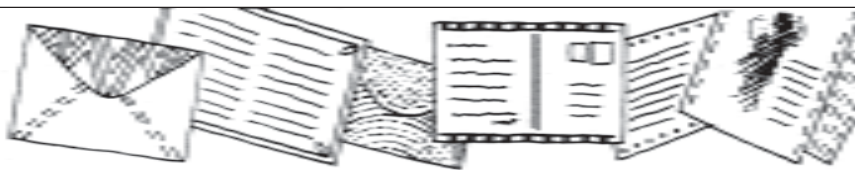


Unscientific Trials

MANUSHI has done a great service to the animal world by bringing out a Special Issue No. 132 on animal testing in the government owned Indian labs. To say the least, they have to be closed down immediately. Every year the Indian Science Congress is held with fanfare. Meaningless resolutions and policies are announced at it by the Prime Minister and other policy makers that claim the government is making science useful to the well being of Indians. India includes not just our humans but also our animals, plants, rivers, lakes, land and all else in our country.

Our animals come next in order of importance after our people in helping us understand the complex interrelationships between medicine and health. Over the years animal trials have been conducted by scientists all over the world. We have strict protocols for human trials, but when it comes to plant and animal trials our scientists act as though they are free to do as they like. Even the full report of the BT Cotton seed trials was not placed in the public domain by the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) of the Ministry of Environment. Unless all the facts related to all types of trials are known, some scientists will continue to violate the law without any restraint.

It is high time that the three types of clinical trials - human, animal and plant, conducted by both public and private labs, are discussed openly every year in the Indian Science Congress, so that the people of India would come to know what terrible things are happening in the guise of research. Second, full reports from all three trial types should be made fully available on Web sites so that the Indian public is able to know what is happening. Third, strict internationally approved



Responses to MANUSHI

protocols have to be followed when conducting all three types of trials. Human trial results are easier to monitor because those who were misused as “subjects” would be likely to speak out. But animals and plants cannot speak out for themselves; we have to protect their rights as “trial subjects” from beginning to end.

Manu N.Kulkarni, Bangalore.

From a MiraBai Dasa

Reading the special issue *Women Bhakt Poets* (Nos. 50-51-52), I felt as though Mirabai was expressly speaking to the spark in my soul. As a “Quasi-Vaishnava” (Krishna devotee) I found her courage and determination to be the deepest teaching ever to come into my criminal hands. The entire 19-page article (pp.75-93) was like a life giving rain, upon a portion of land that was drying up. As such a rain will slowly soak into the ground, and eventually produce a crop, so it is with what I read in these 19 pages... I know the rain of Mirabai will require time to “soak in”, and eventually produce a crop, but her life, words, and your and R. Vanita’s way of successfully conveying it all, has me further convinced that men must step down from the self- assumed role of “master”, and embrace the feminine aspect of creation...the side of creation that gives birth and nutrition to the arid soul. I am in awe of the obvious heart felt conviction you and your associates put into the pages of

MANUSHI. I have never had an opportunity to digest a publication that is so free of bias, and written with such an intense conviction... a conviction that one can easily, and willingly, embrace.

Being a man, who is rather masculine in his physical stature, and sexuality, it has always been against the social norms for me to feel this feminine way, but I have, and have often suffered for it, but suffered in a way that was curious as I had no clue about why, or what it was I was searching for. Anyway, I am not saying that Mirabai is a Goddess, as she herself expressed union with Krishna, but I do tend to believe that she is / was a profound individual, who possessed a genuine grasp of God, and the way to Her/Him! Actually, I’ve decided to take upon myself, the devotional name of Mirabai *Dasa*. Now, I can only assume that self-giving of a devotional name is not in accord with “orthodox” Vaishnava theology, as a *guru* is supposed to impart such a name, but, in the spirit of Mirabai, I feel my taking of such a name, in the self-given manner, is, in fact, in the spirit of Mirabai!! By chance, is MANUSHI aware of any other individuals who have further insight into Mirabai?

Now, to a different area...I do not have much money, as prisoners in Texas are literal slaves, but the reading of MANUSHI has motivated me to ask something that has been in my heart for a very long time... Would you, or

anyone else at MANUSHI, be willing to see to it that if I were to send between \$5-\$10 American dollars each month, this money would be spent on needed terms for a young India girl who has no one to "care" for her, or only has a mother, who earns not enough to make life easy for such a girl? I am told that Delhi has rather large numbers of destitute children...I realise that the little bit I can send is not much, but it should be able to buy a bit of food, or shoes...I can also talk to my mother, and perhaps she could also send a few items, from time to time.

Upon reading MANUSHI, I know I can trust you, or anyone you designate, to properly turn the money into the best possible use, and, as the situation permits, there may be times when \$15-\$20 can be sent...All I ask in return is that such a young girl be truly "in need", no older than 16, and eventually I receive a photo of her and a letter from her.

Peace,

**Timothy Eby Prisoner #623385,
Jordan Unit, PAPA, Texas.**

Obstacles for Activism

I have received MANUSHI No. 135 and read your piece on struggles for the rights of street vendors. I am happy to note that you have now formed a more realistic opinion of the huge obstacles that confront activism. Despite your earlier contempt for NGO type of work, you have perforce had to resort to such work to salvage something for the street vendors in the face of bureaucratic and judicial apathy. I, however, have doubts as to how much the support of your politician friend Subhash Chopra is going to help matters in the long run because these people are inherently untrustworthy!

**Rahul Banerjee, Advasi Shakti
Sangathan, Indore.**

Activist interventions and follow-up on issues we consider important have been a constant feature from the very inception of MANUSHI. These have included campaigns against domestic violence, providing legal aid for women in distress, campaigns to change inheritance laws and social practices in favour of women, relief work during communal riots, active interventions to bridge the politically engineered divides between estranged communities. Our work with street vendors and rickshaw pullers is a part of a continuous process, rather than a new development.

Earlier we did not provide lengthy accounts of MANUSHI 's various involvements and focussed on highlighting the work of others. We began publishing accounts of our work because of demand by MANUSHI supporters. Moreover, we believe our

current work with the self employed poor involves a major paradigm shift in dealing with issues of poverty and therefore, needs to be shared with a wider audience.

I don't know how you got the impression that MANUSHI has an attitude of contempt towards activists or organisations engaged in processes of social transformation. We have carried numerous positive accounts of the work done by NGOs and individuals, including your own. However, it is a well acknowledged fact that a good number of activists and NGOs have become totally self serving and have begun to encash the poverty and misery of our people for personal gain. We have by and large preferred to ignore the existence of such NGOs rather than waste pages of MANUSHI expressing disdain or scepticism about them.

-Editor □

Women Bhakt Poets

*"No one can stop you - Mira set out in ecstasy.
Modesty, shame, family honour - all these I threw off my head
Flinging away praise and blame, I took the narrow path of knowledge.
Tall the towers, red the windows - a formless bed is spread,
Auspicious the five coloured necklace, made of flowers and buds,
Beautiful armlets and bracelets, vermilion in my hair parting,
The tray of remembrance in my hand - a beauty more true.
Mira sleeps on the bed of happiness - auspicious the hour today.
Rana, you go to your house - you and I anntot pull together.
No one can stop you - Mira set out in ecstasy."*

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