

## **JÑĀNA-PRAVĀHA AT A GLANCE : 2008 - 2009**

Various streams of knowledge continue to flow uninterruptedly at Jñāna-Pravāha - Centre for Cultural Studies & Research, situated on the bank of holy Gaṅgā. The Institution, serving as the confluence, is moving forward with its academic and research activities by the blessings of Baba Viśvanātha and Ma Gaṅgā. The ungrudging support and guidance of the members of Jñāna-Pravāha committees, scholars from various disciplines and institutions are our main force and source of encouragement.

Formal inauguration of the Academic Session (2008-2009) of Jñāna-Pravāha took place in the morning on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2008. On this occasion, the Chief Guest Prof. D. P. Singh, Vice-Chancellor, Banaras Hindu University underlined the importance of Kāśī in past and present and also the academic and cultural contributions of Jñāna-Pravāha. The Annual Jñāna-Pravāha Research Bulletin No. 11 was released on this occasion. Presidential Address was delivered by Prof. G. N. Samten, Vice-Chancellor, Central University of Tibetan Studies, Sarnath.

### **1. Seminars**

#### **1.1 Radiance of Kāśī :**

##### **Art & Archaeology of Kāśī (Earliest Time to 12<sup>th</sup> Century CE)**

A three-day National Seminar, organized in collaboration with Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, was held on August 2-4, 2008. The theme of the seminar was introduced by Prof. M.N.P. Tiwari, while the Keynote Address was delivered by Prof. Anand Krishna.

#### **1.2 Vaidik Dārśanika Prasthāna evaṁ Vedānta Sūtra**

One day academic session of 'Akhila Bhāratīya Vyāsa Mahotsava', organized in collaboration with Uttar Pradesh Sanskrit Sansthanam, Lucknow, was held on December 12, 2008. On this occasion, a seminar on the above theme and a painting competition for the children were organized.

#### **1.3 National Seminar on Veda**

A three-day National Seminar on Veda was organized on the subject वेदों में आधिभौतिक तत्त्व एवं वेदाङ्ग-ज्योतिष under the joint auspices of Jñāna-Pravāha, Maharshi Sandipani



Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthana, Ujjain and Sri Pattabhiraama Shastri Veda Mimamsa Anusandhana Kendra, Varanasi from February 23 to 25, 2009. The Keynote Address in the seminar was delivered by Prof. Hare Krishna Shatapathi, Vice-Chancellor, National Sanskrit University, Tirupati. Through such seminars, the Institution intends to promote research into the Vedic wisdom.

#### **1.4 Purāna-Parva : Cultural Glimpses from the Brahmāṇḍa Purāna**

This is one of the annual features of Jñāna-Pravāha, which intends to bring out the cultural components of the Purānic literature through the churning of one *Purāna* every year. This year, *Brahmāṇḍa Purāna* was taken up for the purpose and a three-day seminar was organized from March 20 to 22, 2009.

### **2. Lectures**

#### **2.1 Memorial Lectures :**

1. James Prinsep Memorial Lecture on *Kāśī: History Through Coins* by Dr. Sanjay Garg, Asst. Director, Archives, New Delhi, on November 27, 2008.
2. Prof. R.C.Sharma Memorial Lecture on *Content, Context and Concept: Design and Programme in the Art of Ancient Indian Coins* by Dr. Shailendra Bhandare, Assistant Keeper, South Asian Numismatics, Ashmolean Museum & Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, U.K. on February 7, 2009.

#### **2.2 Special Lectures :**

1. *Research Methodology* on September 16, 2008 by Prof. M.N.P.Tiwari, Varanasi.
2. Two lectures on the *Yoginī Cult in India* were organized in collaboration with the Embassy of Switzerland, New Delhi and Kriti Gallery, Varanasi on September 30, 2008. The speakers were Ms. Stella Dupuis, Switzerland and Dr. Anamika Roy, Allahabad.
3. *Atharvaveda kī Paramaparā evaṁ usakī Upādeyatā* on December 6, 2008 by Prof. S.S.Bahulkar, Varanasi.
4. *Bhāratīya Navajāgarāṇa evaṁ Swami Vivekanand* on January 12, 2009 by Prof. Awadhesh Pradhan, Varanasi.
5. *Kūṭiyatṭam : An Introductory Profile* on February 14, 2009 by Dr. V. R. Prabodhachandran Nayar, Thiruvananthapuram.
6. *Indian and Nepalese Stone Sculpture* on February 17, 2009 by Prof. Adalbert J. Gail, Germany.



