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ALL OTHER PLEASURES AND POSSESSIONS PALE INTO NOTHINGNESS BEFORE SERVICE WHICH IS RENDERED IN A SPIRIT OF JOY - GANDHI -

WOMAN PREPARING TO DIE UNDER 'SANTHARA' A JAIN RITUAL, SPARKS DEBATE – JAIPUR



A 60-year-old woman suffering from brain tumor here has embarked on an age-old Jain ritual of 'Santhara', under which she has stopped taking food or water with an intention to die. The move has sparked a debate, with a local advocate filing a PIL, equating the practice with suicide and mercy killing. After Vimla Devi Bhansali was told by doctors that her brain tumor was incurable, she decided to stop taking food or water in order to die instead of waiting for the disease to consume her. A large number of her relatives and members of the Shwetambar Jain community visited her home at Chhatrsal Colony.

Followers of this Jain sect also came from nearby towns, loaded in cars and buses, to visit Bhansali. Santhara is practised among the Shwetambar as well as Digambar Jain community in old age. Those observing Santhara do not want to live any more and would prepare to die by lying down in a wooden cot and refusing drink or food. Jain monks and nuns preach Santhara as the best way to purify ones soul and it is said to be a great sacrifice to attain salvation. Santhara is considered a supreme sacrifice and often monks and nuns in old age observe the ritual. Bhansali's family members said they tried to dissuade her, but to no avail. However, Rajasthan HC had asked police to take action against Bhansali after a PIL was filed by advocate Nikhil Soni, who said the practice was like Sati. Police said no action had been initiated as the court orders were yet to reach them. A debate has been sparked off on the religious practice. A double bench comprising Chief Justice S N Jha and Justice Ajay Rastogi has sent notices to the Centre and state government, fixing the hearing for October 5. Large number of members of the Jain Shwetambar community were of the opinion that observing Santhara was a ritual, which made it different from suicide and Sati as it has been in practice for 1,000 years now. The community leaders were of the opinion that it was a Jain religious practice and was not punishable under law.

JAINS PROTEST AGAINST FREEDOM OF RELIGION ACT IN GUJARAT

AHMEDABAD - The Jain community in Gujarat has protested an amendment that the state government has made to the anti-conversion law that considers Jainism to be a branch of Hinduism and allows conversion between different sects of the same faith and between Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. The Gujarat State Assembly passed the Gujarat Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Bill 2006 to amend the anti-conversion act.

Jain monk Mitranandsagarji, a prominent religious leader of the Jain community, said ignorant politicians have no right to issue a fatwa that Jainism is a branch of Hinduism.

Jainism is an independent religion and the bill passed by the Gujarat government is against the constitution of the country. Jainism has been accorded the status of an independent religion by the Constitution. The Jain religion has no relation with Hinduism. Jainism existed even before the term Hinduism was coined in the history of Aryavrat. The saint said, he will challenge some provisions of the bill in court. He also suggested that community should also submit a representation to the government to change the flaws. If the government fails to respond, then the courts will be approached. The new law clearly stated that Jainism and Buddhism shall be construed as denominations of the Hindu religion. It also allows conversion between different sects of the same faith as well as conversions between Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism.

Noted activist and Movement of Secular Democracy convener Prakash Shah, said he doubted the credentials of state government as it is run by people who follow hardcore Hindutva ideology. Jainism is an independent religion and it is wrong to say that it is a branch of Hinduism. The amendment is made to the Gujarat Freedom of Religion Act of 2003, which awards three years' imprisonment and a fine of up to 100,000 rupees for anyone converting a person by use of force or any fraudulent means. The law also says that if the converted person is a minor, a woman, a dalit or a tribal, the jail term can be up to four years. But the amendment that the legislators passed re-interpreted the meaning of conversion in the law. It said conversion means to make one person renounce one religion and adopt another. But does not include one who renounces one denomination and adopts another denomination of the same religion. It would mean the law would not object conversion from Shia to Sunni or from Protestant to Catholic. It also thus allows conversions between Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism as the government considers these religions part of the same religious system.

The amendment will come into effect only after Governor Nawal Kishore Sharma gives his assent to the bill. The governor has four options before him: give his assent, withhold his assent, reserve the bill for the consideration of the president or return the bill to the assembly with a message for its reconsideration. In 2003, the Gujarat assembly had passed the anti-conversion law but it could not be implemented even after it got the assent of the then governor Sunder Singh Bhandari. The reason was that the law lacked clarity on what 'forced conversion' meant and to whom it applied.

NARENDRA MODI'S ANTI-CONVERSION PLOY MIS-FIRES IN GUJARAT



If Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi presumed that an anti-conversion law was the right card to play to consolidate his position in a state that is yet to recover fully from the after-effects of the 2002 riots, then he seems to have miscalculated. The Hindutva lobby has routinely used laws of this nature to target the Christian missionaries and propagate the fear that the conversion of Hindus, along with the faster growth rate of the Muslims, would gradually reduce the Hindus to a minority in India. Although the law only rules out conversion through coercion or allurements, the objective is to create the impression that the Christian missionaries are up to no good. The fallout has been to intimidate them and keep the entire community under pressure. An occasional attack on churches and on individual Christians, including nuns, has been the result of these tactics of the saffron brotherhood. However, the problem with the latest law is that it has clubbed the Jain and Buddhist communities too along with the Hindus. The explanation behind the move is that Article 25 of the constitution does put the Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs on the same category as Hindus in the matter of laws regulating or restricting economic, political and secular activities associated with religious practices.

