



VEERAYATAN
compassion in action

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2016



“Jaha Deevo Deev Sayam”
(Your one lamp can light hundreds more)

TIRTHANKARA MAHAVIR

CONTENTS



01

Timeline

02

The Work of Veerayatan

- Education
- Healthcare
- Emergency and relief work
- Spiritual development

03

A Quiet Moment

The Listening Heart

04

Drop of Nectar

The Lamp of Devotion

05

What's Happening Across the Globe

06

Contact Details

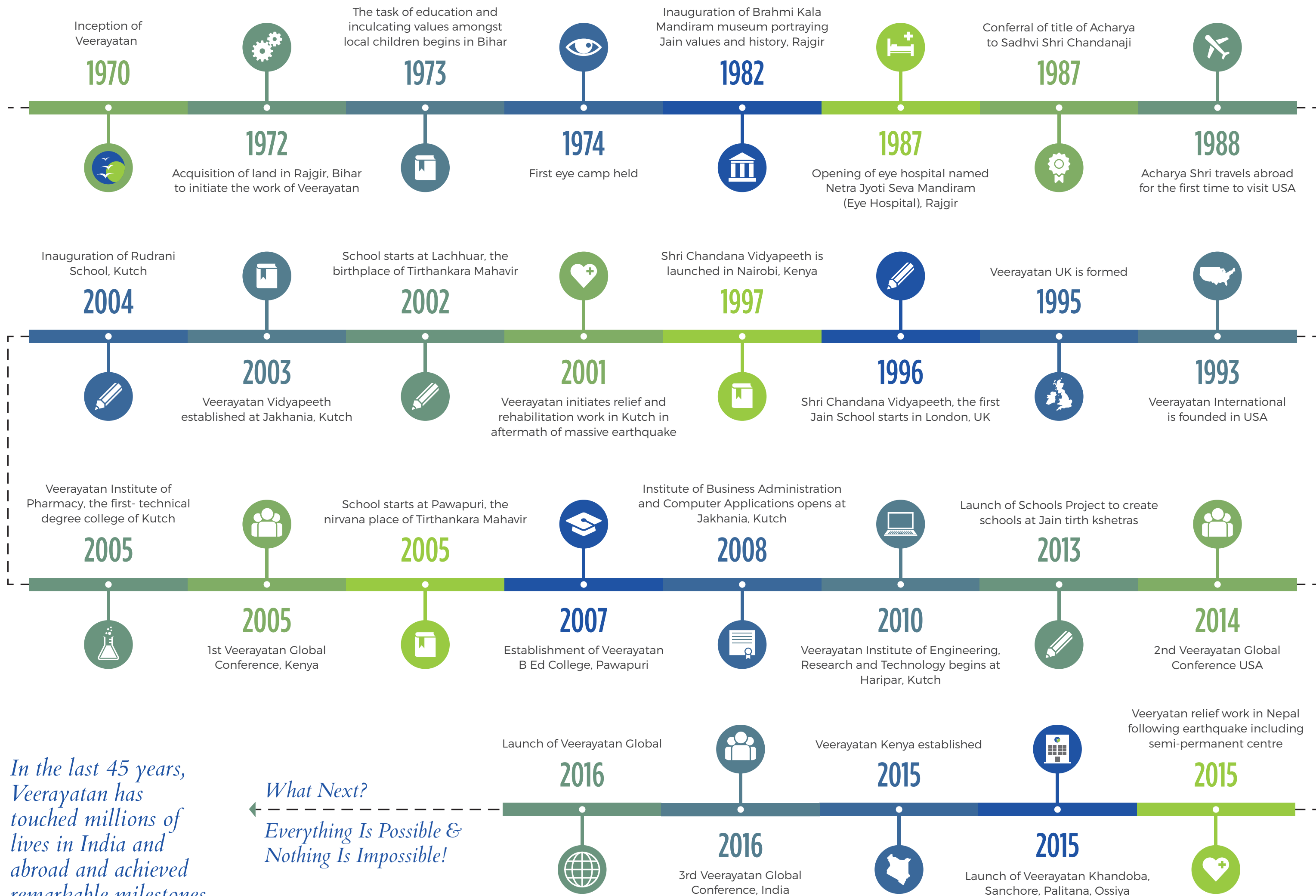


Veerayatan's vision is to inspire, empower and beautify lives through Seva (Service), Shiksha (Education) and Sadhna (Inner development).

