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Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः ॐ May Everybody Be Happy

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NEWS LETTER

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Dear Friends,

I wish you all a very happy, peaceful and prosperous New Year.

This past year has not been a very good year for the whole humanity in many respects. Terrorism has continued to torment the world. Multiple sites in Mumbai, India's biggest city and its financial capital were attacked with bombs and gunfire in a coordinated terror attack beginning on November 26, 2008. The attacks killed 179 people, including at least 22 foreigners and over 300 people were injured. This is not the first time such an attack has been carried out in India. Hundreds of innocent men, women and children are being killed for no apparent reason in the name of religion. This is not right. No religion can approve of killing of innocent people. We condemn such acts of violence. It must stop. Religious leaders of all faiths must raise their voices against violence in the name of religion.

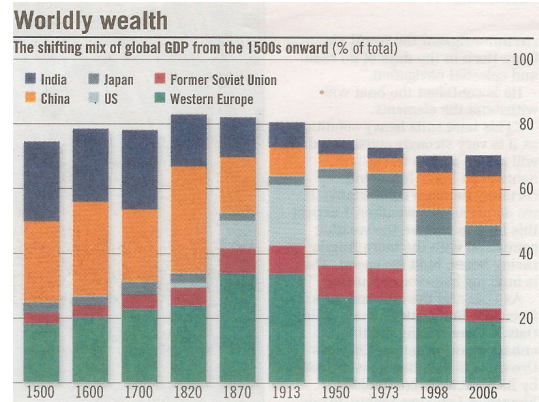
The whole world is in the grip of two other global problems: the worst global financial crisis of the century and the global warming. These issues are affecting the whole of humanity. Let us be careful not only to protect ourselves but try to help others to face the situation in the best manner we can.

In this issue you will find a brief report on the presentation by Dr Raj Maheshwari on "Organ and Tissue Donation" at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. You will also find some articles on the past and present glories of India, as you can see on the graphic table opposite, Indian economy was dominating up until the eighteenth century. Also there is an article on India's cultural influence on south East Asia. At the same time there is article on India becoming the fourth country to land its flag on the moon.

We feel proud of our ancestral heritage. Let us do our best to always maintain the high standards of behaviour.

With my best wishes,

Dr. A. Balasubramaniam
Chairman.



Source: OECD, IMF, Morgan Stanley

India plants its flag on the Moon

November 15, 2008: At 8:34 p.m. Indian time Friday night, India became the fourth country to land its flag on the Moon. The unmanned lunar orbiter Chandrayaan-1 ejected its Moon Impact Probe, which hurtled across the surface of the Moon at 1.5 kilometers per second (3,000 miles per hour), and successfully crash landed near the Moon's south pole.

Chandrayaan-1 (meaning "moon craft" in Sanskrit) reached its target lunar orbit on Wednesday. The orbiter will remain in a circular orbit 102 kilometres above the Moon's surface for two years. Its instruments will be gradually commissioned over the next few days. With this landing, India became both the fourth country to place a flag on the Moon and

the fifth group to send a spacecraft to the Moon.

Organ and Tissue Donation

The following is the gist of the presentation made by Dr Raj Maheshwari to represent the Hindu religious view on this topic at the seminar held on 20 Nov 2008 at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney.

Hinduism does not prohibit its followers from doing any form of charity, including the donation of one's body parts and tissues. The Hindu understanding of organ donation requires first an understanding of the four main tenets of the Hindu religion that may have direct relevance for organ and tissue donation, namely: 1 - Soul and reincarnation, 2 - *Karma*, 3 - *Dharma*, and 4 - *Moksha*

The soul, unlike the body, is eternal, while the physical body is considered as a mere carrier that keeps changing with each cycle of life and death. Death is a part of the living because the soul (the eternal self) never dies, so says Shri Krishna in Bhagavad Gita.

The laws of *Karma* defines good and bad actions, which is determined by the principles of *Dharma*. *Dharma*, or virtuous living, is the cosmic order translated into a social structure with prescribed duties and expectations. Every Hindu is obliged to live a life of *dharma*.

The three *dharmic* principles that concern us are: compassion, charity - to do whatever possible to eradicate sorrow of others, and *Daan* - the act of selfless giving.

