



JÑĀNA-PRAVĀHA
Centre for Cultural Studies & Research
Varanasi

Invocation

प्रसादाद्विश्वनाथस्य काश्यां भागीरथीतटे ।
वृद्धिर्ज्ञानप्रवाहे स्यात् संस्कृतेश्चानुशीलने ॥

*prasādādvīśvanāthasya kāśyāṁ bhāgīrathītaṭe ।
vṛddhirjñānapravāhe syāt saṁskṛteścānuśīlane ॥*

*Nourished with the Grace of Lord Viśvanātha, Jñāna-Pravāha rests on the bank of Gaṅgā in Kāśī,
Dedicated to the Pursuit of Knowledge and Enrichment of Culture.*

Aims & Objectives

- ◆ Bring together scholars of various nationalities on a common platform of cultural expression.
- ◆ Foster in-depth study of ancient & obscure Indian scripts.
- ◆ Encourage & Support advance research in Indian art, culture, archaeology and metaphysics.
- ◆ Organize seminars, lectures, advanced study courses and workshops.
- ◆ Support artisans to preserve their hereditary skills of handicrafts.
- ◆ Nurture cultural values among young generation through interaction.
- ◆ Train novitiates for learned priesthood to cater the needs of society.
- ◆ Revive the performance of Sanskrit theatre and Vedic *yajña*.
- ◆ Endow scholarships and fellowships to young scholars for further training in Indian classical music and study Indian art & culture.
- ◆ Explore, Excavate and Document heritage sites and ancient ruins of historical value.



Jñāna-Pravāha at a Glance

2020-2021

Director's Note

It is a matter of pleasure for us to present the *Annual Report of Jñāna-Pravāha - 2020-2021*. This illustrated publication unveils the events organized by the Institution in the last Academic Session, commencing on 1st of August 2020.

The esteemed members of our Governing Council and various Academic Committees form the backbone of Jñāna-Pravāha. It is due to their generous support and counselling that the Institution has been successfully organizing multifaceted cultural events all these years. The Jñāna-Pravāha will complete its 25th year of existence on the Ramanavami day (10th April 2022). We take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to all the scholars who have been a part of this long and fruitful journey. Some of them left for their heavenly abode in the middle of this journey. With due respect to their valuable contribution, we pay our reverential homage to all of them.

The Academic Year under review was extremely unpredictable as it proceeded through the threat of Covid-19 pandemic and a series of lockdowns. It was for the first time that no significant event could be held to mark the commencement of the new Academic Session on August 1, 2020. Even the regular and annual features also could not be accomplished. Besides two major programmes, viz. (1) *Technical Training Courses in Archaeology* (four courses conducted under this title by Prof. Vidula Jayaswal in February 2021), and (2) a workshop on *Ancient Indian Brahmi Script* (conducted by Dr. Jagdishwar Pandey and Dr. Niraj Pandey in March 2021), all the other events were executed in-house with precautionary measures and without large gathering of people.

We are happy to announce that Prof. Vidula Jayaswal, Fellow, Prof. R.C. Sharma Chair for Art & Archaeology, Jñāna-Pravāha, was awarded the prestigious *Dr. V.S. Wakankar National Award 2015-16* through video conferencing at Jñāna-Pravāha on 7th August 2020 by the Ministry of Culture, Government of Madhya Pradesh. She also conceived, designed and published a beautiful twelve-month Calendar for the Institution which was released in-house in January 2021. The on-going Higher Research Projects undertaken by eminent scholars under the 'Scholar-in-Residence' scheme continued as usual.

The Reference Library was further enriched with the addition of books and journals. The Museum (*Kalamandapa*) and the Art & Craft Development and Promotion Wing (*Shilpashala*) practically were silent this year as these remained closed for the visitors most of the time. The 'Jñāna-Pravāha Samskara and Anushthana Kendra' at Meerghat was also at rest and the students were sent back to their respective homes in time to stay safe and secured.

The unparalleled guidance and suggestions furnished by Prof. Yugal Kishor Mishra Acharya, Jñāna-Pravāha and Prof. Anjan Chakraverty towards execution of the multifarious programmes held at the Institution are gratefully acknowledged. The Jñāna-Pravāha is equally thankful to the students and friends from media for their continuous support.

Kamal Giri
(Prof. Kamal Giri)

Jñāna-Pravāha Bodies

TRUSTEES

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Smt. Bimla Poddar: Managing Trustee
Smt. Smriti Morarka: Trustee
Prof. Yugal Kishor Mishra: Trustee
Prof. Anjan Chakraverty: Trustee

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Smt. Bimla Poddar: Managing Trustee
Prof. Yugal Kishor Mishra: Hon. Acharya
Former VC, JRRSU, Jaipur
Prof. Anjan Chakraverty
Prof. G. Ngawang Samten, VC, CUTS, Sarnath
Prof. Maruti Nandan Prasad Tiwari
Prof. Kamal Giri: Hon. Director
Prof. Vidula Jayaswal: Fellow, Prof. R.C. Sharma Chair

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Former, DG/VC, National Museum/Institute, New Delhi
Prof. Arvind Kumar Singh
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Assistant Keeper, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, UK
Prof. Vidula Jayaswal: Member, Governing Council

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Prof. Shree Kishor Mishra: Member
Prof. Gopal Prasad Sharma: Member
Prof. Kamal Giri: Member
Prof. Yugal Kishor Mishra: Member/Coordinator

Jñāna-Pravāha, Mumbai (JPM)

Prof. Rashmi Poddar: Hon. Director
Smt. Smriti Morarka: Trustee

Jñāna-Pravāha Scholarship for Indian Classical Music, Kolkata

Governing Body:

Smt. Bimla Poddar
Shri Ramesh Tapuria
Smt. Madhu Neotia

Jñāna-Pravāha Trust was registered on June 26, 1997 under the Registrar of Assurances, Reg. No. being 1110 of 1997 and is also registered under section 12A of IT Act 1961. Registration No. being DIT-(E)T 122/8E/86/97-98 dated 14.01.1998. The Trust is exempted from Income Tax under section 80G.

