



National Conference on Yoga

Yoga Śāstra Sangamam 2023

The **Yoga Śāstra Sangamam** organized by **Vivekananda Kendra Institute of Culture (VKIC)** was held at **Williamson Magor Auditorium, VKIC, Guwahati, on 2nd April 2023**. The Sangamam was graced by **Swami Atmashuddhananda**, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Guwahati, as the Chief Guest. Other dignitaries of Vivekananda Kendra were **Ma. Hanumantha Rao**, Vice President, Vivekananda Kendra Kanyakumari and **Ad. Dr. Sova Rani Barkataky Sarmah**, Prant Pramukh, Vivekananda Kendra Assam Prant was also present in the occasion. There was an upastithi of 364 people.

Sattra - I

The Yoga Sastra Sangamam began with deep prajwalan by Swami Atmashuddhananda ji, Ma. Hanumantha Rao, and other dignitaries of the event. The deep prajwalan mantra and the Mangalacharan, marking the beginning of the conference were recited by Ad. Sujatha Pingle, Jeevanvrti karyakarta, Vivekananda Kendra Kanyakumari.

Then the Chief Guest, the Guest of Honour and Ad. Dr. Sova Rani Barkataky Sarmah, were introduced by Sri Arup Kumar Bora, Saha Vibhag Pramukh, Kamrup Vibhag, VK Assam Prant and they were felicitated with a Phulon Gamosa and a few of VKIC Publication.

Ma. Hanumantha Rao ji then delivered the keynote address. He explained **Yoga Sastra Sangamam** is a unique seminar and conference. For more than 45 years, Vivekananda Kendra Kanyakumari is involved in propagating Yoga and Yoga is the core of VK activities.

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People consider Yoga as a form of exercise and people including businessman, do Yoga but they fail to connect mind and body. Now, Yoga has become like a tablet for healthy people. People want to be healthy, but when asked the reason why they want to be healthy, there is no answer. We have to remember and understand that man is God, God is man and we must experience this oneness.

He mentioned about Patanjali who very well defined the Yoga. It is the mindless state and the feeling of "Do I exist? Am I there?"

While mentioning the Mahabharata, he said that even Krishna and Arjuna discussed Yoga in Upanishad. This is the core of philosophy, it is a spiritual science, and it is to know the relationship between us- the oneness, the interdependence where the theme of G20- Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is talked about.

Vivekananda Kendra Kanyakumari is practicing Yoga since the last 45 years. But this has now become commercial. Certificate of Yoga are available, and people are making money through it but VKK is doing this with its own perspective to study and to know self and it is organising Yoga Sastra with proper dimension and even if the world changes, this Sastra will never change, the truth will never change.

He said Yoga is the discovery of the debt of the body. Every Asana we do or practice, we must compare our self with our mind. VK made humble efforts to spread this we had seminars conducted at various parts of the country -like in Orissa, in Solapur of Maharashtra where large number of people attended.

"Let this yoga conference be the light in understanding real dimension of yoga", he said. He mentioned that, it is because our Prime Minister, Sri Narendra Modi appealed to the United Nations General Assembly, 2014 and International Yoga Day has been celebrated across the world annually on June 21 since 2015 whereas Yoga before that was merely a teaching and the taught affair. Let us know the truest sense of yoga.





Then Ad. Dr Sova Rani Barkataky Sarmah deliberated the Kendra Parichay. The address was followed by a Geet by a team of Vivekananda Kendra Karyakartas.



The Chief Guest then addressed the gathering and while speaking on the occasion, he congratulated everybody present on the occasion and said that Yoga Sastra Sangamam is an opportunity to know Yoga is a systematic study to know the mind, body and the thought it carries.

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He started his discourse by chanting:

योगेन वित्तस्य, पद्धेन वाचा, मलं शरीरस्य च वैद्यकेन। योऽपाकरोत् प्रवरं मुनीनं, पतञ्जलिं
प्राञ्जलिरनतोऽस्मि ॥

He who is an expert in removing the impurities of the body, mind and speech, to that most excelled of Mind who is Patanjali, I bow down with folded hands

At the outset, I convey my heartfelt congratulations to Vivekananda Kendra Institute of Culture (VKIC), Guwahati for arranging "Yoga Sastra Sangamam 2023", a national conference on Yoga and providing us the opportunity to share our views on the vast topic of yoga and its practices as prescribed in various Yoga Sastras. There are various texts on yoga like- Patanjali Yoga Sutra, Yoga Vasistha, Raja Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Yoga Pradipika, Shiva Samhita, etc. Among these, Patanjali Yoga Sutra occupies a prominent place in its systematic and scientific approach towards studying and controlling the mind and directing for realizing the highest goal of human life.

