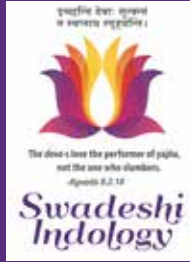




The first swadeshi Indology conference was successfully conducted at IIT Madras from the 6th to 8th of July 2016. It was a closed door conference only for scholars and those presenting papers. The first conference was exclusively focused towards conducting a thorough analysis and presentation of Sheldon Pollock's work (purvapaksha) and a partial rebuttal to the same (uttarapaksha). This will be followed up by future conferences wherein further analysis will be carried out and responses provided. While a primary requirement for the statement of purva-paksha is a sound knowledge of English (given the convoluted and pedantic English of Pollock which has to be figured out, and the need for clarity in expression), the requirement for the uttara-paksha is a good knowledge of Sanskrit and a fair knowledgeable appreciation (not an emotional

admiration, that is) of the spirit of our tradition. In light of this Professor Kannan had selected the following four positions of Sheldon Pollock for purva-paksha in the first conference:-

## FIRST SWADESHI INDOLOGY CONFERENCE



- 1) That Sanskrit is dead.
- 2) On Shastra
- 3) On Ramayana used as a political tool
- 4) That Sanskrit was responsible for the holocaust.

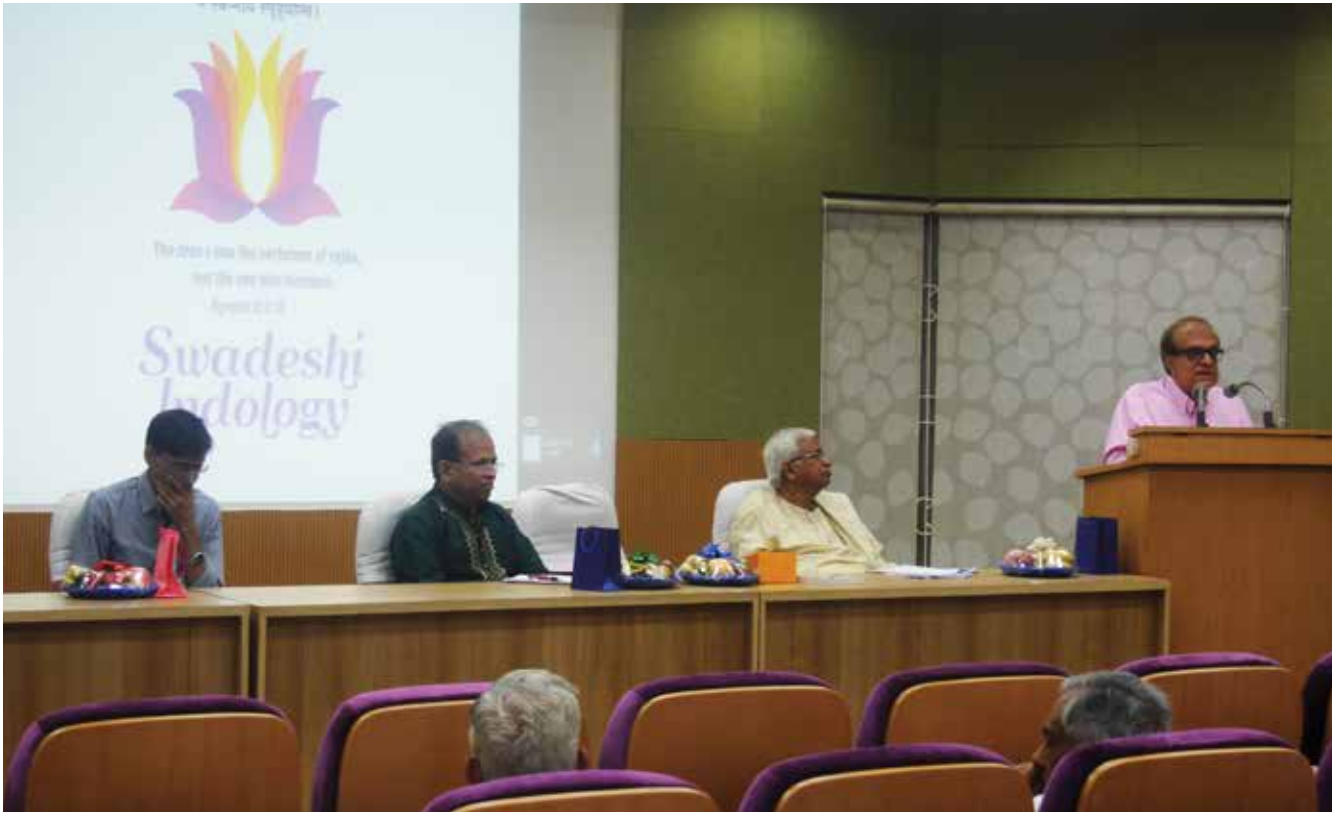
Reading material was provided on each of the four topics to those scholars interested in participating. Scholars were invited to submit abstracts for papers on the above mentioned topics. These were then passed through a review panel consisting of eminent persons well versed in the field. Twenty papers were presented in the conference which will be collected, edited and published as a book. The conference was



