

## Introduction to the History of Shaivism

August 1, 2 and 3, 2025

Mode - Online

In August, Sambhāṣā Foundation organized a three-day online lecture series titled “*An Introduction to the History of Śaivism*” conducted by Dr. Yogesh Prabhudesai on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of August 2025. This series provided participants with a historical, archaeological, and Indological perspective on the evolution of Śaivism, tracing its journey from the Vedic deity Rudra to the many forms of Śiva in later Hindu traditions. Spread over three days, the lectures explored key themes including the early conceptualization of Rudra-Śiva-Śaṅkara, the emergence and spread of sects and cults within Śaivism, and the gradual development of Śiva’s iconography in Indian art and temples.

**Which of these are the weapons of Rudra-Śiva**



Yogesh Prabhudesai

## Field Survey- Pune in Freedom Struggle

August 4, 2025

Mode - Offline - onsite

As part of our August activities, Sambhāṣā Foundation conducted a field survey of heritage sites in Pune that played an important role in India’s freedom struggle. The survey was undertaken with two objectives, to create content for the social media series “*Pune in Freedom Struggle*” and to contribute to our wider research on the city’s role in the nationalist movement. The team

documented historically significant places such as the Samadhi and Talim of Lahuji Vastad Salve, Vasudev Balwant Phadke Memorial, Phule Wada, Savarkar Adhyasan Kendra, Aga Khan Palace, Yerwada Central Jail, Kesari Wada, and Prarthana Samaj, Pune. Each of these sites embodies critical aspects of Pune's contribution to India's independence, from revolutionary activities and reformist movements to nationalist journalism and the sacrifices of leaders.

### Photograph Exhibition- Valor Saga of Indian Army

Agust 19, 21 and 22, 2025

Mode - Offline

In August, on the occasion of the commemoration of 50 years of the 1965 India–Pakistan War, Sambhāṣā Foundation, in collaboration with Olive Green Ventures Foundation, hosted an exhibition titled “*Valor: Saga of the Indian Army*” at Dastur Hoshang Boys High School, Pune. The exhibition featured rare and original photographs from the 1965 Indo-Pak War as well as the 1999 Kargil War, offering students a visual journey into the bravery and sacrifices of the Indian Army. Designed to engage and inspire, the exhibition was attended by students from multiple schools across Pune, providing them with an educational experience that blended history, patriotism, and heritage awareness.

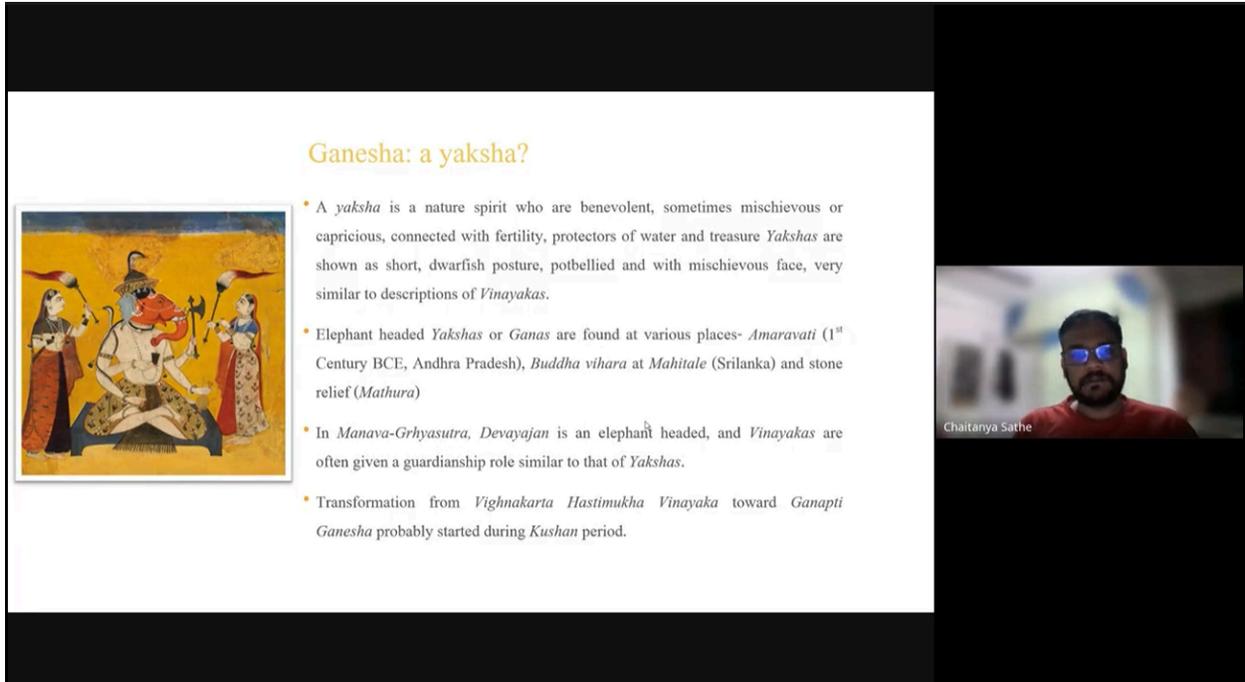


### Ganesha- Voyage Through Ages

August 22, 23 and 24, 2025

Mode - Online

In August, Sambhāṣā Foundation hosted a three-day online lecture series titled “**Ganesha: Voyages Through Ages**”, led by Dr. Chaitanya Sathe. This enriching program explored the historical, cultural, and iconographic evolution of Lord Ganesha, tracing his journey through various religious traditions and epochs. Each session invited participants to contemplate Ganesha's symbolic significance, artistic expressions, and the shifting contexts of his worship.



