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Tigers

Shellac

Elephants

Animal Sacrifices

Asia for Animals Conference 2010



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Editorial India's elephantine problem

In November 2009 the Government of India directed that all captive elephants should be transferred immediately to Forest Departments. Surprise was followed by favourable reactions from animal welfare/rights activists, whereas wildlife and zoo enthusiasts expressed apprehension, seeing it as a reversal.

The pros

It is great news that, in future, no captive elephants will be seen at circuses, zoos, temples, in the possession of individuals or even playing polo at Jaipur.

The ban on elephants in circuses is overdue. No animal should be made to perform – world wide, circuses without animals are becoming the order of the day.

Zoos are animal jails where the conditions under which elephants (and other animals) are kept can never approximate their natural habitats. Unjustified expenditures are incurred on their upkeep.

India's temple/*devaswam* elephants have been subjected to cruel treatment for centuries. Their living conditions are bad and their training, torture.

Individual ownership of elephants as status symbols is ridiculous and, as a gimmick

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for beggars, has time and again proved disastrous to both elephant and human.

Enough is enough – it is high time people acknowledge that elephants are sensitive and feel pain, both physical and mental, just as we humans do.

The cons

Since the Union Ministry of Environment & Forests has directed that elephants should be sent immediately to elephant camps/rehabilitation camps/facilities available with the Forest Department at National Parks/Wildlife Sanctuaries/Tiger Reserves for departmental use, elephants from circuses, zoos, temples and individuals will be handed over to the Forest Department. But what will happen to these elephants now marked “for departmental use?”

They may become working – even performing – elephants. Or give rides to tourists. Beauty Without Cruelty would not hail a mere change of ownership.

For example, an elephant camp exists within Mudumalai Sanctuary which used to organise elephant shows to attract tourists, as atrocious as that of a circus. However, the Government scrapped the “Elephant Show” in 1998, in response to BWC’s persistent representations.

Objections to be expected

Few have understood the implications of this ban on keeping captive pachyderms. Many questions remain unanswered and unexplained.

BWC had submitted a comprehensive report entitled “Circuses in India” to the Union Ministry of Environment & Forests in 1991, on the basis of which a notification was issued banning the use of tigers, panthers, bears and monkeys, and later upheld by the court. Consequently BWC imagines the least objections will be from circuses, since they have already had to give up other species.

Zoos and their supporters have begun crying foul basically because they do not consider it cruel to continue keeping elephants in captivity. They have already come up with reasons why elephants should remain in zoos where conditions are, according to them, adequate. They disregard the financial liability of elephant maintenance in zoos, talk of the possibility of elephants not being able to adapt in camps, go to the extent of saying that captive elephants could pass on diseases like TB to wildlife, and so on. They even cite the importance of the bond between elephants and their *mahouts* and question improvements of living conditions at the camps, saying the estimated 140 elephants will probably be kept under the same condition as in zoos. They forget that these are the very reasons for the decision to remove the elephants from captivity. The ministry rightly based its decision on a series of reports, representations and recommendations submitted by persons and organisations who investigated the poor conditions of captive elephants thoroughly.

As for the temples, their authorities will obviously fight on religious grounds and, along with private owners of elephants, will probably use their financial might, clout and influence to get the ban withdrawn or at least stall the “with immediate effect” aspect.

Ideal solution

BWC feels that, just as elephants are not meant to perform or be displayed, they should not be converted into working animals either. It would be wise for the Union Ministry of Environment & Forests to take steps to ensure that the elephants in our country do not go out of the frying pan into the fire.

This can be accomplished if separate elephant sanctuaries are established for the elephants that are compulsorily given up to the Forest Departments. The difficulties which will arise can be overcome. During the transition period, the erstwhile captive elephants will need to be individually taken care of but, once they have lived out their natural life spans, the need to take care of them will also end.

And since no more captive elephants will be allowed the poaching, breaking in, transporting, training, performing and display of these animals will grind to a halt over time. So it is a step in the right direction.

Meanwhile, let’s hope Lord Ganesha, the Hindu deity with the elephant head, considered the remover of obstacles, will solve India’s elephantine problem smoothly – and soon.

BWC reduces Nepali Gadhimai Mela sacrifices A drop less in the ocean of blood

By Amruta Ubale and
Sunil Srivastava

History is full of battles. But the battle we are discussing is a defenseless one, a story of merciless men hoping to achieve personal desires by killing the weak. In the holy land of the gods, hundreds of men performed *pooja* on their weapons, gearing up for the big kill. The very sight of them got the innocent creatures panicky. They started running helter-skelter. Babies were looking for their mothers. Others were simply trying to escape. Many tried to escape but were chased down. All were beheaded. The killers rejoiced and laughed, claiming that the more they killed, the more they'll get. Acres of land were covered with blood. This is a battle of the defenseless. You may think this excerpt is from 16th century writings, but these massacres occur in 21st century Nepal.

