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GAUTAM BUDDHA

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OUR HOLY LAND..... THE HOLY CITY OF "PURI"

One of the four dhams (holiest places) in India, Puri-is situated on the shoreline of the Bay of Bengal and is just 60 kms from Bhubaneshwar. This coastal town of Orissa is considered by Hindus to be the abode of Lord of the world, Jagannatha. Hence, it got the name Jagannatha Puri. It is said that one obtains 'moksha' (salvation) from the cycle of birth and rebirth, if one stays here for three days and nights. Puri is the hallowed seat of Lord Jagannath (Lord of the Universe), Subhadra (the lord's sister) and Balabhadra (the lord's brother).

Puri is a place, known by many names over the centuries - Nilgiri, Niladri, Nilachal, Purushottam, Sankhakshetra, Srikshetra, Jagannath Dham, Jagannath Puri.

Even before one enters Puri, the 65-metre high temple of Jagannath makes its presence felt. The temple stands majestically on an elevated platform in the heart of the city and the present structure was mostly built around the 12th century by the Ganga King Chodagangadeva, to commemorate the shifting of his capital from South to Central Orissa. It stands in a compound on the Nilgiri Hill. The structure of the temple has all richness of the Kalinga style of architecture. The 214 feet high swirling spire of the temple becomes visible even before one enters the city. The temple is surrounded by a 20 foot high wall, within which lie several smaller shrines. The temple complex is 650 feet comprising 4 chambers- the Deul, the Jagmohana, Natamandir and Bhogamandir, which totally consist of a traditional porch, shrine, hall of offerings and a pillared hall of dance. The temple is surrounded by 20 feet high wall. One must visit the smaller temples of Goddess Vimla, Laxmi and Vishnu, which lie within the precincts of the main temple. The remarkable thing about this temple, since its early beginnings, is that there has been no discrimination ever with the so-called lower castes.

Many festivals are celebrated in Puri. The most famous of them is the Rath Yatra which falls in the month of June- the ideal time to visit Puri. Lord Jagannath with his sister Subhadra and brother Balabhadra take an annual vacation to the 'Gundicha Ghar', a smaller sanctum, 2 kms from

the main temple. This summer temple of the Lord is within a walled garden at the far end of Grand Road, where the deity is enshrined for a week, on a simple throne. This journey to the summer temple constitutes of the Rath Yatra Festival. The three deities, in separate raths (wooden chariots), are pulled by devotees to the Gundicha temple. These raths are elaborately dressed in a riot of colours, the colours symbolising the significance of each deity.

Another very important festival is the Nava Kalebara festival which is an immensely significant religious ritual, wherein the idols of the three deities - Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra change their external forms. New idols are carved out of specially sanctified Chandan-Neem trees, within strictly prescribed regulations. The 'daru' (wood) is then transported to the temple in full regalia.

At this point the Vishwakarmas (wood sculptors) step in and work for 21 days and nights, in strict secrecy, giving final shape to the idols. The new idols are then enshrined after transferring the 'Brahma' within each idol into their new form. This is again done in strict accordance to the religious norms.

Other festivals include The Chandan Yatra celebrating the Hindu New Year. The Snana Yatra, celebrating Lord Jagannath's ritual bath which is held on the day of the full moon in June (Jyestha). The original deities are taken out for public viewing. During the Jhulana Yatra, proxy images of the deities are carried out in grand processions for 21 days, to cruise in beautifully decorated boats in the Narmada Tank.

Apart from the temples, the city of Puri also consists of attractive places to visit such as the Ananda bazar which is the biggest food market of the world. The hand carved statuettes of the deities on wood, paintings, art & craftwork and hand woven cloth reminds of the old charm, which the shops have retained since ages. While walking down the shopping bazar it is difficult to miss the delightful trinkets made from the seashells.

Another very important attraction of Puri is it’s beaches. Proximity to the sea gives Puri an excellent coastal type climate, with temperatures ranging from 17 degrees in winters to 32 degrees during summers. It is

blessed with Golden sand beaches for which it has been famous all over the world. Though life here revolves the temple, the place has been attracting tourists and locals alike who love to swim in the sea and laze around on its golden sands. The beaches of Puri show divergent colours- calmness gives peace to mind while the crashing breakers reminds of the turbulent life within this calmness. The sunrays falling on seawater gives an illusion of a rainbow on water surface.

It is interesting to note that the places surrounding Puri too are great religious places in their own right. Near Puri lies Bhubaneshwar, the capital of Orissa state which was once said to have thousands of temples though only a few hundred remain today. But some of the grand temples which still remain in all their glory include the Lingaraja Temple and the Rajarani Temple. One of the most amazing temples located not at a great distance from Puri is the Sun Temple at Konark, regarded by many as among the most amazing temples architecturally. Archeologists are still baffled how some parts of the temple structures were built in those ancient days.

WELCOME TO THE 52ND CENTURY

While most of the world is planning to celebrate January 1st 2000 as the start of a new millinieum, it might come as a shock and surprise that According to the Hindu calender we already entered the 52nd Century of Kaliyug on Ugadi, March 18th 1999.

Kaliyug commenced at the very time that Lord Krishna departed from earth, which means that 5,200 years have already passed and according to the scriptures there are 426,800 years more to go.