However, members of these communities have generally been against this categorization although it remains in the statute book. Significantly, the Sikhs haven't been included in the Gujarat legislation presumably to avoid offending them and thereby jeopardizing the ties between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Sikh-dominated Akali Dal in Punjab, where an election is due early next year. As may be expected, the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) has noted the exclusion and called for including Sikhs in the new law since it is less concerned with political sensitivities than with expanding the Hindu sphere of influence. But it is unlikely that Modi will heed its request if only because he now has to contend with the protests from the Jains and Buddhists. Since both constitute small and peaceable communities, it is unlikely that there will be any serious law and order problems. But the impression will persist that Modi's chief motivation is to derive political mileage through what he considers a safe route, especially because he has chosen to leave out the Sikhs.

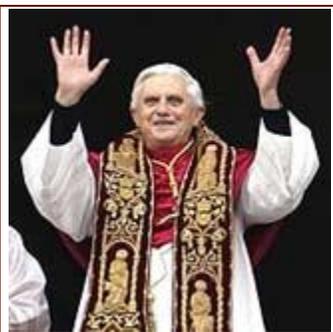
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But there is another aspect of which Modi may be aware. The Buddhists may be small in numbers but there is a connection between them and Dalits ever since B.R. Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism in 1956 when the iconic Dalit leader said: 'By discarding my ancient religion which stood for inequality and oppression, today I am reborn.' This is the central point of difference between Hinduism and the other religions, which even Ambedkar admitted were 'a part and parcel of Bharatiya culture', because there is no caste system in the latter. It is possible, therefore, that the Dalits in Gujarat, as also elsewhere in India, will not be too pleased with this blatant decision by Modi to play cynical games with religion.

As a party, therefore, the BJP will have to contend with the resentment of Dalits in states like Uttar Pradesh where they have considerable electoral clout. Modi's latest decision may not be unrelated to the widespread criticism of his government by his own party men over the recent floods in the state. Moreover, the Congress has been trying to exploit the recent reopening under orders of the Supreme Court of more than 2,000 riot cases, which had been closed by the state police on flimsy grounds.

The Congress has been claiming that the Supreme Court intervention, which also led to the transfer of several important cases to Mumbai for a fair trial, has tarnished Gujarat's reputation. The criticism carries weight because it targets not only the state's politicians and policemen for shielding the members of the saffron fraternity for their involvement in the riots but also the lower judiciary, which could not ensure that justice was done to the victims. Since the BJP is already sharply divided in Gujarat with no love lost between Modi and the influential group led by former chief minister Keshubhai Patel, the former evidently had to initiate a step which would boost his position before the next elections. Given the speculation that Modi has to ensure a second successive victory for his party in the state before he can move to the centre in search of a larger role, the anti-conversion measure was an obvious choice for him. Given Modi's continuing unpopularity except among his supporters in Gujarat, he seems to have unnecessarily courted further controversy by alienating the Jains and Buddhists. Courtesy: Amulya Ganguli is a political analyst. He can be reached E-Mail : aganguli@mail.com)

UNNECESSARY AVOWAL ON POPE'S OBSERVATIONS



Pope Benedict XVI's Remarks - From: William F. Vendley (Secretary General) E-Mail : wwendley@WCRP.org - The recent exchange profiled in the news regarding Pope Benedict XVI's remarks on Islam-and the outrage and injury felt by the Islamic community-are but one example of how religious differences can divide. At worse, such misstatements, misunderstandings, and counter-reactions can inflame centuries-old conflicts and lead to violence. And yet, it doesn't have to happen.

Already, the Vatican and members of the Islamic community are on the front lines of a multi-religious effort to build peace with justice. Just weeks ago, representatives from both the Vatican and the Islamic community were among the 2,000 people representing the world's diverse faiths who gathered together at the Religions for Peace Eighth World Assembly in Kyoto, Japan. Coming from a hundred countries, they pledged to confront violence and build "shared security," acknowledging that each religious tradition had its variation on the Golden Rule: to treat another as oneself, surely a most sensible approach to human relations.

The Kyoto Declaration, ratified by the delegates, acknowledged, "We must regretfully accept that some groups within our religious communities have indeed sought to employ violence. We must reject this and recommit religions to the way of peace."

While it is regrettable that the Pope's remarks deeply offended so many Muslims, it is positive that an apology has been issued. The recent exchange highlights the need for sustained efforts among all religious communities to respect difference and work together based on deeply held and widely shared moral concerns. For thirty-six years, Religions for Peace has built a global alliance of the world's religious communities for peace.

ANGRY REACTIONS ON POPE'S REMARKS IN INDIA



The anger sweeping the Muslim world against remarks made by Pope Benedict XVI on Islam spilled on the street in India. In Delhi, the protests turned violent as the mob clashed in the evening outside the Jama Masjid. Trouble began in the afternoon when a big group assembled outside the mosque to protest against the pontiff's comments. Inside the mosque, Bulkhari called on the Pope to apologise for the remark. Tempers began to fray when some members shouted slogans against each other over the public address system. Soon, bottles and stones were being hurled. The violence stopped only after the Rapid Action Force and a heavy posse of Police personnel were called in. Police said they had videotapes of the incident. All person indulging in violence can be identified and cases will be registered.