This is the story of the Gadhimai Mela, which takes place every five years. The history of this bloodthirsty event dates back about 260 years, when Bhagwan Chaudhary, a feudal landlord imprisoned in

Makwanpur Fort, dreamt that his problems would be solved if he made a blood sacrifice to the goddess Gadhimai. On his release, he approached a local village healer. The descendant of the healer, Dukha Kachadiya started the ritual with drops of his own blood from five parts of his body. Apparently a light appeared in an earthen jar, and the gory tradition began.

This fair takes place every five years in Bariyarpur, Bara District, in southern Nepal. This year, it was on 24 November. Prior to its commencement, the organizing committee declared that at least 500,000 creatures including buffaloes, goats, ducks, roosters, pigeons and rats would be sacrificed. Seventy percent of the visitors to this fair are Indians, mainly from states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. When BWC learned about the atrocities in mid-October it got in touch with Animal Welfare Network Nepal (AWNN), which was campaigning against the mindless carnage.

We wrote top Nepali Government officials. And, since the majority of the visitors are from India, we approached the Union Minister of Home Affairs on 31 October, asking him to stop the movement of animals across the Indo-Nepali border. We also suggested some measures to curtail animal trafficking, one of which is quoted below:

“The number of border police officials should be increased from mid-November 2009 till

the end of the Gadhimai Mela. They should be given orders to monitor the movement of people as well as animals. We understand that the *Sashastra Seema Bal* (SSB) had put forward a proposal to issue identity cards for people moving across the border, so may be you would like to implement it for hassle-free movement.”

We followed up the matter with the ministry, getting a reply to the effect that BWC's concerns were genuine and our letter had been forwarded to the DIG (Operations) of SSB for action. Thereafter BWC was in continuous touch with the SSB officials. The DIG (Operations) told us that SSB personnel had been directed to stop the transportation of animals and birds from India to Nepal during the fair, and to take stern action against the offenders. They would be maintaining a continuous vigil. A proposal, to deploy an additional 4,500 SSB officials at the BOPs during the days of the Gadhimai Fair submitted by the Senior Officer of Security Management (Nepal), was approved. The SSB also released a press note stating that border outposts (BOPs) from where Indians generally entered Nepal, in the districts of East Champaran, West Champaran and Sitamarhi in Bihar, were on alert and an extra vigil was maintained with the Gadhimai Fair in mind.

The Nepal Government, however, did not budge from their plans for mass slaughter. They didn't take any steps to

stop or even reduce the killing. On the contrary, it provided Rs. 4.5 million funds for the festival, which turned out to

they may share the profits. In the past, the buffalo meat was given out free to anyone who wanted it, and the organizers



“Goddess Gadhimai has been kind to me with a good life, and I take this slaughter as a way of saying ‘Thank you’ to her,” said one Munna Bahadur Khadgi (40) who claimed to have slaughtered 600 buffaloes in 2004: “I make money by killing animals and selling meat. But at the festival, I did it for my spiritual satisfaction. It was the least that I could do for the goddess, and I didn’t want to miss this opportunity.”

the spilled blood and apply it to their foreheads. Later the bloodshed continued at a concrete slaughterhouse built close to the temple. Visitors were allowed to enter the area on paying Rs. 25, though some opted to scale the wall to get a better view of the killings, carried out by volunteers. More than 200 men equipped with swords were employed to slay the animals, thousands of which, brought by the devotees, were herded in a confined area. There were buffaloes, mostly calves, far as the eye could see. The butchers randomly started chopping the heads off these animals. Some of the butchers were seen laughing. One of them, Ramlal Mahato was heard saying, the more animals I kill, the more satisfied I feel. I am helping an ancient tradition to survive.”

“There comes a time in the affairs of man when he must take the bull by the tail and face the situation.” – W.C. Fields

be a money-spinner for Nepal’s priests, organizers, suppliers and contractors. People were made to believe that animals are sacrificed to appease Gadhimai but, in reality, this is an eyewash. The organizers were expecting to raise Rs. 140 million this year. Shockingly, the local Village Development Committees (VDCs) contributed 1,000 animals each so that

used to earn nearly two million Rupees by selling the hides. This year the organizers got greedy, planning to give the hides and meat to contractors in the hope of earning 20 million Rupees. The Indian meat and tanning industries are known to be hand-in-glove with the event’s organizers.

Finally D-Day arrived. Although most animals were intercepted from crossing the Indian border, the Gadhimai fest did not stop. Visitors flocked there from 2:00 a.m. To commence the ritual sacrifice, head priest Mangal Chaudhary offered the blood of a slain wild rat, pigeon, rooster, duck, lamb, buffalo and pig to the goddess. Hundreds of devotees rushed to touch

Some managed to kill them in one stroke, while others could not do so because the swords were not sharp enough. The creatures struggled in vain till their last breath. Those animals which were yet to be attacked were terrified for their lives.

“When I was young, I had seen my grandpa and dad slaughtering animals. I’m proud that I’m continuing the family tradition. I’m not scared, because I know I’m doing it for Gadhimai. I don’t feel guilty, because I know I’m making the goddess happy.”

– Abhimanyu Rana (31).



Nepali bloodbath. *Photo courtesy: Animal Welfare Network Nepal*

The ones which were loose tried to flee but were hunted down by the butchers. The animals were kept so close to each other that the living were just inches from those being beheaded. All the buffaloes were killed in two hours despite the inefficiencies.

