year international effort, ‘Encyclopedia of Hinduism’ to be unveiled next week

**Sunday Island**

English edition of ‘Encyclopedia of Hinduism’ is released in USA

**The Globe and Mail**

After 25-year international effort, ‘Encyclopedia of Hinduism’ to be unveiled next week

**Maalaimalar**

After 25-year international effort, ‘Encyclopedia of Hinduism’ to be unveiled next week
Click on the individual news story to go to the full, clear, large-size web or pdf of the article.

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

**Belgium**


**Canada**


**India**


*Cool Age,* “US varsity launches celebration of India,” 28th August, 2013

*The India Express,* “US varsity launches celebration of India,” 28th August, 2013

*IBN Live,* “University of South Carolina launches a year-long celebration of India,” 28th August, 2013


The Times of India, “US university launches year-long celebration of India,” 27th August, 2013
News for All, “Hindu Dharm Visvakosh Ke Antararashtriya Sanskaran Ka America Mein Hua Lokarpan,” 27th August, 2013 (in Hindi)
Zee News, “Hindu encyclopaedia to be unveiled today,” 26th August, 2013
Dainik Jagran, “Hindu Dharm Vishvakosh Ka America Mein Hua Lokarpan,” 26th August, 2013 (in Hindi)
The Hindu, “Hindu encyclopedia to be unveiled on Monday,” 26th August, 2013
India Today, “25 years in making, encyclopaedia of Hinduism is finally complete,” 25th August, 2013
WISTV.com, “25 years in making, encyclopaedia of Hinduism is complete,” 25th August, 2013
Daily Bhaskar, “Hindu Encyclopaedia with 11-volumes, 7,000 articles and 1,000 pics unveiled in US,” 25th August, 2013
NDTV, “25 years in making, Hindu encyclopaedia to be unveiled tomorrow,” 25th August, 2013
The Economic Times, “25 years in making, Hindu encyclopedia is complete,” 25th August, 2013
The Morung Express, “25 years in making, Hindu encyclopedia is now complete,” 25th August, 2013
Manorama Online, “Hindu encyclopedia to be unveiled Monday,” 25th August, 2013
DNA, “Now, a Hindu encyclopaedia with all you need to know about its practices and beliefs,” 25th August, 2013

Japan

Korea
The Korea Herald, “25 years in making, Hindu encyclopedia is complete,” 25th August, 2013

Nepal
The Himalayan Times, “25 years in making, Hindu encyclopedia is complete,” 24th August, 2013

New Zealand
The New Zealand Herald, “Hindu encyclopedia is complete after 25 years,” 25th August, 2013

Oman

Sri Lanka

South Africa

The Philippines
Inquirer, “25 years in making, Hindu encyclopedia is complete,” 25th August, 2013

The Vatican

Trinidad

UAE

USA
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 Asaganandjji 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 ceter 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.
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.
For more information about the Encyclopedia of Hinduism and to order, please email to

info@ihrf.com