7. *An Inscribed Candramaṇḍala from Nepal* on March 3, 2009 by Dr. Gouriswar Bhattacharya, Germany.
8. *A Unique Buddhist Sūrya Sculpture with Graha Figures from Nepal* on March 3, 2009 by Mr. Gerd J. R. Mevissen, Germany.

### **3. Higher Research projects**

#### **3.1 Aśoka: The Man and The King**

The above project is progressing well under the renowned scholar of epigraphy and Senior Fellow of Jñāna-Pravāha Prof. K.K. Thaplyal (Lucknow). Incorporation of some new discoveries of the Aśokan inscriptions and their interpretations are the hallmarks of the work. The project is likely to be completed by the beginning of 2010.

#### **3.1 Unique and Rare Indian Sculptures**

An intensive study in the form of preparation of analytical directory of Unique, Rare and Iconographically Extraordinary Brahmanical Sculptures of India in three volumes, under the title *Śilpa-sahasradala* is undertaken jointly by Dr. N.P. Joshi, Hon. Ācarya of Jñāna-Pravāha and Dr. A. L. Srivastava, Bhilai. The first volume comprising images of Gaṇapati, Skanda and Śiva is in press. The second volume discussing the images of Viṣṇu, Lokapālas, Upadevatās and Devapattas is nearing completion, while the third volume is in progress.

#### **3.3 Rāmalilā of Kāśī**

The project on *Rāmalilā of Kāśī* in collaboration with Ayodhya Shodha Sansthan, Ayodhya is under progress to highlight its history, traditional aspects, features and development alongwith illustrations. The project also discusses the contribution of this festival in the cultural and social aspects of Kāśī.

### **4. In-depth study courses**

#### **4.1 Mauryan Inscriptions - Language and Scripts**

Prof. K. K. Thaplyal of Lucknow conducted a week-long (September 6-12, 2008) course on the above subject. The Chief Guest of valedictory session Prof. T. P. Verma distributed certificates to forty-nine participants.

#### **4.2 Art of Khajuraho**

Dr. Devangana Desai of Mumbai, Sri S. M. Naqvi of Lucknow, Dr. N. P. Joshi, Prof. T. P. Verma and Prof. M. N. P. Tiwari of Varanasi conducted a course on *Art of*



*Khajuraho* from November 6 to 12, 2008. The fifty-six students received the certificates from the well known art historian and Chief Guest of the valedictory function Prof. Anand Krishna.

### **4.3 Gupta Inscriptions - Language and Scripts**

Prof. K. K. Thaplyal conducted the above course from January 6 to 12, 2009. The Chief Guest of valedictory function Prof. Awadhesh Pradhan of Banaras Hindu University distributed certificates to twenty-three participants.

### **4.4 Punch-marked, Indo-Greek, Kuṣāṇa and Gupta Coins**

A course on the above subject was organized from February 8 to 10, 2009, which was conducted by Dr. Shailendra Bhandare, Assistant Keeper, South Asian Numismatics, Ashmolean Museum & Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, U.K. 27 students participated in the course.

## **5. Workshops**

### **5.1 Nathadwara Painting and Its Technique**

A workshop on *Nathadwara Painting and Its Technique* was organized from November 12 to 18, 2008. Master artist of this style Sri Raja Ram Sharma of Udaipur conducted the workshop under the guidance of Prof. Anjan Chakraverty of Banaras Hindu University. The workshop was followed by a lecture on Tradition and Technique of Pichawai Paintings of Nathadwara by the Chief Guest Prof. Kalyan Krishna of B.H.U. 34 participants received certificates at the end.

## **6. Events**

**6.1** An Exhibition on Sketches of Yoginīs by Mr. Edmundo Moure of Switzerland was put up at during the special lectures on the Yoginī Cult in India on September 30, 2008. The programme was organized in collaboration with the Embassy of Switzerland, New Delhi and Kriti Gallery, Varanasi.

**6.2** During the visit of the delegates of the International Conference on 'Democracy in Our Time: The Past & Future of the Enlightenment' a classical vocal recital by the celebrated artist of Banaras *gharānā* Pandit Chhannulal Mishra was organized on December 19, 2008.

**6.3** A powerful stage performance of Sanskrit theatre *Kūṭiyattam* was held in collaboration with the Kuttiyattam Kendra, Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala) at Prof. K. N. Udappa Auditorium, Banaras Hindu University on February 15, 2009, which was highly lauded by the audience.