Veerayatan was established in 1973 in the state of Bihar by Sadhvi Shri Chandaniji, the first ever woman appointed as Acharya. Under her leadership this forward looking non-profit, non-governmental organisation has blossomed and is run by a team of dynamic and dedicated Sadhvis with the wholehearted support of trustees, committee members, professional staff and committed donors and volunteers.

Veerayatan is certainly not a conventional organization, rather it is a mission, a movement, an awareness which prioritizes care for humanity through health, educational and spiritual institutes across the world, care delivered without any distinction of caste, creed, race, religion or socio-economic status. It has undoubtedly created an indelible impact in the alleviation of human suffering and the advancement of spiritual progress.







TRANSFORMING HEARTS, MINDS AND FUTURES

Education

Veerayatan is truly transforming the lives of underprivileged sections of society, especially those from rural areas in India, with lasting benefits by empowering children and adults through quality education with moral values and through vocational training.

In particular, girls and women are supported and encouraged to embrace education, making a positive impact on their lives.

Additionally, hostel facilities are provided to children who would otherwise have no access to education near home thus giving opportunities to disadvantaged children to escape the poverty trap.

VEERAYATAN EDUCATIONAL CENTRES

1. Veerayatan Bihar

An established centre, set in the vicinity of Mahavir Bhagwan's pious birth and nirvana places, provides the following education facilities for the impoverished people of Bihar:

- English medium primary and secondary schools at Pawapuri and Lachhuar
- Vocational training centres
- Bachelor of Education College in Pawapuri

2. Veerayatan Kutch

A centre which has seen phenomenal growth in the last ten years, set in the undeveloped region of Kutch, has the following education facilities benefiting the people of Kutch:

- Gujarati medium primary and secondary schools at Jakhania and at Rudrani
- English medium primary school
- Veerayatan Institute of Pharmacy (B.Pharm, M.Pharm and PhD)
- Institute of Management and Computer applications
- Veerayatan Institute of Engineering, Research and Technology
- Vocational training centres

3. Veerayatan Nepal

Veerayatan has recently established a semi-permanent facility in Nepal to rehabilitate children and women affected by the earthquake through education and vocational training (sewing, computing classes and adult education).





Spiritual Development

Veerayatan promotes spiritual advancement in all its work, espousing that Seva, Shiksha and Sadhana are not separate paths but one interrelated path that leads to personal spiritual development as well as benefits for mankind.

Veerayatan Sadhvis are very articulate and travel extensively within India and abroad to bring awareness of the teachings of Tirthankara Mahavir and inspire the community at large to develop spiritually through lectures and spiritual retreats. Connecting with Sadhvis in this way is a very special and valued experience for adults and children alike.

Outside India, Veerayatan's Shri Chandana Vidyapeeth Jain Schools (SCVP), in UK and in Kenya, enable children living in Western

societies to learn not only about Jain religion, but also motivate them to participate in many religious, cultural and extracurricular activities. SCVP graduates are our future ambassadors thus manifesting Tirthankara Mahavir's vision:

'The older generation asks the questions and the younger generation gives the answers'

A unique and magnificent museum, Brahmi Kala Mandiram at Rajgir, showcases, in an educational and spellbinding manner, the life and teachings of the Tirthankaras. This museum is a dramatic translation of Acharyashri's inner vision and she has designed and fashioned each detail with her own hands making it look appealing and very life like!