**Ganesha: a yaksha?**



- A *yaksha* is a nature spirit who are benevolent, sometimes mischievous or capricious, connected with fertility, protectors of water and treasure *Yakshas* are shown as short, dwarfish posture, potbellied and with mischievous face, very similar to descriptions of *Vinayakas*.
- Elephant headed *Yakshas* or *Ganas* are found at various places- *Amaravati* (1<sup>st</sup> Century BCE, Andhra Pradesh), *Buddha vihara* at *Mahitale* (Srilanka) and stone relief (*Mathura*)
- In *Manava-Grhyasutra*, *Devayajan* is an elephant headed, and *Vinayakas* are often given a guardianship role similar to that of *Yakshas*.
- Transformation from *Vighnakarta Hastimukha Vinayaka* toward *Ganapati Ganesha* probably started during *Kushan* period.



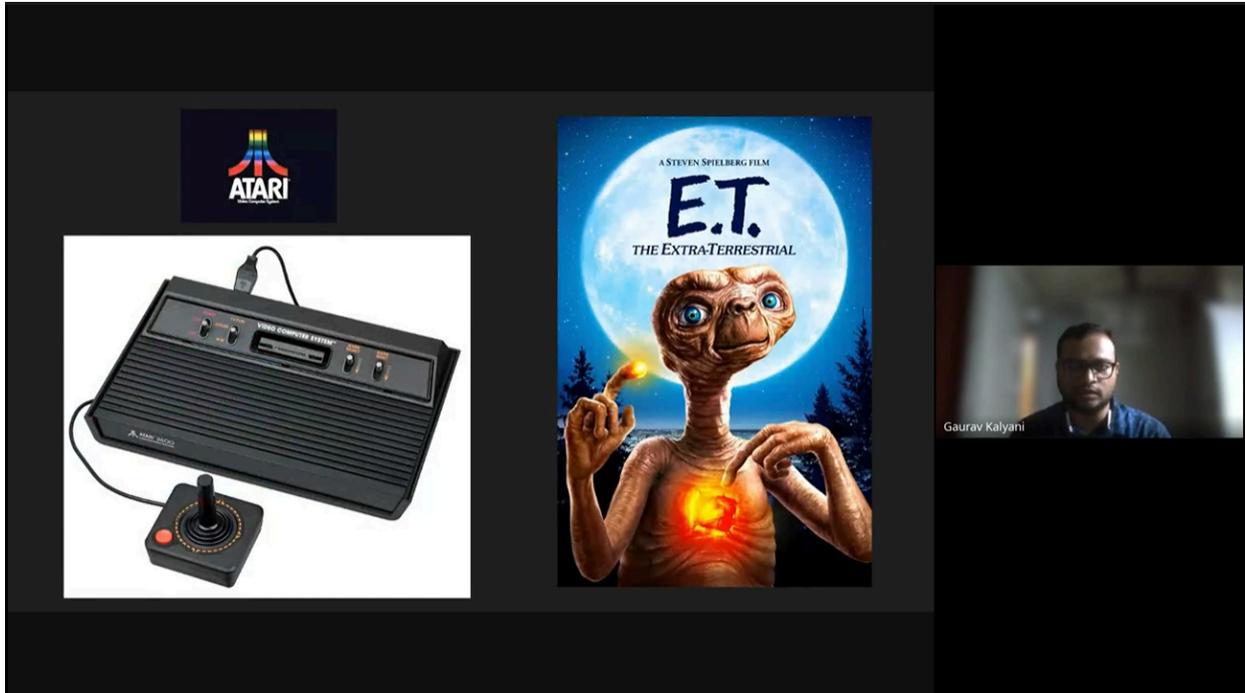
Chaitanya Sathe

## Sambhasha Study Group - August 2025 edition

August 29, 2025

Mode - Online

On August 29, 2025, Sambhāṣā Foundation organized a study group session titled “*Introduction to the World of Archaeogaming*”, conducted by independent researcher and archivist **Gaurav Kalyani**. The session introduced participants to the emerging sub-discipline of archaeogaming, which studies the intersections of archaeology and video games. Highlighting examples such as *Age of Empires*, *Red Dead Redemption*, and *Temple Run*, the discussion showcased how video games are deeply linked with history and archaeology in creative ways. Gaurav explained how this field, which began as a niche hobby in the late 2010s, has evolved into a scholarly area with its own theories, research methods, and academic discourse. Participants explored the potential of video games as cultural spaces for teaching archaeology with the live demonstration, tools for preservation and outreach in museums, and even as virtual archaeological sites that can be studied to understand the past, present, and future.