It also shows that while rest of the world is eagerly awaiting the 21st Century, we are far ahead, since we have just crossed the 52nd Century.

Let us hope that this 52nd Century will usher in a bright and promising future for the Hindu World.

THE WORD - NAMASKAR

In much of the world today, people do not shake hands when they meet. They may hug formally or kiss one another on the cheek, as in eastern Europe and Arab states. They may bow softly, eyes turned to the ground, as in Japan. The Hawaiian greeting, termed "honi" , consists of placing the nostril gently beside that of the person greeted, a kind of sharing of breath, which is life and Pran(a).

For, Hindus, of course, the greeting of choice is "Namaste", the two hands pressed together and held near the heart with the head gently bowed as one says, "Namaste". Thus it is both spoken greeting and a gesture, a Mantra and a Mudra.

The prayerful hand position is a Mudra called Anjali, from the root Anj, "to adorn, honor, celebrate or anoint". The hands held in union signify the oneness of an apparently dual cosmos, the bringing together of spirit and matter.

In Sanskrit "Namas" means, "bow, obeisance, reverential salutation". It comes from the root Nam, which carries meaning of bending, bowing, humbly submitting and becoming silent. "Te" means "to you". Thus "Namaste" means "I bow you." The act of greeting is called "Namaskaram", "Namaskara" and "Namaskar" in the varied languages of the subcontinent.

In the case of Namaste, a deeper veneration is sometimes expressed by bringing the fingers of the clasped palms to the forehead, where they touch the brow, the site of the mystic Third Eye. A third form of Namaste brings the palms competely above the head, a gesture said to focus consciousness in the subtle space just above the Brahamarandhra, a aperture in the Crown Chakra. This form is so full of reverence it is reserved for the Almighty God.

A namaste is in its very essence, a spiritual gesture not a worldly one. By a handshake we acknowledge our equality with other. We convey how strong we are, how nervous, how aggressive or passive. The namaste gesture bespeaks our inner valuing of the sacredness of all. It betokens our intuition that all souls are divine, in their essence.

There are other, more mystical meanings behind Namaste. The nerve current of the body converge in the feet, the solar plexus and the hands. Physic energy leaves the body at these junctures. To "ground" that energy and balance the flow of Pran(a) streaming through the nerve system, Yogi(s) cross their legs in the lotus posture, and bring their hands together. The Anjali Mudra acts like a simple Yog(ic) Asan(a), balancing and harmonizing our energies, keeping us centred, inwardly poised and mentally protected. It closes aura, shielding us physically. It becoming too externalized, thus we remain close to our intutive nature, our super consciousness.

This form of acknowledgement is so lovely, so graceful. Just look at two people in Namaste and you will see so much human beauty and refinement.

NAMASTE

INDIANS ALL

I am an Indian; every Indian is my brother…The ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute Indian, the Brahmin Indian, the Pariah Indian is my brother….The Indian is my brother, the Indian is my life. India's society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure garden of youth, the sacred haven, the Varanasi of my old age…The soil of India is my highest heaven, **the good of India is my good**.

- Swami Vivekanand

*OUR FESTIVALS....*HINDU SAMRAAJYA DIVAS

Hindu Samraajya Divas is celebrated in the month of June as a great occasion to commemorate the coronation of Chhatrapati Sri Shivaji Maharaj in 1674 A.D., at Raigadh in Maharashtra. According to the Hindu calendar the year was 1731.

This grand occasion holds up for the Hindu people inspiring lessons for their future march - perhaps unequalled by any other single event during the past 3-4 centuries of their history.

The greatest contribution which Shivaji made to the freedom struggle of Bharat lay in the fact that he infused in it the right kind of national idealism. Even at the tender age of fourteen, he wrote to his friend, Dadaji Narasa Prabhu Deshpande, that he had vowed in the presence of god to achieve Hindavi Swaraj. Shivaji further expressed his supreme confidence that it was god's will that this mission should succeed.

This pledge, it should be remembered, Shivaji took when the whole of Bharat was held under the firm and suffocating strangle hold of the Mughals ruling at Delhi, of the Adilshahi and Kutubshahi in the south and of the west coast. It was these almost superhuman challenges that Shivaji had accepted even as a teenaged boy.

The secret of Shivaji's success lay chiefly in motivating the people to strive and sacrifice for the establishment of a free Hindu state and not for the sake of any individual king or chieftain. He taught the people of the country to hold their heads high, develop self-confidence and face foreign invasions boldly.

Shivaji was a born military strategist. He created his own army & invincible generals from uneducated village folks. He built resources from scratch and his expert use of guerilla warfare tactics won him many battles. Shivaji had a leader's magnetism borne in him and threw a spell over all who knew him, drawing the best elements of the country to his side and winning the most devoted service from his officers. His dazzling victories and ever ready smile made him the idol of his soldiers.

His army organisation was a model of efficiency. The new military strategies, the new weapons and the new type of training to soldiers which Shivaji introduced in his army speak of his matchless genius on the

battlefield. This apart, his personal heroism outshone many a powerful adversary like Afzal Khan and Shaista Khan. His bold act in escaping from the death trap of Aurangzeb at Agra has indeed few parallels in the annals of thrilling escapades. No wonder, the very name Shivaji became a legend even in his own lifetime.