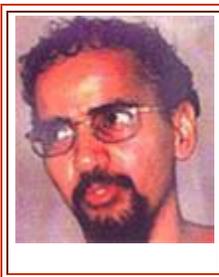
Security was also stepped up outside the Vatican Embassy in Delhi.

From mosques across the country, leaders of the community condemned the Pope's remarks and demanded an apology. There were also demonstrations in Srinagar, Lucknow and Varanasi, where Muslims took out protest marches. In Srinagar, police used batons to disperse protestors and took nearly a dozen activities of the hardline faction of the Hurriyat Conference into preventive custody. Congress and Bhartiya Janta Party expressed disapproval of the remarks made by Pope Benedict XVI. The Congress party spokesman Satyavrat Chaturvedi said the pontiff should have been more careful in making statements that hurt the sentiments of people. The Pope is not just a leader of a religion but also the head of a government and a state. Therefore, we feel he should have been more careful. He sidestepped the question whether the religious head should apologise for his remarks.

The BJP condemned the criticism of Islam and sought an apology from the religious leader. The Pope should immediately clarify his position and if his reported statement is true he should apologise. The BJP said the Pope should rather have told the Bush administration to put checks on US terrorism. The RSS said the Pope comment was a matter that concerned Muslims and it has nothing to say about what the Pope has said. It is up to the Muslims to react to his comments.

INTERNATIONAL RELEASE OF BOOK "KADWE PRAVACHAN" BY MUNI TARUN SAGAR JI AT BANGALORE

The part III of the famous book, "Kadwe Pravachan" (Bitter discourses) written by Muni Shri Tarun Sagar Ji Maharaj was released at a simple ceremony by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, founder of 'Art of Living' institution at Bangalore in the presence of a galaxy of eminent personalities, including Sri T. N. Chaturvedi, Governor of Karnataka, Sri M.V. Rajshekar and others. Muni Tarun Sagar Ji is presently holding his Chaturmas at Bangalore and he has been drawing thousands of people to listen to his discourses.



CONTRIBUTION OF JAINISM TO TAMIL LAUDED



Tiruvannamalai: Food Minister E V Velu lauded Jainism's contribution to Tamil in many spheres of knowledge, including literature, spirituality, grammar, etc, on Sunday. Inaugurating a seminar on Jain contribution to Tamil literature and culture organised at Ponnur Hills, near Vandavasi, by Akhil Bharat Varshiya Digambar Jain Mahasabha, he said that the basic philosophy of Jainism was egalitarianism, which ancient Jain saints carried over to the masses through their works. Jainism nurtured a habit of writing what it wanted to spread. Jainism's flag was held aloft during Kalappirar's rule of Tamil Nadu. They did a lot of service to Tamil after getting a foothold in the areas like Vandavasi, Arcot, Arni, Gingee, etc. There might be conflicting opinions about the place where Thiruvalluvar, the author of Thirukkural resided, but certainly Jainism could have the pride for he belonged to this path of knowledge. All the main literatures of Tamil right from Tholkappiyam, Nannool, Yapparunkalakkargai, Naladiyar, Silappathigaram, Seevaka Chinthamani, Thirikadukam were Jainism's gift to Tamil, the Minister observed. Arun Jain, Chairman, Polaris Software, insisted that Jainism's literature should be simplified. Former MLA Rajendran called upon the state government to declare Jains as minorities in the state. Earlier, Perot Systems MD M. K. Jain in his welcome address made a controversial claim that Thirukkural was authored by Jaina saint Acharya Kund Kund. Peranamallur MLA Ethiroli Maniyan advised the programme organisers not to present shawls in functions of this kind. He suggested presenting of books to the dignitaries. Param Poojya Acharya 108 Shri Vardhaman Sagarji Maharaj, Param Poojya Acharya 108 Shri Gunanandiji Maharaj and many other Dhigambar Jain saints offered blessings to the devotees.

CALL TO STOP ANIMAL SACRIFICE IN KATHMANDU (NEPAL)



The campaign against any form of animal sacrifice grew louder with the day when a large number of buffaloes, goats and chickens likely to take their last lap when the nation will be observing Mahastami. Mahastami is the eighth day of the festival when all those who have promised to sacrifice animals of their choice will be doing so at the temples of Goddess Durga to venerate them. Time-honoured tradition of slaughtering the animals to venerate goddess goes back to centuries. "It is time we stopped this sacrifice. If we can cut the royal prerogatives at the end of a revolution, why can't we do away with this evil practice of slaughtering unsuspecting animals," said Jaya Prakash, who is associated with the Nepal Anubrata Samiti (NAS), an organisation devoted to spiritual awakening. He was of the view that animal sacrifice

was being encouraged by the state since fund for procuring over 150 buffaloes at a temple in central Kathmandu comes from the state exchequer. "Time has come for us to organise street protests much like those who are pressing their respective demands," Jaya Prakash further said while speaking at the Bhagwan Mahavir Jain Niketan in the capital. "It's a stigma on Hinduism that we have people who do not mind taking lives just for fun and taste."

