



February 2024 Issue

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President's Message

Dear Friends and Supporters of Hindu Centre,

February has come and nearly gone. It has gone so fast at the Hindu Centre because a number of major activities have been taking place and volunteers have been active behind the scenes making all these happen

The mass chanting of Kanda Sashti Kavacam took place on 21 January morning at the Sri Veeramakaliamman Temple in Serangoon Road, followed the day after with Rama Utsav to celebrate the prana pratishtha (invocation of the life force) of the Ram Lalla deity and consecration of the Ram Janmabhoomi Temple in Ayodhya, India.

March 2024 will once again see the Centre bustling with activity. See below for details. You and your family are most welcome to attend the events.

Hope you enjoy reading about the activities at your Centre and the other articles. Your support is always appreciated, either with a one-time donation or a regular monthly contribution.

May I take this opportunity to wish Iswara's blessings upon all of you dear friends with good health, happiness and more Jnana, Bhakti and Seva.

Dr N Varaprasad
President

Prayer

Sahanav Vavtu

ॐ सह नाव अवतु ।
सह नौ भुनक्तु ।
सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्वि नौ अधित अस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Transliteration:

Om Saha Naav[au]-Avatu |
Saha Nau Bhunaktu |
Saha Viiryam Karavaavahai |
Tejasvi Naav[au]-Adhiitam-Astu Maa Vidvissaavahai |
Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih | |

Meaning:

- 1: **Om, Together may we progress** (in our Studies, the Teacher and the Student),
- 2: **Together may we two Relish** (our Studies, the Teacher and the Student),
- 3: **Together may we perform** (our Studies) with **Vigour** (with deep Concentration),
- 4: **May what has been Studied by us be filled with the Brilliance** (of Understanding, leading to Knowledge); **May it Not** give rise to **Hostility** (due to lack of Understanding),
- 5: **Om Peace, Peace, Peace.**

Note:

1. This is an invocation verse in many schools during prayer time and appears in the *Krishna Yajurveda Taittiriya Upanishad* (2.2.2)
2. In Point 4, emphasis is laid on avoidance of hostility in discussions as divergent views may abound. Stress on civilised debate has been a cornerstone of studies since ancient times.