He said that Patanjali was none other than the Avatar of *Adishesha* - the infinite Cosmic Serpent on whom Lord Vishnu Meets. *Adishesha* learnt Yoga from Lord Shiva, the greatest of all Yogis. Shiva, on being compassionate, to teach them the science of Yoga, he descended down to the earth, took the form of a small Snake, fell into the palm of a devout woman. Thus, he is known as Patanjali, meaning who had fallen into the palm of woman.

This shows that the Yoga system is eternal and is of Divine origin. It is being accepted as an important branch of traditional Indian Philosophy which has significantly influenced the other Philosophies like Samkhya, Vedanta, etc. Patanjali who has written the book on the yoga system, compiled various scattered knowledge of yoga, into 196 aphorisms called Yoga Sutra, an authoritative classical text on yoga. He also authored commentaries on Panini's Astadhyayi- Mahabhasya' and on the book of Ayurveda.

Swami ji said that study of the mind was originally under philosophy. Today it is treated as an independent branch of science. Study of mind was not merely confined to the understanding of its behaviour etc, but it also included the techniques of directing its powers in definite channels formed as a part of spiritual investigations.

In the study of the mind, the mind itself studies; the mind is the investigator itself. It is the subject and also the object at the same time; a study of unique character. Only the human mind has the unique capacity of objectifying itself and yet remaining as a subject to itself...

Vedanta philosophy says in this regard that the mind is capable of objectifying itself because there is this eternal pervading spirit associated with the mind, which is the real subject.

But for the presence, mind can't function for a single moment. It is the spirit that is supplying power to the mind in its diverse functions. Though spirit and mind is a merely dead matter

तंत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्र तारका' नेमा विद्युतो भाषि मेव भान्ति अनुभाति सर्व कुतोऽयमग्नि 'ती भाषा सर्वमिदं विभाति ईश्वर

He concluded by saying that we are the children of the divine and we have forgotten our nature and he called for us to come and through the practice of yoga to purify our own nature and be free.

End of Sattra-1

The National Yoga Sastra Sangamam received 26 papers out of which 20 papers were selected and out of these 19 papers were presented by resource persons from various institutions like Pondicherry University, Assam University, Silchar; Dibrugarh University, Nowgong College, Rangia College, B. Borooh College, Yoga practitioners and Karyakartas of VK.

Ten minutes were allotted for presentation and five minutes for interaction with the resource persons.





Sattra - II

The first technical session was chaired by **Dr. Sucharita Dey**, Professor, Department of Philosophy, B. Borooah College and **Ma. Hanumantha Rao ji**, All India Vice-President Vivekananda Kendra.

The panellists were then introduced and were felicitated.

Following are the papers presented in the first session:

- Paper name: **What Yoga is all about?** Resource person: Dr Kanta Kaveri Sonowal; Asst. Professor, Journalism and Mass Communication, Dibrugarh University.
- Paper name: **The Yoga of Srimad Bhagawad Gita- Three pathways to spiritual awakening.** Resource person: Priyanka Chakraborty, Research Scholar, Dept. of Philosophy, Pondicherry University.
- Paper name: **Swami Vivekananda and the ideal of Karma Yoga.** Resource person: Bithika Ray, Asst. Professor, Dept. of Philosophy, B. Borooah College.
- Paper name: **Concept of Yoga in Vedic and Modern period: A comparative study.** Resource person: Garima Devi, Faculty, Dept. Of Yogic Science and Therapy, Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University, Nalbari.
- Paper name: **The role of Yama and Niyama for enhancing peace and Harmony in modern society.** Resource person: Dr Madhan Borah, Asst. Professor, Dep. of Yogic science and Naturapathy Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev Viswavidyalaya.
- Paper name: **Mind Body separation: an analysis from the perspective of Yoga and Transhumanism.** Resource person: Dr. Ramala Sarmah, Asst. Professor, Dept. of Philosophy, Nowgong College (Autonomous), Nagaon.
- Paper name: **Yoga and Seven Chakras of life, the main energy centres of the Body.** Resource person: Dr. Snigdha Sarkar, Guest Faculty, Dept. of Botany, Rangia College, Karyakarta, Vivekananda Kendra.