Prof. R. C. Sharma Chair for Art & Archaeology

Dr. V.S. Wakankar National Award conferred on Prof. Vidula Jayaswal

7th August 2020 was the day to be rejoiced by Jñāna-Pravāha as one of its senior fraternity Prof. Vidula Jayaswal was conferred Dr. V.S. Wakankar National Award for the year 2015-16 by Smt. Usha Thakur, Minister of Culture, Government of Madhya Pradesh. One of the most coveted academic recognitions, Dr. Wakankar National Award, honours eminent scholars of History of Arts and Archaeology for their original and valuable research contributions. The awardee receives a well framed citation and a token of appreciation of Rs 2 Lakh in a felicitation ceremony held at Bhopal. Due to the pandemic Covid-19, the function was organized online at Jñāna-Pravāha by Dr. Ramesh Yadav, Archaeological officer of the Directorate of Archaeology, Government of Madhya Pradesh. The Minister of Culture and senior officers of the Government of Madhya Pradesh joined from Bhopal. As mentioned in the citation, Prof. Jayaswal is honoured for conducting excavations of about a dozen important sites, covering the span between Prehistoric and Historical periods and publishing the report of each one of these. She has authored two dozen monographs and books and around eighty research papers.



Prof. Vidula Jayaswal and Dr. Ramesh Yadav during the Online Award Function



Dr. Ramesh Yadav presented the Citation and the Cheque to Prof. Vidula Jayaswal on behalf of the Minister Culture Government of Madhya Pradesh



Members of Jñāna-Pravāha, Government of Madhya Pradesh and Prof. Jayaswal rejoicing the Award after the function

Studies in Archaeology during 2020-2021

The report on the excavations of Saraswati Udyan and Shooltankeshwar which was sent to the publisher in the last session was finalized for printing. Entitled *Archaeology and Mythology of Varanasi - Report on Excavations at Shooltankeshwar and Saraswati Udyan*, was authored by Prof. Vidula Jayaswal. The final printing of the Report got delayed due to the lockdowns in succession.

The ongoing analysis of archaeological findings by the team lead by Prof. Vidula Jayaswal in the peripheral region of Varanasi, focused this year on the site Bhuili. A small hillock of sandstone, Bhuili was nucleus of stone chiselling during historical period. Located in Chunar *tahsil*, this site was brought to notice by Cunningham in 1877-78. The visit of the team from Jñāna-Pravāha under the leadership of Dr. Arvind Kumar Singh and Dr. Subhash Chandra Yadav (2019) could record more than hundred inscriptions, about a dozen mason's marks, symbols and engravings. In view to maintain precision in the documentation, the entire hill at Bhuili was mapped by GPS, and each of the epigraphs and other engravings was placed within its readings. The report on this important site was prepared during the session under consideration.

Prof A.K. Singh deciphered all the hundred and seven epigraphs. Besides highlighting the contents, he has also dated these on palaeographic grounds between fifth century CE and modern times. Name of stone carvers and architects of sixth and seventh centuries CE could be identified due to the suffix of *shilakutta* and *vastukara*. This is a significant information not commonly found in early historical times. The catalogue of stone carvings from the site is prepared by Dr. Meera Sharma. Dated stylistically in seventh-eighth centuries CE, the group appears to belong to Shiva temples.



Sandstone hillock containing inscriptions and engraved drawings, Bhuili



Short epigraphs engraved on Bhuli hill



Sketch of Shiva-linga and inscription recording the name of the engraver, Bhuli

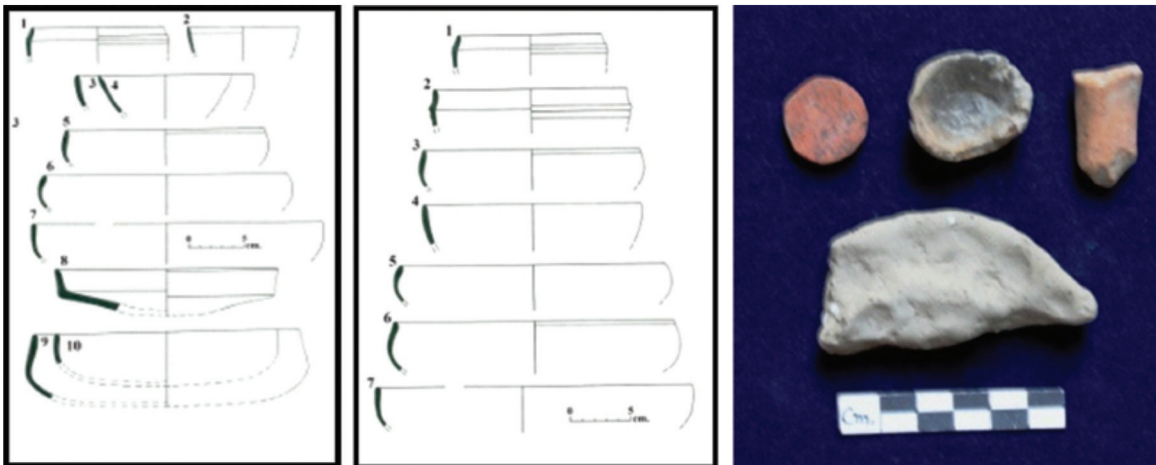


Sculptures found at the foothill, Bhuli



Dr. Meera Sharma preparing catalogue of stone carvings

A small habitation mound near the hill was under occupation during early Historical period. As the main pottery found from the cuttings of the ancient deposits were Late Northern Black Polished, Grey and Red Wares. The report of these findings was prepared by Prof. Vidula Jayaswal. The drawings of antiquities were prepared by Shri Ajay Kumar Chakrawal.



