Global Dharma
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Sacred Texts: Save the Tomes

YOU CAN ADOPT A BOOK AND SAVE an ancient work of knowledge from oblivion for only US$29.00. Send Rs.1,000 to the Asiatic Society of Bombay. A two-man conservationist team will fumigate, de-acidify, wash, chemically treat to strengthen, wrap in tissue paper and re-bind pages (many of which would crumble to dust at the slightest touch) of any book of your choice from their collection. The painstaking process can take two weeks for a 200-page book. Send an additional Rs.1,000 and the work will be microfilmed. The program is a big hit. The cash-strapped society has raised Rs. 21.5 lakh and restored such ancient works as a 16th century copy of the Atharvavedasamhita.

Vegetarianism: Jai Shakahara!

EARTHSAVE MAGAZINE REPORTS, "For the first time, an advisory panel that recommends changes in the US federal government's dietary guidelines has given vegetarian diets a ringing endorsement." In August, the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee released its findings, stating, "lacto-ovo vegetarians enjoy excellent health. Vegetarian diets are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines and can meet Recommended Dietary Allowances for nutrients. Protein is not limiting in vegetarian diets..."

The Washington, D.C., based Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine greeted the panel's pronouncements jubilantly: "The livestock industry's notorious grip on federal nutrition guidelines has been somewhat loosened."

Charity:A Rishikesh Plea

THE INDIA HERITAGE RESEARCH FOUNDATION has started a simple, cost effective fund-raiser called "Shakti Kripa Gift Cards." Using only fingers and fingernails, an artist has quickly painted designs on small cards that are "sold" for donations which are used to assist in the upliftment of pilgrimage sites in Rishikesh. We have seen the cards here at our Hinduism Today offices. They are simple, yet quite beautiful. To participate, send a letter asking for some cards along with a donation to: Help Preserve Rishikesh, Shakti Kripa Card Program, Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh, 249304 INDIA

Monks / Clergy:Panchen Lama?

THE REINCARNATION OF TIBET'S second highest authority, the 6-year-old, 11th Panchen Lama, head of the powerful Tashi Lhunpo monastery, is being held in detention by the Chinese government, according to News Tibet--the official publication of the Office of Tibet, New York, representing His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The Tibetan government-in-exile maintains that only the Dalai Lama has the right to select the Panchen Lama, but after he chose 6-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima in May of 1995, the boy disappeared. Shen Guofang, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman declared, "the Dalai Lama's arbitrary selection of a soul boy as the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama is null and void." In response, the Dalai Lama issued a statement saying, "The search and recognition of Panchen Lama's reincarnation is a religious matter. I conducted all the

necessary religious procedures with great care ...my recognition of the Panchen Lama's reincarnation cannot be changed." News Tibetsays, "China has installed a puppet Panchen Lama....manipulating the Buddhist religion to divide and conquer the Tibetan people." The boy and his family are still missing. World focus on Tibet escalated last October when exiled Tibetans drew international attention to human rights issues in Tibet with a hunger strike held during UN 50th anniversary celebrations in New York.

Culture: Good Luck!

ABOVE (photo essay - subscribe today!) ARE VINTAGE PHOTOS of items in the collection of Robert R. Weger that appear in his little book The Swastika, A History, written in 1958 and still in print today. These are "good fortune, Yankee American swastikas," circa 1910: logo of a California fruit company, swastika medallion for the National War Savings Committee for Service and a glass light bulb cover. Swastika proponent Mark Lind (below) of New Mexico, USA, has researched the swastika symbol for 20 years. Enthralled by its ancient universality and mystically auspicious presence, he works to dispel modern misconceptions that arose after use by Nazis shamed its "Be well!" image.

Kampuchea: Angkor Faces Encroaching Tourism

ANGKOR WAT MAY SOON BE RIGGED with a US$20 million sound and light show and surrounded by three or more five-star hotels. The mega-tourist destination development plan would bring needed economic recovery cash into Cambodia. But John Sanday, project manager of the World Monuments Fund, who is working on the preservation of the nearby Preah Khan monastic complex, says the idea would be

"catastrophic ...the light show is already there every sunrise and sunset. The development will kill Siam Reap," the beautiful, tranquil northern province that surrounds the gigantic Hindu/Buddhist temple complex. The World Heritage Fund threatened to remove the temples from its protected site list following allegations of construction on areas protected under UNESCO's zoning proposals. Post Khmer Rouge Cambodia struggles in a legislative vacuum. One expatriate hotelier says, "Is the zoning plan law or is it just a proposal? No one knows." The controversy has prompted King Norodom Sihanouhk himself to press for a review of development plans.

History: Buddha's Birth Place Found!

HINDU PRINCE SIDDARTHA, BUDDHA TO BE, WAS BORN, IN 563 bce to Mahamaya, queen of the Himalayan kingdom of Kapilavastu. According to ancient Buddhist writings, she gave birth 25 paces from a pond near Lumbini, and later, in 249 bce, Emperor Asoka placed a commemorative stone there. The ancient state straddles today's Indian/Nepalese border, and the exact location of Buddha's birthplace has been much disputed. But nine months ago an international team of archaeologists from Nepal, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Japan said they uncovered the fabled stone placed on seven layers of bricks underneath the temple of Mayadevi in Lumbini, which is in Nepal. The discovery was kept quiet for nine months. The government wanted to authenticate the relics before an official statement was made that Buddha was born in Nepal. They plan to develop the area as a pilgrimage/tourist site for the world's Buddhists.

Trends: Religion and Courts Hit Hard at Tobacco

A SHOCKING BOOKLET, SMOKING IS SUICIDE, AND AN

AMAZING EXHIBIT by in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, both by the Swami Narayan Fellowship and inspired by Pramukh Swami Maharaj's campaign to eliminate deadly addictions, combine gruesome photos of post-surgical facial, throat and lung cancers victims, testimonies, scientific evidence and statistics in a such a frightful manner that even the most hardened nicotine addict might go cold turkey after a first reading. The statistics show that a great many tobacco users are headed for horrible health problems and early death. Meanwhile in America, tobacco is hot news as five states and Blue Cross insurance company filed lawsuits to recover 5 billion in smoking related health care costs and billions more in punitive damages from tobacco companies. The tobacco companies are losing legal ground as testimony by former executives reveals the companies knew about, covered up and used the addictive power of nicotine to gain market share. The issue of second-hand smoke is also getting scrutiny. Dr. Patel says that smokers shouldn't ask, "Do you mind if I smoke?" Instead, ask, "Do you mind if I give you cancer?"