World Association for Vedic Studies (WAVES) Conducts a Successful, Joint International Conference on Scientific Aspects of Vedic Knowledge in Delhi, India

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New Delhi, India (PRWEB) December 24, 2016 -- The 12th International conference of the World Association for Vedic Studies was successfully held from the 15th to 18th of December at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, New Delhi. The main theme of the conference was Scientific aspects of Vedic knowledge and it was held jointly with the 20th Conference of Wider Association of Vedic Studies of India. On the inaugural day Dr. Shashi Tiwari, General Chair of the conference, pointed out that while one cannot expect the Vedas to be used as modern science textbooks, the scientific knowledge of the Vedas must still be appreciated. The conference co-chair was Dr. R.P. Singh of JNU, who helped with the editing of the 130 peer-reviewed papers and invited talks. In addition to focusing on the main theme of the conference, scholars also analysed the use of Vedic concepts for world peace, ecology, human rights, and solutions to the crises faced by modern civilization.

Ashok Pradhan, Director of the Delhi Kendra of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (BVB), pointed to the relevance of the conference to BVB’s mission, and was optimistic that the conference would remove many misconceptions and encourage intellectuals to explore the scientific aspects of the Vedas. Professor Ram Karan Sharma, President of WAVES India, and Sashi Kejriwal, President of WAVES International, placed emphasis on the fact that this 12th WAVES conference was appropriately being held at the geographical center of the Vedic civilization. Sashi Kejriwal felt that it was “mission accomplished. After eleven conferences in the Americas, the first conference in India has brought about a positive resonance amongst the scholars of Vedic studies in India, especially amongst the younger ones.”

Dhirendra Shah, Director and treasurer of the Board of WAVES International, remarked on the contributions of the WAVES as a multidisciplinary academic organization since its foundation in 1996, in promoting ancient Indian traditions and Vedic wisdom through its conferences and other activities. Published contributions have advanced knowledge on the Sarasvati civilization, Ayurveda, science and mathematics, and other topics. Promoting awareness of the contributions from the Indian Civilization in all these fields is critical in inspiring young Indians. Other messages on the relevance of the conference came from Dr. Lallan Prasad, VP of WAVES India, Dr. Bhudev Sharma, Founder and Past President of WAVES International, Dr. Balram Singh, Founder of the Maryada Foundation, and Rajiv Malhotra, founder of the Infinity Foundation and renowned author on Indology and its modern challenges. Dr. S. Kalyanaraman of the Saraswati Foundation welcomed the conference with his message of significant new discoveries linking 2500 BCE metalwork to the inscriptions found at Binjor in the heart of the Saraswati River Civilization.

The conference consisted of keynote speeches, plenary lectures, panel discussions, and academic sessions for presentation of research papers, and attracted nearly 200 scholars from four different continents. The discussion focused on abstract concepts of quantum mechanics and consciousness to more practical and contextual issues like the caste system and health. One of the major features of this year’s biennial conference was the participation of a large number of young scholars, especially from India.

Dr. Ved Mitra Shukla of Delhi University felt it was a very positive development for his and other students. “Students got an opportunity to get a flavour of international relevance of their work,” said Shukla. Dr.

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Shakuntala, a faculty member from a college in Assam, who led a group of research students at the conference said, “We need more such international conferences in India to expose our students and scholars to the latest advances in knowledge happening at a fast pace.”

Various scholarly presentations touched on the knowledge present in the Vedas in the areas of metallurgy, nanosciences, holistic health, gynaecological techniques, environmental sustainability, social stability, chronology of major events, concepts of economic equality and human rights, etc.

Dr. John Kinneman of University of Colorado discussed consciousness in cell biology that could form the basis of new approach to modern sciences. Dr. Indrani Rampersad of Trinidad proposed that epics like Ramayana help in the preservation of the civilizational culture and values that date back many millennia.

Dr. Robert Schneider of Maharishi University of Managament, Iowa, US, presented a paper on the subtle power of the mind and the use of consciousness that can give us the power to keep from aging. This power has practical value in healthcare.

Dr. Koenraad Elst from Belgium narrated a provocative theory that certain yoga practices, such as kundalini, may have their origin in China.

The valedictory session was presided over by the WAVES India Vice President Dr. Lallan Prasad. It included key speeches by Dr. Bhudev Sharma, founder of WAVES, Dr. Bhakti Nishkam Shanta of Sri Chaitanya Institute of Bengaluru, Dr. Narayanan Komarath of Georgia Tech, Dr. Narahari Achar of University of Memphis, Paul Palmorozza of St. James School, London, Dr. Bal Ram Singh, and Sashi Kejriwal and Dhirendra Shah, President and treasurer, respectively, of WAVES International. Speakers emphasized the involvement of young scholars and students in Vedic studies to make these relevant to modern times and for solving the various problems modern day society faces.

The reaction from the delegates was very positive. “It raised my interest in Indology, especially towards Vedas and Epics,” said Jayati Saxena, a Philosophy Research Scholar at Delhi University. Dr. Narahari Achar said, “I am impressed by the range and depth of the topics presented…. and by the participation from young scholars.”

This sentiment was echoed by Pooja Vashistha, a Master’s student in the Sanskrit Department at Delhi University. “I found it [conference] really knowledgeable and very interesting….I felt very lucky.”

Dr. Bal Ram Singh, who is also the Founding Director of the Center for Indic Studies at the University of Massachusetts and currently the Executive Mentor of the School of Indic Studies at the Institute of Advanced Sciences, implored scholars to make Vedic knowledge useful to the current society.

Karthik Amaanachi of Srimaharshi Research Institute of Vedic Technology, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, presented a paper on how ancient knowledge is used by his Institute to develop nanomaterials.

Deeper study is needed to bring out various secrets locked in the Vedas, according to Dr. Bhakti Nishkam Shanta. “Let us encourage the inquiry of the self, origin of both matter and life through education and research.”

An impressive presentation was made by Mr. Tahashin Mandal of Aligarh Muslim University on the Vedic wisdom related to the development of the foetus in the mother’s womb, an area still lacking some
understanding in modern science.

Dr. Narayanan Komerath, highlighted his journey in writing his recent book, “Writing an Introductory Textbook on Sanatana Dharma for a Global Audience”, was impressed by the passion of presenters in languages other than English. "Several papers and presentations discussed in Hindi and Sanskrit by senior scholars and Masters/Doctoral candidates, brought special insights into the richness of the scholarly discourse on Vedic studies".

The invaluable help provided by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, and by the local team of volunteers headed by Dr. Shashi Tiwari and Dr. Aparna Dhir, was acknowledge by all that attended the four day conference.
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