The plan was that the meat from the slaughter was to go to the contractors, but disapproving locals from the Dalit community started removing tons of meat in the evening. A dispute arose between the organizers and suppliers. The latter had cut a deal with the organizers for which they paid Rs. 5.1 million as earnest money (Rs. 510.00 per buffalo). They had

Interestingly a 'licensed' slaughterer Rajinder Ram (38) said, "This year the number of animals seems to be less than last time. We managed to finish them off quickly."

arranged 70 trucks to carry the meat to various cities, and hired more than 500 laborers to skin the slain buffaloes. "The locals have already collected more than 75 percent of the buffaloes," Narendra Sah, a supplier, said. The Dalits were heard saying that they slaughtered the animals themselves for the devotees in hopes of cashing in on the meat. "Since we have consumed the meat from Gadhimai for ages, we took it this time also," said Shivalal Harijan of Harpur. Eventually the suppliers refused to take the meat because it was decomposing. Rupnarayan Paswan of the Bara Dalit Network said, "Even after our campaign against the consumption of carcasses, many Dalits have taken the meat. It might be risky for their health."

According to a senior SSB officer the number of animals sacrificed at the Gadhimai *Mela* this year was reduced

75 percent due to the ban on movement of animals across the Indo-Nepali border. Though 75 percent may be an over-estimation, the reduction must have been at least 50 percent. AWNN did a head count of the slaughtered buffaloes on the D-Day which totaled 6,000. As November 24 was the main day, not many may have been sacrificed on November 25. The organizing committee, which had planned the sacrifice of 25,000 buffaloes, could not accept the fact that there had been such a reduction in the number of animals.

One of the priests was quoted "We're overwhelmed by the number of devotees and sacrifices made to the goddess, despite criticisms from animal rights campaigners. We're happy that the tradition has been continued. The number of sacrificed animals could be higher this time compared to the previous festival. According to Dhenukh Chaurasiya, vice-chair of the Animal Sacrifice Management Sub-committee, at least 16,000 buffaloes were slaughtered on the first day.

It was evident that the organizing committee did not want to accept this. They may have been embarrassed to announce that they had not been able to sacrifice to the budgeted targets because of pressure from Animal Rights groups. That is why they continued issuing exaggerated numbers of sacrificed animals.

The violence of these men is not only restricted to animals, but also to women. This is noticeable in the growing number of dowry deaths in the Terai, where wives are burnt to death. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR), which launched a one-minute television awareness clip on November 24, said "A large number of women alleged to be practicing witchcraft, mostly in the rural Terai, have been ill-treated, tortured, brutally beaten up, and forced to eat human excreta. Deeply-rooted in superstition and entrenched discriminatory practices especially against widows, the violence against women allegedly involved in the practice of witchcraft is a gross human rights violation and a crime punishable under national and international human rights laws." Not only does this fair take lives of animals but it kills humans too. Dozens of shops selling illegal local spirits are set up on the fair grounds. This

year, four men were reported dead due to the consumption of these spirits. There are many unreported deaths due to associated accidents.

Usually a blood sacrifice represents a covenant between a god and his or her follower. The god has made a promise to the believer – and kept a part of it. The believer is asked by god to return part of the promised matter, as a token of faith, to ensure god follows through on the rest of the promise.

No such covenant is discernible in the Gadhimai story, but the devotees as well as butchers are convinced that these sacrifices are done to appease Gadhimai, and it is part of an age-old tradition which has to be continued. However, they have failed to understand that this gory ritual is but a superstition, a senseless thought which came to one Bhagwan Chaudhary's mind 260 years ago, which is now being followed blindly

"I was assigned to film the festival. At first I seemed okay but, when the killing started, I suddenly found my knees shaking. In the beginning the butchers were able to cut the heads of the buffaloes in one stroke. Later they seemed to get into a frenzy and did not kill properly. It would take them a long time to sever the heads. The buffaloes were mooing – it was a terrible sound. The babies were searching for their mothers, not understanding what was going on. At some point a baby buffalo came up to me and touched my tripod. That was when I felt I would be passing out if I continued filming. When I left the place, I had to step over thousands of bodies and heads and wade through animal blood. It was something I will never do again, even if they offer me an award."
– Bibi Funyal, a photographer

by millions. The Government, organizers and priests are aware of this but, instead of exposing the superstition for what it is, they encourage it for their own benefit since it is a good opportunity to fill their pockets. The Gadhimai Mela is the world's largest animal sacrifice.

Beauty Without Cruelty could not stop the mass slaughter but, with the help extended by the Government of India, managed to reduce the number of animals beheaded. This is a victory of sorts.

 Amruta Ubale is
BWC's education officer
Dr. Sunil Srivastava is
BWC's Delhi representative



Orphan calf waits for god, death, or both. Photo courtesy: Bibi Funyal

Fact, not fancy

Shellac

By Nirmal Nishchit

Astonishingly, most people do not know that there is a little shellac is many commonly-used items, or that shellac is of non-vegetarian – insect – origin.