- 6.4 The Śrauta Yāga-*Mitravindā-iṣṭi* was performed on February 23, 2009 by Ahitagni Mahadeva Shastri Agnihotri and his group from Buldhana, Maharashtra along with other renowned priests from Nasik and Varanasi. This event aims at reviving our traditional *yajña* system. Importantly, the sacred fire is preserved throughout the year.
- 6.5 A musical concert *Gulab Badi* was organized in collaboration with Sangeet Parishad, Varanasi on March 15, 2009. In this event of music and festivity the great exponent of classical *gāyakī* and gem of Kāśī Padmabhushan Smt. Girija Devi rendered vocal recital.
- 6.6 A series of special lectures on Mughal Paintings was delivered by Prof. Anand Krishna for the student of Wisconsin University, U.S.A.

## 7. Prerañā-Pravāha (youth service)

### 7.1 Chandogāna: Pāṭha, Prayoga aur Gāna

A demonstration-cum-lecture on classical Sanskrit and matrices under the above title was presented in collaboration with Sanskrit Mātṛmaṇḍalam, Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Varanasi on September 27, 2008.

### 7.2 Sanskrit Antyākṣari on Kalidasa

A specific *antyaṅkṣari* on the works of celebrated poet Kalidasa was organized on October 4, 2008, which was presided over by Prof. Yugal Kishor Mishra, Vice-Chancellor, Jagadguru Ramanandacharya Rajasthan Sanskrit University, Jaipur.

### 7.3 Quiz on Heritage

A Quiz on *Heritage* for Senior School Children was held on October 18, 2008. Certificates to all the participants were distributed by Dr. N. P. Joshi, Hon. Acharya of Jñāna-Pravāha.

### 7.4 Gītā Antyākṣari

The *Antyākṣari* on the verses of Śrīma Bhāgavata Gītā was held on November 22, 2008.

### 7.5 Mānasa Antyākṣari

An *antyaṅkṣari* based on *Rāmacaritamānasa* of Goswami Tulsidas was organized on December 18, 2008. Prof. Shriniwas Pandey of Banaras Hindu University was the Chief Guest.



## **7.6 Visits and Interaction**

Teachers and students of different standards from various schools, colleges and universities frequently visit Jñāna-Pravāha to develop familiarity with the cultural heritage of India through interaction and also to see and appreciate the antiquities preserved in our Museum. This year, the teachers and students of Delhi Public School, Dayawati Modi Academy, Gramyanchal Mahila Vidyapeeth Mahavidyalaya and Little Montessori School of Varanasi visited the Institution.

## **8. Special Visits**

A number of distinguished individuals, groups and academic organizations from India and abroad are attracted towards the Institution. The important visitors of this academic year include Ms. Anshu Vaish, Former Director General, A.S.I., New Delhi (October 1, 2008); Mr. Jean M. Debontte, Ambassador of Belgium, New Delhi (December 14, 2008); Delegates of International Conference on Democracy in Our Time: The Past and future of Enlightenment (December 19, 2008); Sri K. N. Shrivastava, Director General, A.S.I., New Delhi; Sri Navin Chawla, Chief Election Commissioner of India (April 5, 2009); Śrī Kāñcīkāmakoṭī Pīṭhādhiśvara Jagadguru Śaṅkarācārya Sri Jayendra Saraswatiji Maharaj (April 8, 2009) Sri N. Gopalaswami, Former Chief Election Commissioner of India (May 3, 2009) and others.

## **9. Survey and Documentation**

Survey and documentation is a regular feature of Jñāna-Pravāha. Under this programme, number of important sites, festivals, ceremonies, etc. are being surveyed and documented. During 2008-2009, the vicinity of Mughalsarai, Chunar, Chandauli, Kapasethi, etc. was explored to find out the heritage potentiality of these sites. Besides, the on-going photo documentaiton of the important spots and events in and around Varanasi has also made good progress under the guidance of Hon. Director Prof. Kamal Giri.

### **New Aśokan Inscription :**

A new Minor Rock Edict of the Mauryan ruler Aśoka came to light this year from a cave in the Kaimur range at Ratanpurwa in the Bhabhua distrtrict of Bihar. The members of survey team Dr. Niraj Pandey and Sri Samrat Chakraborty visited the site on January 12, 2009 and documented all the details of this important inscription. It was deciphered by the Senior Fellow of Jñāna-Pravāha Prof. K. K. Thaplyal, with the assistance of Dr. Niraj Pandey and Sri Chandraneel Sharma, Research



Fellows of the Institution. Subsequently, a monograph on this Aśokan inscription was published by the Institution in February 2009, which has been written by Prof. K. K. Thaplyal, an erudite scholar of Indian Epigraphy.