SECOND YOUNG JAINS OF INDIA CONVENTION IN NEW DELHI (NOVEMBER, 3RD TO 5TH)

Non-violence, non-absolutism and non-possessiveness have proven time and again to be the underlying principles for peace, prosperity and happiness in the world. Young Jains of India (YJI) is an organization dedicated to promote these principles, as a way of life. YJI is a dynamic and vibrant organization dedicated to spreading Jain Way of Life [JWOL] through simple transformation of core principles of Jainism into easily understandable and practicable lifestyle.



Swami Satyabrata, who is also among those who are spearheading a vegetarian and spiritual movement, said the reasons why people are not falling back from killing animals were they do not see any line between what is wrong and what is right. "Just as there is no place of hatred in love, there is no place for violence in peace." There is a need to commence a journey from self to self before anyone can be expected to love others, including animals," Satyabrata said, adding that people tend to remember enemies rather than remember god all the time.

SAMANI CHARITRA PRAGYA INVITED AS VISITING PROFESSOR AT FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY



For the first time, Jain nuns teach the whole semester 2006 on Jainism & Non-violence in FIU, Florida International University Miami, Florida, USA. Samani Charitra Pragya (I) has been invited by Religious Studies Department as a visiting professor from August 28th to December 12th 2006 by FIU. On 19th September 2006, Samani Charitra Pragya gave a public talk at Florida International University (FIU), Graham Center Ballroom. The topic was 'Life of a Jain Nun'. On 13th August 2006, JVB London welcomed Senior Samani Prasanna Pragya and Samani Sambodh Pragya who have arrived to take over from the outgoing Samanijis who will be returning to India. Photographs courtesy : www.herenow4u.de



OBJECTIVES

- * Have a dialogue with the youths & professionals about the Jain Way of Life (JWOL)
- * Develop young leaders with the above values instilled in their careers and life
- * Networking of Jain Youths across the globe
- * Simplify Jainism without compromising on the basic principles and fundamentals
- * Promoting the scientific approach of Jainism.

The best way to learn is via team work in a conducive environment. YJI convention provides an environment that is not only friendly but also encourages the best to come out from self.

YJI functions with a theme every year so as to propagate the Jain way of life. The theme for the 2nd YJI convention is Self Evolution Through Jain Way Of Life. All the plenary and breakout sessions will be based on the above theme with special emphasis on (a) Non-Absolutism (b) Non-Possessiveness and (c) Non-Violence. These sessions are very interactive in nature and are guided by the experts. The convention will be held at New Delhi from 3rd to 5th November, 2006 and it would be a great opportunity for the youths and professionals to meet others from across India. This shall also be a perfect platform to meet some of the renowned speakers, successful personalities and Jain scholars from India and abroad. Around 600 youths and professionals are expected to gather at the 2nd convention, which will be held at the Aadhyatma Sadhana Kendra, Mehrauli, New Delhi. For further details and enquires of the organization and the convention please send an E-Mail : www.mail2web.com/cgi-bin/compose.asp or visit www.yjindia.org/convregister.asp

ORGANIZERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL FOR JAIN ACADEMIC STUDIES TO MEET AT SEDONA, ARIZONA, USA

- So far, two ISSJS have been successfully conducted in India in 2005 and 2006. A total of 21 scholars (Professors and Graduate students from USA, Canada and Thailand) have attended the two months long Summer schools. After their return, several of them have started offering courses in Jainism at their Universities while others are pursuing their research and advanced studies (towards a Ph.D degree) with Jainism as a major area of their focus. Every year, after the ISSJS is over in India, the organizers meet to review the feedback and to plan for the next ISSJS. Last year, this meeting was held at University of Hawaii in Honolulu and this year it will be held at Sedona, Arizona, September 23-27, 2006. Twenty one organizers from different parts of USA, U.K (Dr. and Mrs. Natubhai Shah of London) and from India (Dr. and Mrs. Shugan Chand Jain of Delhi) along with Prof. Cromwell Crawford (Chairman of the Academic Council and the chief inspirer and mentor of ISSJS program, Mrs. Crawford Dr. Matild Szabo and 2006 alumni of ISSJS; Prof. Andrea Jain will take part in this meeting.

ANKIT JAIN ELECTED IN BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF DA-IICT



Ankit Jain, Naibasti, Firozabad has been elected to the Board of Directors of Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology, a Reliance-ADA Group Engineering institute situated at Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad. Ankit Jain has won the prestigious election by defeating 16 other opponents to bag the most coveted alumni seat of Board of Directors of DA-IICT. He had also been acted as the founder president of Jain engineers club of DA-IICT for two years. DA-IICT was started in Jul 2001 and now it has been ranked among top technical institutes of India, with a sizeable population of Jain students. Presently he is working with Reliance Communications as a software engineer at their corporate headquarters in Mumbai. On this occasion. Courtesy: Rimanshu Jain, E-Mail

: reachrimanshu@rediffmail.com.