The Shellac and Forest Products Export Promotion Council promotes India's exports of shellac and lac (sticklac, seedlac, hand/machine made lac, de-waxed/de-colourised/bleached lac, gasket lac, button lac, garnet lac, molumba lac, lac dye, aleuritic acid, shellac wax, etc.) as non-toxic, natural and environment-friendly products.

Shellac is a refined form of an organic resin derived from an insect indigenous to India and Thailand. Lac insects alight on certain trees and, during their reproductive cycles, suck sap from branches forming cocoons which incubate the eggs they lay. They secrete an amber-coloured resinous substance called lac. These cocoons consist of resin. Part of the twig and insects are called sticklac (having around 150 larvae per square inch of twig) which, on washing and drying, are called seedlac (because they look like seeds). They are refined to produce the resin from which the amber lac dye is obtained – shellac in flake or liquid/varnish form.

Lakh is the Sanskrit word for 100,000. Ironically, that is how many lac insects are killed for

333 grams of shellac. In other words, 300,000 lac insects lose their tiny lives for producing a kilogram of shellac. Our country is responsible for 50 percent of world production and over 90 percent of India's lac comes from Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Orissa, where the insects are commercially bred.

The lac resin (consisting of lac larvae and the insects' parts and wings) apart from the commonly known red sealing wax used on letters and parcels, among its myriad other uses, is utilised in the manufacture of electrical insulation, adhesives, pastes, gasket cements (to make petrol- and gas- tight seals in engines), rubber compounds, flexographic and other printing inks, paints, dyes for textiles, varnishes, polishes (for wood, floors and shoes), mirror coatings, coating on certain wallpapers, fireworks, crayons, optical frames, dental plates, grease-proof paper, jewellery settings, fizzy drinks, coating of urea, confectionery, and coffee beans.

Shellac or lac is permitted as an ingredient in foods and cosmetics, whereas the use of cochineal (also of insect origin) is banned in India. Shellac is often used as a glazing agent (E number E904) to create a high-gloss surface shine and thin protective coating on candies, confectionery, dried fruits and

nuts, etc. It is a common animal ingredient in chocolates such as gems, buttons and nutties. Certain chewing gums are also surface-coated with confectioner's glaze (usually shellac, all too rarely zein made from corn) or beeswax. Sometimes apples and oranges



Lac insect ponders its future.
Photo courtesy: www.oasinweb.com

are coated with shellac to increase their shelf life and look shiny. Some tablets and all timed-release pills are coated with shellac to prevent them from dissolving quickly. Shellac is also used in the production of dentures. India has been using lac since Vedic times, and lac resin and dye are still used extensively in our Ayurveda and Siddha systems of medicines.

Aleuritic acid is a yellow solid obtained from shellac for use in perfumes. And shellac is used as an adhesive additive in certain lipsticks, make-up products and hair sprays.

Kolhapuri shellac-filled gold beads are a part of Maharashtrian traditional jewellery. Shellac goes into a lot of semi-precious and precious jewellery, the most common being *Kundan* settings, beads and bangles, handcraft

items like boxes and marble vases with shellac embossed designs, and lacquered/shellac coated accessories such as decorative buttons, clips, pins and cuff-links. Channapatna in Karnataka is famous for lacquered wooden toys.

Shellac is used as a stiffener for the brims and hoods of felt hats, are treated or proofed with a shellac solution.

Some ceramic tiles are lacquered. Floor and wood polishes, vanishes and waxes may contain shellac, especially no-rub floor polish. French polish for wood is shellac dissolved in methanol. Paints like those used for road marking may contain shellac. Shellac pigmented with white titanium dioxide is widely used by painters as a stain sealer, wall board primer and knot- and sap-sealer on wood.

Shellac is used for electrical work as it bonds glass and metal well. Mixed with marble dust, it is used by lamp manufacturers to glue the metal bases to incandescent glass bulbs. An electrical insulation called micanite, made from fine mica lamellae/splittings, also uses shellac as a bonding agent.

Shellac is utilised in the production of some artists' paint brushes and other brushes. It is used to mask, or block out, parts of designs that are not to be printed during silkscreen painting of posters and banners – the kind which are put up in public places for political campaigns and other advertisements, including cinema hoardings.

Shellac is the binder in Indian/black/indelible ink. A unique violet indelible ink used to mark voters' fingers (it turns black on drying) is made for the Election Commission of India. This is a mix of shellac, dyes, chemicals, aromatic material, biocide and silver nitrate. Manufactured by Mysore Paints and Varnish (earlier known as Mysore Lac and Paints), the formula is a closely-guarded secret. Indian ink is also commonly used for tattooing.

Shellac could be used for preparing dry mounting paper, photo engraving and etching. Simulated engraving for letter heads, visiting cards and greeting cards may involve the use of shellac. Flexographic and some other printing inks may also contain shellac. Filter/tea-bag papers are treated with "wet strength" resin. If melamine and formaldehyde are used, they are of non-animal origin; however, these are sometimes mixed with small amounts of shellac. Some paper varnishes applied to labels and display cards are made from shellac. Metallised papers are prepared by coating cellophane with shellac, then spattering electrically with aluminium.