There can hardly be any more selfless act than to donate one's organs to others to carry on helping even after death. Thus organ donation can be considered as a virtuous or *dharmic* act.

Moksha refers to the liberation of the *atman* (the eternal self or soul) from the continuous cycle of life and death. Follow the righteous path of virtuous living, doing good *karma* according to the *dharmic* principles.

Hence organ and tissue donation is the highest form of charity and selfless giving, thus a good *karma* that supports in the aim of achieving *moksha* in long run.

There is an opposing argument - In Hinduism the dead are respected and gracefully mourned, and the body must be respected, cleansed before escorting it for cremation fairly soon after death. In these cases, opposition to donation is not so much to do with the *Karmic* aspect; it is only because there is not much time for families to think when death comes unexpected.

There is another minority argument, which says that if someone donates an organ as intrinsic to the body as a heart, the principle of *karma* dictates that the recipient will have to return the favour in the donor's next life - which means the donor will have to have a next life. Hindus hope to be liberated from the cycle of rebirth, so this would be a disadvantage. However, most Hindus would view this argument as selfish.

Therefore the Hindus must be educated about donation in advance. There is nothing in the Hindu religion indicating that parts of humans, dead or alive, cannot be used to alleviate the suffering of other humans.

Yale University Announces a US\$75M India Initiative

November 17,2008: The renowned Yale University launched an India initiative with a corpus of \$ 75 million to increase its academic ties with the country.

"The initiative will create new faculty positions on India; specific courses and new curricula across arts, culture, religion and science," Yale University President Richard C Levin said. Yale plans to triple the number of Indian professors to about 30.

A summary from Yale's President follows:

"As many of you already know, Yale University's historical connections to India are among the oldest of any Western university, dating back more than three centuries. It was

at Yale in the late 1840s that Sanskrit was first taught in the Western hemisphere and that we have been continuously teaching Indian languages ever since. Today, a student at Yale can study not only Sanskrit, but also Hindi and Tamil.

“The rise of India since the 1990s into a nation of global economic and geo-political consequence compels Yale to provide a deep and rich curriculum covering all aspects of Indian civilization - its languages and literatures, religions, and history, as well as its politics, economics, and society. We also need to engage with the problems that confront contemporary India: equitable and sustainable economic development and public health.

“Today, Yale commits itself to the goal that India will have a permanent and prominent place in the teaching, scholarship, and the life of the institution, strengthening the relationship between the world’s two largest democracies.”

Tips for an Exceptional, and Powerful Life!

- Take a 10-30 minute walk every day. Smile while you walk. It is the ultimate antidepressant.
- Sit in silence for at least ten minutes each day. Buy a lock if you have to.
- Always pray and make time to exercise.
- Spend more time with people over the age of 70 and under the age of 6.
- Eat more foods that grow on trees and plants and eat less foods that are manufactured in Plants.
- Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a layman and dinner like a beggar.
- Drink green tea and plenty of water. Eat broccoli, almonds and walnuts.
- Try to make at least 3 people smile each day.
- Clear the clutter from your house, car, desk and let new and flowing energy into your life.
- Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful or joyful.
- Don't waste your precious energy on gossip, issues of the past, negative thoughts or things you cannot control. Instead, Invest your energy in the positive present moment.
- Realize that life is a school and you are here to learn. Problems are simply part of the curriculum. They appear and fade away but the lessons you learn will last a lifetime.
- Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
- Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
- Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.

- You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.
- Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.
- Don't compare your life to others'. You have no Idea what their journey has been.
- Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need. God provides, remember!
- No one is in charge of your happiness except you.
- Frame every so-called disaster with these Words: 'In five years, will this matter?'
- Forgive everyone for everything.
- What other people think of you is none of your Business.
- Time heals almost everything. Give time, time!
- However good or bad a situation is, it will Change.
- Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends will. Stay in touch with them.
- The best is yet to come.
- No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.
- Do the right thing!
- Call your family often.
- Each night before you go to bed complete the Following statements: 'I am thankful for _____.' Today I accomplished _____.
- Remember that you are too blessed to be stressed.
- Enjoy the ride. Remember that this is not Disney World and you certainly don't want a fast Pass. You only have one ride through life so make the most of it and enjoy the ride.

LIVE, LOVE, LAUGH. LIFE'S a gift. that's why it's called PRESENT ... UNWRAP IT!