Pottery and fragments of terracotta figures, Bhulli

The period of long lockdown during 2020, due to Covid-19, made us confined in our homes. The task of writing the report in hand, thus, could not continue. Prof. Jayaswal utilized this period for writing one of the volumes of a series, in which she proposes to acquaint general readers, non-archaeologists, to be familiar with recent studies on the past. She wrote a monograph entitled *Clay Art for Folk Rituals of Ganga Plain*, which incorporates significant notes of her earlier publications based on the ethnographic and archaeological field studies. All the main aspects of ancient and modern terracotta - techniques, forms, utility, workshops, artisans and socio-economy of the craft dealt in this have replaced technical details of earlier publications with interpretative and simple narrations.



Prof. Jayaswal with a woman artisan at Navanaga Kumhara-tola, Gorakhpur

Modern ritual terracottas of Gorakhpur district



View of a terracotta production workshop, Varanasi



Clay figures of ancient times found from Khairadih (left) and Rajghat (right)



Commencement of Academic Session 2020-2021

Needless to mention that it was for the first time in the history of Jñāna-Pravāha that due to Covid-19 threat, no formal programme could be organized to mark the beginning of the new Academic Year on 1st of August 2020. The publications are released on that particular day every year. In the year under review, a *Rudrabhisheka* was performed on 27th July 2020 for the well-being of all and the two annual publications of the Institution, viz. *Jñāna-Pravāha Research Journal No.XXIII (2019-2020)* and the *Annual Report of Jñāna-Pravāha - 2019-2020 At a Glance*, were released on the occasion.



Rudrabhisheka



Release of the Publications

Advanced Study Courses/Workshops

Technical Training Courses in Archaeology

It was felt by Prof. Vidula Jayaswal that the practical training to the students of Indian Archaeology is not imparted in satisfactory amount at the Graduate and the Post-Graduate levels by most of the teaching institutions. As a result of which they often are neither able to understand the published details, nor are capable of communicating the significance of their own findings. Proper documentation of ancient remains, an imperative for Archaeology is aided with technical methods, and is a language to communicate the specification of discoveries. Each of the artefact or the structure which are exposed while excavating an ancient site, or is a surface discovery, is an important source of human history, and needs to be recorded and interpreted for revealing our past. Tools made of stone, bone or horn of the Prehistoric times, for instance, were the basic manmade category which catered to the daily needs of the man and, the forms and techniques of tool-kits developed parallel to the physical capacity of man. Similarly, earthen pots which served the edible needs and catered to the habits of the historical times, reflect separate line of history and development of potting technologies. Shelter, another basic need of man also has an individual history of development, of building technologies, as well as the changing socio-economic status of the society. All the archaeological remains thus, have to be documented by using select technical methods, for example, three dimensional drawings and photography, and by narrating the details in words. Three main categories of archaeological remains, viz. *Tools of the Stone Age*, *Ceramics of the Ancient Period* and *Ancient Structures* were selected for designing these courses.

The courses were designed and co-ordinated by Prof. Vidula Jayaswal. The technical training of the courses was imparted by Shri Rambadan, Shri Shiva Kumar and Shri Shiva Shankar Prajapati, Senior Draftsmen of Archaeology, Banaras Hindu University, and Shri Ajay Kumar Chakrawal, Draftsman, Jñāna-Pravāha.



Introduction of the Technical Courses
by the Coordinator Prof. Vidula Jayaswal



Technical training experts Shri Ajay Chakrawal, Shri Rambadan
and Shri Shiva Kumar (left to right)

With precautionary measures, only 36 serious students from different institutions of Varanasi, Baroda, Pune, Ghazipur, Azamgarh, Garhwal and Amarkantak were selected for these courses. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, it was decided not to admit more than 10 participants for one course. But, willing participants for Course 1, were double than the proposed number. At the request of the students this course was repeated.



The participants of the Courses in the classroom

Course-1 : Documentation of Stone Age Remains : Drawing and Description of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic & Neolithic Tool-kits

In the long span of about two lakh years Man was not only living on hunting and gathering food from the nature, but his activities were performed primarily by stone. Stone tools thus become backbone of prehistoric studies. The fine divisions of the time is determined on account of the form and techniques of these artifacts.

- The background of Stone Age with its major divisions, i.e., Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic, and main tool types of each phase was explained to the participants by the Coordinator.
- Main tools of each period of Stone Age were discussed thereafter.
- Participants were then taught drawing tools and writing descriptions.
- They were also imparted training of conjoining method, to fix the basic form of flaking specimen by putting together its' small chipped parts. This helps in understanding in which way the tools were made.
- Participants were also explained drawing and documentation of tools in published reports on Prehistoric sites.
- Participants were given assignment to document the specimens drawn by them and also to note details of published drawings. This helped in ascertaining their understanding of the exercises designed for the course.
- All the assignments were assessed and discussed by the Coordinator with the individual participants.
- This course was conducted twice, first from 17th to 21st February 2021, and second from 23rd to 27th February 2021.



Prof. Vidula Jayaswal delivering lecture on the main aspects of Prehistoric tools

Students learning conjoining method



Students learning drawing a tool from Shri Rambadan

Prof. Jayaswal explaining a tool





Prof. Jayaswal checking assignments



Prof. Jayaswal explaining flaking technique with the help of tool-making debris



Chief Guest Smt. Krishna Neotia gave certificates to the students successfully completing Course-1



Participants with Coordinator after receiving certificate of Course-1 : Documentation of Prehistoric Tools



Prof. Kamal Giri, the Director and Chief Guest, gave certificates to students successfully completing Course-1 : Documentation of Prehistoric Tools (repeat course)



Participants with Managing Trustee, Director and Coordinator after receiving certificate of Course-1 : Documentation of Prehistoric Tools (repeat course)

Course-2: Documentation of Old Structures : Preparation and Description of Plan and Elevation of Buildings

Shelter is one of the main requirements of man. Its history starts from the Stone Age and continues till today. There are marked stages of development in the nature and technique of construction of shelters, which help dating archaeological horizons and determining the dwelling tendencies of ancient communities. From small groups of huts of semi-permanent nature in the Prehistoric times, the settlements developed into villages and, eventually, in cities. The use of durable material in the later stages helped elaborate architectural features as well as added elements of hygiene and utility. Documentation and three dimensional recording of structural remains, along with the details of material used, is another significant aspect of the archaeological studies.