The glossy, silky finish on high class playing cards is very likely obtained by a coat of shellac. Poker chips, dominoes, dice and draughts may be coated with shellac. Racquets for badminton, squash and tennis are mostly made of tough nylon string but, whatever the game the polish used for wooden racquets may contain shellac. It is also used as a finish for bowling alleys, as the

balls' weight does not crack the shellac. Some handlebar tapes are shellac-coated, and shellac is used as a hard-drying adhesive for tubular racing cycle tyres.

Shellac is used in the production of grinding wheels, as it allows abrasive particles to break off at the low heat generated by the grinding process.

Brushes made of skunk hair, with badger hair on the outsides, are considered most suitable for the application of liquid shellac.

Chinese insect/tree wax or simply Chinese wax from scaly insects – of the same family as lac insects – is also available, and used chiefly in the manufacture of polishes, candles and ointments.

Despite vegetable- mineral- and petroleum-based waxes being readily available, wax from insects is utilised in many applications. A corn protein called zein can be used instead, where a high gloss is desired.

The Government of India has made the affixation of a veg/non-veg symbol mandatory on all packaged foods. Beauty Without Cruelty considers this one of its major achievements, since it helps vegetarian consumers and empowers them by giving them the right to question ingredients of dubious origins. Yet the veg/non-veg symbol is semantically flawed, since BWC's definition of the word "vegetarian" is not the same as the Government's. We want to see shellac/lac, honey/bee products, and *varkh*/silver foil included in the "non-vegetarian" category.



By Amruta Ubale

The Asia for Animals Conference 2010 was held in Singapore January 15-19, as I came to know early in January. It was hosted by the Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (ACRES). Since Beauty Without Cruelty has been conducting education programs for years, I thought it may be worth attending the pre-conference workshops, one of the main sessions being on "Running effective education outreach programmes."

It was a good platform to share the BWC educational ideology, but registration for presenters was closed. I did get a chance to share insights on the topic, though. This workshop had the maximum number of delegates. It was good to see so many organizations and individuals taking so keen an interest in education programs.

Mr. Seah Kian Peng, Member of Parliament, Marine Parade Group Representation Constituency, delivered the opening speech. His knowledge of the subject was impressive. Presentations I attended focused on issues like the welfare of animals in captivity, long-term changes for farm animals, wiping out the wildlife trade, running

a sustainable rescue centre, campaigning for change, working with government agencies and advertising. Mr. Juggi Ramakrishnan's presentation on ACRES' advertising may have been the best-delivered. It had a professional, rational approach to spreading our message creatively.

We had a gala dinner on the 18th. There were performances by local groups and bands and the master of ceremonies made some delegates dance funny. It was entertaining. Unfortunately the food served throughout the conference was barely palatable. All were mock meat dishes. This can be helpful for people who are on the road to quitting meat, but not for those who have turned vegetarian or vegan for ethical reasons. Then again, most delegates were meat-eaters. It was disheartening to see that some people who work for protecting the less unfortunate are speciesist. They see nothing wrong in feeding one animal to another animal or even eating an animal themselves. On the bright side, the number of people who are true to the Animal Rights cause is increasing.

One of the main reasons I attended this conference was to network with like-minded

individuals and organizations. The conference was helpful from this perspective. There were a couple of meets I took part in because BWC would be campaigning

on these issues. One of them was the issue of animal sacrifice in Nepal. We have been working on the Gadhimai *Mela* campaign since last year. The organizations/ individuals who can play an active role in this campaign were from Nepal and India. Several ideas were put on the table, and delegates from various countries offered to help in any way they can. I took on the responsibility of managing the Indian group. We will be holding a meeting of the Indian group soon, to draw up a plan of action.

One of the meets was initiated by Daniel Turner of the Born Free Foundation, on the issue of Asian Zoos. The objective was to develop an e-forum which would help share data and stories which may be used to further the welfare of zoo animals, or the closure of zoos.

I met a delegate from Bangladesh from whom I understood that there is no organization working actively for animal rights there. I asked him to look for a responsible individual, keen on working for the cause. Maybe in the future, we can have a Beauty Without Cruelty in Bangladesh.



Amruta Ubale is
BWC's education officer

FAQ

Vishwa (*Sanskrit for “the whole world”*) 2009 was an Exhibition/Conference to support eco-friendly business solutions held at the Ravindra Natya Mandir, Mumbai December 18-20, 2009. Promoted by the Institute for Studies in Vedic Sciences, Vishwa 2009 was a first-ever endeavour to acknowledge efforts for a greener tomorrow. Dr. Ranjit Konkar spoke at the conference about animal rights questions frequently encountered by him. One of them follows.

FAQ: Why animals? Aren't there more important things in the world like starvation, bride-burning and child molestation for you to think about and work for?

Konkar: The range of issues touching human hearts represents the flowering of the human conscience, from our animal existence of the Stone Age to our evolved presence today at the top of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. If *my* heart feels for an animal awaiting fearfully its turn for slaughter and someone else's happens to empathize with the child labouring when he should be going to school, who is to say which is the more valuable cause? Heartstrings resonate to different frequencies. Together, these strings are part of an orchestra celebrating a marvel of the human spirit – that it can look at so many issues beyond one's personal and immediate survival. The imposition of a “common cause” upon all of us would destroy the evolution of the human spirit which has led us here.