Healthcare

Veerayatan recognises that healthcare is an issue for most in rural areas. It therefore complements its educational centres, with good healthcare provision in the form of medical centres for the wellbeing of both children studying at Veerayatan schools and the local populace. Veerayatan's largest medical care facility - Netra Jyoti Seva Mandiram - founded in 1987, is an eye hospital in Bihar, which has earned a nationwide reputation for **outstanding patient and innovative medical care**.

Emergency and Relief Work

Veerayatan constantly works towards extending the alleviation of suffering, whether caused by natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, or by the personal circumstances of socio-economically challenged people.

Immediate relief work is crucial and the aftermath of massive earthquakes in Kutch (2001) and Nepal (2015), tsunami (2004), huge floods in Surat (2006) and Bihar (2008) has seen Veerayatan at the forefront of providing emergency and relief care to those in desperation and need. In each instance Acharya Chandanaji and her Sadhvis provided not only first hand emergency relief effort to the devastated communities but they also brought so much more than that. They extended hugs and helping hands for the children, smiles of warmth and praise for life to the adults and prayers and respect for those departed - and in the process brought **Hope amongst the Despair, Order amongst the Chaos, and Determination amongst the Destruction**.



The Listening Heart

Lord Mahavir's timeless message (*vaani*) is continuously echoing. That divine sound is eternally calling for the awakening of every human heart. Divinity (*paramatma*) dwells within all but resonates only in the devotee whose heart listens and is replete with compassion.

Elevated souls connect always through the heart, not the mind. The mind can have fear, logic can be defeated, but a listening heart can immediately scale any distance in its spiritual pursuits. It is able to reach out across seven seas in a fraction of a second. The sentiment of faith, devotion, prayers, love and complete surrender to Him knows no boundaries. It is beyond time and space.

Even though the call of the divine is utterly silent, it can still be heard by a *Shravak*, a listening heart. The supreme call cannot be heard only through the 'bare ears'. This external hearing does not elevate one to the peaks of spirituality. However, if heard with pure heart, the flowers of spirituality will bloom, the fragrance of compassion will spread, the sound of silence will be heard, the rays of the divine light will glow through the listening heart.

In the glorious history of Jainism, there are two illustrious examples which bear testament to this fact. At the time of Tirthankara Mahavir's *Samosaran* (the divine preaching assembly, the Dharma Sabha of Tirthankara), everyone - including rich-poor, king-pauper, gods-humans, animals-birds - would attend the eternal discourse and immerse themselves in the holy words, seeking purification by listening and through the sight of the Divine. For many, their whole life and its purpose came to fruition.

One day all were rushing to go towards the *Samosaran* to attend the sermon of Tirthankara Mahavir. A poor old woman who was working at a rich household also enthusiastically wanted to join them but could not, as the householder who had gone to the *Samosaran* had left instructions for the old woman to collect a bundle of firewood.

When returning with a large and heavy pile of firewood on her head, she came upon the spiritual discourse of Bhagwan. Of their own volition, her feet started leading her towards the *Samosaran*.

On reaching she could not take her eyes off the captivating image of Bhagwan. Completely mesmerized by the words she forgot the weight bearing down on her head. She was so engrossed that she forgot the time, the place, her pain, her hunger. Indeed she forgot her very own existence. If she had been listening solely through her ears, she would have remembered the weight on her head. If she had been seeing only through her eyes, she would have realised that she was standing in the middle of the road and remembered the tasks which the householder had given her. Not only were her external senses captivated, however, more importantly it was her heart, her being which was totally engrossed. In that instance, all the worries, problems and concerns disappeared and there existed a sense of complete surrender at the lotus feet of Bhagwan. The listening heart allows this experience. She was liberated from all the worldly dilemmas, binds. This is *Bhakti Marg*, the path of devotion, when your heart belongs to the divine, you belong to the divine.