Shivaji was also the few of the first national leaders of Bharat to recognize the looming threat of naval aggression by the western nations and took prompt and strong measures to strengthen the country's defences on that front also. He did away with every kind of superstition, religious or otherwise, such as the religious ban on sea voyage, which came in the way of nation's security and progress.

Shivaji's private life was no exception to his sense of just & morality. He was a devoted son, a loving father and an attentive husband. He was intensively religious from childhood and remained respectful to holy men throughout his lifetime. He was passionately fond of listening to scripture readings, sacred songs and stories. He remained throughout his life free from vice.

Shivaji's sublime traits of reverence to womanhood, protection of religion of all sects, sterling personal character, justice and fair play in every field of administration - all these have made Shivaji a matchless hero not only in the military sense but one inspired with the noblest of human values, unsullied by any taint of personal ambition. Shivaji's state was truly inspired by a spirit of dharma.

It is hardly surprising that an institution of experts in Britain which carried out a comparative assessment of the various celebrated heroes of the world - such as Hannibal, Julius Caesar, Alexander, Napoleon, etc. - to decide `who is the greatest world hero?' chose Shivaji for that unique honor.

Swami Vivekananda spoke of him in these glowing terms: "*Shivaji is one of the greatest national saviours who emancipated our society and our dharma when they were faced with the threat of total destruction. He was a peerless hero, a pious and god-fearing king and verily a manifestation of all the virtues of a born leader of men described in our ancient scriptures. He also embodied the deathless spirit of our land and stood as the light of hope for our future*."

Shivaji's life leads to the conclusion that it was a life distinguished by expanding visions. No national movement created Shivaji, but Shivaji created a nation. It was he who released forces that changed the political map of India in the seventeenth century. Shivaji died on April 3, 1680. Nearly four centuries have elapsed since this great man passed away, yet his message is still relevant to the people of India and the world.

The celebration of this day as Hindu Saamraajya Divas, therefore, carries the spirit of victorious resistance to foreign aggression and presents a glorious vision of national freedom rich with its Hindu content. It is indeed a day to be proud of on which the Hindu world's Greatest king wore it's Greatest crown.

"JAI SHIVAJI JAI BHAVANI"
"JAI BHAVANI JAI SHIVAJI"

300th Anniversary of the KHALSA

This Baisakhi, we all are celebrating the 300th Anniversary of the formation of the KHALSA PANTH, which was initiated on Baisakhi Day in 1699, when the 10th Guru Gobind Singh called those five brave men, who didn't even care about their lives, as the Panj Pyaras. This creation of Khalsa Panth was perhaps the greatest contribution the Guru Gobind Singh made, which served to inspire the people about the great teachings of the GURUs and made them so brave and courageous.

The Guru gave all his men the name of 'SINGH' meaning lion. His men were told to never cut their hair, to keep their KESH (since that was the sign of saints), to always carry their KIRPAN (since they were also warriors), to have a KANGA (comb), to wear a KADA and KACHA. Thus, every Sikh was supposed to remember about the five K's. He decreed that every Khalsa should be a saint and a soldier at the same time and be able and willing to defend those suffering from injustice.

Let us learn the courage, valour, bravery, determination and patriotism and service to the motherland from Guru Gobind Singh.

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GAUTAM BUDDHA

By Dipak Kumar

We all recognize the photo which is on the cover of this issue as the famous “Lantau Buddha”, and most of us have seen it too, and when we are there we proudly tell others that Gautam Buddha came from our country India, but many of us do not know much about the life story of this great personality, so an attempt is made here to narrate the historical events connected with Buddha in the 6th century B.C. there was a kingdom in the foothills of the Himalayas which was ruled by the Sakya dynasty. The capital of this kingdom was "Kapilavastu". It was ruled by king Sudhodhan and queen Maya Devy (also known as Mahamaya).

While the queen was expecting a child, she had a dream in which she saw herself being carried by the guardian angels of the four quarters to a tableland in the Himalayas, where she was received by the heavenly queens. Then she was taken to lake Mansorvar (among the holiest rivers) where she bathed and dressed. Later while resting she dreamt of a divinely white elephant with six tusks. In its trunk the elephant carried a white lotus flower.

When queen Mahamaya told this dream sequence to the king, he called the astrologers to interpret it. The astrologers predicted the a boy would be born soon and he would either be a powerful king or a very great saint who would renounce the world for the benefit of the mankind.

After a few months when the queen was nearing child birth she went to her parents home together with her younger sister Prajapati. On the way she had to pass through a beautiful place "Lumbini", which was a beautiful garden full of green and shady sal trees. Under a sal tree the queen gave birth to a boy. it was the full moon day in the month of Vaisakha in the year 563 B.C. As soon as the infant was born he took seven steps in the northern direction and at

each spot his feet touched, a lotus bloomed and the gods showered flower petal from the heavens. Later, there was great rejoicing in Kapilavastu at the news of the child's birth.

Shortly afterwards, the sage Asita visited the kingdom. Taking the Prince in his hand the sage Asita exclaimed with joy that the child would be a great one. Then tears began to trickle down Asita's cheek. The king was perplexed and worried for the child but the sage replied " I am not crying for the child, but for myself. This child is a great being and will be the future Buddha who will bring message of peace to the world. Since I am old and will not live long enough to listen to his teachings, that is what made me cry".