As long as there is no contradiction in the practice of one's cause, I am no one to prescribe what cause you should adopt and hold dear. Examples of contradiction would be an animal rights advocate eating meat, a climate-change activist using ozone-destroying air fresheners, or a human rights advocate employing child labour at home. Also, as long as I am not contributing to the problems that others are working on, I think that my non-proactiveness in areas other than my chosen passion is not a crime. A thinking person who is an activist or proponent of one cause usually tries to make an effort to support other causes with which he agrees. In our organisation we bend our best efforts to ensure that paper is not wasted, and go to great lengths never to succumb to corruption, to mention two areas – resource conservation and corruption – about which we feel very strongly. Even if we can't be out on the streets on each and every issue, you have our moral, intellectual, and limited physical support on many of them.

If we left animals alone to live their own lives, if we stopped becoming the *cause* of their sufferings, I might shift my attention and time to only human causes. I would not attempt to help animals that are prey to others, to natural calamities, to old age or disease. But for those who behead and torture animals to tell me to shift my attention to something they think is more worthwhile is something I cannot stomach. Leave animals to the lives Nature has brought them into this world

for. Then we may concentrate exclusively on human issues.

I believe of evolution of the human spirit has taken a definite direction. From women's rights to children's rights to human rights, the ever-expanding yet all-encompassing direction is clear for everyone to see. There *is* a next step and that step is to include more, not less, beings into our realm of concern. We cannot stop the expansion of the human spirit. It has to rise above the species barrier defined by Peter Singer as speciesism, after racism, sexism, ageism and other “-isms” of the human world. In our own, culture it rose above it 3,000 years ago in the time of Mahaveer and Buddha. Let us remember that it may be a gift given only to the human being to feel and react morally about issues, especially those involving non-humans. By asking us to kill our faculty for feeling beyond our own species, a unique aspect of humanity is sought to be suppressed.

Two centuries ago, a courageous maverick called Raja Rammohan Roy fought and won a battle against the barbaric custom of *sati*, to win women freedom from this now-unthinkable practice. When we consider that the ridicule people like Rammohan Roy were subjected to have been converted to a basic human right today, can we not credit the movement for improving our treatment of animals as showing us the logical next step in our cultural evolution?

 Ranjit Konkar is an associate senior faculty member at the National Institute of Design as well as a BWC trustee.

Around the world

“Year of the tiger” bodes ill for big cats

Buying and selling big cat skins and body parts is illegal in China. Yet covert filming by the Environment Investigation Agency (EIA), an international NGO, has revealed the continued trade in tiger skins in China, showing traders selling skins of tigers and other rare animals such as snow leopards.

Sold as luxury items, the skins are used for clothes and home decor. They are expensive, costing around 20,000 USD each. People are buying them for prestige.

Between 25 July and 19 August 2009, the EIA carried out investigations in five western China cities. In just twenty-one

days the team was offered four full tiger skins, twelve leopard skins, eleven snow leopard skins and two clouded leopard skins as well as associated bones and teeth from the species.

The EIA says the animals are being smuggled into China from various places including Tibet, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Skins are openly displayed in shop windows while police cars drive past.

A summit was held in Kathmandu, Nepal, last October to discuss how best to save wild tigers from extinction. The Kathmandu Global Tiger Workshop brought together tiger experts and conservation organisations from around the world to further efforts to protect the animal, especially running up to the Chinese calendar’s year of the tiger in 2010. The workshop recommended the following actions to

stop the tigers’ decline and achieve the doubling of the wild tiger population within the next ten years.

- Celebrate 2010, the Year of the Tiger, throughout the world, to create global awareness of the critical plight of the wild tiger and enlist broad and deep support for their conservation
- Strict protection of wild tigers and their core breeding areas
- Conserve and manage buffer zones and corridors that connect core tiger breeding areas in tiger landscapes.
- Tiger range countries stop infrastructure projects in core tiger breeding areas and finance institutions avoid financing development projects that adversely affect critical tiger habitats.
- Empower local communities that live in and around tiger



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Incredible Tigers in Incredible India

The tiger’s disappearance may become the most incredible thing advertised in this billboard on the Canadian prairies.

Photo courtesy: A. Dasgupta

landscapes with sustainable economic incentives and appropriate technologies to minimize human-tiger conflict.

- Make Core/Critical Tiger Habitats truly inviolate by incentive-driven, generous, participatory and voluntary relocation.
- All countries implement CITES resolution Conf. 12.5 "Conservation of and trade in tigers and other Asian big cat species."
- Enhance the capacity of INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization (WCO), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the CITES Secretariat and regional wildlife enforcement networks (including ASEAN-WEN) to more effectively and sustainably combat the illegal trade in wildlife at the international level and through relevant national agencies; and implement the Manifesto on Combating Wildlife Crime in Asia, decided in Pattaya, Thailand, in April, 2009.
- Conduct focused outreach to target audiences to reduce demand for tiger parts and enhance demand for live tigers living in the wild.
- The international community makes a financial commitment to support long-term behaviour-change campaigns with measureable outcomes on tiger conservation in the wild.
- Intensify regional cooperation for better management and enforcement in

transboundary tiger landscapes.