Likewise Gautam Swami, the most revered and most talked about disciple, surrendered his heart and completely devoted his entire life at the feet of Bhagwan Mahavir. His utmost devotion cleansed his heart and his karmas. That purity gave him the ability to go deeper within and allowed him to get closer and closer to Bhagwan. The love and compassion Gautam Swami had for Bhagwan Mahavir was so all-encompassing that when there was discussion regarding attaining liberation, Gautam Swami said without hesitation, 'Bhagwan, I wish to remain at your feet, as your humble disciple, I do not wish for liberation as loving you is more important for me than letting go of you. *Bhakti* and *Mukti* are all the same for me. Your presence and love has filled my heart with everlasting bliss and peace. Now liberation is of no importance for me.'

One can hear Bhagwan's message, one can try and practice - but to bring about transformation, let's listen to and visualise the words, the *Vaani* and the fragrance of holiness, with our hearts.

The Lamp of Devotion

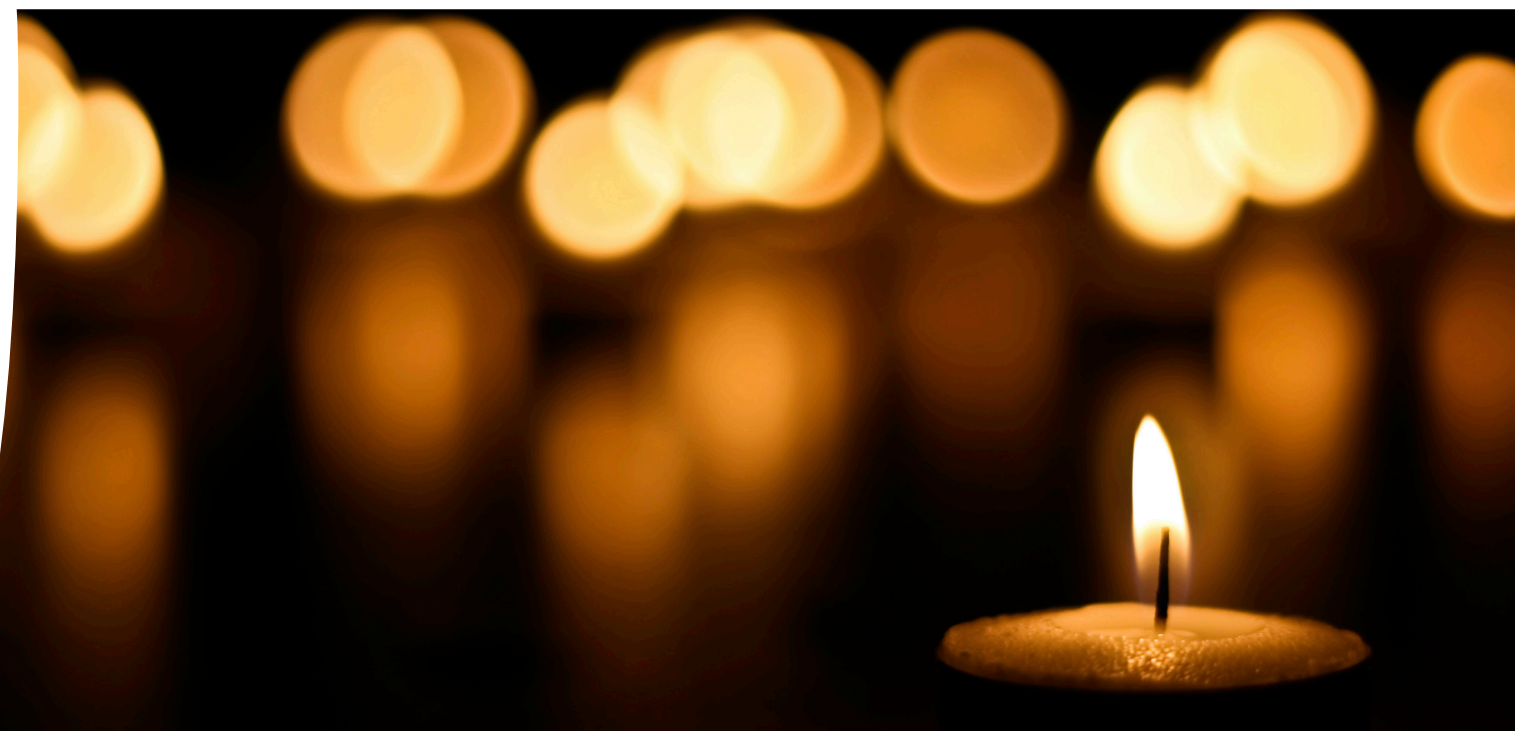
During the time of Buddha, there lived an old beggar woman named "Relying on Joy". She used to observe the kings, princes, and people making offerings to Buddha and his disciples, and there was nothing she would have liked more than to be able to do the same. To bring her wish to fruition, she decided to go out begging one day but sadly she just collected one small coin. Now she wondered, "What should I do with this coin? What sort of an offering should I make to Buddha?" She took the coin to the oil-merchant to buy some oil but to no avail. However on hearing of her wish, he was inspired and gave some oil to her out of goodwill. She went to the monastery, where she lit a lamp with the oil. She placed the lamp before Buddha, and made a wish, "I have nothing to offer but this tiny lamp. However, May I be blessed with the lamp of wisdom, May I free all beings from their darkness, May I purify all their obstructions, and lead them to enlightenment."