- An introduction of the history of structures of Ancient India was felt necessary for the course, which was delivered in the form of an illustrated lecture by the Coordinator.



Prof. Vidula Jayaswal explaining the history of structures through computer

- The general format of recording structures at archaeological sites is by drawing plan and elevation. This was explained and also taught practically.
- Participants themselves prepared drawing of one structure and wrote details of it.
- They were given assignments to describe drawings of exposed structures from published archaeological reports.
- Co-ordinator examined and discussed assignments of each of the participant individually.
- This course was conducted between 16th and 20th February 2021.



Participants measuring plan of structure under the supervision of Shri Shiva Kumar



Participants learning drawing plan from Shri Shiv Kumar and Shri Rambadan



Participants learning drawing of elevation from Shri Ajay Kumar Chakrawal in front of a wall





Prof. Jayaswal discussing assignment with a student



Participant receiving certificate after the completion of Course from Smt. Bimla Poddar, Managing Trustee



Participants with Coordinator after receiving certificates of Course-2 : Documentation of Ancient Structures

Course-3 : Documentation of Ancient Ceramic : Drawing, Reconstruction and Description of Pottery

The most frequent finding of archaeological sites is large collection of fragments of earthen pots. Pottery is not only found in sufficient quantities, but it also changes its shape and texture every few centuries. It is therefore, the backbone of study of excavated remains. While excavating a site, it is possible to fix date and chronology of the entire habitation-deposit on the basis of the contemporary ceramics. Since associated with the edible requirements, earthen pots also reveal nature of their use in storage, cooking, serving and other daily utility, on account of which socio-economic format of the ancient societies are possible to reconstruct. Documentation of pottery requires a good grasp of draftsmanship. And, also the three dimensional recording needs skills of reconstruction.

- Initiated around 7th millennium BCE, the production of earthen pots has an interesting history of technique of its making. Time to time changes in the food habits might also have influenced pottery collections. An introduction to the history of ancient ceramic of India, therefore, was an essential background for the participants of the Course. This was complied by Prof. Jayaswal in the beginning.
- A number of clay pots of different shapes and sizes were purchased. These were broken, to demonstrate how the bulk of pot-fragments forms in ancient deposits. This collection of potsherds were classified and drawn by the participants.
- In view to give them first-hand experience of pottery of the ancient period, one of the studied collections from Rajghat site was made available to them. This enabled them to identify different types of fabric, texture and colours, which are typical to the early historic pottery.
- Participants were also made to study drawing and descriptions of Ancient Indian pottery published in the Archaeological Report.
- They were given assignment to describe drawings from the published Archaeological Reports.
- Co-ordinator examined and discussed assignments of each of the participant individually.
- This course was conducted between 23rd and 27th February 2021.



Participants attending Introductory lecture



Participants breaking modern pots under supervision of the Coordinator



Students learning pottery drawing from Shri Ajay (left) and Shri Shiva Shankar (right)



Prof. Jayaswal teaching pottery analysis (left) and checking assignments (right)



Chief Guest Prof. Yugal Kishor Mishra, Trustee and Acharya distributed Certificates to participants (left) & Prof. Kamal Giri, Director at the closing session of the courses (right)



Participants with Managing Trustee, Chief Guest & Coordinator after receiving certificates of Course-3 : Documentation of Ancient Ceramic

Ancient Indian *Brahmi* Script

The study, teaching and decipherment of ancient and obscure scripts of India like *Brahmi* and *Kharoshthi* have been the landmark programmes of Jñāna-Pravāha since its inception. Courses on these scripts have been organized several times in the past due to the heavy demand not only by the students, but also by the research scholars and teachers as well. On demand again from the students, a workshop on the *Ancient Indian Brahmi Script* was organized from 16th to 21st March 2021. It was conducted by Dr. Jagdishwar Pandey, Former Director, K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna and Dr. Niraj Kumar Pandey, Assistant Director, Jñāna-Pravāha, Varanasi.

Besides theoretical knowledge, the participants were also imparted with a good practice of writing the earliest Ashokan/Mauryan *Brahmi* script. A video recording of the discovery of the 18th Minor Rock Edict of Ashoka by Jñāna-Pravāha in the Kaimur Range at Bhabhua district (Bihar) was shown during the Course and the participants were encouraged to read it by themselves. A small book, *Brahmi Lipi Praveshika* authored by Dr. Jagdishwar Pandey, was given to all the participants. This Course met with a grand success as 27 students from Banaras Hindu University, Vasanta Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Vasanta College for Women (Rajghat) and J.D.I.F.T.D. (Lucknow) enthusiastically participated in the Course. Commissioner of Varanasi, Shri Deepak Agrawal, distributed the certificates to all the course participants during the valedictory function organized on 21st March 2021.