## **10. Śilpaśālā - The handicraft atelier**

*Śilpaśālā - Art & Craft Development and Promotion Wing* of Jñāna-Pravāha was launched in June 2008 with a view to preserve and promote the fast diminishing traditional art and craft of the ancient city of Varanasi. Once known for its unique and multifarious handicrafts, the city is now left with a handful of artisans working, rather struggling in the fast changing and challenging scenario. In fact, the artists working with wood, clay, metal, paper, stone, etc. can now be counted on fingertips, which certainly is an alarming situation. The Institution has hence decided to make an effort to encourage such artists to come out with new creations. Required facilities are provided to them so that the new generation also comes forward and could contribute in salvaging these dying traditional arts and crafts of Varanasi. The Handicraft Atelier at Jñāna-Pravāha is working and progressing well with new creations. The artists are making various objects in clay and metal - *repousses* and *aṣṭadhātu* casting - through traditional methods.

## **11. Honours & Awards**

This year fetched some memorable moments for some of the members of Jñāna-Pravāha family adorning its Governing Council and Academic Committees in the form of following honours/awards:

Prof. Yugal Kishor Mishra became the Vice-Chancellor of Jagadguru Ramanandacharya Rajasthan Sanskrit University, Jaipur.

Prof. G. Nawang Samten was awarded the prestigious 'Padmashri' award. He also assumed the high office of the Vice-Chancellor of Central University of Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi.

Dr. N. P. Joshi was conferred Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters (D. Litt.) by the Deccan College (Deemed University), Pune.

Prof. Maruti Nandan Prasad Tiwari was elected General Secretary of Indian Art History Congress, Guwahati.

## **12. Saṁskāra & Anuṣṭhāna Kendra**

*Jñāna-Pravāha* is also running *Saṁskāra & Anuṣṭhāna Kendra* since 2003 at



Meerghat, Varanasi. This is done on age old oriental style of *Gurukula*. The emphasis is laid on correct pronunciation and proper recitation of the Vedic hymns, performing of rites and rituals along with ceremonies, knowledge of *Jyotiṣa* (Astrology) and good grasp of Sanskrit grammar. The duration of the course is four years. Most of the passed out students of this Kendra are now absorbed in the society and the students of the present batch nearing completion are also confident of taking over the responsibilities as well-versed *purohits* (priests). The students of the Kendra from this year are further enjoying the facilities of appearing in the 'Pūrva-madhyamā' Examination of the Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, Varanasi.

### 13. Social Service

The Charitable Homeopathic Dispensary run by the institution and managed by Dr. Purnendu Chakraborty is quite popular among the patients, who come from nearby and far off urban and rural areas to avail of this facility. About 20,000 patients took the benefit of the Dispensary this year.

### 14. Mumbai and Kolkata Centres

In July 2008, Jñāna-Pravāha, Mumbai (JPM) entered its second year of existence. As in 2007-08, the year 2008-09 also saw a range of programmes.

The year began with the launch of a new series - *Iconic Images* - under which eminent artists, art historians and critics were invited to speak on any one work of art they consider of iconic value. The series was kicked off with a lecture on Atul Dodiya's 'Gaṅgāvatarāṇa: After Raja Ravi Varma' by the eminent curator and art historian Ranjit Hoskote. Subsequent speakers under this series were scholars like Dr. Shailendra Bhandare, Dr. Pratapaditya Pal, Dr. A.P. Jamkhedkar, Prof. Rachel Dwyer, Kaushik Bhowmik and the artist Gieve Patel.

The second programme initiated by JPM was *Dhvani - Resurrecting Melody*, intended as a series of intimate listening sessions for lovers of music, both lay persons and connoisseurs.

The two flagship initiatives of Jñāna-Pravāha - *Indian Aesthetics* and *Community Engagement* - continued to throw up many interesting programmes. One such, under Community Engagement, was 'Pecha Kucha' which showcased new work in the areas of architecture, design, photography and film. With its innovative format; this programme attracted a younger crowd. A very different sort of programme under the same initiative was 'An Evening with Bei Dao', wherein the Chinese Nobel



Laureate read from his work and answered questions from the audience. At the end of year, a week-long performance was run of Three Short Plays by Ranjit Hoskote, directed by Avaan Patel, and a retrospective of the work of the noted Chennai based filmmaker and video artist, Soudhamini.