On the 6th day, the naming ceremony of the prince was held and he was named Siddhartha which means he who reaches his goal. The king called upon eight brahmin priests, all skilled in interpreting signs and asked them to tell the future of the child. The brahmins told the king that if the child followed in his footsteps, he would become a universal king and rule the world, however if he renounced home and family for the life of a seeker, he would become a Buddha and save the world from its ignorance. Eager to prevent his son from renouncing home and family, the king on enquiry from the priests found that his son would renounce everything on seeing four signs the priests explained the four signs as:- "an old man, a sick man, a dead man and a holy man".

The king immediately placed guards around the palace as he was anxious to keep away all these kinds of people. Henceforth, Siddharth stayed inside the palace where all luxuries were in abundance. He was brought with love and affection. Siddhartha was of a quiet nature and loved solitude. When he was 7 years old he started his education excelling in studies but he didn't enjoy games.

One day when he was strolling in the palace garden he saw a flock of wild swans flying overhead. just then an arrow whizzed through the air and a bird fell dying. Siddhartha ran up to it, gently pulled

out the arrow, dressed its wound and tended it. Just then Devdatta, his cousin, arrived and demanded the bird as he had shot it. Siddhartha refused to part with it. He gave the reason that a life belong to the one who saves it rather than the one who destroys it.

As Siddhartha became older, the king married him to the lovely princess Yashodhara, who in time bore him a son, Rahul. It must be remembered that until now, Siddharth had seldom left his luxurious palace but slowly he got tired of all this and so decided to go out to see the outside world. At this time he was 29 years old.

When the king came to know about Siddhartha's plan to visit the outside world, he gave orders that the city be cleaned, houses decorated with flowers and flags, and festive arches built special instructions were issued that the sick and old should not be seen. So when Siddhartha's chariot, driven by his charioteer, Channa, went out in the city, the people greeted him and they were all happy and young. Seeing this he thought that indeed the world was a great place to stay but since he was destined to see the three woes of man, he told his charioteer, to go to the other side.

On the other side, there was no one present to welcome the prince. He saw an old man, his back bent, walking with a stick, "who is that?" “an old man”, replied Channa. Siddharth found out that everyone in the world had to grow old. In later visits, he also saw a sick man and a dead man. Thus, he also discovered for the first time that people fell sick and suffered and all those who are born have to die. At that, Siddhartha thought, "old age, sickness, death? The world is indeed a sad place”. He was greatly troubled and wanted to know why there was so much sorrow and suffering.

Later Siddhartha saw a man with his head shaved and wearing yellow color robes and that man looked calm and peaceful. Siddhartha learned that he was a Sadhu. Sadhus were those who renounced home and family, avoided pleasure, subdued passions, meditated and controlled the mind. they strived for freedom from this world of tears and the endless rounds of rebirths.

The defination of a Sadhu by Channa had a very deep impression upon Siddhartha's mind who decided to renounce everything. So, quitely and with no one knowing of his intentions, he left the city gate in Channa's chariot heading for the forest where he cut his hair and sent it back through Channa as a sign of his renouncing everything. He also exchanged his princely robes for an ascetic's gown and then he set forth in search of truth.

For 6 years Buddha practised extreme austerities and tormented himself by living on scanty foods. he became thin and his body became like a skeleton. One day Siddhartha was unconscious due to his severe austerities and was found by a shepherd, who gave him milk and in this way, he got back his strength and realised the futility of self-mortification. Now he spent more time in meditation. There were many distractions by all kinds of people as well as by evil spirits but Siddhartha was extremely firm and gradually, he realised the truth. H**e became the buddha-the enlightened one, the awakened one** at the age of 35 on the full moon day of Vaishakh. The tree under which Siddhartha attained enlightment was thereafter called the Bodhi tree.

The Budha wanted to teach the people the truth he had discovered. He preached that the world was full of sorrow and suffering and that this sorrow had a cause and thirdly that this cause must be removed which could be done by following the noble eightfold path. The eightfold path which was explained by the Buddha in his first sermon at Sarnath was:-

right view, right aspirations , right speech, right behaviour, right living , right efffort, right thoughts and right concentration. this is the Dhamma, the law or righteousness.

The sermon at Sarnath was only a beginning. For the rest of his life the Buddha travelled the country taking his message to the people. He preached mainly in the pali langauage, which was the main language spoken then. Actually the Buddha's teachings were very

simple. The ultimate goal in life, said the Buddha was nirvana, the escape from the cycle of births and rebirths. This was attainable by a life of virtue and goodness by following the eightfold path

Buddha was a great prophet of ahmisa or non violence which meant violence inflicted by word or deed. He was against the practise of animal sacrifice in the name of religion which many priests in those days used to do by misreading the sayings of the vedas.

After some time Buddha visited the Magadh capital, Rajagriha, and met the king Bimbisara who became his follower and gave his veluvan park as a gift to him. Buddha established the first Vihara or monastery over here.