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON, TEXAS, OFFERS COURSE IN JAINISM

For the first time, since mid August 2006, University of Houston, Texas, USA (a large State University) has been offering a regular course in Indian Religions with special emphasis in Jainism. This course will earn regular credit hours (towards an Undergraduate degree) from the University and is being attended by 35 full time students (mostly non Indians and non Jains). This course is being taught by Prof. Andrea Jain of Rice University. Prof. Jain attended the second International Summer School for Jain Academic Studies (ISSJS) in India from June 1-July 31st, 2006. According to Prof. Jain, ISSJS was instrumental in preparing and equipping her to teach this course. Dr. John Antel, the Dean at the University of Houston is very pleased and encouraged with the response and enrollment by the students. This course offering is part of the India Studies Foundation, where courses in Hindi and Indian cultures are also being offered. The University will consider expanding and offering more such courses on a regular basis in coming years. (Source, Dr. Sulekh C. Jain)

SHUGAN CHAND JAIN TO GET PH.D. IN JAINISM

Shugan Chand Jain, India Director of the International Summer School For Jain Academic Studies defended his thesis on September 13, 2006 at Jain Vishva Bharati (a deemed University) Ladnun, Rajasthan. Based of the quality and novelty of his research, all the examiners congratulated Shugan Ji and recommended him to the University to formally award him with a Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Jainism. His thesis topic was "Jain theory of knowledge and modern computer systems, a comparative study". It throws a lot of new ideas including demonstrating the concepts of telepathy, clairvoyance etc. to the extremely rapid development of computer technologies. Shugan Ji is a Mechanical Engineer, IT Consultant. In addition to being a successful businessman, he is deeply devoted to the Study and Practice of Jainism. Shugan Ji is a clear thinker and a powerful speaker on Jain philosophy in English. Since 2005, he has very successfully conducted two International Summer Schools for Jain Academic Studies wherein 21 scholars (Professors and Post Graduate students) from USA, Canada and Thailand have been educated in Jain philosophy. (Source. Dr. Sulekh C. Jain)

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AHIMSA SILK- DRAWING YARN WITHOUT KILLING WORMS

Ahimsa Silk yarn drawn out without killing worms will certainly make animal rights activists like Maneka Gandhi and Amala happy. APCO's Hyderabad-based technical officer Kusuma Rajaiah developed this silk which does not use yarn that is drawn normally by killing cocooned silkworms by putting them in boiling water. Left-over cocoons are treated with detergent-like chemicals to dissolve them into a blob like cotton. Yarn is then spun out either manually or mechanically to make silk fiber.

It is a laborious and costlier process and takes about 100 kg of cocoons to produce up to 15 kg of yarn. By boiling a single cocoon at least 500 meters of silk yarn can be produced, whereas yarn obtained by Rajaiah's method yields just 15 percent. Rajaiah's innovation has been received with much enthusiasm. Handloom Commissioner was amazed to learn about preparation of silk without killing worms, said APCO Vice-President and Managing Director, YS Prasad. In order to bring down production cost, further research and development is required, said Rajaiah.

DR. SHUGAN JAIN INVITED TO OFFER LECTURES ON JAINISM AT AMERICAN AND CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES - Dr. Shugan Chand Jain, a Jain Scholar and India Director of the International Summer School for Jain Academic Studies (ISSJS) has been invited as a Guest Lecturer to offer lectures on Jain Philosophy at Eastern Connecticut State University (USA) and also at the University of Ottawa (Canada). Dr. Jain will be delivering lectures between September 29 to October 2, 2006. Prof. Hope Fitz (of Eastern Connecticut State University) and Prof. Anne Valley (of University of Ottawa) invited Dr. Jain to teach their classes. Both, Prof. Fitz and Prof. Valley are the alumni of the second International Summer School for Jain Academic Studies.

When in Ottawa, Shugan Ji will also have a meeting with the Dean of the University of Ottawa to explore how ISSJS can assist the University in conducting one or two specialized short courses (up to 3 weeks duration) in fall and winter in India for the class of religious studies at the University of Ottawa. Dr. Jain was also invited to deliver lectures at McGill University, which he has agreed to do so sometimes in 2007. (Source: Dr. Sulekh C. Jain)

PESTICIDE CLAIMS SHAKE-UP COKE AND PEPSI IN INDIA



Extract of report by Brian Bremner and Nandini Lakshman*

After allegations of high levels of toxic chemicals in their sub continental sodas, the U.S. franchises face bans amid a media-stoked uproar. Welcome to the India installment of the fabled cola wars. But this time around, global soft-drink heavies Coca-Cola (KO) and PepsiCo (PEP) are actually on the same side. Their adversaries: a feisty New Delhi-based environmental group, left-leaning politicians in Southern India, and nonstop press coverage that has raised angst levels over pesticide traces discovered in these companies' carbonated drinks. On Aug. 9, the dispute escalated when India's southwestern state of Kerala, home to about 30 million people, banned the Indian subsidiaries of both companies from making or selling their beverages.

Earlier in August, several other regions such as the Western coastal state of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh in central India erected partial bans on the sale of Coke and Pepsi at schools and government offices. The Bharatiya Janata Party is calling for a national ban, and regional politicians with a populist streak have staged Coke and Pepsi bottle-smashing press events. Meanwhile, the Indian Supreme Court has jumped into the fray by ordering Coca-Cola to divulge its century-plus secret formula so government investigators can have more accurate readings of pesticide levels in its products.

In short, this is shaping up to be a public-relations calamity of the first order. True, this is a \$2 billion market that both Coca-Cola and PepsiCo dominate with a combined share of roughly 80%-plus. Still, "as multinationals, the scrutiny is going to be a little higher, and the public is going to make a judgment," says Madan Bahal, managing director of AdFactors Public Relations, a Mumbai-based firm that represents international companies such as IBM India, Barclays Bank, and ABN Amro Banking Group. "and if the judgment is that there is something fishy going on, it will harm you."

