

Fall

2012



Sandesh

“The Message”

A Newsletter from IndUS of Fox Valley

From Editors' Desk

Dear Readers,

The theme of our current issue and this year's annual banquet is *The Mysterious World of Indian Mythology*. Indian mythology is a large and diverse body of traditional narratives, developed by different people, sects, and philosophical schools, in different regions and at different times. Here in this issue of *Sandesh* we bring you some articles which you may find interesting, and hope that they will generate enough interest to learn more about this vast subject.

Sandesh

**An IndUS of Fox Valley
Publication**

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India's Classic Epics and Hindus' Everyday Lives

By Joe Elder

Religious Texts and Everyday Lives

The religious texts of the three "Abrahamic religion" (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) provide instructions for everyday lives. According to Jewish tradition, while Abraham's descendants wandered in the wilderness before entering the promised land, God gave the Torah ("Instruction") to Moses on Mt. Sanai and at the Tabernacle. The Torah contained 613 laws (including the Ten Commandments) for Abraham's descendants to follow in their everyday lives. There were rules for honoring God and parents, prohibitions against worshipping "graven images," and requirements to observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

According to Christian tradition, Jesus' teachings in the New Testament provided rules for everyday Christian lives. These teachings included the Sermon on the Mount, parables such as the good Samaritan, the golden rule (do to others what you want others to do to you), and the Lord's Prayer. Subsequent letters to early Christians, included in the New Testament, provided further advice for the everyday lives of Christians and their church communities.

According to Islamic tradition, God's instructions for everyday Muslim lives were transmitted to the Prophet Muhammad and written in the Qur'an. These instructions were supplemented by the Hadith and Sunnah (statements and behavior attributed to the Prophet). Within a few years of Muhammad's death, the Five Pillars of Islam were accepted throughout the Muslim world as universal rules of conduct including the confession of faith, prayer five times a day, the donation of alms, observation of the month of fasting, and (if possible) the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Classical Hindu texts provide few instructions for everyday lives. The most ancient sacred texts are the Vedas, composed in the Vedic language as prayers and rituals addressed to such Vedic deities as Agni, Indra, Usha, Varuna, and Yama. Then came the Sanskrit Upanishads taught by sages with their explanations of the spiritual unity of all sentient beings, the cycle of reincarnation, and release from the cycle of reincarnation. Then came the Shastras and Sutras composed in Sanskrit by brahmins with instructions regarding the proper actions (*dharmas*) of members of the four classical varnas (brahmins, kshatriyas, vaishyas, and shudras). The Shastras and Sutras described actions that could lead one to be excluded from one's varna and penances that could lead one to be readmitted into one's varna. But they said little about everyday lives. The fact that the Shastras and Sutras were in Sanskrit meant that few people could actually read them.

India's Classical Epics

Most classical epics are considered to be collections of storytellers' oral narratives collected and written down by a compiler. Such is assumed to be the case with the Homer's Greek epics, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. There may or may not ever have been an actual Greek poet named Homer, a Trojan war, and someone named Ulysses returning to Ithaca from the war. But someone collected oral narratives, wrote them down, and produced the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* that have survived for centuries as entities in their own right.

There may or may not have been a major war between two clans on the plains of Kurukshetra thousands of years ago. But

according to tradition the sage Vyas began to dictate the *Mahabharat* to Ganesh who broke off a tip of his tusk and proceeded to write a 90,000-verse account of the war.

At one point in the *Mahabharat* the five Pandava brothers gamble away their wife, Draupadi, in a game of dice with the Kauravas. The Kauravas try to humiliate Draupadi by disrobing her before her helpless husbands. Draupadi is saved only by Lord Krishna's intervention.