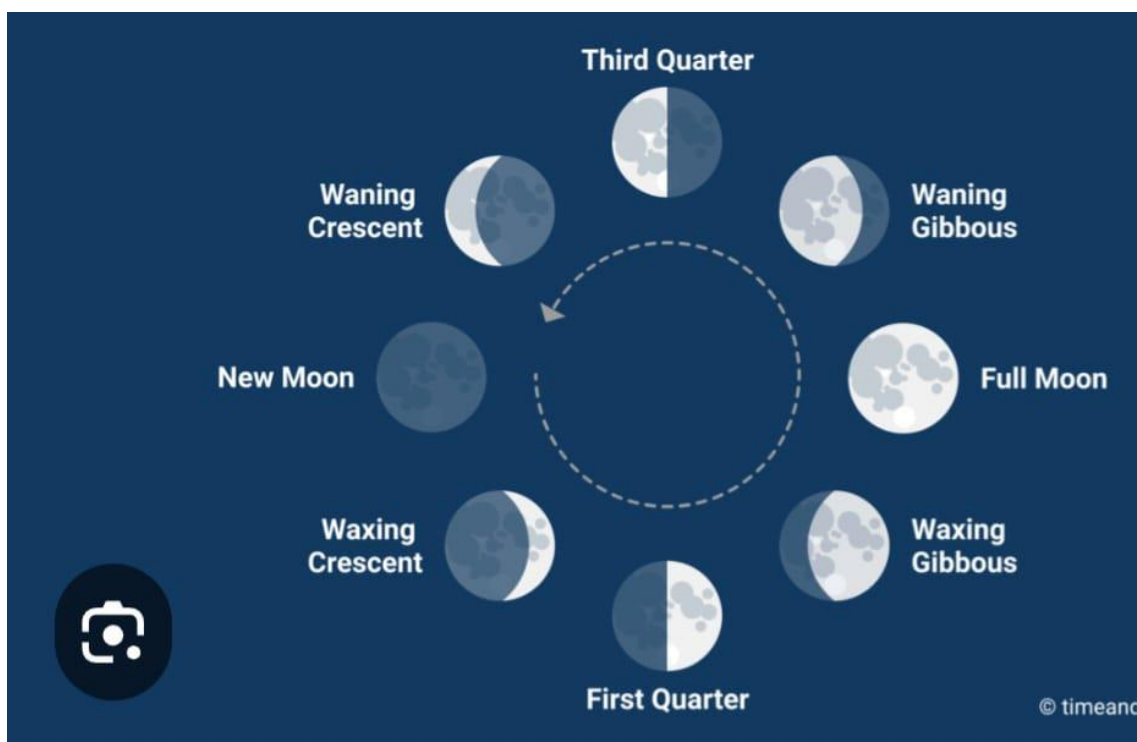
Chinese New Year and the Hindu Calendar

February sees the worldwide celebration of Chinese New Year, as the incoming year of the Wooden Dragon. It is commonly referred to as the Lunar New Year. In this article, we explore some similarities and differences between the Indian and Chinese calendars.

According to Shankar Rajan, a keen follower of astrology and numerology, the Chinese calendar is not a lunar calendar and hence it is not correct to refer to Chinese New Year as Lunar New year. Instead, the Chinese calendar is a luni-solar calendar similar to the Hindu and Egyptian calendars. What that means is that the calendar is structured on the movements of the moon but has solar adjustments.

A lunar year has 354 days since the calculation is only done on moon movements. The moon takes close to 29.5 days to orbit the earth in one month ($29.5 \times 12 = 354$), see diagram below.

The solar year has 365 days (or 366 in a leap year).



What that means is that the lunar year loses about 11 days every year. The only fully lunar calendar is the Muslim calendar. In 2024, Hari Raya Puasa (HRP) falls on 10th April. HRP in 2025 will be on 30th March, in 2026 on 19th March etc. Technically HRP can fall in any of the 12 months so it could be in a cold month or a very hot month (when it will be more difficult for fasting).

But for CNY or Deepavali, it has to fall within a particular monthly period. CNY usually falls between mid-January to mid- February and Deepavali will be mid-October to mid-November.

Let us take CNY. This year it is on 10th Feb. In 2025 it will be on 29th or 30th Jan (minus 11 days), but 2026 it will not be on 18th Jan but around 17th Feb (adding 29 days) as otherwise it goes outside the monthly period of CNY. So we add 29 or 30 days. This solar adjustment is also used for Deepavali.

Interestingly, every Chinese New Year will always fall on the day after Thai Amavasya in the Hindu calendar.

The Hindu and Chinese calendars share many common features.

The Hindu calendar has a cycle of 60 years with a name for each year. This year's name (from mid-April 2024) is Krothi and it is the 38th in the cycle. The Chinese calendar carries the names of 12 animals and has 5 elements of wood, fire, earth, water and metal somewhat similar to the Hindu 5 elements of earth, water, fire, air and space. If you multiply 12 animals by 5 elements, you get the same 60-year cycle of the Hindu calendar cycle.

Dragons are known for their leadership qualities and determination to succeed. Combining the predictions of both Hindu and Chinese calendars, this year will see a lot of violence and destruction, but the dragon is a saviour, and hopefully we should come out of the year successfully.

Overall, the Dragon year will be a good and prosperous year despite the war and other geopolitical and economic issues facing the world.

Recent Events at the Centre

Pustaka Book Club Meeting

Sunday 18 February was a special day for us at Hindu Centre - our 6th successful book club meeting. In these events, our centre becomes our home,

decked up with banners, flowers, kolam, food, like for a wedding, and in this case celebrating art - our centre was full of Parul Mehra's works of art.

It was an evening filled with beauty. We talked about her art, the spirituality and intention behind her art, her practice of Jnana, Bhakti and Seva and why it is so meaningful to her and to us.

We are what we think, talk and act, and Parul expresses it in this unique way. Dhruv spoke about how he wrote the poetry in the book and how he used learnings from the Bhagavad Gita and expressed thoughts for the next generation. Sukanya Pushkarna our Guest of Honour, shared her deep insights of how art can be appreciated and especially Parul's art.