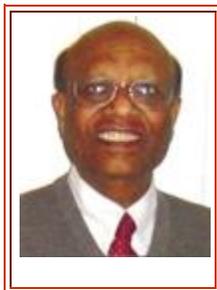
What touched off the controversy was allegations made by the New Delhi 'Center for Science and Environment' (CSE) that pesticide residues found in Coca-Cola and PepsiCo brands were 24 times higher than new safety standards on soft drinks that have been developed by the Bureau of Indian Standards. (These new rules on soft-drink pesticide levels haven't taken effect yet.) The results of the study, which sampled 57 finished drink products at 25 different Indian Coca-Cola and PepsiCo plants, are "clearly unacceptable as we know that pesticides are tiny toxins and impact our bodies over time," CSE Director Sunita Narain said when the group's findings were released on Aug. 2. Similar charges were made by the group several years back, which led the government to set pesticide standards on soft drinks that already exist for other food products.

PepsiCo and Coca-Cola have attacked the CSE's findings in advertorials published in Indian newspapers. And Coca-Cola has posted background information on its testing and quality procedures done at labs in Hyderabad, California, and London for its Indian drink lineup on the Web site of its Indian subsidiary. It has even offered to take Indian customers on guided tours of its processing plants as a goodwill measure. Both companies insist their beverage products present no health threats. "Our products are safe and we measure that against the most stringent standards, the European ones," says Coca-Cola Asia spokesman Kenth Kaerhoeg, who is based in Hong Kong.

PepsiCo noted in its printed ads that pesticide levels in Indian teas and milk are far higher. (Some levels of pesticides are common in many foods given the heavy reliance on chemicals in raising crops in India and other countries.) Prema Sagar, founder and principal of public-relations firm Genesis Burson-Marsteller, which represents PepsiCo, also questions the accuracy of CSE's data, given the work was done by its own labs without any outside peer review.

*Bremner is the Asia Regional Editor for Business Week in Hong Kong Lakshman writes for Business Week.com from Mumbai.

LECTURE ON KARMA THEORY BY DR. SULEKH JAIN AT WEST HOUSTON THEOSOPHICAL STUDY CENTER



September 8, 2006, Jainism, along with Hinduism and Buddhism, is one of the oldest traditions of the world. All these three religious traditions originated in India and their scholars and seers exerted a tremendous influence on the philosophical and cultural psyche, traditions and spiritual thinking of India. The presentation made by Mr. Jain described in detail the uniqueness of the Jain tradition, the concept of Karmic particles, how these particles are attracted to the soul (atma), how these bind to the soul, different types of karmas, their intensity and fruition and how these can be shed or removed. Several common examples of daily life were used to make the subject simple and easy to understand. This was then followed with lively questions, feedback and answers. The subject was well-received by the participants and most of them felt impressed with the Jain concepts.

CHATURMAS NEWS

Pujya 108 Muni Shri Kshamasagar ji maharaj Ji, Bhavya Sagar Ji, Shriyansh sagar ji, Abhaya Sagar ji are holding chaturmas at Aron, Distt Guna, MP.

Pujya Aryaka Mata Ji Gurumati ji Sangh-Sahit is holding chaturmas at Ashok Nagar, MP.

[News received from: Anil Badkul, GUNA MP 473001]

NEW PUBLICATION

MALLIRUPAYAN by versatile poet Sumant Bhadra on life of 19th PROMULGATOR/TIRTHANKAR of Jainism. Apart from teachings of Mallinath the same contains all the tenets of Jain metaphysical context, code of conduct and miracles. It needs not to say that the work is full of poetic beauty and philosophical truth. Numerous aspects of Indian culture, art etc like other particularities are covered as well. The description of the book is as below.

Book name: Mallirupayan
Language: Hindi in the form of poetry
Price: Rs. 300
Publishers: Prajna Parmita Prakashan
Post Box NO. 12, Chinchwad, Pune-411033
Phone: 91-(020) 27480901
E-Mail: Prajnaparmita_prakashan@yahoo.com

READERS' NOTES

NARENDRA MODI'S HINDU FUNDAMENTALISM

Nirmal Sethi President – All India Digamber Jain Mahasabha. He was shocked to hear this news. How can a Government whether State or Central can change the identity of world's oldest religion by passing a legislation. It is against the article 25 of the constitution and hence, ultravires. Similar decision was taken by Bombay Government in fifties when they allowed entries of Hindu Harijans in Jain Temples. Then High Court of Mumbai declared the Law illegal and saved the identity of Jains. Acharya ShantiSagarji Maharaj had an Aansan for more than 100 days. Undisputedly Jain Religion is an independent religion and oldest religion on earth. We get Jain relics in all parts of the world.

We should protest against this Gujarat legislation and should make every effort to decry Narendra Modi, present Chief Minister of Gujarat and make sure that this legislation is withdrawn or nullified by the Supreme Court. The Chief Minister of Gujarat should also be criticised for allowing the encroachment in ancient protected monuments and also changing the originality of Nirvana Bhumi of Neminath in Junagarh, Gujarat. He is applying all sorts of unfair means and giving rights to Baba's (Nath Sampraday) and changing this Sidhha Kshetra as Hindu Pilgrimage. We must show our annoyance and displeasure to every known or prominent BJP leader strongly and we should take every step to protect our interests in coming Assembly elections in Gujarat.

