Diaspora
Category : April 1998
Published by Anonymous on Apr. 02, 1998

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EDUCATION

Swami's Temple of Learning

With a desire to give back to his native country, Swami Satchitananda of the Integral Yoga Institute in Virginia, USA, opened the Satchidananda Jothi Nikethan in Coimbatore, India, in mid-1997. The school--Swami calls it a "temple of learning"--is following the traditional gurukulam model where students and teachers live and learn together. The initial 65 students are doing well. The full capacity is 810 students in 4th to 12th standard. The 45-acre site is at the foothills of the Nilgiri Mountains--wild elephants can be spotted from the campus. Each day at the multi-religious school begins with hatha yoga and meditation. Meals are all vegetarian.

SATCHIDANANDA JOTHI NIKETHAN, KALLAR (PO) METTPALAYAM 641305, COIMBATORE DISTRICT, INDIA

MEDIA

Dharma Hits American TV

Hindus perusing their local TV schedule may be bemused to encounter a show entitled "Dharma and Greg." They may be more nonplused by the show itself--a situation comedy complete with a "laugh track," in case you miss when a joke is made. The hit ABC show stars Jenna Elfman as Dharma, the only child of hippie parents, who meets, and marries the same

day, Greg, a lawyer from a rich, well-established San Francisco family. Dharma, so named by her father in honor of the Dalai Lama, works as a yoga teacher. Most jokes revolve around the contrast between Dharma's family and Greg's, and between her free-spirited life and his constrained career as a US attorney. Eastern concepts such as karma, reincarnation, vegetarianism, chakras, yoga and nonviolence figure strongly in the show, but there is also a heavy dose of sex and an unexpected crudeness. The show has no special underlying "message," beyond entertainment, which it does well. Buddhists in America seem to like it; the Chicago Tribune's reviewer thought it trivialized the concept of dharma; and Hindus will probably get some fun out of seeing our religious concepts in such an offbeat setting.

UNITED KINGDOM

Millennium Dome

England's grand plan to celebrate the year 2000 with the world's largest enclosed structure, the US$680 million, 320-meter-diameter Millennium Dome, has run into a religious snag. The government minister responsible for the immense project, essentially a world's fair exhibition, pledged to make Christianity central. Other faiths immediately protested, insisting the exhibition's "spirit zone" include all of England's faiths. Christians retorted that it was, after all, the anniversary of Christ's birth being celebrated. One Hindu, one Sikh, one Muslim, two Jews and 20 Christians belong to the group advising on the project's religious content.

CROSS-CULTURAL

But Didn't You Say 'Yes'?

The American chief negotiator for a multinational company

pitches his proposal to his Asian counterparts. "Yes," says their chief man, and the American thinks he has a deal. But wait, what did that "yes" mean? The Yankee thinks it meant "I accept your terms." But in Asia, according to the remarkably insightful Handbook of Cross-Cultural Marketing, it could mean, among other possibilities, only "I understand what you are proposing," with not the slightest sense of acquiescence. This book covers the mysteries of dealing with varying cultures from Asia to Argentina and is as entertaining as it is informative about just how different we are from each other.

THE HAWORTH PRESS, 10 ALICE STREET, BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK, 13904-1580, USA.

UNITED KINGDOM

Chinmaya Youth Retreat

Win The World With Love" was the theme of September's Chinmaya Yuva Kendra (CHYK) Youth Retreat conducted in the English countryside under the guidance of the Mission's popular Swami Swaroopananda. Reports one camper, "Swami struck a chord with all of us, immediately put us at ease and soon cleared many of my doubts. He taught us that insecurity lies only in attachment, and that confidence and true security can be found in prema, unconditioned higher love." Campers arose for 6 am meditation, then took solitary walks through the sprawling acreage before beginning a day full of discussion groups, cultural entertainment and outdoor activities.

RELIGION

Hindu Serials Escape the Ax

S.S. Gill, Marxist head of the newly formed Prasar Bharati

Board overseeing Doordharshan, India's state-run TV, backed down from a decision to cancel the popular Hanuman and Aum Namah Shivaya religious series. He came under particularly heavy fire from Dr. Karan Singh, MP, who called the decision an example of "the sort of insensitivity to religious and cultural perception that is, in fact, at the root of many of our current problems." "I personally view the two shows regularly," Dr. Singh wrote to the board, "and am particularly impressed at the way producer Sanjay Khan has handled a Hindu mythological theme. Surely the whimsical perceptions of a superannuated bureaucrat cannot be allowed to disturb these two excellent serials. Doing so would create widespread resentment in the country."

MUSIC

Nepal Beat

The "Master Drummers of Nepal" from Kathmandu University will be on tour in the US from May 15 to June 15. The ensemble includes drums, shawms (double-reed instruments), flutes, trumpets and cymbals and will play music of Nepal's Newar communities. The university's new Department of Music, located in a temple near Bhaktapur, aims to preserve and promote the traditional Nepalese forms, as well as acquaint their students with world musical traditions.

FOR SCHEDULE: GREG GRIEVE, 773-702-8635 IN CHICAGO OR SOUTH-ASIA-OUTREACH@UCHICAGO.EDU

THE VEDAS

God's Word, Sages' Voices

The Deity whose name is "Helpful" dwells encompassed by

cosmic order. It is by reason of her color that these trees are green, and green their garlands of flowers.

Atharva Veda 10.8.31

May the One God who, in accordance with his nature, covers himself like a spider with threads spun out of matter, grant us union with Brahman!

Svetashvatara Upanishad 6.10

The man who understands both the impermanent and the permanent, holding the two in tension together, by the impermanent passes over death and by the permanent attains immortal life.

Isha Upanishad 14

Truth alone conquers, not untruth. By truth is laid out the path leading to the Gods by which the rishis who have their desires fulfilled travel to where is that supreme abode of truth.

Mundaka Upanishad 3.1.6

Sacrifice has only one sure foundation, only one abode, the heavenly realm.

Shatapatha Brahmana 8.7.4.6 P

If he who draws near the sacrifice were to make an improper utterance he would waste the sacrifice, just as he might waste water by spilling it from a full vessel. Where the priests perform sacrifice as described with perfect mutual understanding, however, there everything takes place properly

and no trouble appears. Therefore, it is in this fashion that sacrifice should be carefully cherished.

Shatapatha Brahmana 1.5.2,15

To You, most brilliant and shining God, we pray now for happiness for our friends. Listen attentively to our call: save us from every evil man

Yajur Veda 3.26

The Vedas are the divinely revealed and most revered scriptures, sruti, of Hinduism, likened to the Torah (2,000 bce), Bible New Testament (200 ce), Koran (600 ce) or Zend Avesta (600 bce). They are only four in number, Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva and include over 100,000 verses. The oldest portions date back as far as 6,000 bce.