Shri L.K. Ladha honouring Dr. Jagdishwar Pandey



Dr. Chandra Neel Sharma honouring Dr. Niraj Kumar Pandey



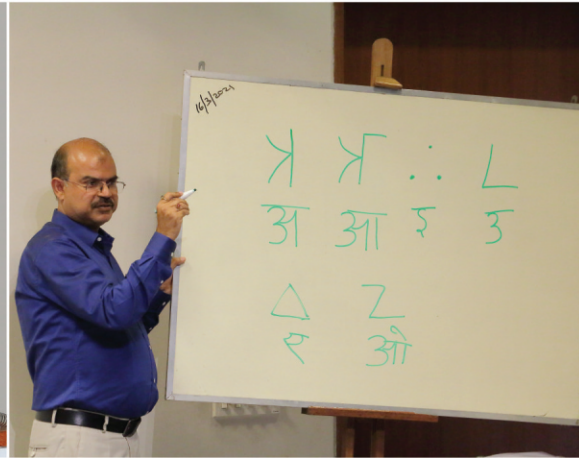
Welcome Address by Prof. Vidula Jayaswal



Introductory Lecture by Dr. Jagdishwar Pandey



Dr. Niraj Pandey describing the *Brahmi* script



Dr. Niraj Pandey introducing the *Brahmi* letters



Dr. Jagdishwar Pandey interacting with the students



Participants taking notes during the class



Participants giving exam on the final day



The Chief Guest Smt. & Shri Deepak Agrawal
Commissioner, Varanasi



Shri Deepak Agrawal distributing certificates to the participants



Valedictory Address by Shri Deepak Agrawal



Thanks giving by Prof. Yugal Kishor Mishra

Advance Study Series

Jñāna-Pravāha started the Series with the aim to preserve and promote the higher studies in Indian scriptures. It began this year with the lecture-series on *Description of Pratishakhya* (Vedic Grammar) which were delivered from 30th May to July 2021 by the eminent and renowned Vedic scholar Prof. Yugal Kishor Mishra. Selected participants, viz. Dr. Shilpa Singh (Assistant Professor, Sanskrit Department, Arts Faculty, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi) and Dr. Abhijeet Srivastava (Assistant Professor, Sanskrit Department, Delhi University, New Delhi) attended these Lectures.



Prof. Yugal Kishor Mishra speaking on 'Description of *Pratishakhya*'

Higher Research Projects

Under the 'Scholar-in-Residence' feature, eminent scholars of Indological Studies work on higher research projects to explore unpublished areas, which are eventually published by the Jñāna-Pravāha on completion. Some of the Research Projects completed recently are:

- (i) Dr. B.R. Mani, Former Director General/Vice-Chancellor, National Museum/Institute, New Delhi, undertook a three-year project entitled *Documentation of Inscriptions of Kashi and Capacity Building of Recording, Decipherment and Publication of Epigraphs*, which is almost complete and likely to be submitted in the current academic year.
- (ii) A project entitled *Wall Paintings of Banaras : Treasures from Mahamaya Temple* by the Hon. Director Prof. Kamal Giri is in the press.
- (iii) The manuscript and photographs of the project *Mughal Wall Paintings* undertaken by Dr. Asok Kumar Das, Former Director, Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, Jaipur were finally submitted by the author and are ready for the press.
- (iv) The project of Dr. Syamali Das on the *Study of Motifs in Baluchar Silk Textiles* is in the offing.
- (v) Prof. P.K. Mukhopadhyay completed the manuscript of his project, *India and Her Changing Self Perception* and currently editing the manuscript for publication.

Vedic Rituals

Rudrabhisheka : The Jñāna-Pravāha is sanctified on the Mahashivaratri day with the performance of the Vedic *Shrauta Yaga "Mitrawindeshti"* by the experts of this stream specially invited from Maharashtra. This event is organized every year on a grand scale. However, it could not be held in the year under review and, instead, an in-house *Rudrabhisheka* was performed on an elaborate scale to celebrate the Mahashivaratri on 11th March 2021.



Glimpses of Rudrabhisheka

Vedic Chanting : On the occasion of 'International Yoga Day', Jñāna-Pravāha presented a *Veda-Path* for the well being of all and prosperity of the country. This presentation was prepared on request from Sangeet Natak Akademi (Ministry of Culture, Government of India, New Delhi) to mark the valediction of the week-long 'Yoga-Parva' programme (21st-27th June 2021). The commentary on the essence of Vedic hymns was delivered by Prof. Yugal Kishor Mishra, while the chanting was recited by Prof. Gopal Prasad Sharma, Shri Durgesh Pandey and Shri Nikhil Shukla.



Commentary by Prof. Y. K. Mishra Chanting by Shri Nikhil Shukla, Prof. G.P. Sharma & Shri Durgesh Pandey (L-R)

Ganga-worship through Deep-dana : Lighted *deepaks* (lamps) were offered to the holy river Ganga on the Ganga Dashahara day (20st June 2021). Instead of regular *diyas*, which gives pollution to the river, the ones here were mounted on lotus-leaves and then released in the sacred river.



Lotus-leaf-lamps floating in Ganga

Ganga-arati : The Jñāna-Pravāha Family believes that the establishment and constant progress of the Institution is due to the blessings of *Baba Vishwanatha* (Lord Vishwanath) and *Maa Ganga* (Mother Ganga). All the activities here, therefore, commence with the oblation to Ganga - the Lifeline of India. Paying tribute to the holy river through *Ganga-arati* every evening is a part of daylong activities.



Daily Ganga-arati

Preservation of Yajna Fire : The worship of Energy (*Tejas*) is the core of Indian Culture since time immemorial. The two major sources of energy are - the Sun/Moon and the Fire (*Agni*), and therefore, they form the hub of all rituals and religious activities.

'Fire' worship is important because 'Agni' has been closely associated with the human beings more than any other deity since Vedic times, as 'Fire' was discovered to be extremely beneficial for survival. The ancient scriptures (*Shastras*) record that 'Agni-deva' serves as the medium between humans and the deities. The *Vedas* have declared 'Agni' to be the real 'Head' of any household. 'Agni' is declared to be compulsorily installed in every home as prescribed in the scriptures, it should be preserved and also worshipped. The 'Agni' installed as per prescribed rules is called '*Avasathya*' (Agni implanted as a deity in the house).

It is said that this 'Agni' should be preserved in every home and the 'Agnihotri-couple' (alternatively the *purohit* as the representative) should offer two oblations each during sunrise and sunset. With full devotion and reverence, one oblation is offered to 'Agni' and 'Sun-god', while the other to Parmeshvara Prajapati, the composer of this Creation. These offerings, for the conservation of the environment and development and well being of the whole Creation, are termed as '*Agnihotra*'.

