

VIRCHAND RAGHAV GANDHI - A LEGEND

Shri Virchand Raghav Gandhi (VRG), born on Aug 25, 1864 was a Great Jain Scholar, Patriot, Humanitarian, Reformer, Philosopher, the 1st ever graduate and a Barrister at Law, among the Jain community. On behalf of Acharya Shri Atmaramji ms (also known as Vijayanand suriji) he represented as a Jain Delegate at the 1st Parliament of World Religions held at Chicago way back in 1893 where Swami Vivekanand represented the Hindu Religion & Shri Dharmpal , the Buddhist religion. **A True Patriot, VRG was the 1st Indian National to lecture about “Freedom of India “ , the “Doctrine of Panchsheel “ , “ Vasudhev Kutumbakam” & even the “Yogic Pranayam “ on the soil of the Western World, more than 5 decades before we actually became INDEPENDENT !** He gave about 535 lectures and pioneered to introduce Jainism to the West (U.S.A., Canada and Europe) in his 3 long journeys from 1893 to 1901 (the same yr he died, at a very young age of 37). **He finds a mention in the autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi, as a genius friend who taught him the Evidence Act!** A linguist who knew 14 languages, Shri VRGandhi also lectured in various International Conferences on Real estate and Commerce in the US.

As a Barrister he had defended the 2 Great Jain Tirths namely Shri Sametshikharji in Bihar, where he got a Piggery (slaughterhouse) closed and Shri Shatrunjay Mahatirth (Palitana, Bhavnagar) from a Pilgrimage Tax (at the risk of his life). In 1896 during the Famine in Bengal, he had raised a princely sum of Rs 40,000/- & sent a ship load of Grain from the US. In 2009, the Indian Govt. issued a Rs 5/- denominated postage stamp in his honour .

On the 25th August, this yr for the 1st time in last 150 yrs the “Janam Jayanti “ of VRG was celebrated across India at about 100 places, exhibiting his contributions & life history.

The Akhil Bhartiya Shri Jain Shwetamber Murtipujak Yuvak Mahasangh (Regd.) a 15 yr young Youth org. having more than 500 branches spread all over India , as part of its VRG’s 150th Birth Centenary program (initiated in 2013) decided to reach out to Various Sanghs, Acharyas and Sadhu Sadhvi ji for celebrating his Janam Jayanti, every year. Across India in various Metropolitans and Tier II & Tier III cities namely Ludhiana , Hoshiarpur, Patiala, Jullandhar, New Delhi, Indore, Ratlam , Unhel, Ashta, Neemuch, Raipur, Ujjain, Mumbai , Pune, Mahua, Surat , Baroda, Ahmedabad , Bhavnagar , Chennai , Bengaluru , Jaipur, Jodhpur, Pali, Pratapgarh, Sirohi, Udaipur, Barmer, Bali, Shri Nakoda ji Tirth, celebrations were held. And even at Bangkok in Thailand.

The celebration KIT sent to all the 100 places contained a VRG potrait for garlanding, a pendrive loaded with a presentation, message by Hon’ble PM of India Shri Narendra Modi ji & a National song written & recorded specially for VRG. A set of 25 posters along with English & Gujarati version of his Life Story in pocket book style and 4 page colored brochure highlighting his achievements, a monoacting script (taken out of his famous speeches), & list of concurrent programs undertaken on Pan India basis by Yuvakmahasangh was distributed at all these 100 places. **On this day, 31 Pa Pu Acharya Bhagwants & several other Muni bhagwants & Sadhvi ji across all the SECTS did the Gunanuwad (spoke in praise) of the “Man of the Centuery “VRG at their Chaturmasic places.**

The major event was organised at his birth place in Mahua, Bhavnagar Gujarat under the aegis of Pa Pu Acharya Shree Vijaysheelchandra suri ji ms , in presence of VRG ‘s descendents. A procession was carried out in the main streets of Mahua and his Bust at the main Crossing was garlanded by VIP Dignitaries. Elsewhere in New Delhi, under the pious aegis of Ganivarya Sri Rajendra Vijay ji ms, several Hon’ble Union Ministers in Govt. of India along with the Shahi Imam, the Head of 550,000 maulvi’s (Priest of Mosques in India) celebrated VRG’s Janam Jayanti at the Constitution Club. In Pune, Pa Pu Acharya Srimad Nityanand suri ji ms, of the Muni Atmaram and Acharya Vijayvallabh suri ji lineage, celebrated with great pomp n show. In Ahd., the Yuvakmahasangh presented to Pa Pu Acharya Srimad Rajyash suri ji, the letter of congratulations recd from the Hon’ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi . Similar letters from Chief Ministers of various States & several MPs and MLAs have also been received.

In Dec 2015, the VRG Celebration Committee of Yuvakmahasangh with Nitin Dugar (N Delhi)and Kamlesh Choudhary(Sirohi,Rajasthan) as National Convenors ,hosted "Gandhi before Gandhi "drama in the Parliament House’s Balyogi Auditorium, New Delhi. In presence of more than 40 MPs,

the Hon'ble Union Minister Shri Ravi Shanker Prasad gave a "Samman Patra" to his great grandson Shri Chandresh VR Gandhi & released the hindi version of the book "Gandhi Before Gandhi". We are grateful to Shri Pravin C Shah (Ex-JAINA, VRG Chair) from NY, Shri Mahesh Vadilal Gandhi & Mr Pankaj Hingad from Mumbai & Shri Virendra Chand Mehta, and Shri Rakesh Pandey & Shri Deepak Jain from Delhi for their valuable inputs to the VRG Celebration Committee.

