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Letters

Waxing Trend. Waning Traditions

The article about Kerala and the joint families ("Joint families, a Venerable Tradition in Jeopardy," special report, January '97) made me feel sorry, and I felt anguish for the traditions that are disappearing. Many beautiful traditions have vanished, and some are in the process. Many of the traditions are being heckled by the younger generation as unnecessary fuss or superstition. The Europeans destroyed beautiful cultures in the world wherever they went. They thought, even honestly believed, that they were doing a great service to the barbarians by civilizing them. The worst thing the Europeans brought to India is the consumer culture--making people want more and more, giving them worthless paper money, thus raising the rate of inflation. Consumer culture has brought so much discontent to India. British civilization caused Indians to become greedy. They have become black marketers. India is a lovely country which needs simple clothes. The climate is conducive to wearing cottons. People were content with what they possessed in those days. But now, Indians want to buy suits from Hong Kong, get gadgets from Japan, etc. We are breeding an elite, entertainment-loving, lawless generation. I hope and pray that this trend will change in the next fifty years.

Anandhi Ramachandran, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

Shhh...

My God, what a masterpiece Hinduism Today has become. My vigil period today was "Silence is Golden." I never want to say another word! Actually, I am going to begin a regular silence sadhana on Mondays until sunset. I became painfully aware that I need to be more direct in my appreciation for your wonderful magazine, and I will.

Deva Seyon, Kauai, Hawaii, USA deva@aloha.net

Silence is Golden... (insight, June '97) is a gem of an article! It confirms my beliefs, gives invaluable suggestions, and insightfully answers many questions. I sincerely hope that the readers will use the enlightening information in this article to better their lives.

Irene Rudra, Marion, Indiana, USA

Uncloneable Mind

I must say that of all the publications I had read, Hinduism Today dealt with the issue of cloning best (Playing God?, medical ethics, June '97). Maybe this is because cloning does not challenge the very existence of Hindu religion as it does some others. I would like to pose a question to all the religious leaders of this faith. Is not the birth of Kauravas an example of cloning? The "experience" at that time, when Mahabharata was written, appears to be that cloning only produces physically identical people and not mentally identical. Seen in that light, many arguments against cloning will just disappear.

Nandakumar Paruvakat, Green Bay, Wisconsin, USA

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Jai Viswanathan!

I was deeply touched by the letter of 18-year-old student from

South Africa, Mr. Vivekananda Moodley, who cannot afford to subscribe to your magazine (Something is Missing, letters, June '97). We Hindus should help students like him. I know that you have no way of reducing your subscription price; almost everything in the world, including the printing, ink and paper, has gone up. At the same time, I hate to see an Indian student who is really interested in Hinduism complaining that he cannot afford your wonderful, thought-provoking magazine. I wish to pay for one-year subscription for Mr. Moodley.

Ed Viswanathan, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

Yoga Is Always an Aid

I would like to respond to the letter "The Yogic Life" (letters, May '97). Some, definitely not all, yoga classes in the West may appear to be taught as physical exercise sessions. This is an approach that can encourage many Westerners to take up yoga, as physical exercise is popular in the West.

The truth that yoga is a spiritual discipline is inherent in every asana. The student may think he or she is only exercising the body, but in reality one is expanding one's awareness of self. Firstly, by becoming more aware of the physical body, then comes an awareness of the flow of subtle energy, which follows naturally and instinctively. These cannot really be taught to one by another. The practice of yoga asanas, whatever approach is taken, will always bring benefits both of physical fitness, health and spiritual growth.

Susan James, Catford, London, United Kingdom

Time to Guard

Malaysia's official religion is Islam, but Muslim's missionaries never go to houses converting and preaching to people unless you are a Muslim or you ask for it. Muslims are well protected

by the Muslim laws from the Christian missionary group which broke up many families in the name of religious freedom provided in the federal constitution of Malaysia. Unfortunately, there is no law for Hindus to be protected from Christian missionary groups which are going from house to house or in the pretext of giving free tuition, medical, food and money. It is high time for the Malaysian Consultative Council of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Sikhism to be reorganized or break away to protect Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs from this evil missionary program.

Palpanathan Poduval, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

Will Anyone Help?

In a recent visit to Nepal, a Nepali Christian told me that one cannot separate the Hindu religion from the Nepali culture, so Hinduism must be abandoned to escape from the evils of the caste system. This sounds like a misinterpretation of the basic caste system concept. It is indicative, though, of the propaganda some Christians are spreading in Nepal. We would like to see some Hindu aid go towards scholarships to counter this active effort to undermine the religious and cultural traditions of the country. There are certainly many Hindu organizations in Nepal, but few can match the funds of the much wealthier European and American Christian missionary organizations. If I were to get in touch with Hindu organizations in Nepal, would there be any possibility of providing scholarships to poor Nepali students?

Layton Montgomery, Ukraine

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Corrections

* In our December 1996 issue we erroneously reported a "coup

attempt" against the government of Trinidad in August, 1996. There was no such attempt. Our Trinidad correspondent, Parasaram Ramoutar, was not responsible for this mistake.

* The publisher's address of the children's book *The Adventure of Yoga* was incorrect (*Yoga for Kids*, culture, May '97). Please direct all the inquires to Don & Moo Briddell, 8002-A Dollyhyde Road, Mt. Airy, MD 21771-9408.

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