## Research Projects

### Oral History Documentation

The Sambhasha Foundation has initiated an Oral History Documentation Project aimed at preserving the narratives of prominent personalities in Pune aged 75 and above. This endeavor seeks to capture the recent past through firsthand accounts, ensuring that invaluable experiences and insights are not lost to time.

1. The project commenced with interviews of renowned psychologist **Dr. M. N. Palsane**, focusing on his personal and professional journey. In addition to recording his oral narratives, the foundation is digitizing his handwritten materials to ensure comprehensive preservation of his contributions. This initiative seeks to capture valuable insights from esteemed individuals, enriching the cultural and historical tapestry for future generations.

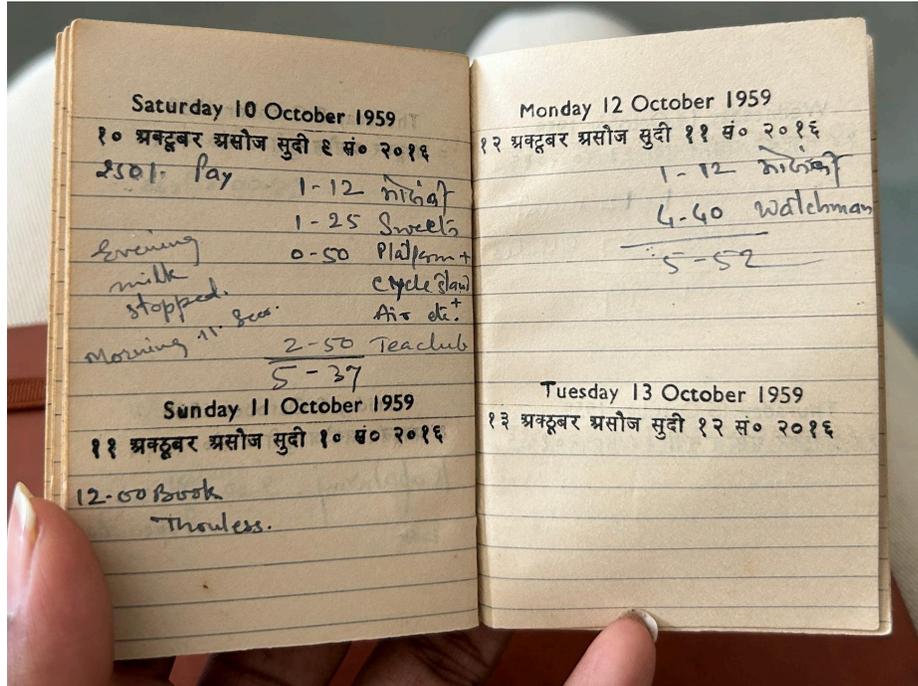
This month marked a significant milestone in our ongoing archival project on the legacy of Dr. M. N. Palsane. We successfully completed the transcription and translation of all recorded interviews with key individuals, including Dr. Palsane himself, his son Mr. Sudhir Palsane, daughter Dr. Vandana Palsane, and his student Dr. Mukta Puntambekar. Additionally, we digitised a newly discovered 17-page handwritten manuscript by Dr. Palsane.

2. Over the past two months, we have been documenting the life and legacy of **Late Shri Narayanrao Bodas of the Gwalior Gharana**. His handwritten notes, letters, and

photographs have been digitized to preserve his personal and musical journey. This month, we also began noting insights from our conversations with **Savita Bodas**, wife of **Narayanrao Bodas**, adding valuable context to the archival material.



3.



## **Ethnoarchaeological Survey of Traditional Communities in Pune**

### **Mode - Offline**

The research project of the Ethnoarchaeological Survey of Traditional Communities in Pune commenced this month. Pune, often referred to as the “Cultural Capital of Maharashtra,” is home to diverse traditional communities who have preserved their ancestral professions. These professions, ranging from pottery and metalwork to weaving and making jewellery, show the rich cultural heritage of the region. However, with rapid urbanization and modernization, many of these traditions are at risk of fading away. The purpose of this project is to conduct an ethnoarchaeological survey of 10 traditional communities in Pune. The aim is to document their cultural practices, tools, techniques, and the historical significance of their professions. This study will help in understanding how these professions have evolved over time and the challenges faced by these communities today. The fieldwork is scheduled every Wednesday, when the old town is explored in search of these communities. This month, the communities like Burud (basket makers), Tambat (coppersmiths), Kumbhar (potters), and Attarwale (perfume makers) were being surveyed.

This month, we have successfully documented the traditional practices of two communities as part of our ongoing ethnoarchaeological project. The documentation has been carried out digitally, with the processes visually represented through detailed illustrations. These have been compiled into informative brochures. Additionally, the script for the documentary is in its final stages, and we look forward to beginning production soon.



