

INDOLOGICAL MEETING AT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY



Participants and organizers of Indological meeting

The First Training Programme for Indian Studies Teachers in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was jointly organized by the Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies (CR&CAS), School of International Studies (SIS), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, India and the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and was held on February 9–15, 2014.

Twelve representatives from the six countries: Dr. Aliyev Bahman Fazil oglu and Dr. Samir Hamidov

(Baku, Azerbaijan), Dr. Alex Perzashkevich (Minsk, Belorussia), Dr. Dossova Senyngul Nauryzbaevna and Dr. Yelena Rudenko (Almaty, Kazakhstan), Dr. Kseniia Nikolskaya (Moscow, Russian Federation) and Dr. Gulnara Valiakhmetova (Yekaterinburg, Russian Federation), Dr. Olena Bordilovska and Dr. Yuriy Zavhorodniy (Kyiv, Ukraine) and Dr. Murat Mahmudovich Bakhadirov, Dr. Sirojiddin Nurmatov and Dr. Mirzokhid Rakhimov (Tashkent, Uzbekistan) took part in the First Training Programme for Indian Studies Teachers in the CIS. The participants are teachers and researchers of different Indological disciplines, such as ethnology of India, history of India, philology of India (Hindi and Urdu) and philosophy of India, who work in the leading universities and institutes of their countries.

The First Training Programme was very intensive, informative and extremely interesting. Prof. Sudha Rai, the rector of JNU, Prof. Arun Mohanty, Chairperson, Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies, School of International Studies, JNU, Shri Ajay Bisaria, Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, Prof. Nirmala Joshi, Research Adviser, United Service Institution of India and Prof. K. Warikoo, Dean, School of International Studies, JNU (who was the Chairperson of the Inaugural session) took part in the Inaugural session. Indologists from the CIS had a rare opportunity to hear the point of view of India's leading specialists on many important issues.

For four days, from the 10th to the 13th of February, the training participants listened to sixteen lectures, which thematically covered different areas of Indology from antiquity to the present:

- 1) 'Ancient India', Prof. Kumkum Roy, Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences, JNU;
- 2) 'Medieval India', Dr. Najaf Haider, Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences, JNU;
- 3) 'Indian Cinema', Prof. Ira Bhaskar, Dean, School of Arts and Aesthetics, JNU;
- 4) 'Indian Economy', Prof. Gulshan Sachdeva, Chairperson, Centre for European Studies, School of International Studies, JNU;
- 5) 'Indian Society', Prof. Anand Kumar, Centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, JNU;
- 6) 'Modern India', Prof. Tanika Sarkar, Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences, JNU;
- 7) 'Political Philosophy in India', Dr. Manindra Thakur, Associate Professor, Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Sciences, JNU;
- 8) 'Indian Political System', Prof. Anupama Roy, Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Sciences, JNU;
- 9) 'Governance and Public Policy in India', Dr. Sudhir Kumar Suthar, Assistant Professor, Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Sciences, JNU;
- 10) 'Indian Foreign Policy: An Overview', Prof. Varun Sahni, Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament, School of International Studies, JNU;
- 11) 'India – US Relations', Prof. Chintamani Maharatra, Centre for Canadian, American and Latin American Studies, School of International Studies, JNU;
- 12) 'India and Neighbors', Prof. Savita Pande, Chairperson, Centre of South Asian Studies, School of International Studies, JNU;
- 13) 'India and the UN', Prof. CSR Murthy, Centre for International Politics, School of International Studies, JNU;
- 14) 'India and China', Prof. Srikant Kondapalli, Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies, JNU;
- 15) 'India's Relations with Russia, Ukraine and Belarus', Prof. Arun Mohanty, Chairperson, Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies, School of International Studies, JNU;
- 16) 'India's Relations with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan', Prof. Ajay Patnaik, Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies, School of International Studies, JNU.

Most of the lectures were very rich in content and supported by necessary slides (key quotes, pictures, diagrams, statistical tables). As a rule, each lecture ended with a lively discussion. Among the topics that were of great interest were the following: 'Ancient India', 'Medieval India', 'Modern India', 'Indian Political System', 'Governance and Public Policy in India', 'India and China', 'India's Relations with Russia, Ukraine and Belarus', 'India's Relations with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan'.