Performance of Vedic *Shrauta Yaga "Mitravindeshti"* on the Mahashivaratri day is an annual feature of Jñāna-Pravāha. The 'Agni' of the *yajna* in the *Yajnasala* is then kept preserved with care throughout the year and oblations, as prescribed, are offered at the time of sunrise and sunset everyday with the desire to fetch good fortune and wellness for the environment, country and all living beings on this planet.



Daily worship of preserved fire

Navagraha-shanti-yaga : This *yajna* was performed on 20th March 2021 with the aim to seek boons for good health and blessed life for all during these tough hours.



Glimpses of Navagraha-shanti-yaga

Release of Calendar 2021

A beautiful twelve-month Calendar, published this year by the Institution, was released in-house by the Jñāna-Pravāha Family on 29th January 2021. Prof. Vidula Jayaswal developed the concept of this colourful Calendar and the wonderful pictures she selected while designing it were all snapped by Shri Samrat Chakravorty, Museum Assistant, Jñāna-Pravāha, Varanasi.



Smt. Smriti G. Morarka, Smt. Krishna Neotia, Prof. Vidula Jayaswal & Shri Samrat Chakravorty releasing the Calendar 2021

Samskara & Anushthana Kendra

Jñāna-Pravāha runs a separate Learning Centre named Samskara & Anushthana Kendra at Meer Ghat, Varanasi which primarily aims at grooming priests (*purohitas*) to be in service of the society. The three-year course is particularly designed to lay emphasis on correct pronunciation and proper recitation of the Vedic hymns, complete knowledge of rites and rituals and perform these ceremonies with perfection as prescribed in ancient Indian scriptures, knowledge of *Jyotisha* (Astrology) and a good grasp of Sanskrit grammar. The whole exercise is executed in traditional *Gurukula* style and this is achieved by the Kendra under the guidance of its Chairman Prof. Sudhanshu Shekhar Shastri and the Coordinator Prof. Yugal Kishor Mishra. All the former students are now earning their livelihood by being into active service of the society in various parts of the country.

Special Visits

A large number of dignitaries and distinguished people from India and abroad, *viz.* scholars, researchers, artists, film-makers, politicians, officers, tourists, etc., who came to Varanasi for some reason, have visited Jñāna-Pravāha also at least once since its foundation. Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi also marked his presence here in 2015. Every visitor expressed a great deal of appreciation about the quality of work being done by this Institute in serving, preserving and disseminating the Indian Culture. Indian and foreign group visits have also been quite frequent in the past years. However, the current year could witness less visitors due to prolonged lockdowns.



Shri Dattatreya Hosabale, General Secretary, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Lucknow (18.08.2020)



Shri Shashank Hemchand, Mumbai (23.01.2021)

Prof. Deepak Gautam, IMS, BHU (14.02.2021)

Kalamandapa (Museum)

The Museum of Jñāna-Pravāha, *Kalamandapa*, was inaugurated in 1999. Although small, but it boasts of some unique, rare and outstanding artefacts. Initially it housed the personal collection of Late Shri Suresh Neotia. Gradually it was enriched, slowly but continuously, down the years with the acquirement of more antiquities of various types from time to time. At present the Museum has a notable collection of **Paintings** (of almost all major schools: Pala, Western India, Provincial Mughal, Mewar, Bundi, Sirohi, Kishangarh, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Amer, Jaipur, Guler, Kangra, Mandi, Nalagarh, Raghogarh, Malwa, Orissa, Mysore, Company, Nepal, Tibet, etc.). These paintings were painted on palm-leaf, paper, *charba* (skin), cloth, wood, etc. The themes opted by the artists are religious scenes, garden party, sport, portraitures, hunting and battle scenes, musical modes, heroes and heroines, festivals, fairs and ceremonies, etc. Equally impressive is the collection of **Textiles** (Baluchara saris, Gujarat brocades, Loom-woven Kashmir shawls, Paithan weave, Cotton *Jamdanis*, *Nakshi Kantha*, early 16th century woven-silk – *Samit* from Eastern India and 17th century Persian brocades). **Stone Sculptures** of Kubera, Surya, Aditya-Varaha, Bhairava, Chamunda, Mahishasura-mardini, Dakshinamurti Shiva, Shiva's mount Nandi, etc. and **Terracotta Figurines** also form a major section. **Coins** of almost every era right from the earliest Punch-Marked Coins (pre-Mauryan period) to Republic India are on display (4th century BCE coins of Alexander and Menander are of great historical significance; the Kushan and Gupta coins are known for aesthetic appeal and use of gold; Akbar's coin recording Rama, Jahangir's portrait coin and his set of twelve coins for twelve months issued from Kandhara mint, are noteworthy). **Copperplates** (an important and outstanding acquisition is a copperplate with seal issued by Emperor Harshavardhan as a land grant in the year 23, corresponding to 629 CE), **Proto-historic Tools** (gifted by Deccan College, Pune), **Decorative Art Objects** and **Antiquities from Ramnagar** (surface finds collected during survey of the site) further enrich the collection and complete the archaeological wing. A separate *Kashi-vithika* (Banaras Gallery) is set up with the purpose of providing a glimpse of art and culture of this ancient city through photographs and objects. Musical instruments of India are exhibited in another independent gallery.



Prof. Kamal Giri receiving gift for the Museum from Smt. Shraddha Gupta

Shilpashala (The Handicraft Atelier)

The Art and Craft Development and Promotion Wing of Jñāna-Pravāha, *Shilpashala*, was established in 2008 aiming at preserving and promoting the traditional art and craft of Banaras which is just on the verge of extinction. The artisans here are encouraged to continue with their family-tradition and produce hand-crafted objects following the age-old traditional methods. Required facilities are provided here for the purpose. The Atelier is functioning under the supervision of Dr. Pramod Giri. Objects in *ashtadhatu* (alloy of eight metals) and *repousse* work in copper and brass are the two significant areas of the *Shilpashala* production.



