

Introduction to the Bibliography of Professor Agehananda Bharati's Works



Agehananda Bharati, or Swami, as he was known, was a dominating figure in South Asian Studies in the U.S., Europe, and India. Swami was born Leopold Fisher in Austria on April 20, 1923. Leopold's interest in South Asia began when he was a young boy in Vienna learning classical Sanskrit and Hindi. He graduated from the Akademisches Gymnasium, Vienna, in 1941 and the Oriental Institute and Ethological Institute of the University of Vienna in 1948. He received the name Agehananda Bharati in 1951 when he was ordained in the Dasanami Sanyasi order of Hindu monks. He earned his Acharya, the equivalent of a PhD, from Sanyasa Mahavidyalaya in Varanasi, India, that same year.

Professor Bharati became a noted scholar of Indian culture, teaching linguistics, comparative philosophy, anthropology, and South Asian studies at universities and institutions in India, Japan, Thailand, and the United States. In the 1950s, he was a lecturer in German at Delhi University, a reader in philosophy at Banaras Hindu University in India, a guest professor of comparative religion at the Nalanda Institute of Post-graduate Buddhist Academy in Bangkok, Thailand, Asia Foundation Visiting Professor at the universities of Tokyo and Kyoto in Japan, and research associate for the Far Eastern Institute at the University of Washington in Seattle. He recounts this journey in his acclaimed autobiography, *The Ochre Robe* (Ross Erikson, 2nd edition 1980).

Professor Bharati joined the Maxwell faculty in 1961 as an assistant professor of linguistics and anthropology and was Syracuse University's first Hindi instructor at a time when Maxwell was building its connections with India. He was promoted to associate professor in 1964 and to full professor in 1968. He chaired the anthropology department from 1971 to 1977 and was acting chair during the spring semester of 1985. In 1991, he was named the Ford/Maxwell Professor of South Asian Studies and also was presented with the Chancellor's Citation for Exceptional Academic Achievement. He passed away from brain cancer in the spring of 1991.

Although he taught in an anthropology department, his primary work focused on Indian religion, especially Tantric studies. He was an outstanding Sanskritist who spoke 15 classical and modern European and Indian vernacular languages—skills that he relished showing off. He is perhaps best known for his books *The Tantric Tradition* (The Hutchinson University Publishers, 1966), his autobiography, and a book on mysticism, *The Light at the Center* (Ross Erikson, 1976). Professor Bharati also wrote hundreds of articles for publications distributed

worldwide, was an editor for several international publications, and presented numerous lectures and papers at national and international professional conventions.

In the 1980s, Swami served as the priest for the growing Hindu community in the Syracuse area, performing many life cycle rituals. He was also the Hindu chaplain for the university and he took great glee in telling about meetings with the chaplains. Swami was a large man, probably 6'4" and until the early 1980s a large 300 lbs. The Evangelical Christian chaplain was a small man from Kerala. When they were introduced at public events, newcomers were more than startled when the large white European was introduced as the Hindu chaplain and the small Indian as the Christian one.

After his death in 1991, his vast collection of writings was donated to the Syracuse University Special Collections in Bird Library. The objective of these web pages, supported by the Friends of Agehananda Bharati, aims to make his many writings more accessible. When available via the online databases, there are hyperlinks to access those sources. When the material is available only at Syracuse University Libraries' Special Collections, patrons are urged to contact them directly. Special Collections has more information on their [website](#). In addition, we include information regarding tape recordings of lectures on Indian religions given at Cornell University in the summer of 1986 and video recordings of lectures at Syracuse University in 1987. Access to the audio and files of these lectures are available on request from the South Asia Center. Professor Bharati also served as research consultant on a film about the Ganges released by Berg in the early 1980s. Finally, Chris Helton wrote a dissertation focused on Swami, titled "Agehananda Bharati and the Search for Orthodox Humanism," which was completed in 2018 at the Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave, Slovakia. Please email [Dr. Helton](mailto:Dr.Helton) if you would like a copy of this dissertation.

In addition to supporting the creation of this web resource, the Friends of Agehananda Bharati have supported graduate research at Maxwell for over 25 years through fellowships to undertake field research in South Asian Studies. More information on the Bharati Memorial Grant can be found [here](#).

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