HC would like to express our sincere thanks to Parul, Dhruv, her family and friends who graced the occasion, To Sukanya and to all our audience who participated and shared their thoughts. And to all our volunteers and event manager who helped us make this event a success.

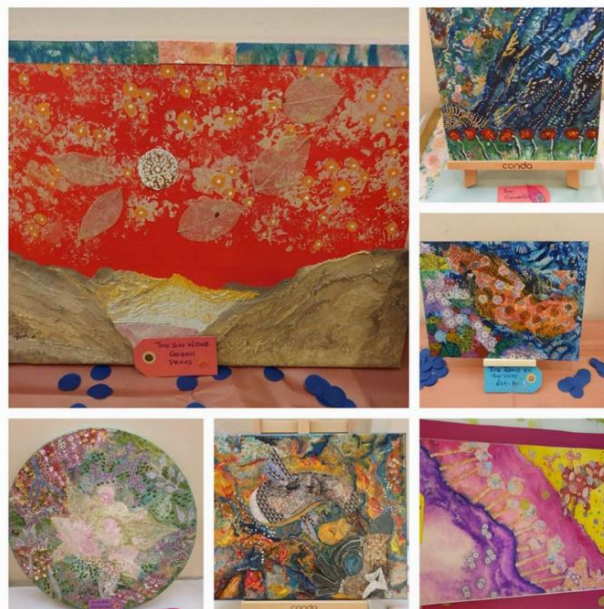
Please continue to join our sessions. A recording will be available on HC YouTube channel soon, please watch at www.youtube.com/hinducentresg.





Pages from Parul Mehra's book, "Unmasking the Spiritual Self"

Examples of Parul's artworks



Take Control of Your Karma!

Our workshop on Karma on Saturday 17 February was a very empowering and revealing experience for both teachers and students.

The goal was to get the concepts of dharma and karma which is foundational for our life and thinking, across in a simple manner. Knowledge that will always be our support in life.

How can we be in charge of our lives? How can we make sure that the arrow that we are about to shoot into this world is the right one? And will help us be comfortable in our life? How to deal with uncomfortable situations that will always arise?

With an actionable component - participants learned why and how to go about life in a prayerful manner, and learned a basic everyday puja, a navagraha stotram, khumbaka as tapas, and a simple nama japa.

For our teachers Anu and Shanthy, this sharing is a labour of love; they spent hours debating before creating this “knowledge and practice” package. And we are happy that our students said it was extremely useful. Thanks very much for attending and we welcome you to attend all our workshops.



Sanskrita Sambashana Shibiram

Our Sanskrit classes started off on 19th January, and will run on 8 Fridays till 8th March at Hindu Centre conducted by Teachers from Sanskrita Bharati, Singapore.

Learning a classical language clarifies our mind. This class helps to clarify the pronunciation of the Sanskrit alphabet and learn simple grammar constructs

and vocabulary. Being familiar with Sanskrit gets our pronunciation better for chanting.

This class also sets you up to start Certificate level courses at Samskrita Bharati. Started off with a beautiful prayer with a Sankalpa of Sanskrit as a mother. Followed by basic pronunciation using English transliteration.

Learning basic language asking questions with abhinaya, makes it stick to the mind. Breakout sessions to practice and familiarise ourselves. Thanks to Samskrita Bharati Singapore for bringing so many teachers to help us and to our 20+ students for being so very enthusiastic! Uttamam!



Samskritam Class in progress

Ramar Utsava

My teacher at Hindu Centre said to a question on what to read after Ramayana, read it again and again. To celebrate the official consecration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, Hindu Centre celebrated Rama Utsava with puja, prayers and bhajans. We even had the Dhvaja from Ayodhya.

House full again! So much so, there wasn't space for a specially prepared dance item!

We had beautiful Bhajans from HC volunteers, the Krishna Premi group, SIFAS teachers and students. And a talk from Sri Keyur Dave, President, Swaminarayan Temple, Singapore.

We also had on sale Ramayana 108, our own publication, a Q&A book on Ramayana. And also a book called [The Friendless God](#) written by our long-time volunteer [Anuradha Subramanyan](#), a fictional account set around Ayodhya. Thanks to all our dedicated volunteers whom you can see on the picture below!