During the night all the lit up lamps were extinguished as expected apart from one - the old beggar woman's lamp was still burning at dawn when Buddha's disciple, Maudgalyayana, came to collect all the extinguished lamps. He was so surprised to see one lamp still alight,

full of oil and with a new wick, he thought, to himself, "Let me extinguish this lamp as there is no need for it to be burning during the day."

He tried ever so hard to extinguish the lamp but miraculously it just kept on burning. He tried everything including snuffing it out with his fingers but it stayed alight. He also attempted to smother it with his robe, but it was of no use! Buddha had been watching all along, and said, "Maudgalyayana, you will not be able to put out this lamp. In fact you cannot even move it, let alone put it out. If you were to pour the water from the entire ocean over this lamp, it will still continue giving light. The water in all the rivers and the lakes of the world will also not extinguish it." "Why not?" asked Maudgalyayana. Buddha replied, "It is because this lamp was offered with devotion and with purity of heart and mind. And that motive has yielded a bountiful harvest." Just as Buddha was saying this, the old beggar woman approached him, and he made a prophecy that in the future she would indeed become a perfect Buddha, "Light of the Lamp."

So it truly is our intention, good or bad, that determines the fruit of our actions!



What's Happening Across the Globe?

VEERAYATAN GLOBAL

Volunteer Program

For those in the 15-22 age bracket, why not avail yourself of this excellent opportunity to go to Rajgir, India and do voluntary work with Veerayatan, a leading NGO, to both aid your self-development and assist you with your further education applications and opportunities! The perfect way to start the summer.

The participants will be both from India and abroad with a limit on numbers for each program to maximise the benefits for participants. The dates for this first program are 2nd August to 16th August 2016. For further details, please visit www.veerayatan.org or contact the individual country representatives set out under 'Contact Us' below.

Launch of the new website

A new Veerayatan website, www.veerayatan.org, has been launched. Visit the site, explore some of the Veerayatan publications, listen to amazing prayers and stavans and find out more about the work that Veerayatan is doing.

VEERAYATAN BIHAR

Tree Plantation Program for July 2016

The aim is to plant about 580 trees of Neem, Lichi and Mango across all the Veerayatan Centres in Bihar. What a splendid activity to be involved with!

Recent Highlights:

One of the Veerayatan students, Sujit Kumar, secured 5th rank at National level in National Astronomy Olympiad. There is now an opportunity for him to visit NASA, USA if he qualifies in the next round of interviews. Good luck!