The Pandava-Kaurava power struggle culminates in an all-encompassing war. Just before the war begins, Arjun, a Pandava prince, places his weapons on his chariot floor and declares he will not slay his kinsmen. At that point, as described in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna teaches Arjun that each human is born with duties to perform (*dharma*). Arjun has been born a kshatriya warrior whose *dharma* is to fight. The world depends on all individuals doing their duties, but they must perform their duties without attachment to the fruits of their actions. Krishna's teaching ends with Arjun seizing his weapons and preparing to perform his *dharma* as a kshatriya warrior. Krishna's core teaching in the *Bhagavad Gita* is: Better one's own *dharma* even if imperfect than another's *dharma* followed perfectly (chapter 3, verse 35).

As the *Mahabharat* acquired additions, it came to include the story of Savitri, the relentlessly-dedicated wife who performed the impossible feat of retrieving her husband from the realms of Yama, the Lord of Death.

The Sanskrit *Ramayan*, attributed to the sage Valmiki, began in Ayodhya in contemporary Uttar Pradesh. Prince Ram, the hero of the *Ramayan*, is banished from his rightful throne by his father because of an unfortunate promise his father made to one of his wives. Ram accepts his banishment with grace and enters exile accompanied by Sita, his devoted wife, and Lakshman, his faithful younger brother. During their wandering, Sita is kidnapped by Ravan and imprisoned on Ravan's island kingdom of Sri Lanka. Lord Hanuman, with his

monkey face and tail, helps Ram by visiting Sita in Sri Lanka. Then Hanuman and his army build a bridge from India to Sri Lanka, enter Sri Lanka, and help Ram and Lakshman defeat Ravan and his army in a fierce battle. Sita is rescued, proves her faithfulness to Ram, and the victorious entourage return to Ayodhya to enjoy a harmonious and peaceful Ram Raj (rule of Ram).

In southern India a Tamil-language epic as popular as north India's *Mahabharat* and *Ramayan* is the *Silappathikaram* (the jeweled-anklet). The heroine of the *Silappathikaram* is a faithful and forceful wife, Kannagi. Kannagi's husband, Kovalan, takes her jeweled anklet into Madurai to sell to start their new life together. The king hears that Kovalan is selling a jeweled anklet and assumes the jeweled anklet is the missing jeweled anklet of the queen. Without further examination, the king executes Kovalan. When Kannagi discovers her husband has been killed for a crime he did not commit, she accosts the king, tears off one of her breasts, and breaks open the jeweled anklet her husband was selling, proving to the king that the jeweled anklet was her's and not the queen's. The king dies of remorse for failing to implement justice, and Kannagi is elevated to become a goddess of faithful wives.

Classical Epics and Everyday Lives of Hindus

Where the Vedas, Upanishads, Shastras, and Sutras may provide few instructions for people's everyday lives, the epics are filled with such instructions. The characters in the epics provide role models of behavior - to be emulated or denounced.

Rulers who bring peace and harmony to their land (as Ram did in Ayodhya) should be revered. Mahatma Gandhi, in his struggle for India's independence, referred to "Ram Raj" to describe independent India.

Rulers who kidnap (such as Ravan) or rulers who execute innocent people (such as the king of Madurai) should be destroyed.

Sons should obey their fathers as prince

Ram obeyed his father when his father banished him from the kingdom -- even though Ram knew his father was wrong and that he, Ram, was entitled to the throne.

Husbands should never gamble their wives away as property -- as did the Pandava brothers with their noble wife Draupadi.

Younger brothers should be loyal to their elder brothers even though, for Lakshman, this meant years of self-denial.

Wives should love and serve their husbands at all times and under all circumstances, as did Sita, Savitri, and Kannagi. Each of those wives suffered for the sake of their husbands. Their exemplary persistence, patience, and faithfulness earned them universal admiration. Hindu mothers, at the time of their daughters' marriages, could urge their daughters to be Sitas and Savitris to their husbands.

Devotees should surrender everything for the divine, as did Lord Hanuman for Ram and Sita. Hanuman represents the ideal devotee, forever humble, forever eager to serve, forever singing the praises of Ram and Sita. In their practices of piety and devotion, male or female, young or old, could choose to emulate Lord Hanuman.