Mass Chanting of Kanda Sashti Kavacam

21 January was an especially auspicious day and mesmerising to hear 200 plus voices raising in crescendo with our lead singers and musicians. And the dancers from Nrityalaya Aesthetics Society were enchanting, making us immerse ourselves in thoughts of Muruga.

The Kavacam is an armour; in this song, we are asking Lord Muruga to protect us against all Asuras - strengthening our minds to keep our internal asuras also in check. And surrendering to him. Just like we say Muruga kappathu for everything.

Smt Padmini Chandrasekhar's singing of Tiruppugazh during the Arathis, entranced us. (she taught us these very songs, please join us when she next teaches us the Arathi songs). And the bhajans and song medley that followed leading up to the dancers doing the whole kavacam with abhinaya nailed it in our hearts.

Special thanks to [Sri Veeramakaliamman Temple, Singapore](#), [Bhaskar's Arts Academy](#) Dr Ghana Venothan Retnam and his students and [Nrityalaya Aesthetics Society](#) Guru Ambuja Thiru and her students.



Full House at Sri Veeramakaliamman Temple Hall

Upcoming Events at Hindu Centre

- Maha Shivaratri Celebrations: Friday 8th Mar 7pm to Saturday 9th March 5am. Register here: <https://sfh.sg/hcbhakti>.
- Exam stress management for upper secondary and tertiary students: Saturday 16 March, 2.00pm to 5.30pm. Register here: <https://forms.gle/vhvyYvxc5r9gxFBf6>
- Yoga Therapy Sunday 17 March, 3.30pm to 6pm. Fee \$15. Early bird fee \$10 if registration and payment is received before 29 February here: <https://sfh.sg/hcseeds>
- Warli Art: Saturday, 23 March, from 4pm to 6pm. Look out for this.
- Weekly Tuesday Yoga class. \$20pm. Join here: <https://sfh.sg/hcyoga>. Free trial for 1st timers!

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

For more details and registration, please call the HC office during office hours at 62918540, or email to events@hinducentre.org.sg

Subscribe to our calendar of events here: <https://sfh.sg/hcevents>.

Hindu Centre Membership

To join Hindu Centre as a member, just visit <https://sfh.sg/hcmember>

The fee for Annual membership (12 months) is \$120, and the entrance fee for Life membership is \$2000 (one-time).

Find your Purpose and Make a Difference

Hindu Centre provides wonderful opportunities to volunteer and help the community according to your talents and interest. From counselling offenders in prison, befriending old folks staying in homes for the aged, to social media and website design, to helping in the library, or joining our bhajan groups. You will meet a group of wonderful people in a common cause.

Hindu Centre is looking especially for a **volunteer librarian** to manage our book collection and library. We already have an online catalogue, but we need someone to develop it further and to manage access to members and seekers. We're also looking for people with website design expertise to revamp our website.

Please register your interest here: <https://sfh.sg/hcvolunteer>.

Help Us Promote, Protect and Preserve our Vedic Heritage

“Every Little Bit Counts”

Hindu Centre Singapore is dedicated to the spiritual progress of Singapore Hindus through the three pillars of Jnana (Knowledge), Bhakti (Devotion) and Seva (Service). We are a non-profit society run entirely by volunteers. HC depends on the goodwill of generous donors and supporters who believe in our work and mission.

For more information, please click here
<https://www.hinducentre.org.sg/donate/>



Use your mobile banking app to scan the code.

OR use PayNow to send to UEN S78SS0017J

Thank you for your generous support.

Every little bit counts!

Ask Us Anything on Hinduism

Do you have a question about Hinduism, Sastras, Life in general, Relationships or activities of Hindu Centre? Send us your question at admin@hinducentre.org.sg and our panel of respondents will get in touch with you. Please be assured of protection of privacy at all times, regardless of the nature of your questions. Email your questions to at admin@hinducentre.org.sg

Hindu Centre WhatsApp broadcast Group

To receive regular event notifications, just follow the steps below.

Your name and number will not be shared with nor visible to anyone else.

1. Save +65 8768 0532 in your phone contacts as WhatsUp@HC.
2. Send a WhatsApp message “I’m in” to the newly added contact with your name.