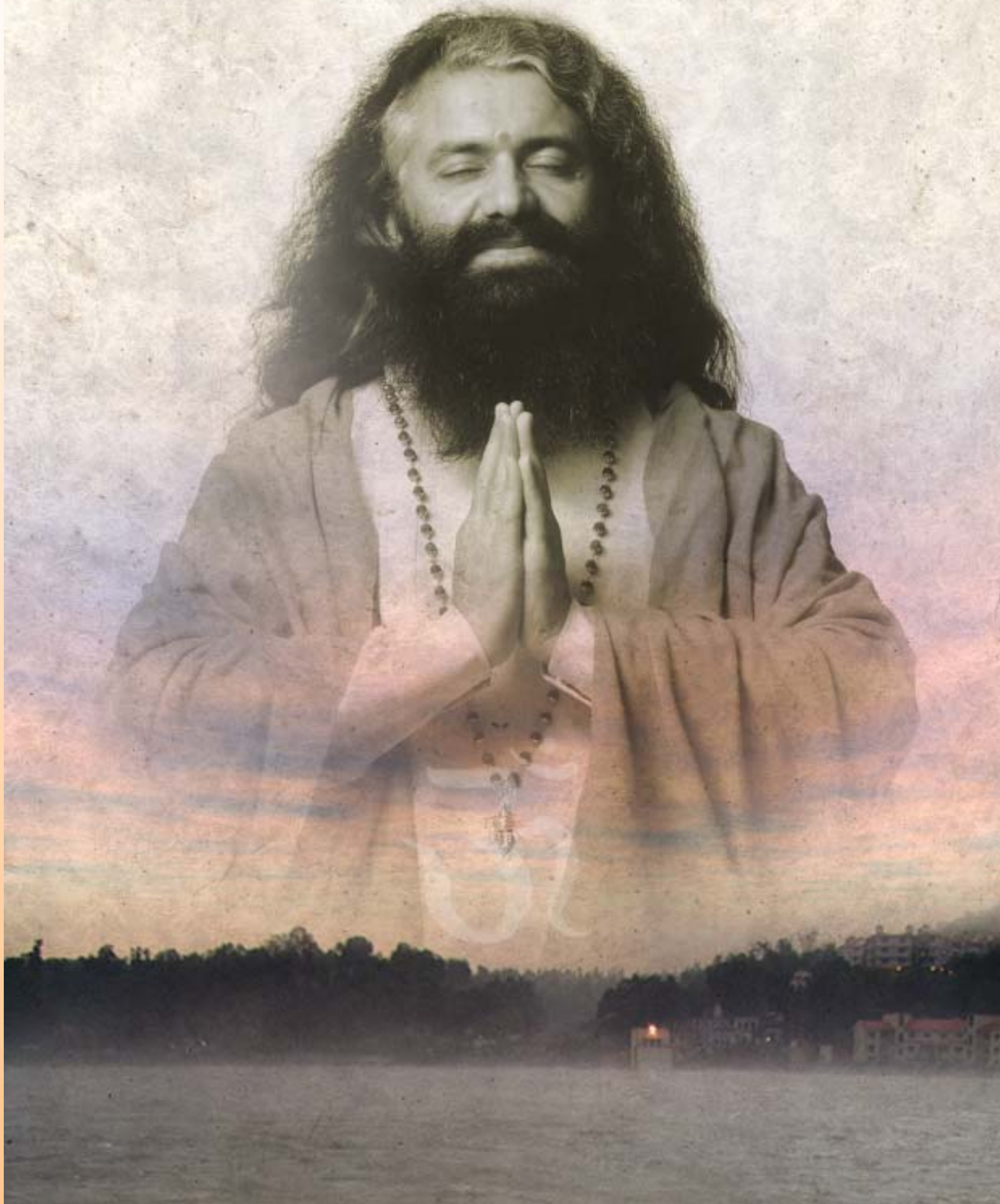




INDIA FOUNDATION

NEWS LETTER DECEMBER 2005



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HINDUISM

The project of the Third Millennium



The Hindu tradition, followed by over a billion people today, is one of the oldest, richest, and most influential traditions on Earth. Further, it is one of the most all-embracing world traditions. Hinduism is founded on such universal principles as “The Truth is one, although the sages call it by different names,” and “The world is one family,” and “Let all the noble thoughts come from all the directions.” The actual name used by Hindus to describe their religion is not “Hindu”; rather, followers refer to their tradition as “Sanatan Dharma,” or “The Eternal Path of Righteousness.”