Buddha continued to spread his knowlodge all over the country. After many years when he was nearing the age of 80 he was passing a place called Kushinagar, he realised his end was fast approaching and told his disciple Ananada to prepare a bed for him with its head turned towards the north between two Sal trees. There he lay down and passed into meditational absorbtions and entered mahaparinirvana in 483 B.C.

Even after the Buddha departed, his teachings continued to spread all over Bharat. They also spread all over the world in due course, especially central, north and south-east Asia due to the great and tireless efforts of emperor Ashok, whose missionaries travelled all over spreading Buddhism.

The places associated with his life became holy and venerated by his followers and pilgrims. The most important ones are as below:
L**umbini** was the place where he was born. it is located in Nepal.
Bodh-gaya was the place where he attained enlightenment and it is located in Bihar state. A grand Mahabodhi temple is visited by thousands of Buddhist pilgrims from all over the world.
Sarnath was the place where he gave his first sermon. This place is marked by a very big Stupa and a tall monolithic iron pillar which was built by Ashok. On this pillar are engraved 4 lions facing four

directions which symolize the roaring form of Buddha preacing in all 4 directions. The importance of this emblem can be judged by the fact that it has been adopted as our national emblem and the wheel of law (dharmachakra) is proudly placed in the center of our flag.

This place is in Uttar Pradesh state.

Kushinagar, which is near Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh), the place where Buddha left the earth, is also marked by a Stupa and a Nirvan temple.

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Actually, Gautam Buddha is held in the highest esteem not just by Buddhists but also by Hindus alike. Hindus regard Gautam Buddha as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. In fact, the teachings of Gautam Buddha is not opposed to the Vedic faith; rather they are quite similar and should be viewed as being from the same family.

Since Hinduism and Buddhism can be said to complement each other, with so many things in common, it is very necessary to have better co-operation and understanding between India and the Buddhist countries, for example Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, etc.

Perhaps, it would be a good idea that there be a forum of such countries in which each can help. there could be easier exchange of trade, commerce and tourism while at the same time using the forum for the purpose of spreading the teachings of Gautam Buddha, especially non-violence to the world for peaceful co-existence.

OM BUDDHAM SHARANAM GACCHAMI



The states of BHARAT

TAMIL NADU

Area:- 130,000 sq.kms, Population:- About 54 million,
State capital:- Chennai, Main language:- Tamil
Famous pilgrimage centers:-
Madurai,Chidambaram,Srirangam,Tanjore,Rameshwaram
Famous touristic places:-
Kanyakumari,Ooty,Kodaikanal,Mahabalipuram,Coonoor,
Kanchipuram, Courtallam, Madhumalai

TAMIL NADU IS IN THE SOUTH-EASTERN CORNER OF THE BHARATIYA MAINLAND. THE WESTERN PART OF THE STATE IS DOMINATED BY THE WESTERN GHATS, THE NILGIRIS AND THE PALANI,CARDAMON AND ANAMALAI HILLS. THE HIGHEST PEAK IS DODABETTA, OVER 2,500 METERS, WHICH IS IN THE NILGIRI HILLS. THE RIVER KAVERI WHICH RISES IN KARNATAKA IS VITAL TO THE IRRIGATION OF THE THANJAVUR DELTA. OTHER RIVERS INCLUDE THE PALAR AND THE TAMARAPARNI. TAMIL NADU IS FAMOUS AS HAVING THE LARGEST NUMBER OF TEMPLES IN BHARAT,MOST OF WHICH ARE GRAND AND CONTAIN EXQUISTIVE SCULPTURES, WHICH ARE BEYOND ANY COMPARISON.

SANSKRIT- *THE MOTHER OF ALL LANGUAGES*

One of BHARAT's greatest gifts to the world has been the Sanskrit language. Sanskrit is renowned all over the world as being the greatest,most ancient and the most beautiful language. **It is a well-known and accepted fact that almost all the languages in the world are derived from Sanskrit, either directly or indirectly. Thus Sanskrit is, without any doubt, the mother of all languages.**

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of Bharat has this to say about our great language:-

'If I was asked what is the greatest treasure which India possesses and what is her finest heritage, I would answer unhesitatingly – it is the Sanskrit language and literature and all that it contains. This is a magnificient inheritance and so long as this endures and influences the life of our people, so long the basic genius of India will continue'.

According to Max Mueller, the German scholar/missionary in the last century, 'Sanskrit is the language of languages and it has been truly said that Sanskrit is to the science of the language what mathematics is to astronomy'.

In fact, Sanskrit is called the Deva Bhasha *or* the language of the gods because it is the language spoken by them.

Sanskrit is the cultural language of the Hindus. Almost all our ancient scriptures – the Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayan, Mahabharat, the Puranas, are all written in Sanskrit. Besides that, Kalidas,Bhavbhuti, Banbhatta and Dandi also wrote their classics in this language. So, it is a language venerated by all Hindus as being the most sacred.

Besides the fact that it was the language used in the scriptures, it was in the ancient times, the one main language spoken all over Bharat. Mr Bopp of the Edinburgh Review, writing at the end of last century said 'It(*Sanskrit)* was the one language spoken and understood all over the world, not just India'.