And everyday people -- housewives, farmers, day-laborers, teachers, nurses, traders, artisans -- in whatever walks of life they find themselves, should perform those duties (*dharma*) that are placed before them, as Arjun did, without consideration for themselves and without attachment to the fruits of their action. If all individuals do their duties without attachment to the fruits of their actions, there will be harmony. There will be Ram Raj. □

Joe Elder is Professor of Sociology/ Languages and Cultures of Asia in the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has lived and studied in both south and north India for a total of eight years. He teaches a course each Fall titled: Civilizations of India - Modern Period. For many years he was Faculty Coordinator for the University of Wisconsin's "College Year in India."

Of Greek Gods and Indian Devas

By Rashmi Menon

I was having a chat with my 9-year-old son, Ishaan over breakfast. He happened to tell me about something which was discussed in his class. The topic was something new to me and also very exciting for him, as he got the opportunity to teach me something. Of course it's another matter that, I consider him as my biggest teacher, as I believe babies, being closer to the source, are as divine as our pure souls. Seeing him growing up has taught me much about life.

What totally intrigued both of us was the similarities between the Greek mythology and Indian mythology. Here is a small briefing of our online research.

Mythology is the oral transfer of stories or myths of a particular group of people or culture passed on through generations inculcating an idea about the values, culture and intellectual development of those cultures and civilizations. Ancient Greek and Indian civilizations are considered two of the oldest, advanced and colorful mythologies. Their religions were correspondingly called Hellenism and Hinduism. These two religions and cultures existed in different parts of the world and were separated by great distances. Yet they have striking similarities.

Supreme Gods

The three elder or "Supreme" gods of Hinduism are Brahma(The Creator), "Vishnu" (The Protector and Preserver) and Mahesh also known as Shiva (The Destroyer of evil forces and the Transformer). Shiva is also the most powerful god. The supreme gods of Greek mythology are Zeus (The Lord of the skies) , Poseidon (The Lord of the Seas) and Hades (The Lord of the Underworld). The youngest of the Greek brothers is Zeus.

Zeus and Indra

Similarities: Zeus, the King of the Greek gods can fairly be compared to Indra, the Rig-Vedic King of Hindu gods. Both these deities had control over weather and had thunderbolts as their

weapons. They both had kingly chariots. Like the dwelling place of Zeus and other Olympian gods Mount Olympus, the dwelling place of the Hindu gods was in Svarga located high above in the sky on Mount Meru. Indra represents Thursday in the days of the week. So does Zeus.

Dissimilarities: Indra's reputation and role diminished in later Hinduism with the rise of the Trimurti. Unlike Zeus, the final and supreme god of the Greek mythology, Indra is not the supreme god anymore. He is only the king of the Devas. Above Indra, are the three most powerful and supreme deities, Brahma (The creator), Vishnu (The protector and preserver) and Shiva (The Destroyer of evil forces and the transformer).

Hera and Laxmi



Similarities: Hera and Laxmi are also similar to an extent, since both of them are the goddesses of Home and Wealth and Prosperity.

Dissimilarities: Laxmi is not only the goddess of Wealth, but she is the goddess of preservation too. In the Vedas, Laxmi is referred to as the consort of Lord Vishnu. Vishnu, being compassion, it seems to signify that where compassion flows, prosperity follows.



Athena and Saraswati



Similarities: Both Athena and Saraswati are the goddesses of Wisdom and Learning. They are also the goddesses of Culture and knowledge.

Dissimilarities: Athena is also the goddess of war. Saraswati is the goddess of creation, creative energy of Lord Brahma (the Creator). Athena is often seen to carry shield and other weapons, goddess Saraswati carries a Lotus flower (as a symbol of enrichment), the musical instrument Veena (as a symbol of culture), Rudraksha (as a symbol of homage to the supreme Lord Shiva).

Hades and Yama

Similarities: Hades is the Lord of the



underworld, and Yama is also the same in Hindu Mythology. Both these gods are associated with Death and afterlife.

