

BIOGRAPHY OF V. R. GANDHI

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VIRCHAND RAGHAVJI GANDHI (VRG) was born at Mahuva, near Bhavnagar. After primary and secondary education at Bhavnagar he joined Elphinstone College in Bombay and graduated with honors. He mastered fourteen languages and at the age of 21 he became the first honorary secretary of the Jain Association of India.

VRG was a great exponent of Indian culture and religion, besides being a brilliant scholar of Jainism. His speeches at the parliament of World Religions at Chicago in 1893 echoed the true spirit and culture of India. He was accorded a warm reception and shown highest appreciation from clubs, literary and church societies, philosophical branches and spiritual associations in USA. He impressed the American public about the Jain religion as a rational religion and speeches received extensive publications in several leading newspapers in USA. He corrected the false, twisted and perverse impression of India as being the land of Maharajahs, tigers and cobras.

VRG stayed in USA for about two years and visited several cities. He returned to USA twice and in 1896 organized a shipload of grain and about Rs. 40,000 cash for famine relief in India. He also visited England, France, Germany and other places in Europe. Herbert Warren studied Jainism under VRG. He qualified as Barrister in London at one of the Inns of the Court.

SOME OF THE EXTRACTS OF COMMENTS FROM NEWSPAPERS AND INDIVIDUALS IN USA :

1. 'Now here is VRG, the Jain, whom you well know in Bombay. This man never takes anything but pure vegetables even in this terribly cold climate and tooth and nail tries to defend his countrymen and religion. The people of this country like him very well.

Letter written by Vivekanandji to Shri Diwanji - November 1894

2. These lectures are instructive to both, old and young, and should be seen and heard all over America. The Rochester Herald - October 3, 1893

3. His lecture was a most scholarly production both in matter and form, and showed a thorough grasp of oriental philosophy. Rev. R.A. White, Chicago

4. It was rarely, if ever, been my good fortune to meet a man whose reading and culture have been so wide and varied, and who, withal, has so sweet, sincere and teachable a spirit as Mr. Gandhi. Hon. E.B. Sherman, U.S. Circuit Court