The first session was summed up by the two panellists who chaired the session. According to them, the papers presented were deeply analytical and had subjective awareness, without which no programme on Yoga can be produced in our empirical subjective mind. It was also pointed that as the usage of Sanskrit in English has been used, one should be careful on the pronunciations. Corrections were also made as Patanjali Yoga sutra does not actually meant Patanjali as the founder of Yoga, rather he is believed to have compiled the continuation of the existing Yogic practices in a structure manner like Vyasa has codified the Vedas into four.

The interaction that followed after each paper had very important points discussed like the need for inclusion of 5 types of development, summed up as holistic development in one of the papers. Then the description of Universal Consciousness was discussed. Certain opinions were also put forward like transhumanism today can overcome the technological warfare and such transhumanism can also lead to humanisation of the world.

Ma. Hanumantha Rao ji, also mentioned regarding the concept of non violence. He said that if anything is disturbing our own state of non-violence, curtailing that effect is not violence in any form.



Sattra - III

The second technical session was chaired by **Dr Ujjwal Arun Maske**, HOD, Dept of Yogic Science and Naturapathy, Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya and **Ad. Dr. Sova Rani Barkataky Sarma**, Prant Pramukh, Vivekananda Kendra Assam Prant.

The panellists were then introduced and were felicitated.

Following are the papers presented in the second session:

- Paper name: **Kriya Yoga: A holistic approach towards ultimate goal of spirituality**. Resource person: CA Harishankar Singh, Certified Yoga Prashikshak, Karyapaddhiti Saha Pramukh, Kamrup Vibhag, VK Assam Prant.
- Paper name: **Garbhopenishad and Garbha Sanskara as an education over womb during pregnancy: A literature study**. Resource person: N.Aphaba Singh, Research Scholar, MSSV, Guwahati and Raksha Rawat, Asst. Professor, MSSV, Guwahati
- Paper name: **Bhakti Yoga: Tradition propogated by Srimanta Sankardeva and Mahapurush Madhavdev**. Resource person: Dipandita Gogoi, Research Scholar, Nirwan University, Jaipur, Rajasthan and Ashima Jyoti Kashyap, Research Scholar, Dep. of Yogic science and Naturapathy Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev Viswavidyalaya
- Paper name: **A study on the concept of absolute self in Ishavasya Upanishad**. Resource person: Ravi Prasad Sharma, Research Scholar, Dep. of Yogic science and Naturapathy, Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev Viswavidyalaya.

- Paper name: **Concept of Aum with special reference to Nadabindu Upanishad.** Resource person: Ankita Borthakur, Research Scholar, Dep. of Yogic science and Naturapathy Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev Viswavidyalaya.

In the interaction, questions like the difference between Namghar and Sattrra or whether a soul and ultimate soul is different where the presenter also answered the same saying self is the manifestation of the ultimate self. The resource persons were also questioned regarding the Bindu of the Aum, about whether the Bindu is same as any other Bindu.

Summing up the session, panellists referred to the papers and pointed certain observations like the ultimate goal of life is always to be led by the body, mind and soul.



Sattrra - IV

The 4th Sattrra began with a Geet presentation by the VK Karyakartas.

The third technical session was chaired by Dr. Madhukara Shastri, academician, eminent Sanskrit Scholar and an expert in Vedic studies, also a preacher of Yogic practices and Dr. Bali Narayan Phukan, Academician, Founder of the Dep. of Yogic science and Naturapathy, Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev Viswavidyalaya.

The panellists were then introduced and were felicitated.

Following are the papers presented in the second session:


- Paper name: Shiva Puran Aru Yoga, also establishing unity in diversity. Resource person: Biva Choudhury, Karyakarta, VK
- Paper name: **Physical and mental disciplines in the Sradhdhatrayavibhagayoga of Srimadbhagavad Gita: A study.** Resource person: Dr. Hiramoni Goswami, Asst. Professor, B. Borooah College.
- Paper name: **A Review of Shiva Samhita and its Contribution to Yoga.** Resource person: Nazia Akhtar, Yoga Instructor, Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev Viswavidyalaya.
- Paper name: **Yoga Psychology.** Resource person: Rekha Moni Kalita, Asst. Professor, Dept. of Philosophy, Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Guwahati.

