

[Diaspora](#)

Category : [July 1997](#)

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Diaspora

SRI LANKA

War's Ravages Finally Told

For years media observers were barred from entry into the war-torn Jaffna areas in the north of the ancient island of Sri Lanka. In August of 1996, two representatives of the privately-funded U.S. Committee for Refugees--policy analyst Hiram A. Ruiz and research assistant Katie Hope--were granted permission to visit Jaffna by the Sri Lankan government. Their thorough March 1997 report details, with interviews and recommendations, the plight of over half a million displaced Sri Lankan Tamils under key categories: conflict assessment; Jaffna city security issues of rape, disappearances, checkpoints; the possible food crisis facing 500,000 civilians in the Wanni area under the control of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam; detention center conditions and asylum in India. Copies of the report may be obtained from: U. S. Committee for Refugees, 1717 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Suite 701 Washington, D.C., 20036, USA; ph: 202-347-3507

SELFLESS SERVICE

Building Babaji's Hospital

The "unborn" appearance in the Himalaya's of a young ascetic known as Haidakhan Baba ("mendicant of Haidakhan village") in 1970, was believed to be the return of an immortal Hindu yogi. Babaji passed away in 1984. In 14 years he carved a pristine Hindu path: purity, simplicity in living, the

performance of the Vedic fire worship, chanting of God's name--Om Nama Sivaya, meditation and service. Today Haidakhan Samaj centers the world over are working on, as Babaji requested, a hospital for the uncared-for residents of the Himalayan hills in India where he lived. Construction is partially complete and over 300 patients a month are now being cared for, but much more equipment and funding is needed. Please help. To find the center in your country e-mail: margdevi@aol.com

POP CULTURE

Rock Star with Hindu Planets

Kula Shaker, London's hot band named after an Indian emperor poet combines Indian rhythms, Sanskrit mantras and pop melodies. Lead singer Crispian Mills, son of actress Haley Mills, says, "We have lost touch with spiritualism in the West. Kula is about spirituality, innocence and a bright future. " In 1993, he lived in a Hindu temple in India, and last year returned to Bharat for his Hindu wedding. Last September, Mills asked that Columbia Records wait for a planetary alignment at exactly 5:05pm, Sept. 29, to sign on Kula.

YOGA

Laugh Asanas

More than 100 laughing clubs now provide Indians with venues for chortling exercise. The Wall Street Journal reported that Dr. Madan Kataria started by organizing a group of five jokers at his home in Bombay. The meetings grew in number and now the good doctor has "popularized an ancient yoga breathing and yoga posture" that exercises all 32 facial muscles. Club members from all ages and walks of life line up, stretch and warm up with a few "ha ha ha's" and "ho ho ho's."

They gradually move on to a rib-splitting workout that devotees say opens the breathing, builds self-confidence and even alleviates high blood pressure and arthritis.

MULTI-NATIONAL

Muslims Protest US Statue

A sculpture of the Prophet Mohammed holding a sword and the Koran has looked down from a marble frieze depicting history's great lawgivers upon the US Supreme Court since 1935. In February the Council on American-Islamic Relations called for its removal. The coalition of Muslim groups claims it is an insult to Islamic tradition and that the sword reflects stereotypes of Muslims as "intolerant conquerors." The council's executive director, Nihad Awad, said "Muslims do not believe that the prophet can be symbolized in any picture or artistic sculpture." In rejecting their request, Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist said the frieze honors the prophet and will not be altered. Literature describing the frieze, however, will be changed to reflect Muslim sentiments on the issue. Kashmiri Muslims responded to his decision with demonstrations and a protest letter to the US. The situation is similar to the Hindu 1996 protests over Muslim artist Maqbool Fida Hussain's 20-year-old nude painting of the Goddess Saraswati.

INDIA

Unearthed After 529 Years

In 1985 Sri Radhakrishna Reddiar was having difficulty making progress building a small Ayyappa temple in Tamil Nadu. He went to Vellore's Pundit Sri J. Hari for an astrological reading. The pundit used as a guide the 3,300-year-old text of the Tamil siddhar [master of spiritual knowledge] Theiryar. It details the

fruits of deeds done in past lives as revealed in the planetary positions of one's birth. Pundit Hari discovered remarkable correlations while matching Reddiar's planets against the text. With prolific precision, he unfolded 13 pages of interpretative predictions that explained how a 7-inch-tall Sivalinga made of five "poisons," which would have curative powers, was made in 1368 in the Vijayanagar kingdom. Later, to protect it from invading Muslims, it was chemically treated, covered with beeswax and copper acetate and buried 32 feet under the bottom of a temple pool. Only by unearthing this Sivalinga would Reddiar be able to finish his temple. He proceeded as Pundit directed and dug up the Lingam. The ancient text manuscript and Pundit's predictive notes are all open for study.

PHILATELY

Swami's Stamp

Sri Lanka has honored Swami Vivekananda's 1897 landing in Colombo, the first stop after his "victory tour" to the West, with a centenary stamp. Jubilant Hindus and others welcomed him. But in the ancient town of Anuradhapura fanatical Buddhists disrupted his address. Swami restrained his audience, saying, "Let us practice a bit of nonviolence, even if they do not."

THE VEDAS

God's Word, Sages' Voices

Lead me from unreality to reality. Lead me from darkness to light. Lead me from death to immortality

Yajur Veda, Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.3.28

Subtlest of the subtle, greatest of the great, the atman is hidden in the cave of the heart of all beings. He who, free from all urges, beholds Him overcomes sorrow, seeing by grace of the Creator the Lord and His glory.

Krishna Yajur Veda, Svetasvatara Upanishad 3.20

Perishable is matter. Immortal, imperishable the Lord, who, the One, controls the perishable and also the soul. Meditating on Him, uniting with Him, becoming more and more like Him, one is freed at the last from the world's illusion.

Krishna Yajur Veda, Svetasvatara Upanishad 1.10

That which is neither conscious nor unconscious, which is invisible, impalpable, indefinable, unthinkable, unnameable, whose very essence consists of the experience of its own self, which absorbs all diversity, is tranquil and benign, without a second, which is what they call the fourth state--that is the atman. This it is which should be known.

Atharva Veda, MandUkya Upanishad 7

He is the Supreme Brahman, the Self of all, the chief foundation of this world, subtler than the subtle, eternal. That thou art; thou art That.

Atharva Veda, Kaivalya Upanishad 16

He should be known as one liberated while alive. He is blessed and is of fulfilled duties. After giving up the state of being liberated while alive, when the time arrives for his quitting the body, he enters on the state of disembodied liberation, even as the air attains the state of nonmovement.

Shukla Yajur Veda, Paingala Upanishad 3.5

The one who has not turned away from wickedness, who has no peace, who is not concentrated, whose mind is restless--he cannot realize the atman, who is known by wisdom.

Krishna Yajur Veda, Katha Upanishad 2.24

Verses are drawn from various sources. Those taken from The Vedic Experience by Prof. Raimon Panikkar are available at

[www.HinduismToday.kauai.hi.us/ ...
/Dir-New.html#VedExp.html](http://www.HinduismToday.kauai.hi.us/.../Dir-New.html#VedExp.html)