Durga (Ashtadhatu) Lion (Copper)



Photo Frame (Copper)

Jnanpravaha Mumbai

JPM's 2020-2021 academic year, the 14th, saw a fruitful year. In spite of the pandemic challenges, we successfully presented and completed several courses, seminars, and lecture series by going virtual. The online mode gave us a unique opportunity to reach a global audience as well as invite specialists from all fields of academia. Scholars who have been on our dream wish-list for a decade, willingly taught and shared their profound scholarship to our global audience which stretched from New Zealand to California. Along with our flagship year-long Indian Aesthetics Course and semester long course on Aesthetics, Criticism and Theory, we were thus able to present several one-month long courses taught by a single scholar, an impossible format in normal times.

As per policy, we refreshed the content of our annual courses by incorporating the latest research that scholars bring into the discourse. The existing vast terrain of knowledge allows this practice to flourish, giving our students and audience an opportunity to hear and interact with the best minds in our fields of study. This inherent policy is assiduously followed while curating all our other programmes as well. Hence no topic of enquiry has been repeated since our inception.

Thus, the overarching subject for Islamic Aesthetics this year was The Sacred Journey of the Hajj, wherein 5 renowned scholars delved into different aspects of this world pilgrimage. Buddhist Aesthetics explored the historical, political, cultural, social, religious, and philosophical underpinnings of Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. We broke fresh ground by studying the foundational text on political philosophy - Plato's *Republic* while also training our lens to Foucault and Aesthetics, New Media practices and the current discourse on Photography. The Nature of Landscape examined historical aesthetics as well as the contested geographies of land and territory. A close reading of Kailasanatha Temple of Kanchipuram showed how this 8th century Pallava monument continues to reveal its layered meaning.

The upcoming new academic year, the 15th since inception in 2007, starts mid-July. Along with the seminal Indian Aesthetics and Aesthetics, Criticism and Theory courses (both have been substantively transformed for this iteration), we will be presenting an exceptional semester long course on Southasian Painting. It is perhaps the first time that 12 leading scholars will be heard on a single platform as they take us through the Arts of the Book. We will also have the rare privilege to hear a lecture series titled Understanding Hindu *Tantra* - a subject which continues to mystify. Continuing our thrust in Political Philosophy 4 leading academics will be tackling Liberalism, Secularism, Nationalism and Islamism, topics of urgency and currency. We also hope to address the Mamluk Period, Modernism, Pala Art and Architecture and the relationship of Poetry and Painting in the "Miniature Tradition".

The activities of JPM during the year were held under the following categories:

a. Yearlong courses:

Postgraduate Diploma in Indian Aesthetics (62 students)

b. Month long courses:

Foucault and Aesthetics by **Prof. Arun Iyer** (31 students)

Discourse, Theory, Photography by **Dr. Jan Babnik** (22 students)

Techniques of Enchantment - An Introduction to Art and Media by **Dr. Boris Čučković** (26 students)

Plato's Republic by **Prof. Ioannis D. Evrigenis** (23 students)

The Nature of Landscape by **Dr. Kajri Jain** (22 students)

c. Two weeklong course:

Islamic Aesthetics by internationally acclaimed scholars (35 participants)

Dr. Venetia Porter

Dr. John Slight

Dr. Annabel Gallop

Dr. Guy Burak

Dr. Luit E.M. Mols

d. Public lectures:

Two public lectures were delivered by notable national and international scholars, Dr. Riyaz Latif and Dr. Padma Kaimal. Dr. Latif reflected on *The Premodern Islamic Monuments in The Maghrib (Western North Africa)* while Dr. Kaimal unveiled the *Material Form of The Kailasanatha Temple in Kanchipuram*.

e. Seminars of 3-5 days: 2

We were extremely fortunate to have internationally renowned scholars such as Dr. Pia Brancaccio and Dr. Neeraja Poddar who conducted seminars on subjects as varied as *Buddhist Art on the Indian Subcontinent* and *Text and Image in Southasian Painting*. We hope to continue this collaboration over the coming years with lectures and conferences involving intellectuals and artists.

f. New Endeavours

We have started with Online Courses, Lectures and Seminars for all our courses and programmes.



The Reference Library

The Jñāna-Pravāha Reference Library was initially established with the personal collection of books and manuscripts of Late Shri Suresh Neotia. Thereafter, it kept on expanding with time through gifts and acquisitions. Now it is equipped with more than 11,000 books on different aspects of Indological Studies, like Culture, Philosophy, Art, Architecture, Sculpture, History, Religion, Script, Inscriptions, Archaeology, Textile, Painting, Numismatics and allied subjects. Several rare manuscripts also form the part of collection. Besides, separate sections contain books on Sanskrit and Classical Literature, Indian Art and Archaeology and volumes on various aspects of the ancient city of Varanasi. The books are not issued, but the scholars are allowed to study here at a nominal fee of Rs.100/= per annum. It is open for all on working days, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday is a weekly closure.



Visitors going around the Library



Librarian Shri A.K. Ghanekar receiving gift of old manuscripts from Dr. Analava Mitra

Social Service

The Jñāna-Pravāha launched a Charitable Homeopathic Dispensary in active service of the society with the aim to render free treatment and distribute free medicines among patients who cannot afford costly medical services. The clinic is managed by Dr. Jayprakash Pandey and a large number of patients from both urban and rural areas avail of this facility during the working days.