attended by luminaries like Prof. V N Jha, Former Director, Centre of Advanced Study in Sanskrit, University of Pune, Prof. Makarand Paranjape, Professor of English, JNU, Prof.

3) The Intellectual Kshatriyas must not be scattered individuals but rather a home team with team work.

4) The individuals must participate as their



Ramanujan, at CDAC Bengaluru, Dr. Koenraad Elst, well known Indologist and Sinologist, Shri. Nityananda Misra, eminent Sanskritist, who chaired the different sessions during the three-day schedule of the conference, and Prof. Madhu Kishwar, founder of Manushi. The stage is now set for the building of an Indian narrative driven by well-informed stakeholders who have an innate understanding of India's culture, literature, philosophies and practices. This effort is but a stepping stone towards a bigger objective of establishing a credible and responsible academic aegis for Indian Indology.

### **Rajiv's closing remarks on the first Swadeshi Indology Conference**

Rajiv was very happy with the proceedings of the conference and the output from it. He sees it as a continuation of a long journey by himself and his companions. Rajiv made it clear that there are certain opinions that were common to all participants of the conference. These are that:

- 1) There is a Kurukshetra of ideas.
- 2) The need for Intellectual Kshatriyas to conduct purva-paksha and Uttara-paksha

svadharma and not for any purposes like advancing their career etc. The yajna is the collective aspect of the svadharma.

Having sponsored hundreds of conferences Rajiv asserts that the Swadeshi Indology series is meant to be very specific where a single target is selected each year. This will bring direction and focus rather than being vague and fuzzy. Swadeshi Indology (S.I.) will perform both aspects i.e. disruption as well as construction. Rajiv for the first time stated that he doesn't feel alone anymore unlike the past where he was always deserted when he was attacked after every book he published. Unlike during the purva-paksha of Wendy Doniger, where Rajiv left that battle field to move onto new areas of inquiry, he recognizes that a home team is required to continue pursuing that front of the battle field that he opens up through his writings. Rajiv stressed that due to action being due to one's svadharma, all considerations of career or prestige must be left aside. Though there are advantages of being within the academic systems, there are several advantages of being outside it too. Case in point is that majority of the papers were from those of STEM (Science Technology Engineering Medicine)





background rather than the humanities which in fact should have been the one championing post-colonial scholarship. He says that the system of social sciences and humanities must be critiqued as a whole and must be dismantled as it is a huge source of colonization. The myth that theories can be produced to study people and cultures objectively is a failure. Rajiv dismissed the idea that a paper in prestigious journals would make more impact than all this effort by pointing out the scanty readership that academics draw in comparison to lakhs of people on social media. Rajiv asks as to what is "post-colonial" about "post-colonial studies" when it is in fact a re-colonization. According to him the whole intellectual establishment has just taken a whole new set of social theories from outside and not one of them have ever critiqued Pollock. In fact Pollock has more collaboration with Sanskrit scholars in India which is lacking even among the Humanities and Sanskrit scholars in various universities of India. Rajiv was very happy with the kind of work done and quality of papers presented in such a short timeline. He ended by announcing that there will be another conference in 6 months and thanking all those who put in hard work to conduct the event. Please watch the video at the link provided.