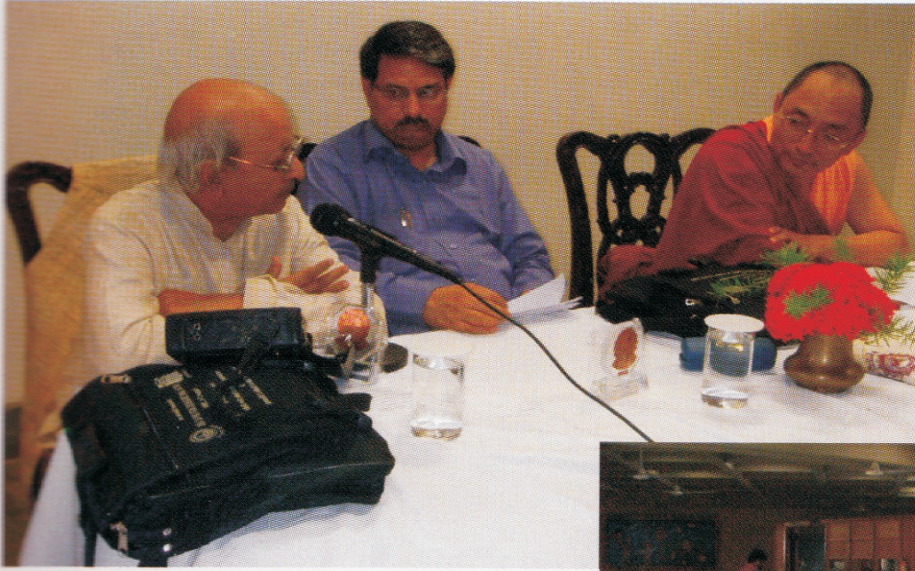
Our second major initiative, Indian Aesthetics, included a talk by the noted scholar Anna Dallapiccola on South Indian Painting and Dr. Kirit Mankodi's lecture titled 'Divine Proxies: the Devata 'Masks' of Himachal'. Like every year, this year too JPM invited two eminent scholars to conduct a lecture series. Prof. Tapati Guha Thakurta spoke on the subject, 'Nationalism and Modernism in Indian Art: Cameos of an Early Regional History' and Dr. George Michell gave a series of four lectures on 'The Later Temple Architecture of India: Chronologies, Revivals, Innovations, Borrowings'.

The most significant development of this academic year was the introduction of the semester long programme in *Art, Criticism and Theory* (A.C.T.). This path breaking course, which seeks to equip participants with the critical skills essential to writing about art, received a good response - 17 students registered in the first year itself. The faculty for the course is drawn from a pool of art historians, curators and artists including Shivaji Pannikker, Nancy Adajania, Abhay Sardesai, Jitish Kallat, Prabodh Parikh and George Jose.

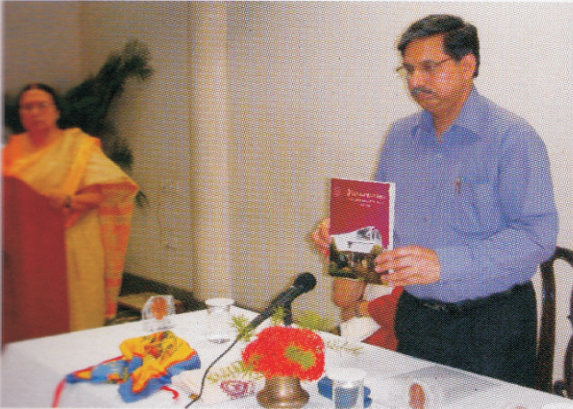
The Post Graduate Diploma in Indian Aesthetics took in 41 students from different backgrounds. This year's course included two lecture series mentioned above. The current batch of this programme will graduate in July 2009.

Under the able guidance of Pandit Vijay Kichlu, Convenor, the Kolkata Centre of Jñāna-Pravāha is running well. It offers scholarships for the promotion of Indian Classical Music in the tradition of *Guru-Śiṣya-Paramparā*. At present, seven scholars are getting scholarships under the renowned *gurus* from Kolkata, Mumbai and Delhi.





Beginning of Academic Session  
2008-2009







Ms. Anshu Vaish, Former D.G., A.S.I.



Shri K.N. Srivastava, D.G., A.S.I.



Mr. Jean M. Debonotte, Ambassador of Belgium



Delegates of International Conference on Democracy in Our Time : The Past & Future of Enlightenment





Shri N. Gopaldaswami, Former C.E.C.