- Paper name: **Concept of "Pancha-Makara" in Ancient Yogic Text Book of Assam: The Yogini Tantra.** Resource person: Rituraj Boruah, Yoga Instructor, Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev Viswavidyalaya.
- Paper name: **Prachin Bharatiya wadyaya mein Yogasastra ki Parampara.** Resource person: Keshab Luitel, Asst. Professor, Dept. of Sanskrit, Gurucharan College, Silchar.
- Paper name: **Contribution of Yoga towards Stress Management.** Resource person: Dr. Govind Sharma, Associate Professor, Department of Sanskrit, Assam University, Silchar.

In the interactive session certain observations were put forward by the participants like Discipline, as was only mentioned in Sattvik form of lifestyle, but there also exists other forms of disciplines in other forms of lifestyles like Rajashik and Tamasic as well. The presenters were questioned on the definition of Sraddha as per Shastra. The resource persons were also asked to validate the references they have used for writing their study.

The panellists in the concluding technical session pointed out that there were some misinterpretations of data and suggested that one should have proper research before presentation and also suggested for a committee that should analyse the eligibility of a particular paper that can be presented in further Yoga Sāstra Sangamam.

After the conclusion of the technical session, the Vivekananda Kendra Yoga Certificate Course team presented a demonstration of the Suryanamaskar and other Asanas.

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Dr. Mridul Hazarika, Vice Chancellor, Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya who attended the conclusion program was felicitated by Ma. Hanumantha Rao, Vice President, Vivekananda Kendra Kanyakumari.

This event was followed by providing the certificates of participation to the resource persons by Dr. Hazarika.

Dr. Mridul Hazarika, then addressed the delegates, the resource persons and the other participants of the Sangamam with an exhaustive focus for a healthy environment leading to a healthy society. Expressing pity on the current societal scenario, he mentioned Martin Cooper

who invented the mobile phone, who himself toward the later stage disregarded the painful life seeing the misuse of his invention. Dr. Hazarika critically acclaimed today's self-centred people and discarding society. He persuaded the youth of today to take the habit of a disciplined lifestyle in connection with yoga. He said such practices cleanse the mind and soul and hence teaches the society respect for diversity and tolerance. He highlighted the importance of research and also suggested to give more importance to quality than quantity and not to get carried away with the career-centric rush regarding time.

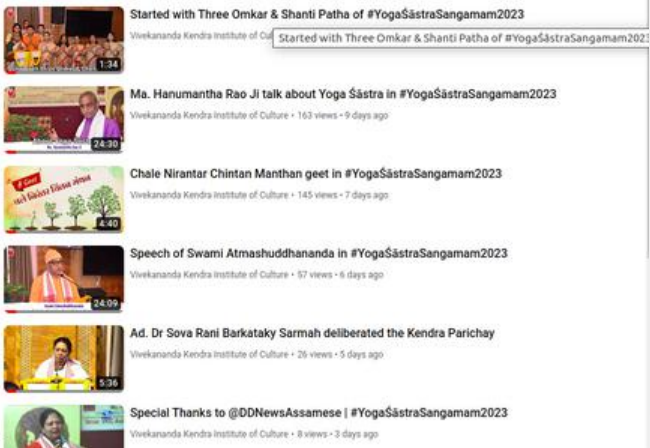
Ma. Hanumantha Rao ji then in his concluding remark highlighted the importance of such Sangamams where repeated consultations on a particular context leads to the updation of its meaning on a regular basis. He said, unlike other branches of science, the Yoga is an experiential science, where the teacher and the taught, in each session undergo major transformation together. He expressed his happiness on such a Sangamam being organised for the first time in North East India by the Vivekananda Kendra family. He concluded by congratulating the Karyakartas who worked both front and behind in making the programme a grand success.

Lastly, the words of gratitude were expressed by Shri Dipankar Mahanta, Joint Secretary, VKIC. Addressing the gathering he congratulated the entire family of VK for the successful conduction of the Sangamam and thanked the delegates and the resource persons for enlightening us with so much of knowledge. He concluded his remark by thanking the Almighty and hoped for many such gatherings in future courses.

The programme ended with the Shanti Paath.



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About Vivekananda Kendra Institute of Culture



A Project of **Vivekananda Kendra Kanyakumari**, the **Vivekananda Kendra Institute of Culture** (VKIC) was established in 1993 at Guwahati to nurture roots through Seminars, Research, Documentation and publications on the Northeast of India to:

- ▶ Understand the richness of our traditional systems
- ▶ Identify the unifying elements that bind us
- ▶ Provide meaningful continuity to these practices in a fast- changing complex lifestyle
- ▶ To be relevant in time-hence Development through Culture

Contact Us

M.G. Road, Uzan Bazar Riverside, Guwahati - 781001