In recent years, there has been a burgeoning interest in Hindu thought among philosophers, theologians and sociologists world-wide. More and more scientists are discovering the convergence of Hinduism and modern scientific thinking. Further, whatever sphere one selects for study – whether it be language, art, sciences, literature, architecture or music – one has to look to this heritage, because some of the most valuable and insightful materials are encompassed within this tradition.

Unfortunately, this rich culture currently has no standard source of ready reference. Therefore, an authentic, objective, insightful and scholarly presentation of Hinduism is needed. **The Encyclopedia of Hinduism will fill this crucial need.**

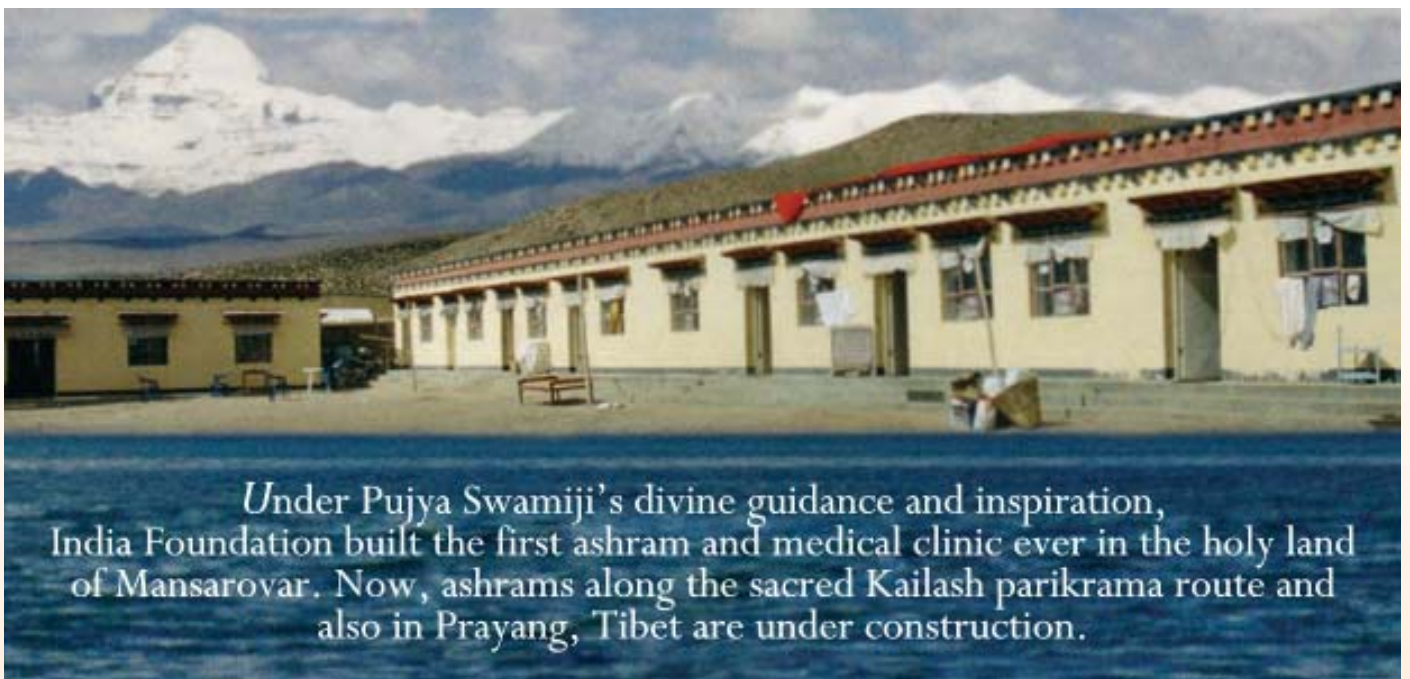
Further, despite the influence of Hinduism and Hindu thought across the globe, this spiritual tradition is widely misunderstood in the West. The Encyclopedia seeks to provide a better understanding of the all-embracing nature of Hinduism and its universal principles of righteous living.