Shri Navin Chawla, Chief Election Commissioner



Jagadguru Shankaracharya  
Shri Jayendra Saraswatiji Maharaj, Kanchi



Shri Suresh Neotia, Smt. Krishna Kumar,  
Shri Suhel Seth, Shri Rahul Jain

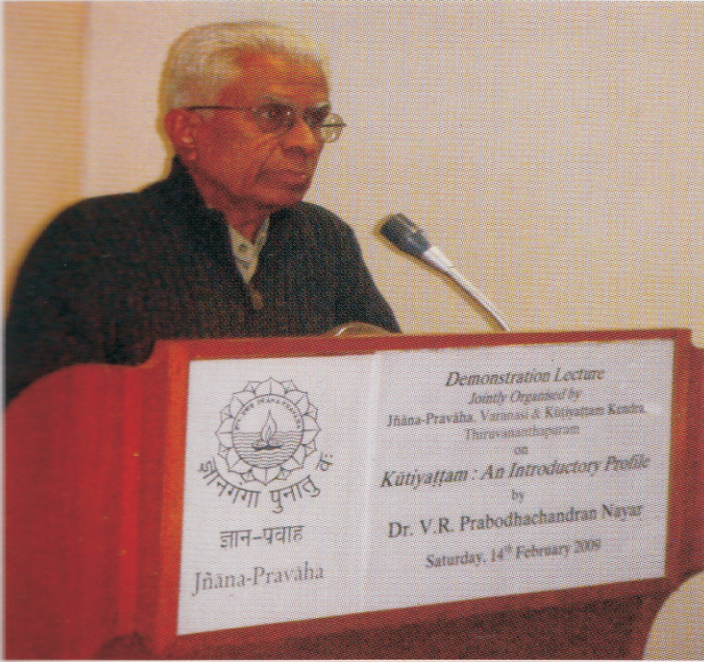




Gulab-Badi : Padmabhushan Smt. Girija Devi  
15th March 2009







Lecture-Demonstration & Performance of Kūṭiyāṭṭam



Vocal Recital by Pt. Chhannulal Mishra





Mitravindeṣṭi Śrauta Yāga







Budding Priests of Samskāra & Anuṣṭhāna Kendra