Dissimilarities: Yama's realm is the Naraka, which is said to be in another dimension. But the realm of Hades is said to be below the earth. In addition to being the Lord of the Souls, Yama is also the final judge of the human souls. His role as a judge can be equated to that of Osiris. Hades takes the souls of all to the underworld. Yama takes the souls of ordinary people to their next body/life. To those who are devoted to Shiva or Krishna, Yama cannot touch them.

Envoys of Shiva and Krishna take them to their abode. All others continuously remain in Samsara.

Poseidon and Varuna

Similarities: Both Poseidon and Varuna are the Gods of ocean. They are the protectors of aquatic creatures.

Dissimilarities:

Poseidon carries the Golden Trident as his weapon,

whereas Varuna carries the Pash (the weapon which is the combination of an arrow and a trident).

Varuna is also the God of water, but the Greek God of water is the Titan Oceanus.



Haphaestus and Vishwakarma

Similarities: Both Haphaestus and Vishwakarma are the worker Gods, who design and make weapons for the Gods and manufacture tools.

Dissimilarities: Haphaestus is said to have a central workshop or factory. There is no such concept for Vishwakarma. Further, the mascot of Vishwakarma is elephant, but Haphaestus has no mascot. Vishwakarma is God of tools and factories. During Vishwakarma Puja people pray at factories and workshop.

Ares and Kartik

Similarities: They both are both the Gods of war and fighting. They both are depicted as warriors, carrying weapons as a sign of inspiration.

Dissimilarities: Kartik is said to have peacock as his mascot and he also has six heads, unlike Ares, who has no mascot and single head (or face). Also Kartik personality is closer with Athena where they both represent tactical and strategical part of warfare while Ares represents blood lust.

Kronos and Mahakala

Similarities: Both these Gods are the Gods of time and space.

Dissimilarities: Kronos has a definite figure, whereas Mahakala is not said be

invisible to all and control everything.

Concept of Good and Evil

The Gods of Mount Olympus represents good while their antitheses are the Titans represent evil. In the same way we have the Asuras as the chief tormentors of the Devas. The interesting fact in both these mythologies is that both good and evil are fathered by one and the same being. While the Gods and the Titans were fathered by Cronus, the Devas and the Asuras were fathered by Kashyap. There is a constant struggle between the forces of Good and Evil in both mythologies. Throughout the mythologies we can see the Gods tricking their antithesis during instances when they require the Titan's or the Asura's help.

Gods and Men

While men have always worshipped and showed unfaltering devotion towards the Gods, the Gods on their part have not been as benevolent as they might lead us to believe. In fact the Gods' attitude towards men has been quite curious to say the least, almost bordering on tyrannical. Their behavior and attitude towards men is exemplified by two incidents in the mythology. In Greek mythology there is the story of Prometheus who stole fire from the Gods and gave it to men. Men after receiving fire began to be developed and more enlightened. Zeus was so enraged by this that he punished Prometheus to be chained to a Mount Caucasus. Each day an Eagle would come and peck out his liver, which would be regenerated in the night. This cycle continued until Hercules (son of Zeus. Also known as Herakles) killed the eagle and freed Prometheus.

Similarly in Hindu Mythology there is the story of the benevolent Asura king of Kerala called Mahabali. During his reign the kingdom prospered unlike in any other. Indra and the other Devas were jealous and afraid of Mahabali's popularity and conspired with Lord Vishnu to end his reign. Vishnu came to earth as Vamana and tricked Mahabali into the depths of the underworld, but not before granting the asura king one last wish; that to visit his subjects once a year. People of Kerala celebrate his day

of return as the famous Onam festival.

Prophecies

Prophecies have a major role to play in these mythologies. One instance in the Greek mythology is that of Cronus who becomes aware of a prophecy that he will be overthrown by one of his children. In order to avert this fate Cronus begins to swallow each one of his children as soon as they are born. When the sixth child Zeus is born, Rhea (Cronus' wife) devises a plan to save him with the help of Cronus' mother Gaia. Rhea secretly gives birth to Zeus and arranges for him to be brought up in exile. Later a grown up Zeus comes back to free his siblings and forces Cronus to flee.

