

# INDIA New England

June 16-30 2008

## N.H. academy to offer yoga, Sanskrit

By Julie Masis

A boarding school that will offer courses on Sanskrit, yoga and the *Bhagavad Gita* is about to open in the state—but so far Indian nationals cannot attend.

The Maharishi Academy of Total Knowledge, a private high school for boys, will open on the picturesque southern New Hampshire campus that had once been home to Nathaniel Hawthorne College that trained pilots and specialized in aviation.

Now students in Antrim will study a different sort of flying: transcendental meditation, a practice developed by Indian yogi Maharishi Mahesh, and “yogic flying.”

“In the beginning, people experience an impulse to hop,” explained the academy’s headmaster Alan Colby. “It’s very powerful in terms of creating mind-body coordination.”

The academy—where tuition, room and board will cost \$38,200 per year—will teach students about Ayurveda as part of the health curriculum, serve only vegetarian meals, bring in visiting professors from India and require everyone to participate in transcendental meditation twice a day.

The 15-minute meditation—before breakfast and at the end of each school day—will be preceded by simple yoga postures and yogic breathing exercises.

“It’s something that actually prepares the students for learning,” Colby said.

“Transcendental meditation is the most researched self-improvement technique in the world. It’s not a matter of tradition, belief or custom.”

The academy will offer traditional college-preparatory courses like mathematics and science, but instead of French or Spanish in foreign-language class, students will learn to read the *Gita* in Sanskrit.

The ancient Indian language, however, will be taught not because of Hinduism, Colby pointed out, but because “it’s a classic language” on which “all European languages are based.”

“Students who are Christian, Muslim or Jewish will be comfortable,” he said. “They wouldn’t feel that they are in a Hindu school.”

Despite its connections to Indian culture, students from India cannot currently attend.

Maharishi Academy’s director of admissions Sherry Levesque said a Department of Homeland Security regulation, that was instituted after the terrorist attacks of September 11, requires a school to have a graduating class before it can admit foreign students.

“I’m hoping this can change,” she said. “We’d love to have students from India.”

*To learn more about the academy, which is slated to open as early as September, visit [www.maharishiacademy.org](http://www.maharishiacademy.org).*