

[Global Dharma](#)

Category : [July 1996](#)

Published by Anonymous on Jul. 01, 1996

Global Dharma

CLERGY: Silent Sage's Global Radiance

HIGH IN THE DEEP KARNATAKA HILL forests of the Biligiri RanganaBetta near the temple of the Vaishnava Deity, Sri Ranganatha, Swami Nirmalananda settled in 1964. He had visited over 240 India ashrams as a wandering monk, and completed a five-year world tour. Then, 107 km from Mysore, he built a small ashram. He never left its compound thereafter for 32 years, observed silence for 11 years and even now speaks only rarely when needed to help the local tribals. He usually answers visitor's questions in writing. During his tapas, Swami has reached a profound place of inner peace, light and wisdom. He rises at 2am, keeps up an international correspondence on his typewriter, maintains a library and, with the help of some devotees, his Viswa Shanti Nikethana publications actively promulgate his deep, pure teaching. His goal is to inspire others toward the life of meditation, silence and simplicity that is so important for humanity. He also looks after the needs of some ten mothers of the Soligar tribe and their children. Swami bakes his own bread and offers it as prasada. His inner power radiates globally and he was named International Man of the Year 1991-92.

Contact: Viswa Shanti Nikethana, B.R. Hills, 571 441, Karnataka, India

HINDU EDUCATION: Summer Focus

WHEN SCHOOL BREAKS FOR SUMMER and Christmas in the US, Hindu leaders are poised to put the time to work for dharma. Chinmaya Mission West has scheduled three 6-day summer camps in August and one in December from the 20th to the 27th to target the western holiday season. World head, Swami Tejomayananda, will be there to teach "Vedanta for Spiritual Growth. Values for Lasting Happiness." In the Pocono Mountains the Sringeri Vidya Bharati Foundation will be holding two two-week "Hindu Ideal Youth" summer camps directed by Mrs. Sarala Pancha from Hong Kong with Swami Suddanandji from Madras present for spiritual guidance. The camp is a modern mix of dharma, culture, recreation and nature: Sanskrit, puja, philosophy, Indian dance, yoga, teen discussions, hiking, cookouts, softball, aerobics, crafts, etc.

SOCIAL HOT SPOTS: Farmers to Fall?

DESPITE FIJI'S SURPLUS OF FALLOW LAND, Dr. Balwant Singh Rakka, MP, says the government is not planning to renew Indian farmers' Agricultural Landlord-Tenant Act land leases. The 10-to-20 year leases, usually renewed on a regular basis, begin expiring next year. If not renewed, thousands of Indian farmers will be evicted and become landless peasants. He cited the country's failure to farm already reserved lands, which just become jungles, to suggest that there is no legitimate reason not to allow the Indians to keep the land which they have cultivated for nearly a century. Unfortunately, many Indians are fleeing from what they perceive as a fruitless future. In Suva, recently, at the Dakshina India Andhra

Sangam, opposition leader Jai Ram Reddy said Fijian Indians should not lose hope. "You will have to work shoulder to shoulder with other religious organizations for peace and justice. We have no other country in the world. This is our motherland."

HINDU RIGHTS: ISKCON and UK Hindus Win Battle

TEN YEARS ON THE PATH OF CONFRONTATION HAVE RESULTED IN ISKCON'S winning their battle to maintain a place of public Hindu worship and festivals at the Bhaktivedanta Manor in the formerly residential-only zoned Letchmore Heath village 15 miles outside of London. Early this May, British Environment Secretary John Gummer granted the change of use permit. The manor, donated to ISKCON in 1973 by former Beatle George Harrison, was originally licensed as a theological college for 50 trainee priests. Gradually worship there became popular among thousands of Indian Hindus. A rancorous legal battle ensued when local residents banned public functions citing traffic congestion and the destruction of their tranquil way of life, while ISKCON charged discrimination. In deference to locals in 1993, ISKCON had purchased adjacent "greenbelt" zoned land to build a road directly to the freeway which would by-pass the village. With prodding by Indian Ambassador Singhvi, permission for the new road, formerly denied, was also granted in May. It is symptomatic of ISKCON's growing global amalgamation with Asian Hindu Vaishnava's, that 35,000 people, mostly Indians, protested the ban in London's streets in March, 1994. A few questioned whether ISKCON's lawless "move-in-take-over" social strong arm tactics were in the best of Hindu global interests. Ultimately the temple succeeded. Gummer said, "I concluded that the spiritual and

religious needs of this section of Hindu community outweighed the harm the development would do..." Meanwhile, the general attitude toward UK Hindus was much improved by the Swaminarayan Fellowship's new temple, built on a foundation of community service and cooperation.