Similarly in Hindu mythology King Kansa is foretold that the eight son of his sister Devaki would kill him. To avert this, Kansa imprisons both Devaki and her husband Vasudeva and allows them to live on the condition that they hand over all their newborns to him. Devaki's eighth son was Krishna (a reincarnation of Lord Vishnu) and as Kansa had killed all their previous children, they arranged for the child to be brought up in exile and presented another newborn to Kansa in his place. A grown up Krishna later returned to avenge the death of his brothers and killed Kansa.

There are many other similarities between the various mythologies in the world. It is not possible to cover all of them under the realms of a single post. But it is infinitely fascinating to learn more and more about them as they shows us how similar we all are, even though we have different cultures and are from different civilizations. □

Reference: "<http://keralaarticles.blogspot.com/2007/05/comparison-of-hindu-and-greek-mythology.html>"

Dr. Rashmi Menon is an integrated clinical hypnotherapist and a homeopathic medicine practitioner based in Mumbai. She is an associate of Nithya Shanti Foundation, a not for profit organization with the vision to awaken a culture based on wisdom and joy. Her core mission is to help people achieve their personal success and wellness goals. Her website is www.therayofhappiness.com

Myth Scores over History

By Sandhya Sridhar

“A hero ventures forth from the common world into a region of supernatural forces. He encounters them and wins a decisive victory. The hero returns from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his people.”

Is this Lord Rama, Gautama Buddha, Jesus Christ or Moses? Joseph Campbell detailed this mono-myth, an example of common myths shared around the world in, “Hero with a Thousand Faces”. Diverse cultures share similar stories of creations, virgin births, incarnations, overcoming insurmountable hurdles, death and resurrection. Details may vary but underlying message is the same, one of continuation and sustenance of belief that life as meaningful.

That is the power of myth. Myth becomes more powerful over time than history.

Such timeless, sacred, traditional stories are passed on from one generation to the next. They are not always written. Many cultures around the world for many millennia have shared folktales, legends and myths. India is no exception. Many Vedic myths, Hindu myths, Buddhist and Jain myths have been handed down in form of paintings, sculptures, dances, and songs and as oral history. This rich cultural heritage also manifests in creative variations meant to adapt to the needs of changing times. Underlying themes and basic story lines do not change.

Most Indians believe that Hindu epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata are historical accounts. They will cite places as proofs of this history, like Rama’s birthplace: Ayodhya, Dandkaranya forest, where he spent fourteen years in exile and Lanka whose demon ruler he vanquished. They will even produce pictorial records of a stone bridge built by monkey brigade between southern tip of India and island nation of Sri Lanka. The brigade assisted Lord Rama to rescue his wife Sita who was kidnapped and imprisoned by demon king Ravana. Now consider this, there another place named Ayutthaya, also called Ayudhya, in another country, Thailand, and it is believed to be birthplace of Rama by Thai people. Balinese dancers depict the story through their dances with a firm belief that Ramayana happened on their land.

President Barack Obama narrates an incident in his “Dreams From My Father”, that illustrates how powerful myths can be. A little boy in Indonesia, raised in Hawaii to be a Christian, saw a huge statue in the town square. It had a monkey head on a human body. It was Hanuman, leader of the monkey brigade. Puzzled look on the little boy’s face prompted his Muslim stepfather to explain who Hanuman was and how he signified strength. It is said that Barack Obama carries in his wallet several lucky charms included among them is

Hanuman. (<http://marketdailynews.com/2012/10/11/should-you-look-into-president-obamas-lucky-charms/>). Such is the power of myth.