A brief example to the readers to show how much Sanskrit has influenced the other major languages in the world can be found from the table of numericals given below:-

SANSKRIT	LATIN	GREEK	LITHUANIAN	ENGLISH
EKA	UN	HEN	WEIN	ONE
DVA	DU	DU	DU	TWO
TRI	TRI	TRI	TRI	THREE
CHATUR	QUATUR	TESSAR	KETTUAR	FOUR
PANCH	QUINQUE	PENTE	PENKI	FIVE
SHASH	SEX	HEX	SZESTZI	SIX
SAPTA	SEPTEM	HEPTA	SEPTYNI	SEVEN
ASHTA	OCTO	OKTA	ASZTUNI	EIGHT
NAVA	MOVEM	ENNEA	DEWYNI	NINE
DASA	DECEM	DEKA	KESZIMT	TEN

From this, we can see the depth of Sanskrit influence all over the world.

Even though many people regard Sanskrit as a language not spoken today, almost all Hindus are familiar with it when they chant *shlokas* or perform pujas, which are almost all in Sanskrit. Plus, almost all the rituals conducted are in the same language.

The Bharatiyas look upon Sanskrit as the binding force for the different peoples of the country. It is the only language which every Hindu, whichever place he may be in, considers it to be his own language. Thus Sanskrit is the tool to bring about national integration in Bharat.

Actually, since the past few decades, efforts have been made to regain the lost status of Sanskrit as a spoken

link-language understood by all,instead of just the priests and saints. The first success came when residents in Muttur, a village in Karnataka state, declared their mother tongue as Sanskrit. In this village of about 2,500 people, over 50% speak in Sanskrit as a first-language; most of the balance population can also speak and understand it.

More recently, in 1981, a camp was held in Bangalore where efforts were made to teach people converse in simple Sanskrit. The camp proved a great success and since then innumerable other camps have been held, not just in Bharat but across the globe with the result that upto two million people can now converse fluently in simple Sanskrit. An organisation, Samskrita Bharati is in the forefront of this movement to popularize and revive Sanskrit as a link language. It is well known that Bharat led the world through the medium of Sankrit. Perhaps a time will come when Bharat will again lead the world through the same medium.

One of the most astonishing things, which computer scientists have verified, is that Sanskrit is the most computer friendly language. A NASA scientist, Mr Rick Briggs has said that after he discovered Sanskrit, he was able to get hold of the link between artificial intelligence and the 4,000 rules of Panini's(the leading grammarian of Sanskrit more than 2,500 years ago) Sanskrit grammar that were so scientific and logical as to closely resemble structures used by computer scientists. Panini made Sanskrit precise,concise and complete, so much to the extent that it blends excellently with computers and scientists have acknowledged that Sanskrit is the best language compatible to computer programming.

Therefore, learning the oldest language in the world is not only the key to a priceless heritage; it is also the gateway for a bright future and a means to address the challenges of the 21st century.

20

THE AIRSHIPS OF ANCIENT HINDUS

It may come as a surprise to many that ancient Hindus knew about Aeroplanes, rockets, missiles and other means of airships but this is all true.

Anyone familiar with the Ramayana, Mahabharat and other scriptures will know that all forms of airships are defined in these scriptures.

PUSHPAK was the name of the aeroplane mentioned in the Ramayana. Ravana, the king of Lanka, fought with Kubera and captured this Pushpak Viman. Hanuman, on his entry into Ravana's place, came across the Pushpak parked in air. This would mean that aeroplanes could be stationary without linerar or rotary motion in air.

The Rigveda Suktam (5-41-6), indicates that a chariot can be moved by loading air inside it and rendering the direction favourable; it also makes reference to air driven chariots of two and three storeys. Electrical, horseless, three wheeled chariots have found a mention in the Vedas also. The construction of aeroplanes is discussed is discussed in the 24th section of the Yanthra Sarvaswam. This section has 8 chapters dealing in 160 topics and 500 rules composed in 1,500 shlokas.

Maharishi Bharadwaj says that the Vimana is a special vehicle which can travel freely by itself on land,in water and in the sky just like the bird.

There were eight types of Vimanas:-

1. SAKTHYADAGAMA:- Flies by means of energy extracted from the sky

2. BHOOTHAVAHA:- Works of pancha maha bhoothaas, i.e. the five elements - Earth, water, fire, air and sky.

3. DHOOMAYANA:- Powered by vapour.

4. SIKHODGAMA:- Powered by burning of juices of trees such as sikhi, srikurin

5. AMSUVAHA:- Flies by means of stored solar energy

6. THARAMUKHA:- Flies with energy from ULKHA(meteors) falling on earth

7. MANIVAHA:- Powered by the energy from mined metals such as vijaya, bhadra, etc, as well as certain artificial chemicals.

8. MARUTHSAKHA:- Energised by wind

The qualities of a VAIMANIKA (astronaut) are also discussed by Bharadwaj. There were accordingly 32 principles laid down by shastras for the astronauts.

Some of the most interesting principles and techniques for the success of the astonauts was the GOODHA RAHASYAM, which meant that with the aid of vasa,viyasa and prayasa, the astronaut was able to make the vimana invisible. (in fact, modern science is yet to master this process)

Another technique was APAROKSHA RAHASYAM, which meant that scanning with the rays of ROHINI made it possible for the vaimanika to visually observe other vimanas which came nearer, even if not within sight.