The heat is unbearable but the patients keep coming to Netra Jyoti Seva Mandiram with a total of about 7,000 patients being reviewed and treated in the month of April! Notwithstanding the heat, around 6000 pilgrims came to visit the magnificent Brahmi Kala Mandiram.

VEERAYATAN KUTCH

Students studying at Veerayatan Kutch continue to excel in both academic and sports activities, achieving excellent grades at Kutch University and in State and District level competitions. Students graduating from Veerayatan have also secured good job opportunities with high profile employers, a trend which should continue through regular liaison with such employers and the signing up of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) on recruitment with them.

In April 2016, Veerayatan Institute of Engineering, Kutch, organized TECHNOTRENDZ, a 2 day District Level Technical Event in which around 1000 students of various technical colleges from all over Kutch participated. Educationists, industrialists, company heads, and contestants from other colleges were amazed to see and applauded the flawless logistics of the event as organized by Veerayatan.

VEERAYATAN KENYA

What's happening: June to September 2016

- Walkathon & Mela - On 3rd July 2016, Young Jains, Nairobi plan to raise funds for Education, Cerebral Palsy Unit and for their local Water Project. The walk will be followed by a Mela which will include fun activities and entertainment for children.

- Pratikraman in English during all 8 days of Paryushan (29th August to 5th September 2016) followed by Aarti and Mangal Divo.

For more detail, please contact:

Leenaben Shah: leena@insightconsultancy.net

Ritaben Sanghrajka: ritasanghrajka@hotmail.com

Recent Highlights:

Shri Chandana Vidyapeeth, Nairobi, students celebrated Mahavir Janma Kalyanak in style on 23rd April 2016. The students acted out the various messages of Mahavir Bhagwan brilliantly. There was also raas garba to celebrate the joyous birth.

VEERAYATAN UK

What's happening: June to September 2016

- Samayik on 24th June – Come and join us for this wonderful event where everyone in the family – children, parents and grandparents - take part and understand the ritual of Samayik, all explained in English.

- Family Fun day on 2nd July 2016 – Our annual fundraising event run by the children and adults from Shri Chandana Vidyapeeth, UK, instilling the value of selfless giving!

- Participating in a Sponsored Run to raise funds for Veerayatan, "Vitality British 10k London Run" on 10th July 2016.

- Pratikraman in English during all 8 days of Paryushan (29th August to 5th September 2016). A novel way of delivering Pratikraman so that people from all ages really understand the essence of and feel able to participate in this amazing ritual of forgiveness.

For more detail, please contact:

Nileshbhai Kothari: nilesh.kothari@bt.com

Pramitbhai Shah: pramit70@yahoo.co.uk

Recent Highlights:

The amazing choir of Shri Chandana Vidyapeeth, UK - On 1st May 2016, the children, parents and teachers of Shri Chandana Vidyapeeth, London recited Namotthunam sutra beautifully for Mahavir Janma Kalyanak celebrations. Check it out: <https://youtu.be/okRKezKWu4U>

VEERAYATAN INTERNATIONAL (USA)

- Since 1998, a program "Give the Gift of Sight, on the Day you Saw the Light" is operational to invite registered supporters to donate towards an eye operation on their birthday. This program continues to help "Netra-Jyoti Seva Mandiram" - an Eye Hospital, Veerayatan Bihar, India

- In July 2016, Veerayatan International will have a representative, Priti Khara at Bi-Annual YJA (Young Jains of America) 2016 Convention to talk about the volunteering opportunities at the different centers in India.

For more detail, please contact:

kiran.mehta@veerayatan-intl.org

Tree planting by Shri Chandana
Vidyapeeth students in London



Students acting at Mahavir Janma
Kalyanak Celebrations in Nairobi

Contact Us

For more information and for further contact details, please visit
www.veerayatan.org

To receive future editions of this newsletter please register by scrolling
to the bottom of our homepage at www.veerayatan.org.