

Dharma Beej

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DHARMAVIJAY

The Hindu society has understood, practiced, and nurtured the Eternal Dharma so much so that the name Sanatana Dharma became synonymous with Hindu Dharma. For Hindus, Bhagavaan (God) is everywhere and also in everything. So all names and forms belong to Bhagavaan alone, thus the Almighty can be worshipped in any form of our liking! So we revere all who invoke Bhagavana in any way! Thus practically God invoked in the world by any name or in any form is 'Hindu' God. However, Devis/ Devatas that have been worshipped by Hindus for thousands of years in the land of Bharat are generally considered as Hindu Murtis (Deities.) For coming few issues the details of what is a Murti (Deity) and in what other parts of the world they are worshipped will be discussed.



Japanese Saraswati - Benzaiten

Japan : The Hindu deities in Japan: Apart from the widely known fact that Buddhism in Japan has its origin in India, not many probably know that so many Hindu deities surround the life of a Japanese.

- Many temples across Japan are full of Hindu deities. Japanese couples who desire to have a beautiful daughter pray to goddess 'Saraswati' even to this day. Saraswati is also believed as the patroness of writers and painters.
- In ancient times, Japanese generals prayed to Saraswati to be victorious in war. Saraswati is also worshipped as the 'goddesses of kitchen'. Many traditional Japanese plays are dedicated to the Indian deity.
- Lord Ganesha in Japan symbolises the joy of life that arises from the power rooted in the virtues of wisdom and compassion.
- Young Japanese worship Ganesha to win in love whereas the old worship the deity to get success in business.
- There are roughly 100 temples dedicated to Ganesha in Japan
- Sanskrit language has influenced traditional Japanese calligraphy. Ramayana has influenced the traditional Japanese dance forms of 'Bugaku' and 'Gigaku'.

From a lecture titled 'Hindu Gods and Goddesses rooted to Japan' given by Sri Lokesh Chandra, the Director of International Academy of Indian Culture and attended by the Japanese Ambassador to India Yasukuni Enoki and his wife during the yearlong celebrations in 2007 as Japan-India Friendship Year.



Traditional Japanese dance form of 'Bugaku' influenced by Ramayana

Sister Nivedita : Margaret Noble was the eminent educationist in London at the end of 19th century. She was born in a devout Christian family. She became disillusioned with Church when she found that the different denominations were fighting and converting each other. Still she continued to work through Church for the poor mine laborers. She was shocked once when she was told by the Father of the Church she was working in that the benefits should not go to those children who were not belonging to their Church. Her search for ultimate Truth also made her restless when she was told that Christ is the only True God. She revered Christ but she could not digest that Christ or God is limited to only one name. How the infinite God is realized going beyond all names and forms and yet not losing the reverence for all names and forms of God, she wondered. It was at this stage that she happened to listen to Swami Vivekananda. She found there was consistency with the Truth and as well unbounded affection for all in his message.



Gradually, Margaret Noble the seeker of the Truth, the well-read and well-known educationist, the passionate lover of service to the poor was convinced that her destiny was in India. She came to India on 28 January 1998. She was given the diksha by Swami Vivekananda in March and was named as Nivedita – the dedicated. She knew that if a Hindu becomes a Christian he/she would not be allowed to pray anyone else that Jesus. She was amazed at the inclusive approach of Hindu Dharma. Though she became Hindu she was not barred by anyone to not to go to Church. She felt only those people who have realized what God is could be so inclusive and encompassing. Kali became her chosen deity. She could feel the deep spiritual mystic of Kali.

The first book she wrote was 'Kali: the Mother'. She started a school for Indian women; rendered service at the times of plague, famine and floods; Inspired and helped many like Subramaniam Bharati, Jagadishchandra Bose; fought for the freedom of India; wrote many books and articles explaining the grandeur of India and her culture; loved India and her people and fought against any injustice done to them. That is why people of India called her Sister Nivedita and Ravindranath Tagore called her Lokamata. She had no support from any organization back in London nor did she have any financial security.

What a great inherent strength Hindu Dharma must have had that though British this great and accomplished lady came to India which was ruled by British, she became Hindu and worked for India.



Swami Vivekananda with some of his Western disciples including Sister Nivedita (Margaret Noble).

Dharmakatha

An old farmer lived on a farm in the mountains with his young grandson. Each morning Dadaji was up early sitting at the kitchen table reading his Bhagavat Geeta. His grandson wanted to be just like him and tried to imitate him in every way he could. One day the grandson asked, "Grandpa! I try to read the Bhagavat Geeta just like you but I do not understand it and what I do understand I forget as soon as I close the book. What good does reading the Bhagavat Geeta do?"

Dadaji quietly turned from putting coal in the stove and replied, "Take this coal basket down to the river and bring me back a basket of water."

The boy did as told but all the water leaked out before he got back to the house. The grandfather laughed and said, "You'll have to move a little faster next time," and sent him back to the river with the basket to try again.

This time the boy ran faster, but again the basket was empty before he returned home. Out of breath, he told his grandfather that it was impossible to carry water in a basket, and he went to get a bucket instead.

The old man said, "I don't want a bucket of water; I want a basket of water."

You're just not trying hard enough," and he went out the door to watch the boy try again.

At this point, the boy knew it was impossible, but he wanted to show his grandfather that even if he ran as fast as he could, the water would leak out before he got back to the house.

The boy again dipped the basket into river and ran hard, but when he reached his grandfather the basket was again empty. Out of breath, he said, "See Grandpa, it is useless!"