The Encyclopedia was conceptualized in 1987 by Pujya Swamiji and, after years of planning and preparation, work actually began in earnest in 1993. For the last 12 years, over 1000 scholars from across the world have written, edited and reviewed nearly 8000 entries, ranging in subject area from history to spirituality to culture to social movements to art and architecture.

The Encyclopedia project is underway in its final stages of review by top international scholars. The writing work and initial editorial work-- both substance editing as well as copy editing -- have been completed. Now, each article is being reviewed by a handpicked team of respected, eminent scholars to ensure that the substance, content, style and language are all up to the highest international standards. Work of illustration collection and matching is going on simultaneously. We expect to have the 18 volume work completed and ready for publication shortly.

The wait has been long for the committed supporters of EH, yet it is of crucial importance to us that the quality should be the highest - both in terms of content and also style. Further, compared to other famous Encyclopedias in the world, 12 years is still record-pace for completion (many encyclopedias have taken 25-40 years). We are sure that when this monumental task is completed, it will be something that all Hindus across the world will be proud to call their own!

Please send your email address to ihrf@ihrf.com in order to have your name added to our email mailing list so that you will receive instant notification when EH is complete and ready for purchase/delivery. We will also be emailing information and invitations to the international launch functions.



Under Pujya Swamiji's divine guidance and inspiration, India Foundation built the first ashram and medical clinic ever in the holy land of Mansarovar. Now, ashrams along the sacred Kailash parikrama route and also in Prayang, Tibet are under construction.

PARMARTH MANSAROVAR/ MT. KAILASH ASHRAMS & MEDICAL CLINIC

In 1998 when Pujya Swamiji traveled to the sacred land of Mansarovar and Mt. Kailash with Pujya Swami Gurusharananandji and Pujya Sant Shri Rameshbhai Oza, he saw the dire lack of facilities. He vowed to create indoor lodging as well as medical facilities both for yatri and local people.

After more than 2 years of negotiations, in December 2000, the official contract was signed with the Chinese Government, and construction began in the Spring of 2001. The ashram and medical clinic were officially inaugurated in July 2003 by the hands of Pujya Swamiji with Pujya Swami Divyanand Teerthji, Shankaracharya Bhanpura Peeth, Pujya Acharya Kishore Vyasji, Pujya Rasyani Babaji, Pujya Roopchandra Muniji and over 200 pilgrims from across the globe.

Since then we have also constructed 2 large halls on the same premises which can be used as a dormitory and also for meditation, satsang and puja.



Ribbon opening ceremony



Pujya Swamiji in front of Reception room



Medical Clinic room



One of the halls



The halls have a beautiful view of Mt. Kailash and lay just on the banks of Lake Mansarovar. They can be used for puja, satsang, meditation and also as a dormitory for larger groups

PARMARTH PRAYANG ASHRAM

At that time the ground breaking ceremony was also performed for the ashram in Prayang, which is now nearly completed.



Bhoomi puja for Parmarth Prayang Ashram



Parmarth Prayang Ashram nearly completed

PARMARTH ASHRAMS ON KAILASH PARIKRAMA ROUTE



Land on which Dirapuk Ashram will be built



Further, we have purchased land on the sacred parikrama route, at Dirapuk (4775 meters high) and Zuthulpuk (4700 meters high). The construction for these has just begun and will be completed by the summer of 2006.

These will be the first ashrams ever to be built at such a high altitude. Now, when pilgrims perform the sacred Kailash parikrama, which is 52 km and takes 3 days, they will have safe, indoor facilities in which to stay rather than only camping in tents in the wind and cold.