This clearly shows that our ancient forefathers had an extensive knowledge of the airships even in those remote days and to a very high degree, some of which has not even been discovered by modern science as of yet!

22

CHANAKYA-NITI

Chanakya was an epoch-making personality. He was one of the greatest thinkers who appeared about 2,500 years ago. He was the political Guru of Chandragupta Maurya, the founder of the Maurya Dynasty. He guided Chandragupta to throw the Greek invaders out of the country. Chanakya wrote two outstanding books, the **Arthashastra**(under the name of Kautilya) and **Chanakya-niti**.

Chanakya-niti is in fact the great thinker's observation to impart the practical wisdom to the people of his time. But these teachings are so fundamental and rooted so deep in the human pschyology that their relevance is almost ever-lasting. Enshrined in the simple *shlokas,* these are the pearls of the practical common sense.

SANDESH BHARATI continues to present you some of the famous quotes from this brilliant Chanakya-niti

'QUOTES FROM CHANAKYA-NITI'
(AUTHOR: CHANAKYA)

Riches, vitality, life, body – all are fickle. Only Dharma is constant and everlasting.

Truth is my mother, knowledge father, my Dharma is my brother, compassion my friend, peace is my wife and forgiveness my son. These six virtues are my real relations, the rest are all false!

He whose mind is not steady doesn't get happiness either amongst his people or in the loneliness of the jungle. When lonely, he longs for company and when in company, he yearns for loneliness.

If others praise even the virtueless person, he may acquire some status but even if Indra Devta starts praising his own virtues, he will belittle his stature.

Although man reaps as he sows and his wisdom is also controlled by his action, yet the prudent and wisemen always act very thoughtfully, fully weighing the good and the bad consequences.

Like gold is tested by rubbing,cutting,heating and beating, so also man is tested by his sacrifice, moral conduct, innate qualities and his actions

The nectar of satisfaction begetting peace and happiness cannot be available for the people hankering after material riches and physical pleasures.

If one craves for comfort, then he should drop the idea of studying and if one wants to study sincerely, then he should stop caring for comfort. One cannot get comfort and education simultaneously.

A wise father must educate his son in a variety of ways:- in making him learn good manners, develop good character and receive good knowledge because the noble sons bring glory to the family and win admiration of their brethren.

One worthy son is better than a hundred incompetent and useless sons. The moon alone is capable of destroying the darkness which even thousands of stars fail to achieve

Contined in next issues'

OUR EFFORT, YOUR SUPPORT

Hindu Swayamsewak Sangh is a patriotic organization of Bharat devoted to "Man Making and Nation Building". The main object for which the Hindu Swayamsewak Sangh is striving are to unite all the Hindus living in Bharat and abroad, to cultivate patriotic feelings among all Bhartiyas so that they can serve faithfully for the cause and upliftment of our great Bharat Mata and enhance its glory in whatever manner we can, to educate our children about our great culture and heritage of Bharat by running Shakhas whereby we try to cultivate good 'samskar' amoung our children. Especially who are born and brought up abroad and get influenced or carried away with highly materialistic western world. Otherwise there will be a great danger that by the next few generations, our ages old culture will be completely forgotton. We are trying to bring in all the virtues among our young generations so that true swayamsewaks should be admired for their honesty, discipline, courage and sacrifice.

In Hong Kong we have been running shakhas since 1979. Every week we have shakhas for youngsters and elderly swayamsewaks. We also organize Hindu Cultural Orientation Camp every year in which good number of syawamsewaks participated.

Now to increase our activities and services to the society we are going to purchase a place for our Karyalaya (Center), for which we have been planning for quite sometime. The greatest bottleneck is the money and the manpower. Our activities have been limited owing to the acute shortage of funds which had made it difficult for us to buy a karyalaya. Therefore, Hindu Swayamsewak Sangh, Hong Kong earnestly requests all Hindus to participate in carving out this project in the service of Sangh, which is devoted to the welfare of the society.

You are therefore requested to participate generously in this project and make it all success. You may send your contribution to us by sending Cheque/Drafts payable to "HINDU SWAYAMSEWAK SANGH".

Our is a small effort to build Hindu Unity and consolidate our society based on the understanding, love and respect for our cultural heritage and moral values and we seek your co-operation in this sacred task.

THE H.S.S. 99' CAMP REPORT

While the rest of the world was enjoying the Easter holiday's, the Hindu Swayemsevak Sangh (H.S.S.) held it's 17th Annual training camp for all swayemsevaks in the picturesque Sai Kung countryside for 4 days from the 2nd–5th April, 99.

The camp was attended by about 45 swayemsevaks & adhikaries. The Mukhyashikshak of the camp was Haresh Khushi. The annual camp was organized to teach the youth about the great historical and cultural values of our mother land Bharat and also for them to participate in all sorts of Indian sports and various other competitions.

The camp's activities started from 5:30 a.m in the early morning and all swayemsevaks were engaged in morning exercises including yogasan.

The swayemsevaks were divided into 2 teams for all competitions and their captains were Hitesh Hiranandani and Prashant Goel who headed the teams of "Guru Gobind Singh" and "Prithvi Raj Chauhan" respectively.

