Global Dharma
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CLERGY: Premier Printer Becomes Abbot

N.C. NACHIAPPAN, FOUNDER OF KALAKSHETRA PRESS in Adiyar, Madras, recently took sannyas at the age of 68. After the traditional diksha and vows, he was installed as Sri-la-Sri Nachiappa Gnana Desikar, the 13th Guru Mahasannidhanam of little known Kovilur Mutt in Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu. A devout, gentle, kindly and highly competent Hindu bachelor who pioneered high-end printing in Madras, he has collaborated with the staff of Hinduism Today for 20 years. Famous artists from Europe and New York sought his renowned press for first edition monographs, publications that eventually made Kalakshetra Press a multi-million dollar business.

His great-grandfather founded the Kovilur Mutt near Karaikudi to provide non-brahmins an infrastructure similar to the brahmin one. Last fall, the late abbot asked Nachiappan to take over his seat after his passing, which came shortly thereafter, in 1995. Nachiappan unhesitating renounced worldly life and accepted the heavy new responsibilities, turning his publishing fortune into an endowment. Kovilur Swamigal,as he is now known, will also manage the mutt's ten branch monasteries in Tamil Nadu and plans to translate the mutts' ancient Tamil manuscripts on Siddha medicine, Jyotish

and philosophy and to record the oduvars,the religious temple bards, before their tradition dies. The new kartarbrings a progressive vision and executive prowess to Tamil Nadu's ancient monastic tradition.

TRADITIONAL ARTS: Kundalini Measured

ULRICH ARNDT REPORTS IN ESOTERAthat biochemist Gerhard H. Eggetsberger and engineer Karl Heinz Eder, at the "Institut fur angewandte Biokybernetic und Feedbackforschung," Vienna (Austria), have measured "the so-called kundalini energy." Using a PCE scanner, they measure micro electric impulses from the spine and have tested 500 people so far. The usual daily range averages 200 millivolts. After four to six weeks of breathing and yoga, this limit can easily be exceeded. At 400 millivolts, the first symptoms of consciousness expansion may arise. Mediumistic, highly gifted people have reached a potential of 2,000 millivolts. Eggetsberger says, "The old yoga teachers were right, and this can be measured."

SOCIAL HOT SPOTS: Hate Crime Rises

IN FEBRUARY FOUR SHOTS WERE FIRED through the main window of the London Tamil Sangam at High Street North, Manor Park. Manager Arumugam Ramalingam said, "I have no idea who did this; it may have been a racist attack, a reaction to the rise in activities and traffic at our formerly quiet center." A continent away, India-West reports a "rising wave of anti-immigrant feeling" in the USA. This February, in New

Jersey, 23-year-old Vijit Patel ran into a restaurant after being shot by youths with rubber pellets The restaurant owner went outside. They tried to shoot him also and shouted vulgarities as they drove away: "Hindus, get out of here. Go back to your own country." Hello! USA is Vijit's own country.

MODERN CULTURE: Yoga of Stars

HOLLYWOOD MAY PERMEATE THE GLOBE, and parents feel helpless as the culture of the silver screen and TV mindlessly rules the minds of coming generations, but, unknown to many, rishi culture has touched the tinsel stars via Bikram Choudry and his wife who have taught yoga in Los Angeles for over 23 years. Bikram was beckoned to Hollywood in 1973 by none other than Shirley Maclaine and actor Martin Sheen (left with Bikram) is one of his most devoted students. Mr. Sheen for years required that his film contracts allow daily time for yoga practice. On February 10, 600 students and friends joined Bikram for his 50th birthday party.

In a related event, famed funny man George Burns passed away at age 100 in March. Sunday Monitorran headlines "Yoga and Meditation Played a Key Role in Burns' 100-year Long Journey." The Monitorstaff writer says, "Hollywood has known for a long time that Burns had read a lot of the writing of philospher Jiddu Krishnamurthi. Several sources revealed that yoga and meditation helped him remain healthy all through his life." Perhaps the man who played God, really knew who He really was. Either way, it was Burn's own anandathat filled hearts with laughter for three generations.

SACRED SCIENCE: Mercury Magic

SWAMI PRAGYANAND INSTALLED a remarkable group of murthis on Maha Sivaratri, the 17th of February, at his Pragya Dham center in New Delhi. Most unusual was the 108 kg. mercury Shiva Lingam which was prepared with an ancient alchemical, shastric formula for solidifying liquid mercury. The others were exquisite white marble statues of Tripur Sundari Raj Rajeshwari, Vaishnao Mata, Mahadeva Narmadeswar Linga, Maha Gauri, Nandeswar, Kartikeya and Lord Ganesh, which were added to the existing statues of Shirdi Sai Baba, Hanuman, Surya, Shankar/ Parvati, and Gayatri Mata, giving his recently expanded three-story Delhi center a remarkable and luminous divine presence. Thousands of Swami Pragyanand's followers attended including pilgrims from USA, Canada, Sweden and Abbudhabi, reflecting the swami's global mission work in previous years. Swamiji announced his mission plans which include a new hospitial in his home state of Madhya Pradesh.