### **Reception of the first Indology conference by scholars and academicians**

The first conference was well received and appreciated by the participating dignitaries. Professor V.N. Jha considers the conference a grand success. He remarked that he could see that the cause for which Rajiv has been fighting for the last three decades was genuine. He was happy that the critiques were of high academic standard. He encouraged more Sanskritists to come forward and participate. He also drew attention to the fact that Pollock draws extensively from Western intellectual history that the insiders must become aware of to conduct a meaningful inquiry into Pollock's writings.

Professor Ramanujan noted that such self-strengthening efforts are what we need in the backdrop of a general fall in competence level among swadeshi efforts particularly in the recent few decades. He found it worrying to note the deficit of attention from Sanskritists compared to other professionals. It is his view that we owe it to our ancestors to be able to deserve our great lineage.

Professor Kannan found it surprising that young graduates from science and engineering were fairly grounded in Sanskrit and did a good job in





comprehending and confronting Pollock's arguments which were beyond the expectations of the scholars.

Shri Nityananda noted that many participants being from an engineering background had both strengths and weaknesses. The strengths are due to the fact that it is these fields that have the largest pool of bright minds today in India and it is from there that the intellectual home team is likely to emerge. Weakness is due to lack

of academic experience in Indology and formal training in Sanskrit at least for the time being. He also paid special attention to Koenraad Elst's remark that participants should be well prepared to be "blacklisted" by certain people. This statement speaks volumes about the courage needed to openly challenge those who are 'too big to be criticized'. As a conference that would likely be a first step in a long journey, he considers it an impressive first step.











Dr. Swamy noted the immense sacrifice on the part of Rajiv to take on the Hinduphobic narratives presented in Western Academia. He lauded Rajiv for the immense courage, grit and intellectual prowess required to wade through academic battles waged against India and Hinduism single handedly. He observed with agreement the parallels between the military sepoys of the past who were Indians shooting fellow Indians at the behest of the British and the intellectual sepoys of today that supply atrocity literature on Indians to the West. Looking forward to more books from the fertile mind of Rajiv, Dr. Swamy congratulated him for his new book and contributions towards liberating Indian minds from enslavement.

Shri Ram Bahadur Rai observed that certain insights that are fundamental towards understanding contemporary issues of Indians offered by Rajiv aren't present in any academic work in the country. Case in point being the census introduced by the British to map Indians into various groups. Unlike a constantly

changing system, the jatis got fixed due to census by the British and became a huge problem dividing the Indians. He concluded stating that the book needs to be read and re-read just like we read sacred texts in order to gain a proper understanding of our history to respond to the attacks being made on our ethos.

Maj Gen GD Bakshi began his speech by stating that very few countries in the world have been subjected to such an assault on their identity and selfhood like India. However, he also noted that the center of colonialism had shifted from Oxford to Washington, Massachusetts and other such universities across the Atlantic. He stressed on the nature of the de-humanizing scholarship that Indians have been subjected to in order to kill every shred of self-respect left in them. General Bakshi noted the materializations of the patterns highlighted by Rajiv in 'Breaking India' about five years ago. He concluded his speech stating that we will not survive if we do not pay heed to Rajiv's warning.



This was followed by a speech by Rajiv on his book. The book is to rekindle an old debate wherein after the battle, the intellectual territory wasn't occupied. This time he wishes to deal with the battle differently. The Swadeshi Indology conference is to create Intellectual Kshatriyas who can occupy new intellectual territories. Rajiv reiterated the concerted and systematic attack on our sense of civilization right from our Itihas, Shastras and Gurus to our deities where they are characterized in very vulgar and abusive ways. Rajiv gave an overview on the multitude of channels of infiltration going on in India through NGOs, activists, media, and academia. He also drew upon the general flaws in the structure of the Indian Government towards building the Indian grand narrative. He concluded his speech highlighting that there are a number of issues that need attention and that a lot of work needs to be done. The talk by all four dignitaries was followed by a lively Q&A. Please watch the entire event at the link provided.