Further, at Zuthulpuk where there is already an existing monastery for Tibetan monks, we have offered our assistance to them in repairing their monastery and also in anything else they may require.

Sponsor a room in Prayang, Dirapuk or Zuthulpuk

Sponsor a room in the name of a loved one or a dear, departed soul. Immortalize the name and the memory of yourself, your parents, your children, your brothers or sisters or your spouse.

Please contact us at ihrf@ihrf.com if you would like to have a room in one of these ashrams sponsored in your name. A beautiful plaque will be put up in each room bearing the name of the room donor.

Further, a special puja will be performed at the “Plaque ceremony” at Mt. Kailash and Lake Mansarovar, in your name before the plaque is put on the wall of the ashrams.

MEDICAL SERVICES TO KAILASH AND MANSAROVAR



In addition to construction of comfortable, indoor facilities, IHRF is committed also to bringing basic medical care to a land where none exists. At the inauguration of the ashram and medical clinic in July 2003 we donated many supplies and medicines to the local, Tibetan doctor for the clinic. We have sent additional supplies with yatra groups.

Further, in June 2004 we sent the first team of medical specialists to give free medical camps to the local people. A team of 39 doctors traveled from USA and Canada, providing free medical care along the way from Nepal, through Tibet all the way to Mansarovar, and then had a special free medical camp at the Mansarovar ashram.



left: Tibetans line up for medical treatment at Mansarovar ashram.
Right - in front of the banner for the free medical camp



If you are a doctor and would like to organize a group of physicians to go and offer free medical seva to the Tibetans living in the sacred, yet barren land of Mansarovar and Mt. Kailash, please contact us at ihrf@ihrf.com.

OTHER PROJECTS IN THE SACRED LAND:

Tree plantation and agricultural program: The local people mostly eat only yak and yak by-products, as no vegetation grows at that altitude. However, Pujya Swamiji believes that it must be possible to grow vegetables and grains there. Therefore, we took a sample of the soil when we visited in July 2003. That sample has been analyzed by specialists in India, who have determined that, yes, basic agriculture IS possible. Therefore, we will be providing seeds and the materials for a greenhouse as well as the technical know-how in order to help the local people move from only a yak-based diet to one that is more based on vegetables and grains.

Clean up program: Beginning in the summer of 2005, clean up programs have begun in order to pick up all the trash left by pilgrims and visitors. We will expand this program in 2006 so that the sacred land can be kept clean, green and serene.



***We came for 48 hours but stayed for 3 weeks and are committed forever.
We could not turn our backs on the dire situation and anguished faces that called forth for help.***

India Heritage Research Foundation, led by **H.H. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji**, and Yashodhara Oberoi Foundation, led by famous actor **Vivek Oberoi**, joined hands and formed PROJECT HOPE for the relief and rehabilitation of victims of the tsunami.



The following things were completed by Project Hope between December 30, 2004 & January 16, 2005

1. Building of **100 new, temporary homes** for those whose homes were destroyed in the tsunami
2. **Plantation of nearly 3000 trees** in honor of victims of tsunami from every country.
3. **Community Kitchens** where all families were fed hot meals 3 times a day - 7 Kitchens were set up and we also provided milk for babies and children every day.
4. **Play ground** for the children, with swings, slide, merry-go-round, jungle-gym, & sports equipment.
5. **Medical Relief Centers** operated at each of these community centers
6. **Distribution of necessities** to thousands of people such as food, water, clothing, candles, cooking supplies shoes, sheets, mats, etc. These were generously supplied by Shri Chandru Kewalramani, London, UK,; Shri Ashok Hinduja & Ashok Leyland Co., India; Shakra family, Indore/Bombay, India and others.
7. **Free Eye Camp and Cataract Operation Camp**
9. We purchased over **400 new fishing nets** with the generosity of Shri Ramesh Goenka, Dubai



100 new temporary houses



community kitchens



10. With the great assistance of Ashok Leyland, CII & the army - **we repaired more than 100 boats**
11. With the cooperation of Rotary International we **purchased 10 brand new boats** for the villagers.

EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL REHABILITATION:

We organized sacred pujas and prayers for the local people, according to their own, South Indian tradition to honor the memories of the departed souls and to restore their faith in both God and also in the ocean.



On January 15, not even 3 weeks after the tragic tsunami, we organized a special musical concert by world famous drummer Sivamani. Spirits soared and hope was renewed through the sound of music.



Thousands and thousands of villagers came to take part in the musical concert on the 15 January, on the grounds in front of the temporary houses we constructed

LONG TERM RELIEF AND REHABILITATION:

Project Hope has 3 major long term relief projects underway - 2 village reconstruction programs and the construction of an orphanage/ladies home:

I. RECONSTRUCTION -- VILLAGE PANNITHITTU

The village of Pannithittu, Pondicherry was completely devastated by the tsunami. In July we agreed to reconstruct that village and the official paperwork was signed. Construction began in August, and Pannithittu will now be the first completed tsunami-reconstructed village!

The village will include 100 homes, a community center, a school, a women's vocational training center, a primary health care center and other amenities.



Pannithittu before

As of November 30 the homes are nearly completed (see below left).

The final homes, as will be ready in December, will look as per the simulation shown below right.



Pannithittu and Patancheri (see below) villages, including houses and community amenities, are being rebuilt with the generous assistance of Rotary International; Belvai Vinayak Kudva, USA; Charitable Care Foundation, Hindu Community of Bay Area, California, USA; Manav Seva Mandir, Chicago, USA; Hindu-Jain Temple, Pittsburgh, USA; Chattanooga Temple, Tennessee, USA; Singapore Jain Society; Sajjan Jindal, Bombay, India. And a special thank you to Shri L.N. Mittal, London, UK for joining hands with Project Hope for village Patancheri.



II. RECONSTRUCTION -- VILLAGE PATANCHERI

Patancheri is one of the largest villages of Pondicherry, in the district of Karaikkal. In this village, plans are underway - with the generosity and support of generous donors -- to reconstruct 350 homes as well as to build a school, vocational training center, computer center, community center and primary health care center. The vocational training center and computer center have already been started and construction of the homes is ready to begin any day.



In the tsunami, the force was so strong that it ripped this Patancheri house out from the bottom up!

I. HOME FOR ORPHANS AND WIDOWED, POOR, ABANDONED LADIES

Project Hope has also adopted a dilapidated and run-down service center in which 200 widowed, abandoned and poor ladies live. They have no proper facilities for dining, cooking or studying.



We are in the process of building a full dining hall, a computer center, a typing center, a vocational training center and other facilities for the girls/ladies, as well as renovating and repairing the existing center.



On the adjacent land, we are constructing an orphanage for children orphaned by the tsunami. There will be living facilities, school rooms, computer center, science laboratory, etc.

We will create a place where both the children and also the girls/women will benefit greatly. It will be a true village of hope and love.

The project is generously sponsored by Dr. Kiranbhai & Dr. Pallaviben

Patel through the Patel Foundation, Florida, USA and Bellaben and Yogeshbhai Patel, Florida, USA

The foundation stone for this project was laid by the hands of the Hon. Governor of Tamil Nadu, Hon. Governor of Uttranchal and the Hon. Lt. Governor of Pondicherry and other dignitaries.

Please feel free to contact us for more information about any of the projects:

IHRF

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 Rishikesh (Himalayas), Uttranchal -- 249304
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 Fax: +91-135-2440066, Email: ihrf@ihrf.com

Itinerary for Pujya Swamiji : December 2005 - February 2006

December		January		February	
1-10	Rishikesh	1-31	Rishikesh**	1-14	Porbandar, Gujarat
12-13	Tsunami Areas			20-28	Rishikesh
15	Delhi				
16-28	Rishikesh				
29-30	Tsunami Areas				
31	Rishikesh				

**** Please note that Pujya Swamiji will be in a silent meditation from Jan. 5 - Jan. 25. He will be giving darshan only once a day, following the evening Ganga Aarti**