- Implement capacity development programs to achieve effective landscape and protected-area management.
- Use innovative science and technology to closely monitor and protect wild tigers and their prey and habitats.
- Adopt innovative, sustainable mechanisms to finance wild tiger conservation.
- Generate collective support to tiger range countries from the international donor community to reverse the decline of wild tigers.

As 2010 will be the Chinese Year of the Tiger, India asked China at the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) summit to shut down large-scale tiger farms, and only keep the farms "at a level supportive of tiger conservation in the wild," following which CITES asked China to file a report on its tiger farms and what steps were being taken to restrict the trade in tiger parts. In October 2009, Indian wildlife officials discussed tiger and leopard poaching and smuggling with China, pointing out that tiger skins were selling for as much as \$11,660 to 21,860 and leopard skins for \$1,020 to 2,770 (figures revealed by EIA investigations). However, China said that they would respond to the issue after India checks poaching of the Tibetan antelope called Chiru, in Ladakh.

2010 is expected to increase Chinese demand for tiger parts. Indian tenacity on the issue may have resulted in China issuing a pioneering directive calling for the conservation of wild tigers, and a crackdown on poaching. The directive says stockpiles of dead tigers at tiger farms should be sealed, but not destroyed. It does not, however, specify the closure of tiger farms India has been calling for.

Tiger deaths rose from forty in 2008 to sixty-six in 2009, and there were twenty-nine seizures of tiger body parts and skins in 2009. While poaching-related arrests have risen, convictions are yet to catch up. Though sixty-six were arrested for tiger poaching in 2008, and seventy-two the following year, no convictions followed. Only two were convicted for tiger poaching in 2009, for cases six to eighteen years old. They got three to five years' rigorous imprisonment. Enforcement officers state that dead tigers are being smuggled out of India via Nepal. Sonali, on Uttar Pradesh's Indo-Nepali border, may be a hub.

Tiger reserve directors and chief wildlife wardens will have to key in crucial information – on tiger deaths, the seizure or recovery of poached tiger parts, and post-mortem results – into a consolidated national database at tigernet.nic.in, to dispel secrecy about tiger deaths, initiate investigations and take quicker action at the central government level.

Readers write

Side-effect of sugar production

Further to your well-researched article on “Sugar,” a side-effect of the sugar industry upon animals is the common practice of burning sugarcane fields during harvesting. This causes all life residing in the fields like snakes, rats and insects to get charred to death.

Ramesh Jhaveri

Exotic tastes

It is good that you have cautioned readers about gourmet foods available. Till now it was only the turkeys slaughtered for Christmas that made even some non-vegetarians squirm. Weeks ago, I was shocked to see a close-up picture of cooked *escargots* (French for snails) on a platter, in an exotic local restaurant. Days later there was another newspaper account, this time about silk worms being sold by worm-vendors in Iew Duh, one of the biggest markets of the North-east. They are consumed, fried or boiled, as a winter snack. The third item of interest I read was that in India, the meat of pangolins – scaly ant-eaters – is in demand as an aphrodisiac, and their scales are fashioned into rings said to bring luck.

Balsamic vinegar, Morel mushrooms, olives, olive oil, marrons (chestnuts) and nuts, peppers, gherkins, artichokes, asparagus, avocados, fruit conserves and preserves, Spanish Bomba rice, wild rice, saffron, dark chocolate and coffee beans are some cruelty-free items sold alongside non-vegetarian gourmet foods.

Ajay Welinkar

Vegan recipe

Mulligatawny Soup

(Serves four)



Ingredients:

2 cups vegetable stock
 1½ cups water
 1 cup lentils
(tuvar/arhar & masoor dals)
 1 cup fresh coconut milk
 ½ cup oil
 ¾ cup finely chopped onion
 4 tablespoons ginger paste
 1 tablespoon garlic paste
 2 teaspoons curry powder
 ½ teaspoon crushed green chilli
 3 crushed peppercorns
 2 bay leaves
 1 sprig curry leaves
 Salt and white pepper powder to taste

Preparation:

Boil and puree the lentils. In a stockpot, heat oil, crackle bay leaves, peppercorns and curry leaves. Add onion, ginger, garlic and green chilli. Cook. Then add curry powder and cook further. Add pureed lentils and vegetable stock. Bring to boil. Simmer for 10 minutes. Strain. Boil mixture again with a little more vegetable stock. Add coconut milk, season and blend. Serve with boiled rice. Optional: squeezed lime, chopped corriander, diced apple and additional pepper.

FYI

Do you eat red bugs?

Though Cochineal is the commonly-known name for the red bug, cantharidine, carminic acid (natural red 4) and carmine (aluminium chelate of carminic acid) are synonyms.

Cochineal is a Mexican cactus insect parasite. A red colouring agent obtained from the females has been used for dyeing fabrics, particularly wool, for centuries. It is a very common ingredient in cosmetics, hair oils, paints and medicines today.

