Dr. Freund Publishes Newly Discovered Varuna Purana

For the first time, the charming stories of the Varuna Purana have been published, thanks to the discovery of this ancient text by faculty member Peter Freund and his colleague Vivek Vaidyanathan.

Dr. Freund’s book contains both the Sanskrit text and an English translation. Purana is a branch of Vedic literature that features ancient stories, and the Varuna Purana contains 10 stories portraying the full range of experience from ignorance to complete enlightenment.

Searching for the only-known manuscript of Varuna Purana after finding references to the text in an obscure catalogue in the University of Iowa Library, Mr. Vaidyanathan contacted manuscript repositories all over India. The manuscript was finally found in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library in Chennai.

Dr. Freund first converted the text from Telugu script into Sanskrit, and then translated it into English.

According to Dr. Freund, the translation follows Maharishi’s principle of sequential unfoldment: The first verse of every chapter contains in seed form the total knowledge of the chapter, which is then sequentially unfolded.


This is Dr. Freund’s second book.

Construction of Maharishi Vedic Observatory Expected Soon in Front of Argiro

Depending on the weather, excavation could begin soon in preparation for the construction of the Maharishi Vedic Observatory™ that will be sited in front of the Argiro Student Center, with completion expected sometime this summer.

The observatory, a gift of a generous donor, consists of 10 instruments in a circle that are different types of sundials and a central display of the Rik Ved.

It will be the size of a small sculpture garden 40 ft. in diameter, with the instruments being 4–5 ft. high. It will lie about 20 ft. east of the sidewalk in front of the Argiro Student Center.
FROM THE FOUNDER

"The basis of all events is the consciousness of the individual, the collective consciousness of the nation, the collective consciousness of a continent. It is that which we want to purify; it is that which we want to harmonize, to integrate, so that in the light of higher levels of consciousness, the negative trends will not sprout in the world."

— Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Sept. 25, 2002 press conference

Faculty Present at Harvard on Sustainable Agriculture

MUM faculty recently had the opportunity to present a more profound view of agriculture at a conference on “The Spirit of Sustainable Agriculture” hosted by Harvard Divinity School.

Dr. Thimmaiah, Travis Cox, and John Fagan led a workshop that presented three natural approaches to agriculture.

Dr. Thimmaiah was also invited to be one of five speakers at the plenary session. And he performed an ancient ceremony, called Agnihotra, for healing and agriculture that was attended by approximately 150 of the 200 conference participants.

“Those instruments are based on an ancient tradition, the same Vedic tradition from which we have the Transcendental Meditation technique,” said Craig Pearson, MUM executive vice-president. “They were used to track the heavenly bodies and locate the individual in space and time. But, more important, they are instruments for cultivating our deep connection with the universe and aligning ourselves with the orderliness in nature.”

Maharishi has described the observatory as an ancient Vedic technology to expand awareness and train the vision and mind to focus on the mathematical precision and order that regulates the universe without problems.

The Maharishi Vedic Observatory can be understood to be the structure of the universe as detected from the shadow caused by the sun. According to the website vedicobservatory.svr.com, the principle of the instruments of the Maharishi Vedic Observatory is demonstrated in the travel of the shadow.

This movement on the instruments resembles the overshadowing influence of waking, dreaming, and sleeping on pure consciousness. Measuring the sun from the shadow resembles the phenomenon of locating Transcendental Consciousness from the state of waking consciousness.

The observatory is the first phase of development of Younger Park, which will lie east of Argiro. It will include an amphitheater, watercourse, paths, fountain, and various sustainable features.

Younger Park, also supported by donors, honors the late Gil Younger, a benefactor of MUM for over 30 years.

The park is based on designs by campus architect Jon Lipman and developed by RDG Planning & Design. It is part of a master plan that will include a pedestrian mall on Robert Keith Wallace Drive, new parking lots on the periphery of campus, a new library/information center on the east hill opposite the Argiro Student Center, and a residence hall slightly down the slope from the northeast corner of Argiro.

Campus residents are advised to not walk through the construction area once it begins.
New Study: Invincible America Assembly Reduced Homicides 21.2% and Violent Crime 18.5%

A new study has found that the community Invincible America Assembly reduced the rate of homicides by a total of 21.2% over the four-year period when attendance was at its peak, and reduced the rate of violent crime by a total of 18.5% over the same period.

The study estimates that 8,157 homicides were averted by the significant shift from an increasing to a decreasing trend in homicide rates.