For majority of Indians anomalies of historical details do not make any difference. They are firm in their beliefs. Their literature is replete with lessons learned. Their art forms continue to flourish. Every village and hamlet enacts stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata on special holidays. They have annual parades to welcome Rama, Sita and Laxman back home from a fourteen-year exile, victorious in the battle. Every year they burn huge effigies of the demon king Ravana and his brothers stuffed with fireworks. Millennia old epics are alive and well. Recent reading of Sundarkand in local Hindu Temple of Northeast Wisconsin tells us that it is alive and well in our little corner of the world. Sundarkand is a chapter of Ramayana that describes Hanuman’s bravery. What matters more than history is that mythology continues to provide them with role models, reminds them of human imperfections and equips them to experience life in all its glory. □

Sandhya Sridhar immigrated to USA in 1980 and after completing her doctoral studies at Ohio State University moved to Wisconsin. She has been a resident of Wisconsin since 1987. She teaches at College of Business, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.

The Myth of Trishanku

By Mahesh Subramony

During my early days in the US, I was often reminded of the myth of the king, Trishanku, who aspired to be a denizen of heaven. The myth began with the king beseeching the sage Vishwamitra (lit: Friend of all Creation) to help him ascend to the abode of Gods in his corporeal body. The sage acquiesced and, through his spiritual powers, managed to transport Trishanku to his aspired destination, where he was refused entry and pushed down.

However, the sage stopped his rapid descent and . . . in my mind, there he stayed – belonging neither here nor there. Incomplete though it was, this myth – as I remembered it - captured my feeling of alienation.

Neither here: unshared history, alien routines, and a new awareness of an accent; *nor there:* broken bonds, friends who had moved on, and a home that now belonged to another. Dangling

between two worlds like Trishanku, condemned to have no home because I left one for another.

In that rural Midwest campus, there were others like me. Some glorified their chosen world, while others sought refuge in familiar smells, tastes, and sounds in their grey student apartments— as if beamed in from a different universe. I followed suit. There were days when I spoke of the problems of

daily living “back home” contrasting those with the clockwork-like precision of life in a small town in the US. On other days, I attempted to share the manufactured merriness of a gathering where we spoke, ate, and danced – as if that evening was all that mattered.

Gradually, new habits were built, a new accent cultivated, and people befriended. My alien companions modeled others who had come before them - watching football games, relishing burgers, wearing their baseball hats sideways, aspiring for Nissan Altimas. I envied their increasing certainty. I also yearned for the sense of oblivion characterizing my resident friends for whom no other world existed. “Do I miss my old home much? Thanks for asking. I can’t say, for my home has moved on . . .”

As years passed, I settled into a professional career, strengthened friendships, and became a householder. But the *transition* was not complete. Events like 9/11 made my presence salient. Many friends invested in Star and Stripes stickers to grace their windshields, to both, demonstrate their loyalty toward their new home and affirm their new identity. Ah, that was the reason Trishanku was not allowed into heaven– he could not belong there in his physical form, however much he *felt* Godly!

But, Trishanku was not destined to dangle alone for all eternity. The sage created a new heaven for the king to reside in – right there in the middle of the two spheres of existence. My wife and I created ours in the Fox Valley. Our daughter arrived as only a

Wisconsinite can, on a cold November evening. Soon after, we became members of IndUS and found friends who transitioned back and forth seamlessly between the two Worlds in their quest for perpetual education and opportunities for service. I learned that there was a strange sense of comfort in being a Trishanku, in that one did not have to give up ones’ allegiance to either world. In fact, there weren’t two worlds – there was only one, and one could become its citizen by simply expanding one’s identity to encompass all of humanity. Trishanku in my personal myth, united earth and heaven, affirmed the unity of all existence, and ruled – not as a king – but as a citizen of the one world. □

Mahesh Subramony, an ex-resident of Fox Valley now lives in Northern Illinois with his wife and daughter.



News ...

The Neville Public Museum “Museum PLACE: A Celebration of Community”

Last summer IndUS was invited with other cultural organizations in the area to create a mosaic piece that was displayed in the museum’s exhibit, a part of a community mosaic. The finished pieces were displayed at the entrance to the *Museum PLACE* exhibition. Our piece was filled with photographs and information depicting the activities of the organization.

