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Published by Anonymous on Aug. 02, 1998

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THE CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND Environment in Delhi reports that traditional conservation methods have long met people's water needs in India, but "modern" solutions are floundering. Each part of India used to have its own storage method in line with regional topography and local needs. Disruption of the ancient water works began when the British laid roads blocking established waterways.

THE GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU announced a 30% pay hike for the state's 50,000 temple employees. Depending upon the temple income, monthly salaries will range from a low of ^{us} \$25.50 to a high of \$247.50. Traditional oduvars (singers) and nagasvaram (horn) players will be hired for 120 temples, and \$8,000 was earmarked to create a Saiva Agama and Vaishnava Divya Prabhandam training center. The Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments minister, Mr. Tamizhkudimagan, announced more than \$30,000 worth of properties had been returned to their temple owners.

ANYONE YOU RECOGNIZE in the top photo?
(Please see hard copy) Probably not, for this is the famous "face on Mars" photographed by the Viking I orbiter in 1976. It's been the darling of

UFO enthusiasts ever since, as evidence that advanced life once existed on Mars. NASA agreed to take a second look and in April had the newly arrived Mars Global Surveyor take a new photo (bottom). The resolution is much higher, the lighting different, and it doesn't look much like a face anymore. UFOers are sure it's another NASA coverup.

MANY OF THE DALAI LAMA'S WESTERN devotees have joined with some Tibetan Buddhists who are protesting the high lama's ban of the worship of Dorje Shugden, a popular Deity of Tibetan Buddhism. A large group of devotees demonstrated outside a meeting he attended in New York recently, and presented a petition bearing 15,000 signatures objecting to the ban. The Dalai Lama stopped the worship in 1976 after an oracle told him the Deity was a malevolent spirit harmful to the leader's well-being. The protesters consider it an issue of freedom of religion, even though, as the spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism, the Dalai Lama has the authority to make such a decision.

PIERCE THAT NOSE and you could be under arrest, young lady! Especially if you live in New York or California, where laws are being considered or in effect making it a crime to pierce any part of a minor's body (except the ears) without parental consent. The possibility of transmitting disease is the reason given for the law--even though there have been no cases of such transmission by body piercing, and even though ears pose the same threat. Legislators appear to be more concerned with stopping the anti-establishment rage of body piercing--nose, lips, tongues, navels, etc--that has gripped Western youth.

NEW YORKERS LOVED THE BHARATA Natyam and Flamenco duet dance performance of Rajika Puri and La Conja held early this year at the famed Guggenheim Museum. Flamenco is the dance of the Gypsies, or Roma people, who left India a thousand years ago and are now spread all over the world. The performance--with sitar, guitar, violin and tabla--clearly showcased the continued similarities in dance and music the two cultures share.

THE ALL-AFRICA HINDU CONFERENCE is planned for August 7 to 9 in Nairobi, Kenya, to assess the problems faced by Hindus in Africa and discuss solutions. The Hindu Council of Kenya and its 127-member institutions are organizing the event. Contact HCK, P.O. Box 44831, Nairobi, Kenya.

WANT TO GET YOUNG AGAIN? Get yoga! So thousands of aging Americans are discovering. An April 28 article in the Washington Post reports, "A growing number of older adults credit yoga with helping them stay healthy as they age." One yoga-practicing grandmother was brought to her grandson's kindergarten "show and tell" session because classmates did not believe she could do a headstand. Yoga is credited with reversing the effects of the American sedentary life-style on the aged, improving flexibility, vigor and general health.

BIOLOGY OF SPIRITUALITY is the latest field for medical research. Scientists are attempting to correlate religious experience with specific activity in the brain. In one experiment, they injected Buddhist monks with a faintly radioactive tracer

chemical that quickly infuses into the brain cells, allowing changes in activity to be detected. During prolonged meditation, specific changes were detected in the brain section responsible for generating a sense of three-dimensional orientation in space--perhaps, the experimenters thought, corresponding to an experience of going beyond time and space. The more cynical researchers hope to reduce all religious experience to chemical reactions in the brain. Others aren't prepared to say that will ever happen.

"THE CURE CAN KILL YOU" we know, but until recently we didn't quite understand just how frequently. A new study by the University of Toronto published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found bad reactions to prescription drugs to be the fourth leading cause of death in the US, after heart disease, cancer and strokes. That's 106,000 people a year--two-and-a-half times than from AIDS. And this is from approved drugs, professionally administered. Another two million suffered serious side effects. Unexpected interactions when patients are given several drugs at once is a

major killer.

SKANDA-MURUGAN Conference is planned for December 28 to 30, 1998, in Chennai, India. Organized by the Institute of Asian Studies, the meeting is intended to bring together scholars with an interest in the popular God. Visit the web site at xlweb.com/heritage/murukan. The non-wired may write: IAS, Chemmancheri, Sholinganallur, Chennai 600 119, India.