Published earlier this month in the journal SAGE Open, the study established baseline rates of homicide for the whole U.S. and violent crime for a sample of 206 urban areas with a population over 100,000 during the period of 2002–2006, and then compared that baseline with the period 2007–2010.

The researchers found that a rising trend of U.S. homicide during the baseline period 2002–2006 was reversed during the 2007–2010 intervention period. In the case of violent crime, the study found a highly significant shift from a flat trend in 2002–2006 to a declining trend in 2007–2010.

From January of 2007 through December 2010, the Assembly was above or near the threshold of 1,725 participants, the size predicted to have an influence on the U.S. This threshold represents the square root of 1% of the U.S. population.

“Given that there are now multiple studies showing a highly significant relationship between a large group practicing the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs and decreased violence, this obviously has implications for crime prevention,” said research professor Michael Dillbeck, lead author of the study.

This study is the latest in a series of studies spanning decades that have suggested that a sufficiently large group practicing an advanced program of the Transcendental Meditation® technique, the TM-Sidhi® program, is associated with decreased social violence.

Nine peer-reviewed articles, comprising 14 studies, have now been published.

The earlier studies were for periods of several weeks or months. This current study was based on group practice over a number of years, which gave researchers an opportunity to study potential long-term changes.

They used a battery of diagnostic tests to establish the validity of the key statistical assumptions of the analysis, which utilized “broken-trend intervention analysis” of outcomes, a form of interrupted time series analysis.

In the study the authors discuss alternative hypotheses, such as economic trends, incarceration rates, seasonal cycles, demographic changes, and policing strategies, but found they weren’t sufficient to explain the observed reduction.


Zhou Jiang Named Top Accounting Student

Zhou Jiang, a PhD student in management, was recently recognized by the Iowa Society of CPAs after being nominated by the management department as the 2016 Outstanding Accounting Student.

Faculty at each college and university nominate their top student, and the society then presents them with an award.

Ms. Zhou’s accomplishments as a student include passing all four parts of the Certified Public Accountant exam and passing the XBRL certification exam while also earning an MBA, a post-graduate certificate in Lean Accounting, and a post-graduate certificate in Lean Higher Education.

Accounting professor Andy Bargerstock said it’s rare that a student without professional experience is able to pass the CPA exams because much of the content of the exam is mastered by actually doing it in practice.

Ms. Zhou has also achieved XBRL certification. This is a markup language, resembling a computer language, that’s used to ensure data is reported in a systematic manner to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. XBRL is now required in many jobs involving reporting accounting data to the government.

The award was presented by Fairfield CPAs Tommy Thompson and Tamra Halama, members of the Iowa Society of CPAs who were invited by the society to formally bestow the award.

In addition to being a PhD student, Ms. Zhou also does some teaching for MUM.

School Student Wins State Science Championship

BY LEANNE HAYS

After having won the junior division state championship last year as an 8th grader at Maharishi School, 9th grader Pranav Chhalliyil has now won the senior division of the State Science and Technology Fair of Iowa, competing against 300 other young scientists grades 9–12.

Last year he found that traditional oral hygiene using activated charcoal to brush followed by tongue cleaning was the most effective reducer of oral bacteria.

This year, in a study involving 92 subjects, he worked to discover what percentage of specific dental damaging bacteria was removed using three different approaches to cleaning with activated charcoal products.

During the course of experimentation, Pranav developed a form of activated charcoal derived from rice husks, a product typically considered waste material. This technology is simple, cost-effective, efficient, microbiome friendly, even eco-friendly, and can be used in both developed and developing countries.
Rec Center Now Offers Sailboats

Two sailboats are now available, and two more will be picked up in late May, as the Rec Center expands their offerings.

The British-made boats, called the RS Quba Sport, are 11.5 ft. x 4.5 ft and weigh 128 lbs. They have a single mast with the option of installing a small second sail called a jib, which gives more power, said Ken Daley, head of the Department of Exercise and Sport Science.

As this issue of The Review goes to press, the boats were expected to be available for checkout by the publication date — but only to experienced sailors. Others will first need to be trained.

The Rec Center will be offering sailing classes in May and June at local or regional lakes.

The boats, which can accommodate up to two persons, are available to students, staff, and faculty at no charge. The fee for others hasn't yet been determined.

Mr. Daley said that the fact that the boats are the same design will allow for sailing competitions.

“They're going to make an excellent extension of our outdoor recreation program,” Mr. Daley said.