India Heritage Day, Midwest IChild Conference, Green Lake, July 21, 2012

Many volunteers shared Indian games, arts and crafts and cooking demos to create a sense of heritage in families of 75 children adopted from India. Games like Chess, Snakes and Ladders, ‘Parchessi’, ‘Cowri’ shells, Carom, which originated in India were introduced. Miss Oshkosh 2012, Samantha Philip shared her story with the children. An adopted child herself, and having chosen international adoption as her platform, she was a great hit and became a role model for

many of them. They also enjoyed playing Cricket and splashing Holi colors.

Apple Tree Connections 5K run/walk on August 25, 2012

Few IndUS families with children called a Dream Team raised funds for *Make-a-Wish-Foundation of Wisconsin*. IndUS donated \$250 towards the cause. It was a great opportunity for children to be active, give back to the community and work together as a team.

Appleton Octoberfest 2012

More than 60 volunteers from IndUS and India Association sold delectable



Indian food and painting of beautiful henna designs was a big hit. From the proceeds, \$1000 each will be donated to United Way, Oshkosh and Fond du Lac for charities involving children.



Let's Share: How To Take Good Pictures, June 11, 2012

Shivaprasad Arava of Morning Sun Photography and Che Correa of The Pro Click presented useful information to

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photography enthusiasts, some of whom had brought their pictures for a critique. The participants benefited from the discussion following the presentation.

Let's Share: A Razzle-Dazzle Fun With Stars: Sunday, August 12, 2012

Celebration of Independence Day of India featured a Slide Presentation on "India's Contribution To Astronomy" by Dr. Virendra Sharma at Barlow Planetarium, UW Fox Valley, followed by a spectacular star studded show "Freedom at



Midnight": when the sky was set to the night India got her independence. Kids and grown-ups shared a chocolate birthday cake.

Finding One's Voice: A Conference of South Asian Writers, September 21-22, 2012

First literary event of its kind was organized in collaboration with UW Fox Valley. Grants from Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region, UW Fox Valley Foundation, and South Asian Students Association, Simon Fraser University, BC, Canada made this unique conference possible. On Friday Kirin Narayan, UW Madison and Fox Valley poet Laurel Mills led pre-conference workshops on memoir and poetry writing. Regional poems from sixteen languages with English



translations were read in an evening session on, "Sharing Our Poetic Heritage", followed by a cultural program that featuring a variety of



dances. On Saturday morning, the conference opened with the session "Finding One's Voice". The participating writers were: Mary Anne Mohanraj (Sri Lanka) from University of

Chicago; Kirin Narayan (India) from UW Madison; Sita Bhaskar (India), a freelance writer; and Asha Sen (India) of UW Eau Claire. Bruce Dethlefsen, the Poet Laureate of Wisconsin was the moderator. Writers talked about the





challenges they faced in finding their voices and identities. The second session was “Sharing Poetry, Fiction, and Non-



fiction” during Appleton. This year’s theme is *The Mysterious World of Indian Mythology*. Each year it has been a sold-out event. If you have not bought the tickets yet, do so by visiting IndUS web site www.indusfoxvalley.org. From the home page download the Registration form, fill it in and send it with your check to



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how to get their work published. Prof. Scott Emmert chaired the session.

Upcoming Events

IndUS-2012, the Fourteenth Annual banquet will be held on November 17, 2012 at Radisson Paper Valley Hotel,

If you wish to join the IndUS team, add your membership dues. Those who are already members of IndUS, we remind them that it is a good time to renew their membership for the year 2013.

IndUS Of Fox Valley
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IndUS of Fox Valley
Presents

IndUS-2012

*The Mysterious World of
Indian Mythology*

**Saturday, November 17, 2012
5:00 to 9:30 p.m.**

**Radisson Paper Valley Hotel
Appleton**

*Exhibition
Social Hour
Authentic Indian Cuisine
Cultural Program*