Rathin Das, Gandhinagar, - THE RULING BJP in Gujarat piloted through the assembly an amendment that clubs Jainism and Buddhism with Hinduism. Passed by voice vote amid vociferous protests by legislators of the opposition Congress, the amendment also triggered a debate on its validity outside the House. Introduced in the assembly as an amendment to the anti-conversion law - officially called the Gujarat Freedom of Religion Act 2003 - the bill states that Jainism and Buddhism shall be construed as denominations of Hindu religion. Jains - around 5.25 lakh - are about 1 per cent of Gujarat's population. There are around 18,000 Buddhists in the state.

Hamid Ansari, chairman of the National Commission for Minorities, said: "I think legislators cannot, and should not, decide the religious identity of a community this way. This decision has to be taken by the community itself in a democratic manner."

Udit Raj, a Buddhist and chairman of the All-India Confederation of SCs/STs Organisations, said, "It is an arbitrary move. The entire Buddhist community opposes it. We can never be termed as Hindus. There will be protests from Ahmedabad to Delhi and we will also convey our displeasure to the prime minister."

Chakresh Jain, president of the Delhi Jain Samaj, said the community would plan protests across the nation. "The move is absolutely against the wishes of the Jain community. We are not Hindus at all."

Former minister Shaktisinh Gohil, who is also a lawyer said that the Constitution recognises Jainism and Buddhism as distinct religions. Declaring them as denominations of Hinduism is ultra vires of the Constitution.

Prof. C. Devakumar, E-Mail : cdevakumar@yahoo.com - Shri Modi has a greater ambition of becoming a tall figure within Hindu fundamentalists. He playing to that gallery. He doesn't care about the nuances of human rights, religious freedom etc. He belongs to the school that believes in Jainism being a part and parcel of Vedic vessel. He has neither inclination nor time to ponder over the great history of this nation. He plays to the vote bank. He wants to consolidate so-called Hindu votes and take up fight against Muslims and Christians. That is why US government has denied visa to him. Unfortunately Jains in Gujarat mostly out of fear do not raise any voice against him. In the past, there was nothing like one religion. There were different schools of philosophy. That itself speaks about the environment of religious freedom and expression in those days. Only when one school wanted to dominate others, this colorful lost its tensile strength and texture. The aliens just took advantage of the mess created by forefathers of the breed to which Mr Modi likes to be identified with.

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We need to educate gullible public and intelligentsia alike. Peace prevails at home if the individual freedom is respected. One brother cannot dominate another and suppress him and expect a peaceful family. Similarly, if Modi wants to be recognized as Big Brother, he must care for the feelings and respect and rights of the minority. He should ask these vandals to vacate Girnarji. Unfortunately, vinasha kale vipareeta buddhi seems to be his affliction. He has few genuine well-wishers on his side. As far as Jains are concerned, we need to keep fighting for our rights. Our success will not be far away in coalition politics. One major mistake, he would fall Humpty Dumpty. Michcha Mi dukkadam Dev.

Shan Parisa E- Mail : shanbog66@yahoo.com - It is irony that there are large number of Jains in Gujarat state but still cannot claim freedom for their Beloved Dharma probably unknowingly in a political move Jains are being assimilated in Hindu fold. Probably Jain Acharyas in Gujarat are not forceful to rejuvenate Jainism or may be have forgotten their historic rich heritage in the shuffle for Hindu rituals. Whatever the reasons it is time all Jains voice their concern and protest in strongest term. It is high time for Gujarati Jains to come on board with other Jain organization around the World and demand Indian Government at the Center the legal Minority Status for all Jains living in India. The RSS and Sangh Parivar are playing Cast card saying Minority means Dalit and Jains should not claim such a status. This ploy has worked in many places and many Jain leaders have fallen as victim. Minority status means Legal protection for your Jain religious institutions and freedom from Hindu incursion upon your holy shrines. The best example is Giranarji. When you have a legal Minority status legally no one can occupy, destroy or take away your heritage and being minority Jains need such a protection.

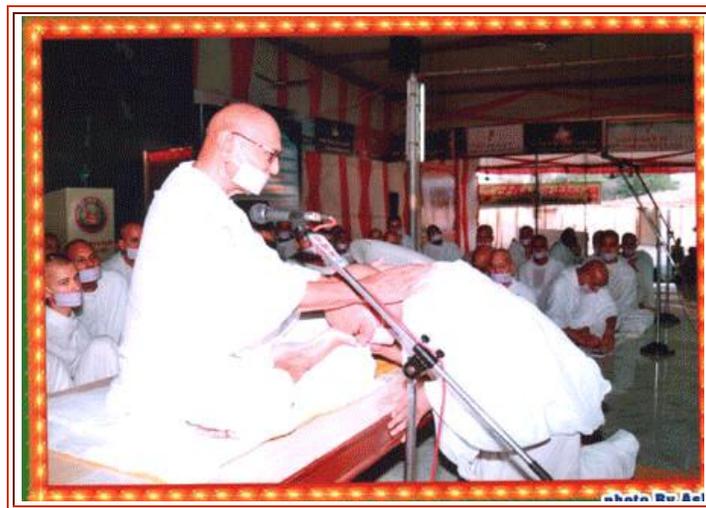
Care and Maintenance of Jain temples in south India - Rajendra Jain, E-Mail : mdrajain@yahoo.com wrote: As you are all aware Tamil Nadu is a repository of large collection of Jain art and sculptures. The cave temples, sculptures, rock cuttings, stone beds of Jain sadhus of the ancient past, centuries old inscriptions are the treasures of not only Tamils but all Jains. One such magnificent rock sculpture at Kudagu Malai in Pudukottai Dist. of Tamil Nadu is now in danger of being demolsihed by the greedy stone quarrying industry and the local adminsitration has turned deaf ears to the appeals by very small population of the Tamil Jains. In the days of vote bank politics Tamil Jains cannot achieve much without the help of other brethern from all over the world.