OF GOD AND GODS: India's Mighty Shiva

TIME MAGAZINE'S MARCH INTERNATIONAL EDITION featured a. wonderful indepth article on the transformation of India. The focus was political, social, economic and environmental. But the editors chose Lord Nataraj for the cover page.

CHURCH AND STATE: Priestly "Jai" For a Modern Maharani

TAMIL NADU CHIEF MINISTER J. JAYALALITHA inaugurated the 2nd state conference of Gramakkovil Poojarigal Peravai(village temple priest federation) at Madras on March 9th (above left). She announced before 40,000 liturgists (3,000 of them women) plans to provide pensions and housing for the priests, power for temples and law enforcement for removal of encroachments on temple lands and properties. She detailed the allocation of funds for renovation and maintenance of temples and spoke of Tamil Nadu's recent religious renaissance. Her government temple renovation fund has helped hundreds of temples, many were saved by her subsidies of "money for one daily puja," program. Priests in the audience rang bells upon each positive pronouncement. The Shankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Mutt, Sri Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal, called upon the priests to uphold the dignity of their calling, undergo training, end animal sacrifice and turn temples into centers for community integration. At a later evening rally Hindu Munnani president Rama Gopalan said that temple priests were vital in upholding Hindu dharma in the face of conversion efforts.

TRENDS: Yatra Boom

THE DECEMBER ISSUE OF INDIA EXPRESSmagazine reported that in 1994, 3,700,000 people visited the Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu--up from 326,000 in 1971. "In the South, Kerala's Sabarimala attracted four million pilgrims during the last season. Tirupati, the world's wealthiest religious institution after the Vatican, attracts 35,000 daily--nearly 13 million annually. An estimated three to nine hundred thousand pilgrims went to Puttaparthi for Satya Sai Baba's 70th birthday. "Tourist managers are cashing in" on the trend, providing

better facilities, quality hotels and time share condos. The hardship of pilgrimage will be much softened for those who can afford it. While foreign visitors account for a percentage of the growth, India's own are largely responsible, with families averaging three yearly yatras. Despite "secularization," India's post-colonial Hindu renaissance appears vital as ever, unabashedly adapting Bharat's ecomomic transformation to the love of God, Gods and Guru.

PUBLISHING: Mystic India'sAmazing Array

IN 1994, M.C. BHANDARI LAUNCHED A SMALL PUBLICATION under the auspices of the Occult Foundation and supported by Bharat Nirman, which he had convened as "an all India organisation to take up constructive activities in all walks of life." Since then, the editor-in-chief has nurtured an unusual stream of input to produce one of the world's finest resources on the mystical sciences. It's humble 5" X 8", plain paper format is deceiving. But wait! Look inside. Compared with a lot of the slicker looking but shallow western Madison Avenue New Age marketing Zines, Mystic Indiahas real substance rooted in India's ancient sciences: palmistry, yoga, spiritual discourses of sages living and passed, Jain meditation, Sufi sayings, religious humor, pulse analysis, natural farming, "tantriopathy," Ayurvedic remedies, the process of astral body formation following death…the list goes on and on. Kudos to Sri Bhandari for fearlessly and intelligently bringing India's mystical sciences out of the closet.
Contact: Mystic India, 4, Synagogue Street, 2nd Floor, Calcutta 700 001 INDIA

HEALTH WATCH: Hindus Pray for Cows / USA Scare

IN EARLY APRIL 140,000 OF UK'S MILLION or more Hindus joined in special prayers led by their religious leaders in the face of the imminent tragedy of mass cow slaughter being planned to prevent the spread of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, "mad cow disease." A VHP spokesman in London reportedly offered to provide shelter for the cows saying, "If people kill our helpless cow so they do not die by eating beef, it is not morally correct." In India, VHP leader Ashok Singhal said, "This is God's way of teaching them a lesson… they will eventually stop eating beef this way." Though no cases of BSE have been found in US cattle, on April 10th the American Farm Bureau urged the destruction of all imported British cattle found on US farms. While incidents of the related human Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease have been only 1 per million between 1979 and 1993, the recent death of a 58-year-old California woman with CJD has put the Atlanta Centers for Infectious Disease Control on an increased CJD surveillance alert. Popular national talk show host Oprah Winfrey shook the nation by announcing on April 16th that she would stop eating burgers for fear of contracting the disease. Her audience was horrified to learn from her vegetarian activist guest, Howard Lyman, that American cows are routinely fed the body parts of other cattle, the same dangerous practice that scientists feel led to the British epidemic.