Intense competitions took place between the teams for 4 days in many games such as "kabadi, ring-o-stick, dog and the bone, sitting and standing kho, tug of war, lathi relay, etc and also in other events such as 'cleanliness of dormitories', discipline, camp geet, debates, etc".

Both teams were put into 2 separate dormitories so that they could learn to work as a team and think for themselves.

This was also one camp where 1 *new record* was made:

The record was in the age category by the participation of the youngest swayemsevak Karan Shah who was only 6 years old. "the camp was nice and fun," he said, short and sweet words from the smallest swayemsevak.

Also another uniqueness of this camp was that it was attended by about another 40 parents & friends on Sunday 4th April which brought the figure to about 85 people who participated on that day's camp events.

The parents and well wishers who attented the camp on Sunday were in for a treat as the guest speaker Shri K.P. Daswani ji gave a momentous speech which carried the message that "the highest path to success was possible only by the cultivation of good thoughts in one's mind" which was followed by a beautiful patriotic song "Manushya Tu Bada Mahan Hai" sung by Shri J.P.Goel ji (the Sah-Sanghchalak of HSS, Hong Kong). The programme was followed by the camp geet sung by the swayemsevaks and a lovely heart-warming story told by Shri G.T.Gul ji (the Sanghchalak of HSS Hong Kong). However the highlight of the day was a play performed by the swayemsevaks which was taken from the excerpts of the Mahabharata and the loud and continous applause by the audience proved the great success that the play was.

Tea-break followed and then all the action was continued onto the field where the guests watched the swayemsevaks in full action during the relay and kho-kho games. Such was the ferocity and excitement that all the guests decided to join in the fun and took part in various games along with the swayemsevaks.

On 5th april the last day, all swayemsevaks were tested in various physical activities including lathi and field commands. Then each one of them also had to take a written test on the subjects that were taught to them during the camp which included krishna, ancient and medieval indian history and geography. After the tests, the bidai programme (farewell) took place in which both the team games and tests results were announced and it was the "Guru Gobind Singh" team who won in the overall competions.

In the best sportsman's category the prize was given to Dinesh Hiranandani who described the camp atmosphere as good and also the games being at a very competitive level.

In the up-coming swayemsevak's category the award went to Vaibhav Dhaddha who along with the camp activities had all compliments for the good vegetarian food served throughout the camp.

Finally the Best Swayemsevak award went to "Sudeep Surana" who was active in not only all of the camp activities but also in regular shakhas too. he also shone in his ability to play the part of "Yudhistra" in the play. Sudeep projected his thoughts on the camp, "it was great and we learned a lot about India" .

During the vidai programme, all the swayemsevaks spoke on how much they enjoyed in the camp and how much they were looking forward to another camp in the near future. They also expressed how this camp and regular shakhas were bringing into them a sense of Hindu unity and pride in our Bharat Mata.

STORY TIME

The Foolish Lion and the Clever Rabbit

Once upon a time there lived a ferocious lion in the forest. It was a greedy lion and started killing animals in the forest indiscriminately. Seeing this, the animals gathered and decided to approach the lion with the offer of one animal of each species volunteering itself to be eaten by the lion everyday. So every day it was the turn of one of the animals and in the end came the rabbits' turn. The rabbits chose a old rabbit among them. The rabbit was wise and old. It took its own sweet time to go to the Lion. The Lion was getting impatient on not seeing any animal come by and swore to kill all animals the next day.

The rabbit then strode along to the Lion by sunset. The Lion was angry at him. But the wise rabbit was calm and slowly told the Lion that it was not his fault. He told the Lion that a group of rabbits were coming to him for the day when on the way, an angry Lion attacked them all and ate all rabbits but himself. Somehow he escaped to reach safely, the rabbit said. He said that the other Lion was challenging the supremacy of his Lordship the Lion. The Lion was naturally very enraged and asked to be taken to the location of the other Lion.

The wise rabbit agreed and led the Lion towards a deep well filled with water. Then he showed the Lion his reflection in the water of the well. The Lion was furious and started growling and naturally its image in the water, the other Lion, was also equally angry. Then the Lion jumped into the water at the other Lion to attack it, and so lost its life in the well. Thus the wise rabbit saved the forest and its inhabitants from the proud Lion.

MORAL: Wit is superior to brute force.

CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE

IF A CHILD LIVES WITH CRITICISM
HE LEARNS TO CONDEMN

IF A CHILD LIVES WITH HOSTILITY
HE LEARNS TO FIGHT

IF A CHILD LIVES WITH RIDICULE
HE LEARNS TO BE SHY

IF A CHILD LIVES WITH SHAME
HE LEARNS TO FEEL GUILTY

IF A CHILD LIVES WITH TOLERANCE
HE LEARNS TO BE PATIENT

IF A CHILD LIVES WITH ENCOURAGEMENT
HE LEARNS CONFIDENCE

IF A CHILD LIVES WITH PRAISE
HE LEARNS TO APPRECIATE

IF A CHILD LIVES WITH FAIRNESS
HE LEARNS JUSTICE

IF A CHILD LIVES WITH SECURITY
HE LEARNS TO HAVE FAITH

IF A CHILD LIVES WITH ACCEPTANCE AND FRIENDSHIP
HE LEARNS TO FIND LOVE IN THE WORLD

SANDESH BHARATI

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