"So you think it is useless?" The old man said, "Look at the basket." The boy looked at the basket and for the first time realized that the basket was different. It was transformed from a dirty old coal basket and was now clean, inside and out.

"Son, that's what happens when you read the Bhagavat Geeta. You might not understand or remember everything, but when you read it, there will be change in you, inside and out. That is the work of Krishna in our lives."

Regular reading of our scriptures with full concentration will purify the mind and the purified mind has full concentration to succeed in life and also to realize God.



Agnishikha

India as Jnanabhoomi

India is mentioned in the books of all the ancient countries as a land of wealth and wisdom. India had the first Universities of the world. The Universities located at various places had more than 60 subjects and more than 10,000 resident students. Many of the universities were burnt during Muslim invasions but still quite few of them survived. The colleges for higher education were well spread all over the country. More than that India had a universal primary education till 1813.

But we are under the wrong impression that the education in India was in only in the hands of Brahmin; the other castes were barred from getting education; it is the British and foreign Christian missionaries combine who educated the masses of India. But actually the truth is otherwise. Mahatma Gandhi told in London in 1931 that the beautiful tree of education was cut down by the British and India became illiterate. That time he was challenged by Philip Hartog to prove his statement or to apologize for such charge. Gandhiji said that he would prove it. He did not get time. But his follower Sri Dharampal went through British archives, came upon the educational survey that was conducted by British in 1922 but which was not made public by them as they were bent upon destroying the Indian system of education and this is how they did it.

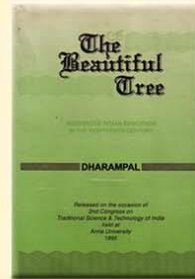
By 1813 Charter Act of East India Company all villages were made to remit the revenue meant for schools to the government. Thus the financial support of the schools was withdrawn. When Indians agitated as the schools were getting down closed, British called for educational Survey in 1822. It was conducted over three years in various presidencies.



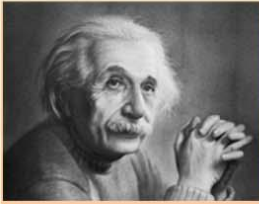
Sri Dharampal

As per the educational survey conducted by British -

- 36% of the children were going to schools and equal numbers were also getting education at homes of rich persons or teachers as the schools had closed down. Thus the % of school going children stood at 72%. (When British left India the % was 17)
- No village was without a school
- The medium of instruction was vernaculars
- The British collectors praised the competence the children acquired in reading, writing and computation skill at the end of the primary education.
- They also were wonderstruck at the dedication, competence and high regard the teachers had in the society
- Not just the Brahmins, but, children of all castes were given elementary education. Students from all the castes and communities were going to schools. The British statistics for the survey in 1823-25 show that the percentage of Brahmin students in village schools ranged between 13% to 23% and the non-Brahmins 70% to 84% and there was a school for every 400 people.
- Even teachers were from all the communities. In the year 1823, the number of Brahmin teachers ranged from 7% to 48% and the non-Brahmin teachers 18% to 78%. (page 73 'The Beautiful Tree' – Dharampal The complete works of Dharampal and the above report published in the book 'Beautiful Tree' is available on internet)



In short, in spite of the financial starvation of 10 years there still was a universal primary education. The education was for all communities and it was in mother tongue. But British deliberately and systematically destroyed the Indian system of Education. How they did it and what should we do to remedy it we shall see in the next issue of Dharmabeej.

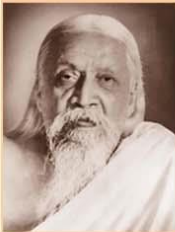


"When I read the Bhagavad-Gita and reflect about how God created this universe everything else seems so superfluous."

- Albert Einstein

"I owed a magnificent day to the Bhagavad-gita. It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson



"The Bhagavad-Gita is a true scripture of the human race a living creation rather than a book, with a new message for every age and a new meaning for every civilization."

- Sri Aurobindo

Participate and win the prizes!

Dear Readers

Please tell us in two sentences your opinion about this second issue of *Dharma Beej*. You can send it along with your photo to the following address. The best three responses would be published and also would be rewarded suitably.

The address:

The winners on the first issue

"First of all I want to thank all the persons individual involved in publishing such a good news letter. While going through the news letter **Dharma Beej**, I came to know the life history of Swami Vivekananda from his birth till his mahasamadhi, his noble deeds, his love for his nation and his peoples. Many usual things happen around us but we use to ignore that. Through **Dharma Beej** I came to know what does real worship means and who will God love most? What is the reality behind worshipping stone or woods? Here I also want to describe many important things that I have noticed while going through the phrases. In this publication, I have noticed some sentences which I love the most, Swamiji believes that every individual in universe is interconnected, interrelated and interdependent with each other, and the soul is deathless and full of all power and dignity and goal of life is to manifest the dignity, divinity within. According to Swamiji the real worshipping of God can be done by worshipping the poor, the weak and the diseased one. He who serves and helps the people without considering his wealth, caste, creed or race only will be blessed by God. I was inspired while reading it. Hope you will be carrying this noble work in future with new ideas."



Kumar Duyu Taiyang
Itanagar,
Arunachal Pradesh



"I have become confident enough that I will answer myself and masses about the life giving principle of Hindu dharma. I admire Malhotra's Dharma Beej Endowment's quarterly News Letter **Dharma Beej**."

Akal Bayor,
Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.