In particular, it was interesting to hear from Dr. Manindra Thakur that the Indian political thought reaches the Manusmriti ("the Cosmic Vision" according to V. R. Mehta) and that the Mahabharata ("the Heroic Vision" according to V. R. Mehta) could serve as the example of the Indian political thought.

Sometimes it was felt that senior lecturers (especially those who studied in and repeatedly visited the Soviet Union) experience nostalgia for the Soviet past and express opinions that are hardly acceptable for the new independent countries, in particular Ukraine (for example, the thesis that the joint Russian and Ukrainian economy is more convenient for Indian partners).

Another interesting detail. If necessary, the lecturers could quite harshly criticize the Indian government.

On February 14, the participants from the CIS presented their reports. I had the honor to present my monograph (Zavorodniy Yuriy. Perception of the Indian Philosophy in Ukraine: The Line of the Vedas. Monograph. – Kyiv: H. Skovoroda Institute of Philosophy, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2013. – 412 p. (Ukrainian, English summary, Pp. 404–

410)) to the library of the Center for Russian and Central Asian Studies and to tell about my teaching of Indian philosophy at the National University of 'Kyiv-Mohyla Academy'.

On February 15, the Valedictory session of the First Training Programme for Indian Studies Teachers in the CIS took place, where all participants were awarded a certificate from the hands of Prof. S. K. Sopory, Vice Chancellor of JNU. Also the results of our work were discussed together with the organizing Committee. The arguments of all participants from the Commonwealth of Independent States and Indian colleagues have shown the importance of the region of post-Soviet countries (in other words, Euro-Asian region) for Indological research, starting from the ancient Vedic times till today. It was decided to coordinate joint research efforts in the future.

Our lectures started at 9:00 and, with a few breaks, continued till 15:00 – 17:00; then there were a cultural programme and official receptions. In particular, Qutub Minar, Humayun's Tomb and Indian National Museum were visited. Visiting the Museum and the above-mentioned monuments, I was impressed with how responsible the Indian authorities were towards India's historical legacy.

The organizers of the First Training Programme for Indian Studies Teachers in the CIS kindly provided a fixed amount of subsidy for the purchase of Indological literature. Thanks to this support, I was able to acquire the necessary editions of famous researches, in particular:

- *Contesting Symbols and Stereotypes. Essays on Indian History and Culture.* Ed. by D. N. Jha. – Delhi: AAKAR, 2013. – VIII, 247 p.
- *Eck Diana L.* India. A Sacred Geography. – N. Y.: Harmony Books, 2012. – XII, 559 p.
- *India: Historical Beginnings and the Concept of the Aryan.* Essays by Romila Thapar, Jonatham Mark Kenoyer, Madhav M. Deshpande, Sherren Ratnagar. – W/s.: National Book Trust, 2013 (First Edition 2006). – X, 201 p.
- *Mehta V. R.* Foundations of Indian Political Thought (From Manu to the Present Day). – New Delhi: Manohar, 2013 (First Edition 1992). – 306 p.
- *Saharan M. S.* Ancient Indian History. – New Delhi: Black Prints, 2013. – XVI, 254 p.
- *Tripathi B. D.* Sadhus of India. The Sociological View. – Varanasi: Pilgrims Publishing, 2007. – XXII, 369 p.
- *Rukmani T. S.* Saṃnyāsīn in the Hindu Tradition. Changing Perspectives. – New Delhi: D. K. Printworld (P), 2011. – VIII, 283 p.

In addition, every participant was given a set of materials required for training lectures.

Taking into account that Indology has been restored in independent Ukraine, after its destruction in the 1930s, and the current state of Ukrainian science is extremely difficult, this training is very important, because it gives an opportunity to join the international professional communication in a wide circle of Indologist colleagues on the basis of one of the best universities of India.

Let us hope for the continuation of the Training Programme for Indian Studies Teachers in the Commonwealth of Independent States in the following years.

Yu. Zavhorodniy