

President's Letter

Summer Solstice 2018 edition

Greetings dear ACVA friends! We hope this finds you and your families doing well, and prospering.

It's been another very busy quarter! The big news is that ACVA's participation in the United Astrology Conference (UAC) last month was an unqualified success on every level. I was so proud of ACVA's role there as the exclusive organizational representative of Vedic Astrology. This global Astrology conference, held every 4 – 6 years, is a collaboration between four Western Astrology groups, and ACVA, - the sole sponsor for Jyotisha. It was a very encouraging experience to see so many new faces there. We estimated that around 50% of participants were new to this most recent Kumba Mela of Astrology. There is so much current interest in, and enthusiasm for, studying Astrology.

It's hard to describe the intensity of such a large gathering of astrologers, jyotishis, and students of the Sacred Science. So, for those of you who couldn't attend, here's a bit of what happened in Chicago, during the fourth week of May 2018:

ACVA sponsored a day long pre-conference intensive workshop: "The Facets of Vedic Astrology." It was well attended by a room full of enthusiasts who had come from as far away as Argentina, and from China, to attend the conference early, specifically to hear Dennis Harness, Shoba Mohan, Ronnie Gale Dreyer, and myself present fundamentals of Jyotish. Thank you to the ACVA faculty for this labor of love! Recordings of this material will be available for purchase, soon, in the ACVA store.

The next day, Bangalore Niranjana Babu presented a masterful 4-hour intensive on "Jyothir Vastu". Thank you for travelling from India, Sir, to share this useful and ancient knowledge. ACVA instructor, Ronnie Gale Dreyer also gave a brilliant workshop on "The Predictive Power of Eclipses" that same day.

Thursday, 5/24 was the official opening of the conference. I was honored to be onstage with the presidents of the other organizations, to introduce The American College of Vedic Astrology. It was a wonderful moment, for me, to be able to proudly proclaim that Vedic Astrology is alive and well, here in the West! Background screen shots displayed a (South Indian) chart of the muhurt for the opening, and also included was a slide with the blessing: "Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu." Special thanks to ACVA tutor Komilla Sutton for the aside to me that there was a very auspicious Saraswati Yoga forming at that time. It certainly felt like a blessing for the conference, to be under the gaze of Saraswati.

That same evening, I was interviewed by Netflix, for a piece on Jyotish, to be broadcast in August 2018. Chinese media interviewers were also very curious about Vedic Astrology, and asked me intelligent questions about it.

Brilliant lectures on Jyotish were given, to full rooms, all day long, for four days. It was really a feast for the brain, and heart, and soul. ACVA distinguished itself, again, with its generous gifts to the Silent Auction, which took place on Saturday night. This charity auction supports UAC scholarships for future conferences. ACVA was able to provide one appreciative student with a full scholarship to the conference.

One of the most impactful events was the lovely Navagraha Puja which Pundit Samavedula performed on behalf of ACVA, in the ACVA hospitality suite, on Sunday evening. That was an amazing event – with reverent and appreciative attendants, ancient mantras to the planets – and each one there was

individually named and included in the ceremony. I heard that it was the highlight of the conference for many. Thank you, dear Pundit Samavedula, for your generosity and virtuosity!

The culmination of the conference was the Regulus Awards Banquet, on Memorial Day. It was an elegant gathering of approximately 1,700 people in the main ballroom of the Marriott. Again, I was honored to be able to represent ACVA, and to bestow ACVA's Lifetime Achievement Award, posthumously, to our recently departed president, Dr. William Levacy. Many thanks and sincere pranams also to Bangalore Niranjan Babu for trusting me with presenting the Raman and Rajeshwari Research Foundation's "Jyothisha Jnana Sagara" award to our Dr. Bill's memory. ACVA's President Emeritus, Dr. Dennis Harness, accepted this impressive award, on behalf of his successor. I heard later that this especially loving tribute set the high tone for the speeches which followed during the evening.

Special thanks to my dear friend, "The Godfather of Western Astrology" Ray Merriman, who always made sure that Jyotish got the respect that it deserves; and to Dr. Suhas Kshirsagar, and his physician wife Manisha, for medical advice; and to our friend Joni Patry for managing the Vedic Track. I am in awe of, and will be eternally grateful for, the contributions of our ACVA faculty: Dennis Harness, Komilla Sutton, Ronnie Gale Dreyer, Shoba Mohan (and her husband, Kit Mohan), and Christina Collins. Also, to ACVA alum and former board member, Edith Hathaway; Sam Geppi; Bill Sinclair; Barry Rosen, and especially to Angela Pennington, who did double duty (for the past 3 years!) as UAC staff representing ACVA's position as a sponsor, and as a presenter. ACVA board members Karina Weil, and Swati Tipnis have also been invaluable during this long process, holding the college tightly together during UAC.

Being together in a spiritual sangha, with ACVA members, at UAC, was quite a rare and uplifting experience. We at ACVA look forward to serving the Jyotir Vidya, as sponsors, during the next UAC.

Speaking of future gatherings:

In collaboration with ACVA, I will be presenting a lecture on Jyotish, for the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, in New York City, on Wednesday, August 15, 2018. Those of you in Manhattan, please join me there! Thanks to A.T. Mann for initiating this interesting idea.

Komilla Sutton will be hosting "The 6th International Fresh Talents of Jyotish Conference", in San Francisco, California, November 2 – 7, 2018. www.Komilla.com I'll be attending, and look forward to being back where I left my heart...

The now annual "Sedona Vedic Astrology Conference" hosted by Dr. Dennis Harness will be held in Sedona, Arizona, November 30 – December 3, 2018. www.sedonavedicastrology.com. I will be presenting a bit about "The Outer Planets: Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto". See you there, too, I hope!

On the level of virtual gatherings, please look forward to ACVA's newest series of webinars on Jyotish, in development now, to be announced later this year.

Congratulations to our newest class of Jyotish Ratna, and Jyotish Prabhakara graduates! Your dedication to the study of Jyotish is awe-inspiring and humbling. We instructors have learned a lot, in the course of guiding you on your path of knowledge.

Gentle readers, if you love Jyotisha, and if you support ACVA's mission to educate much-needed future jyotishis, please donate to the Bill Levacy Memorial Scholarship Fund. Guru Purnima (honoring the Teachers) falls on the Full Moon eclipse of July 27, 2018. It would be a gesture of affection and respect

to the Jyotir Vidya to consider making a tax-deductible donation to ACVA at that time. Thank you in advance!

With appreciation to our dedicated instructors; our thriving ACVA alumnae; and with best wishes for a light-filled season to all our friends and readers,

Charlotte Benson