

Krishna sect visits University

By Michelle Brence
Of the Emerald

During the past week, a group of short-haired men in faded orange robes have frequented the corner of 13th Avenue and University Street. They are members of the Hare Krishna movement, and are traveling up the coast from San Francisco to Seattle, meeting young people.

"We feel we have some education to give young people as far as spiritual knowledge," says Vyasa Pada, a devotee of the faith.

The Hare Krishnas came through Eugene to inform the community of their beliefs, and to test people's response. Finding little hostile reaction and an inquisitive Eugene public, the Hare Krishna members hope to eventually start a yoga club at the University and establish a center in Eugene for devotees to live and meet.



Photo by Steven Wall

Vyasa Pada, Tripurari Swami and Loka Saranga are Hare Krishnas who hope to establish a yoga club at the University.

The faith originated in India, and claims several million followers worldwide, Vyasa Pada says. The Hare Krishna doctrines include up to 80 volumes, which devotees believe have been inspired by God, or "Krishna." The most important of these is the Bhagavad-Gita, which they say are the words of God himself, from 5,000 years ago.

Hare Krishna devotees strive to live their lives according to Krishna's doctrines. This means a diet

without meat, fish or eggs. In addition, they must refrain from sex outside of marriage, gambling, and taking intoxicants into the body. Another doctrine involves prayer to Krishna through singing and chanting.

In Hare Krishna philosophy, "karma" determines the destiny of every life form, Vyasa Pada says.

"For every action, there is an equal and opposite action," he says of karma. In other words, karma keeps track of every organism's activities — the good actions will be rewarded while the bad ones will be punished.

The Hare Krishnas believe in reincarnation.

Vyasa Pada says, "Death is not the end, it's just the change of body." At the time of death, an organism will progress to a higher life form. For example the soul of an animal may enter the body of a human, if it has passed its God-given test. However, if the karma has been negative, the organism may regress to a lower life form.

In addition to moving from organism to organism, souls may be transported to different planets within the universe, Vyasa Pada says. Some planets are heavenly, where inhabitants are rewarded, while other planets are a punishment to sinful souls.

"If we develop Godly qualities then we take on a better life," says Vyasa Pada.

The ultimate destiny, Vyasa Pada says, is the exit from the physical body and the entrance into the spiritual kingdom of God. This can only be achieved by following Krishna's doctrines and excelling through the forms of life.

The men in the faith are at one of four stages.

Brahmacari is the first. Men in this stage, like Vyasa Pada, are students. They live in temples, preach, and refrain from any connections with women.

After this, the men may either pass through the second and third stages or go directly to the fourth.

The second stage, Grhastha, involves Hare Krishna men who are married, work in society, and may have children.

During the third stage, Vanaprastha, the man may stay with his wife to give and receive support in spiritual practice, but must refrain from sex.

The fourth stage, Sannyas, involves the complete renunciation of the follower's earthly family in order to prepare for death.

Women practice similar rituals, but their roles and stages of progression are less clearly defined.

"I saw that Krishna consciousness was a practical solution to my questions," says Vyasa Pada, "It has helped me to develop better appreciation for the higher values of life."

Speakers address Central America

An American doctor who has practiced medicine in a guerrilla-occupied area of El Salvador and a Northwest forester currently working in Nicaragua will speak on campus this week.

Dr. Charles Clements, who spent a year in the Guazapa region of El Salvador treating civilians affected by the war, will speak in Room 150, Geology on Tuesday at 8 p.m. Clements is the author of "Witness to War: An American Doctor in El Salvador."

Clements is a former Air Force pilot who flew more than 50 missions in Vietnam. In 1970, when he refused to fly further missions, he was committed to a psychiatric hospital and eventually given a medical discharge.

After attending medical school, Clements practiced in Salinas, Calif., where he often treated Salvadoran refugees. In March, 1982, Clements entered El Salvador clandestinely.

There, Clements says he witnessed a situation quite different from that portrayed by the State Department. The human rights performance of the Salvadoran government has not improved, he says, and he has treated civilians who appear to be victims of napalm bombing.

Since returning to the United States, Clements has spoken about El Salvador throughout the country. He also helped found the Salvadoran Medical Relief Fund.

Clements' talk is free and open to the public. There will also be a reception and book signing at the Koinonia Center, 1414 Kincaid St., at 5 p.m. A \$2 donation is requested.

Howard Heiner, a Methodist missionary forester working in Nicaragua, will speak Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in EMU Room 167. The talk is free and open to the public.

Heiner will arrive directly from Nicaragua where he works with the Nicaraguan Natural Resource Management Agency. Heiner, a former forester with the St. Regis Paper Co., has also done forestry work in Bolivia, Chile and Somalia.

Heiner's topic will be "Natural Resource Ecology and Forestry in Nicaragua." He will also discuss current events in Nicaragua.

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