In some countries, if cochineal is used as a “natural food colouring,” it must be stated on the label, as it can cause toxic and allergic reactions. India has banned it in foods but this red colouring is, ironically, easily available as its use is permitted in the pharmaceutical industry in coating allopathic pills, as well as for colouring medicines and ointments.

In India these bugs, called *beerbahooti*, are found during the monsoons. *Unani* cures for paralysis include cooking them in oil and, for typhoid, suffocating them to death.

Kermes, kermesic acid or chermes (meaning red/crimson in Farsi) is derived from another crushed insect. In fact, kermes, cochineal, lac and Chinese insects are all crushed bodies of the same family of scale insects.

Pomegranate, annatto seeds, madder roots, beetroot, paprika fruits and cutch heartwood (*katha* consumed in *paan*) produce red colours which can easily replace insect dyes.

BWC News & Views

BWC calendar and Compassionate Friend

Beauty Without Cruelty members in India and abroad were mailed our 2010 calendar in December. Due to high postage rates, only e-versions of *Compassionate Friend* are being sent overseas.

The theme of our 2010 BWC calendar is Human Predation. It showcases thirteen unfortunate creatures tortured and killed for gluttonous human palates. BWC is most grateful to an anonymous donor for having sponsored the calendar again this year – as he has generously been doing every year.

BWC recipe leaflet

Many non-vegetarians say they would stop eating animals if they could find tasty alternatives. For them, and for others this year, BWC has again published some scrumptious vegan recipes in a leaflet as part of our Veg@Lent campaign. As in 2009, the leaflet will be distributed via some churches from Ash Wednesday, 17 February 2010, to help Christians abstain from meat during Lent's 40 days till Easter.

Readers who wish to receive a copy of this leaflet containing vegan recipes (by e-mail or in print) should please write BWC.

We will also be printing a vegan recipe in each issue of our magazine – see opposite page.

hinsa vs. ahinsa

From September to end 2009, 13 editions of *Hinsa* versus *Ahinsa*, covering specific subjects, were e-mailed to mark particular occasions: Elephant Appreciation Day; International Rabbit Day; *Dassera* Eve (animal sacrifice); Reverence for Life Month; World Vegetarian Week; World Animal Rights Day; *Diwali*; Silk; World Vegan Day; World Kindness Day; Meatless Day; Fur-free Friday; International Animal Rights Day, Human Rights Day; Christmas; and Resolutions for New Year 2010.

These brief pictorial messages have been appreciated and can, on request, be e-mailed to those who did not receive them. In order to widely circulate the *Hinsa* vs. *Ahinsa*, BWC would like to add more e-mail ids of members – and non-members – to its mailing list so please do send admin@bwcindia.org your and your friends' e-addresses. There is an option for receivers to unsubscribe, so you will not be imposing upon them. Also, those members from India who send their e-mail ids for receiving *Hinsa* vs. *Ahinsa* will not have to receive *Compassionate Friend* by e-mail.

Turn over a new leaf...

Printed version of the Beauty Without Cruelty Pledge Form in English cum Hindi circulated by e-mail (*Hinsa* vs. *Ahinsa* 13) just before 1 January 2010 is enclosed for those who wish to make important, advantageous lifestyle changes. It is voluntary and not binding on any one – member or non-member.

Ban on *dhirio* continues in Goa

Beauty Without Cruelty was relieved to know from Norma Alvares, writer of "Shadow of a Bull" (*Compassionate Friend* Summer 2009), that efforts to legalise *dhiros* in Goa had come to nought. Francisco Sardinha, the Congress Member of Parliament who had moved an amendment to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960, to make bullfights legal was asked on 4 December 2009 by no less than the Union Minister of Environment & Forests, Jairam Ramesh to withdraw the bill from the Lok Sabha. Ramesh stated it was a tradition that needed to be done away with because it involved cruelty to bulls, and encouraged gambling and fighting among humans.

Manja ban

As *manja* used for kite flying cuts and profusely bleeds birds as well as humans, many NGOs have taken up the issue. It was banned in cities like Chennai and Mumbai. *The Economic Times* reported "Manja ban takes the wind out of *Makar Sankranti*" and, with people losing interest in kite-flying, many kite-makers abandoned their profession. But Gujarat's *Uttarayan* went ahead with kites battling in the sky. Five humans and hundreds of birds also battled for their lives – and died. At least 250 persons and countless birds were seriously injured because the banned Chinese *dori* (*manja*) was sold under the counter. The state government also issued an appeal not to fly kites between 6:00-8:00 a.m. and 5:00-7:00 p.m., when more birds fly.



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हिनइह vs. अहिनइह

Chinese Year of the Tiger

14 February 2010

चीन का बाघ वर्ष

१४ फरवरी २०१०

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उनकी रक्षा करें...



... in the wild

... जंगल में



... not in captivity!

... कैद में नहीं!

**Do not visit zoos —
they are animal jails**



**... फीता चिड़ियाँघरों में ना जायें —
वे पशुओं के कारागार बंदी गृह हैं**

**Beauty Without Cruelty is a way of life which causes
no creature of land, sea or air terror, torture or death**

Beauty Without Cruelty

(An international educational charitable trust for Animal Rights)

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