**Other Engagements:**

Rajiv was interviewed on the NewsX television news channel. He was asked several questions about the Breaking India forces and about how

can we understand the present day sympathy that we see for terrorists and separatists among intellectuals of the nation. Please find link to the video attached.

Rajiv has also had a meeting with the head of the Akhada Parishad, on the issue of the Kumbh Mela, the video of which will be uploaded soon.

He also met several central level ministers and had fruitful conversations.

He has had discussions with various collaborators to help conduct Swadeshi Indology Conference-2



## TALK AT INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY AT PHILADELPHIA

Rajiv delivered a talk at Philadelphia on the 25th of June 2016 as part of International Yoga day. Here he wanted to present the various issues associated with yoga vis-à-vis nationality, origin, whether it is Hindu and so on in a new framework that would bring unity rather than the divisiveness of the present mainstream discourse. Taking a moment to explain the history of yoga in the West, Rajiv briefly explained the counter culture movement in America during the 60s. In this regard he said that many Americans went to India, learnt under Gurus, brought back like vegetarianism, Tantra, philosophies like



Vedanta, ideas suitable for the feminist movement of conceptualizing the divine as feminine etc. Yoga also began to be studied by science in departments of health and psychology. It then began getting digested into American culture when its various elements got dissected and assimilated into new frameworks. Hence Hatha yoga became merely a part of physical health while other new movements like Christian yoga developed. With the influx of large numbers of Indian immigrants, the dialogue of "who owns yoga?" began. It is from these dialogues that questions of whether



it is Indian, secular, or Hindu and so on gained popularity. Yoga then started being fit into categories like religion, science (in a materialistic sense), health etc. which are too narrow for Yoga. Thus it is first important to understand Yoga in its own terms. Yama and Niyama cannot be bypassed for the practice of asanas and pranayama. Rajiv used the analogy of how the doctor prescribes certain dos and don'ts as part of the medication. Though the medicine is universal in that it will work on anybody, the adjoining conditions must be fulfilled. Thus the ethics, lifestyle and diet prescribed by yoga cannot be bypassed on the pretext that 'yoga is universal'. Yoga has a certain cultural soil and ecosystem in which it must be practiced which includes respect for the surroundings, ahimsa, mantra chanting etc. The scope of yoga must be understood as a system towards enlightenment which is here and now. Hence belief systems that the individual is a born sinner are in direct conflict with yogic view of the individual as eternally divine. Though the brand name of the religion that one belongs to is not important, one must be aligned with the metaphysics of yoga. Answers to the questions of who is the individual, what is the relationship between oneself and the cosmos and the divine, can either be in alignment with yoga metaphysics or in conflict with it. These issues must be dealt with and can't be wished away. There are implications beyond the individual with regard to relationship with family, society, animals, trees, rivers etc. involving viewing them as divine manifestations rather than as things. Hence without brand names associated with yoga, one must still be aware of the yoga ecosystem, the dos and don'ts, the ideas that one must be compliant with in order that yoga be fruitful rather than becoming outright

dangerous for a person. Yoga's connections to India and the Vedic tradition is due to connections of metaphysics and world views vis-à-vis the nature of the self and the cosmos that are essential to it. The roots of the tree of Yoga must be nourished so that the fruits can be exported to the world. The link to the video is provided at the end.



## Links

- 1) **Talk on International Yoga day at Philadelphia -**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AefxKKTqv5I>
- 2) **Rajiv's closing remarks on the first Swadeshi Indology Conference**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5HrBZvxcPmY>
- 3) **Book launch: Academic Hinduphobia -**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOIOS6p7ZY8>
- 4) **NewsX interview on Breaking India forces -**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLf6UCTzq4w>