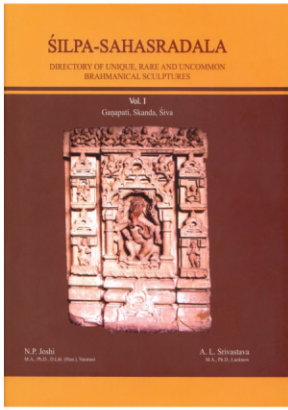


Dr. Jayprakash Pandey in the dispensary

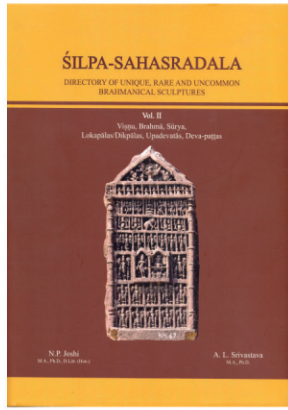


Patients waiting for their turn

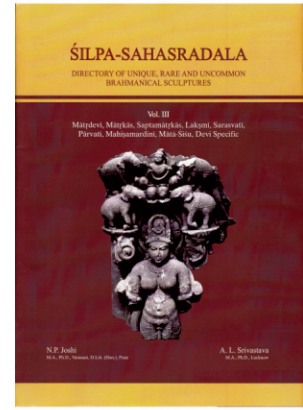
Important Publications



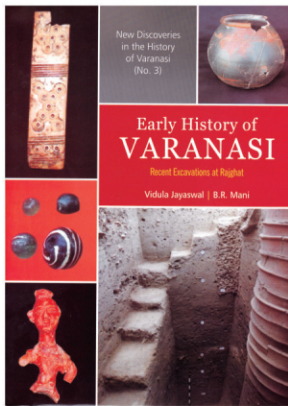
Śilpa-Sahasradala Vol. I (2012)



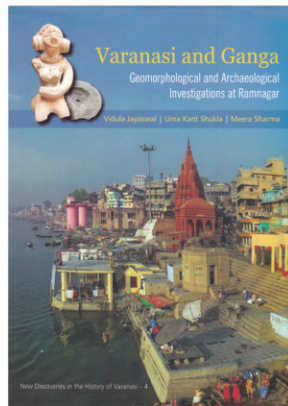
Śilpa-Sahasradala Vol. II (2012)



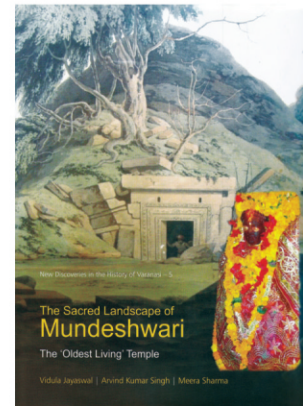
Śilpa-Sahasradala Vol. III (2016)



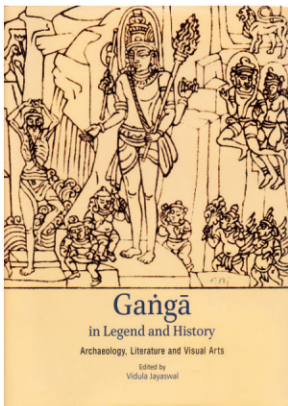
Early History of Varanasi (2016)



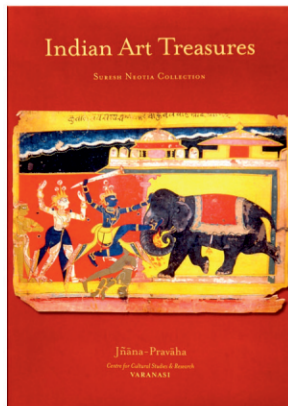
Varanasi and Ganga (2016)



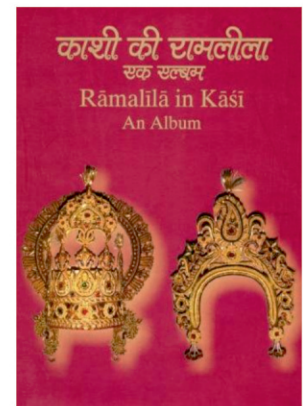
The Sacred Landscape of Mundeshwari (2017)



Gaṅgā in Legend & History (2019)



Indian Art Treasures (2006)



Rāmālilā in Kāśī (2012)

Annual Publication : Jñāna-Pravāha Research Journal, Vols. I-XXIV

For details please visit our website : www.jnanpravaha.org

Our Other Publications

Jñāna-Pravāha Research Journal (Volumes 1 to 24)

A New Ashokan Inscription from Ratanpurwa

Jaina Contribution to Varanasi

Vaishnava Contribution to Varanasi

Shakta Contribution to Varanasi

The Universe that is God

Glimpses of Paintings from Kala Mandapa

Kashi Ki Deva-Vigraha Yatra

Shree Radha Ka Samskritika Paridrishya

Brahmanda Purana Ka Samskritika Paridrishya

Kashmir Shaiva Parampara Evam Pratibha Vimarsha

Facsimile Editions

Kalidasa-Parva : Raghuvamsham-Meghadutam

Purana-Parva : Shaiva Concept in Vayu Purana

Bliss of Upanishads : Chhandogya Upanishad

Purana-Parva : Cultural Gleanings from Kurma Purana

Bliss of Upanishads : Ishavasyopanishad-Kathopanishad

Reflection of Vedas in Classical Sanskrit Literature

Purana-Parva : Cultural Gleanings from Agni Purana

Purana-Parva : Cultural Glimpses from Vishnu Purana

Fairs and Festivals of Varanasi

Bliss of Upanishads : Brihadaranyakopanishad

Reflection of Vedas in Hindi Literature

Sukriti

Purana-Parva : Cultural Glimpses from Matsya Purana

Purana-Parva : Cultural Glimpses from Varaha Purana

Purana-Parva : Cultural Glimpses from Vamana Purana

Purana-Parva : Cultural Glimpses from Brahma Purana

Purana-Parva : Cultural Glimpses from Shiva-Mahapurana

Contribution of Goswami Tulsidas to Kashi

Interaction Between Nigama and Agama

Sanskrit Sahitya Mein Ganga