MODERNIZATIONS: Vedic Education and the Net

THE JIVA INSTITUTE OF VIDYA ACADEMY is quietly revolutionizing education in the industrial town of Faridabad, Haryana, just 25 kms south of New Delhi. They were the first school in India to utilize the newly arrived internet connection while integrating Vedic culture in education. Using the computers as a resource and e-mail tool, students exchange information with peers of other cultures. The school has an interactive approach, says the principal, Rishi Chauhan (left). If there is a lesson on the Eskimos, who the textbooks say all live in igloos, the students try and speak to an Eskimo student on the internet. That helps correct textbook distortions. "Books are static; the internet is current," says Chauhan, who left the US to set up the school in Haryana after studying educational systems throughout the world, with the aim of restoring India's ancient Gurukul, Vedic learning-centred system. The unique teaching method focuses all lessons for a week on the same subject such as building history, building construction science, the building math in their house and building stories for English literature. Students get a rounded concept from many different angles, and develop their insight and lateral thinking. Teachers are very close to students. Attention is given to proper diet, dress and hygiene. Students are advised to be vegetarian and treated in the Jiva's Ayurvedic clinic. Computer wizard, vegetarian, yoga-practising, former New York English teacher,

Steven Rudolph, is the Academy director. He recently set up a learning centered system for 3,500 students at the Kanda Institute in Tokyo. The Jiva Institute plans a national Bulletin Board Service linking schools, a 100-acre Vedic University with a Vedic Arts center and an Ayurvedic hospital.--From a report in India Perspectives

TRENDS: My Wife and I Run the Monastery

NOTORIOUS "DEFECTIONS" OF MONKS FROM ORDERS AND THE ATTENDANT wailing over the waning of ascetic tradition belie man's continuing deep fascination for the ideal of "living a spiritual life 100% of the time." But new spiritual lifestyles are leading to a questionable re-definition of monasticism. The children of the 60s integrated Asian philosophy with free love. The urge to merge with both God and the opposite sex filled hundreds of co-ed yoga ashrams, Vajrayana Buddhist and Universalist Vedanta "monasteries." John Daido Looi, abbot of Zen Mountain Monastery, an apparently orthodox Western institution in New York says: "We made a clear distinction between lay and monastic practices....that goes against the grain of the New Age tendency to synthesize...a monastic can practice celibacy or be in a stable monogamous relationship. . .but agree not to procreate." From the Hindu side, the universalism of eclectic Indian Vedanta swamis has spawned a now-independent-of-RK mission movement. Its Vedanta Free Press, American Vedantist magazine describes the newly founded Fellowship of the Holy Trinity, a "Christian" order filled with "householder monastics," who wear orange robes on the weekends citing Hindu sages as examples "Rama, Krishna and Ramakrishna were all married, none lived in a monastery." There may be serious sadhana being done. But other such

"ashrams" have suffered from behind the scenes extra-marital affairs and divorces, with children scarred for life. Elsewhere, some Tibetan monks still take 253 vows.

CULTURAL REVIVAL: Veda Chat Future

WE CAN HEAR IT NOW. A NEW YORK born taxi driver opens the door "Swagatam, Swagatam!"(Welcome, welcome!) City Bank's giant neon messaging sign flashes high over the streets at ten second intervals, "Lokah Samasta Sukhino Bhavatu." (May all beings be happy.) Sanskrit, the famed mother of all languages never died. Sri Aurobindo predicted it would be mankind's future language. It may happen. A new conversational Sanskrit movement is sweeping India. Many speak Sanskrit daily. The movement offers easy courses and tapes and has its own modern magazine, Sambhashana Sandesha,done with a dharmic touch, available both in India and the US with India and world news, articles on Sanskrit and Hindu culture, interviews, short stories, children's stories, and even Sanskrit crossword puzzles. Sanskrit in this contemporary idiom is much easier to learn. Contact:USA: Shivram Bhat, 20800 Homestead Rd. #36H, Cupertino, CA 95014, India: Sambhashana Sandeshah 8th Cross, II Phase Girinagar, 560 085 Bangalore

MONUMENTS / PRESERVATION: Monumentally Cracking Greed

THE 1,200-YEAR-OLD SIKKANATHASWAMY SIVA CAVE TEMPLE, carved into a stone hillock in Pudukkottai, Tamil Nadu, including its large Ganesha, is full of cracks now, as a local

development program's allegedly illegal granite quarrying shakes the area. Sadly, this precious treasure along with many ancient South Indian forest preserves and formerly stable ecosystems are being irreparably damaged by the rampant rape of India's stone for export. Traditionally used in small amounts for sacred architecture, the new demand by corporate builders in cities like Tokyo is inadvertently defacing the region--a burden Bharat cannot bear.

BANGLADESH: Unsung Leader Honored

THE 1933 CHICAGO WORLD FELLOWSHIP of faiths invited India leaders to follow in Swami Vivekananda's footsteps. Founder Acharya of Mahanam Sampradaya, Sri Angan, Faridpur, now in Bangladesh sent the young award-winning philosophy student, Dr. Mahanambrata Brahmachari to represent the then unknown-to-the-west Vaishnava school of Bengal and Chaitanya. He subsequently gave 354 lectures in 63 US towns and spoke at 29 universities. In Dhaka, December 1995, the Sri Jagatbandhu Math conducted a massive honorary celebration at which Indian, Nepal and Bangladesh leaders paid homage to the 92-year- old Hindmissionary's life work.