Monica

"From Persia to the Chinese Sea, from the icy regions of Siberia to the islands of Java and Borneo, from Oceania to Socotra, India has propagated her beliefs, her tales and her civilization. She has left indelible imprints on one-fourth of the human race in the course of a long succession of centuries. She has the right to reclaim in universal history the rank that ignorance has refused her for a long time and to hold her place amongst the great nations summarizing and symbolizing the spirit of Humanity." - Sylvain Levi, French Scholar (1863-1935)

Suvarnabhumi - Land of Gold

Only since World War II has the term Southeast Asia been used to describe the area to the east of India and to the south of China, which includes the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, the Malay Archipelago and the Philippines, roughly forming a circle from Burma through Indonesia to Vietnam. Before the term Southeast Asia became common usage, the region was often described as *Further or Greater India*, and it was common to describe the Indonesian region or Malay Archipelago as the East Indies. The reason may be found in the fact that, prior to Western dominance, Southeast Asia was closely allied to India culturally and commercially. The history of Indian expansion covers a period of more than fifteen hundred years

This region was broadly referred to by ancient Indians as Suvarnabhumi (the Land of Gold) or Suvarnadvipa (the Island of Gold), although scholars dispute its exact definition. Sometimes the term is interpreted to mean only Indonesia or Sumatra. Arab writers such as Al Biruni testify that Indians called the whole Southeast region Suvarndib (Suvarnadvipa). Hellenistic geographers knew the area as the Golden Gheronese. The Chinese called it Kin-Lin; Kin means gold. During the last two thousand years, this region has come under the influence of practically all the major civilizations of the world: Indian, Chinese, Islamic, and Western. Of these, Indian culture appears to have blended best with the indigenous culture.

The name Java comes from the Sanskrit Jawadwip, which means a (dvip) island (yawa) shaped like a barley corn. The Vedic Indians must have charted Java, Yawadwip, thousands of years ago because Yawadwip is mentioned in India's earliest epic, the Ramayana. The Ramayana reveals some knowledge of the eastern regions beyond seas; for instance Sugriva dispatched his men to Yavadvipa, the island of Java, in search of Sita. It speaks of Burma as the land of silver mines. The Agni Purana, along with many other Puranas, calls India proper as Jambudvipa as distinguished from Dvipantara or India of the islands or overseas India. Towards the end of the fifth century, Aryabhatta, the Indian astronomer, wrote that when the sun rose in Ceylon it was midday in Yavakoti (Java) and midnight in the Roman land. In the Surya Siddhanta reference is also made to the Nagari Yavakoti with golden walls and gates. Seldom has the world seen such a protracted and pervasive cultural diffusion. It stands a monument to the vitality

and magnetism of Indian civilisation.

Indianization of Asia

Indianization of Asia was entirely peaceful, never resorting to physical force or coercion to subvert local cultures or identities, or to engage in economic or political exploitation of the host cultures and societies. Its worldviews were based on compassion and mutual exchange, and not on the principle of conquest and domination

The unique feature of India's contacts and relationship with other countries and peoples of the world is that the cultural expansion was never confused with colonial domination and commercial dynamism far less economic exploitation. That culture can advance without political motives, that trade can proceed without imperialist designs, settlements can take place without colonial excesses and that literature, religion and language can be transported without xenophobia, jingoism and race complexes are amply evidenced from the history of India's contact with her neighbors... Thus although a considerable part of central and south-eastern Asia became flourishing centers of Indian culture, they were seldom subjects to the regime of any Indian king or conquerors and hardly witnessed the horrors and havocs of any Indian military campaign. They were perfectly free, politically and economically and their people representing an integration of Indian and indigenous elements had no links with any Indian state and looked upon India as a holy land rather than a motherland - a land of pilgrimage and not an area of jurisdiction.



(Source: **Greater India** - By Arun Bhattacharjee)

"The south-eastern region of Asia both mainland and Archipelago - owed its civilization almost entirely to India. In Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Cambodia, Champa, and Java, religion, art, the alphabet, literature, as well as whatever science and political organization existed, were the direct gift of Hindus, whether Brahmin or Buddhists, and much the same may be said of Tibet, whence the wilder Mongols took as much Indian civilization as they could stomach."

- **Sir Charles Norton Edgcumbe Eliot** (1862-1931)