Restoration of Śiva Temple



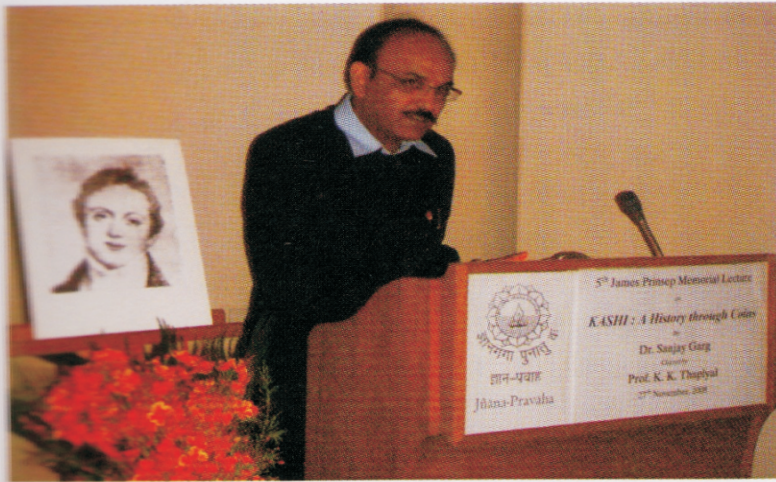




Seminars







Memorial Lectures

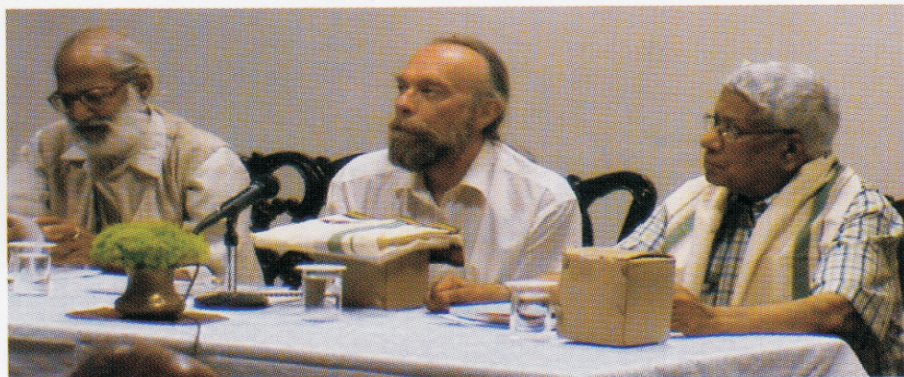


Release of Monograph on Ratanpurwa Inscription of Aśoka

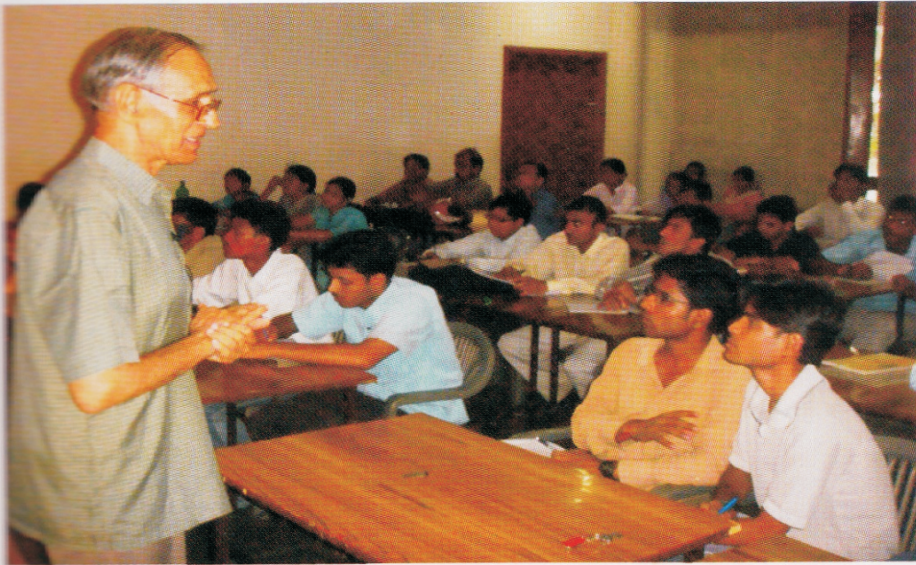




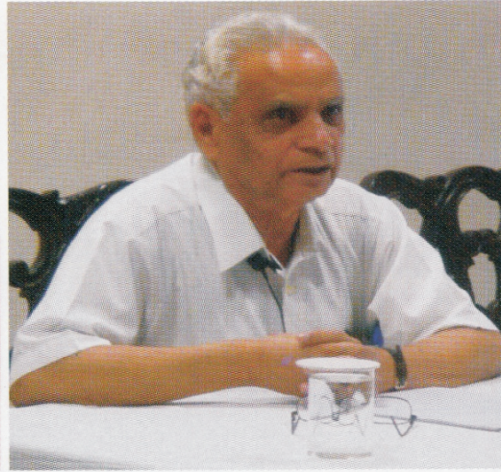
Special Lectures





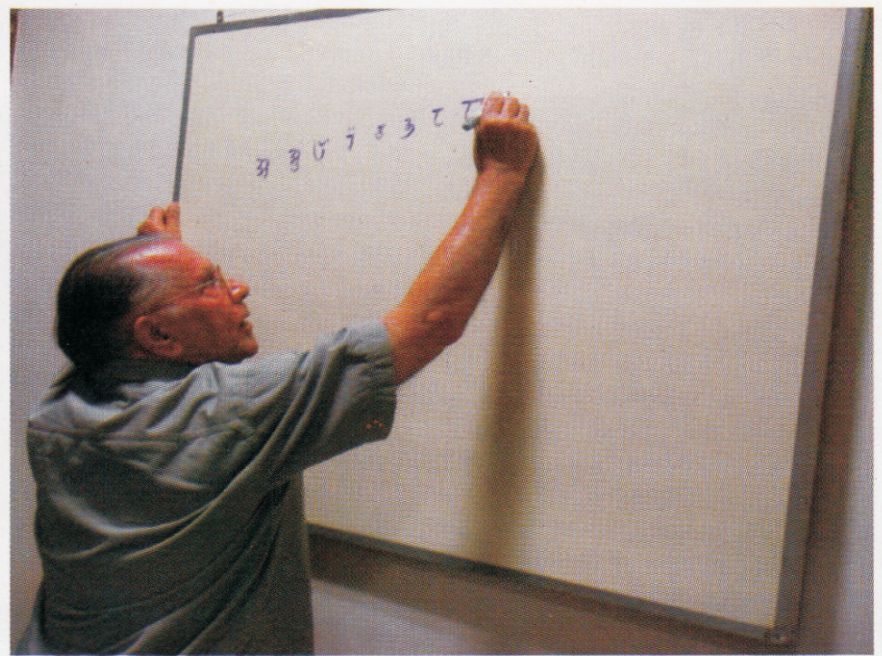


In-depth Study Courses





Workshops



Special Classes



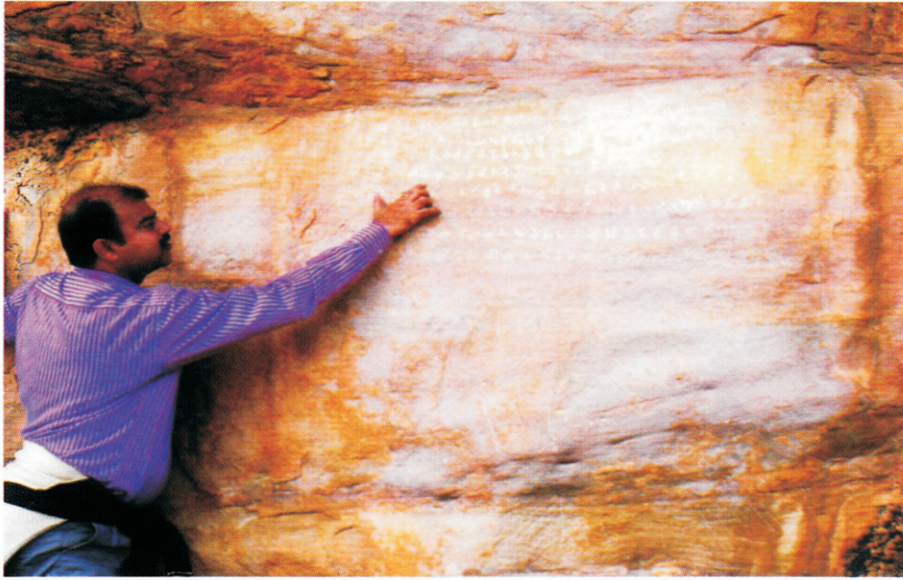




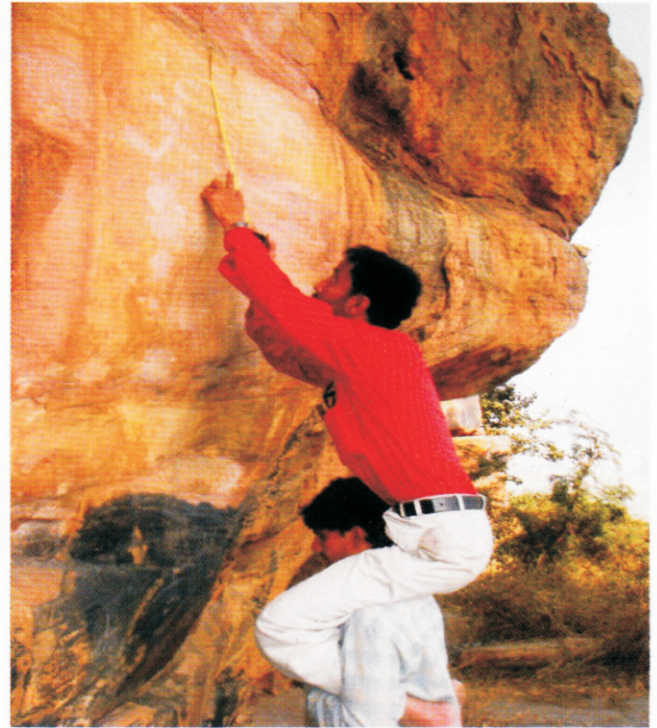
Prerāṇā-Pravāha







Discovery of New Aśokan Inscription, Ratanpurwa



Exploration at Chunar



Copper Coin Hoard and Sculptures,  
Kuru Village, Kapasethi







Artisans of  
Handicraft Atelier  
at Work





Jñāna-Pravāha Atelier Products



JPA.08



JPA.06



JPA.17



JPA.12



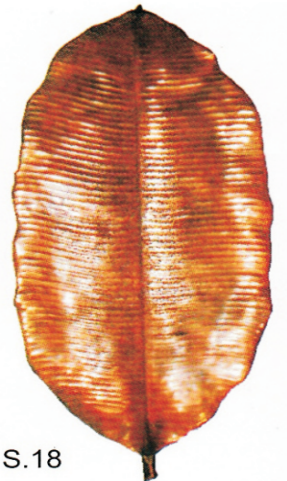
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S.05



S.25



S.18



JPA.18



S.21



JPBP.01



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