Unchecked declaration of Jain Thirthankara images as of Buddha's and destruction of Jaina monuments in Tamil Nadu will in the near future obliterate ancient Jaina heritage in Tamil Nadu. Earlier similar quarrying has resulted in the total destruction of similar jain monument in the past. The Tamil Nadu Samana Peravai and Madurai Tamil Jains Sangh has taken up the task of protecting this monuments through legal help. An appeal by these associations circulated by Jain Youth Forum magazine "Mukkudai" is translated in English for your information and request for help. M.D. Rajendran. The Tirthankara images, stone beds of jain sadhus, caves, and inscriptions proclaiming the ancient roots of Jainism in Tamil Nadu are now under threat of destruction. Created, worshipped and gloriously maintained by our Jaina ancestors and left for posterity (to us) are under the danger of destruction by granite exporters.

Kudagu Malai is a small hillock between Kolathur and AmmaSamudram villages in Pudukottai Dist. Here we have large collection of Jain sculptures, cave temples, rock cuttings, stone beds of Jain Sadhus and centuries old incscriptions pertaining to the periods of Chola emperor Rajakesari Varman and the famous Pandya ruler Sundara Pandian. One of the inscriptions proclaim land donations to the Arhat Thiru Pallimalai Alwar temple for performance of 7 days of festivals. Similar inscription of the period of Sundara Pandian I wherein land donations by Acharya Kanakachandra Pandit's disciple Dharmadeva is also found. This site is of national importance and is a protected monument under the Achaeological Monuments and Archaeological Site and Monuments Acts, 1958 and 1992. Kudagumalai is a "protected monument" under the custody of Archaeological Survey of India. As per the Act, first 100 metre perpheral area is a prohibited area, the next 200 meter is a regulated area. All activities, except agriculture, are banned in the prohibited area. In the next 200 meter only residential construction are allowed. Under no circumstances dynamiting and quarrying of rocks are not allowed within the total 300 meter circumference. But at Kudagu Malai blasting of rocks and quarrying is being carried out in five places within 100 meter area endangering the monument. The vibrations generated by constant blasting will one day make the whole hillock to cave-in destroying the historical treasures.

On hearing about the destructive work being carried out, President of Tamil Nadu Samana Peravai, Mr. A.P. Aravazhi and Mr. Anantharaj, Secretary of Madurai Tamil Jain Sangam have been running from pillar to post to stop this atrocity. However, in view of the fact that Tamil jains being very small in number and have neither political nor monetary clout, they have been advised to take legal course of action. As the legal expenses may run very large, Tamil Nadu Samana Pervai has requested for contributions. Donors may forward cheques/DDs favouring "TAMIL NADU SAMANA PERAVAI" to the following address: Mr. P. Ashok Kumar, Treasurer, Tamil Nadu Samana Peravai, NO.19, Kasturi Bai Street, Vandavasi - 604 408, Tamil Nadu. India."

IN PHOTOGRAPHS ACHARYA MAHAPRAGYA AT PREKSHA VIHAR, BHIWANI, HARYANA



FAKE COLD DRINK UNIT RUN BY SUKHMAL JAIN IN MODEL TOWN, DELHI

The Delhi police have arrested Sukhmal Jain, from the Model Town area who was running a fake cold drink manufacturing unit. Acting on a tip-off, a police team accompanied by Coca Cola officials raided the manufacturing unit in the posh area on Saturday. The team found over 2,000 fake bottles of some popular brands like Coke and Fanta. The team also found some documents from the factory. The factory was being run by one Sukhmal Jain (43), who earlier ran an authorised supply agency for Coca Cola, police said. Jain was arrested and a case has been registered against him under the right act. During the raid, police seized 2,472 bottles of fake cold drink of various brands such as Crush Orange, Schweppes, Coca Cola, Fanta and Limca that were placed in 102 crates. Police said Jain ran the manufacturing unit in posh Model Town with the aim of reducing the chances of detection.

DEVLOK GAMAN

With a very sad heart this email is to announce the Kaaldharma of the eminent, pious and visionary Param Pujya Acharya Shri Vijay Yashodev Surishwarji Maharaj Saheb in Mumbai on the 30th August, 2006, at the age of 92 and having been a Sayam Aaradhak for the past 75 years. He was one of the most learned Acharyas who had the protective and affectionate Drishti of Mata Padmavati always around him, a prolific writer of many books, poetry, commentaries and the Jain Panchang. His writings have been translated into many languages. Jain Shasan has today lost one of its most learned, affectionate pillars and an illustrious son. It is an irreparable & irreplaceable loss to the Jain community. Ahimsa Foundation alongwith all the viewers pray that his benevolent soul rests in eternal peace.

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