

# DIVERSITY AT WORK

## January 2007

(For interest/information purposes only)

**Aboriginal Spirituality: K'aliyee** The time the North Wind blows off glaciers and icecaps that have lingered from the last ice-age.

**January 1: New Years Day.**

**January 1: Temple Day (Buddhism)** North American Buddhists of all schools attend a special service in the temple.

**January 5 : Guru Gobindh Sikh Birthday (Sikh)** Sikhs honour the last living Guru and the founder of Khalsa brotherhood where the initiated adopted the five "K's": Kangha (wooden comb); Kara (steel bracelet); Kirpan (sword); Kaccha (pair of shorts); Kesh (long hair). There are parades and processions held across cities in Canada. Please check with your local community organizations for further information.

**January 6: Three Kings' Day (Christian).** In Latin America and parts of Europe, the end of Christmas season is a traditional time for gift giving.

**January 7: Christmas. (Coptic , Eastern Orthodox, Ethiopian).** On this day, some Eastern churches celebrate the birth of Jesus according to the Julian calendar, which is currently 13 days behind the Gregorian or Western calendar.

**January 14: Thaiposam Cavadee (Hindu Tamil)** Celebrated by Hindus of Tamil origin in India and Mauritius, in honour of Kartikeya, Granter of Wishes, and the elder son of Shiva. Special devotees, with their tongues, cheeks and bodies pierced with needles, hooks and skewers, dance their way trance-like to the temple carrying the Cavadee, a wooden arch covered with flowers and a pot of milk at each end of its base. These devotees believe that by carrying the Cavadee in the prescribed manner, their wishes would be granted for the year to come. Please check with your local communities for information on parades/celebrations.

**January 15: Martin Luther King Jr. Day (USA).** Commemorates the leader of the Afro-American rights movement in the USA. He was a Nobel Prize winner (Peace Prize 1964) and a prominent advocate of non-violent protest. He was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

**January 20: First of Muharram (Islam).** The first day of the first month of the Islamic year 1428 CE, which follows a lunar calendar. This day commemorates the migration of Prophet Muhammad and his companions from Makkah to Medina in 622 CE where the first Islamic community was established.

**January 21: World Religion Day. (Bahai)** At this annual celebration of the teachings of unity found in all religions, Bahai's invite representatives of other traditions to address a common theme. World Religion Day was started in 1955 by the Baha'i faith.

**January 23: Basant Panchami (Hindu)** In Northern India heralds the approach of spring and yellow coloured clothes are symbolically worn. Even the food is coloured yellow using saffron. This festival honours Sarawasti, Goddess of Wisdom and Lakshmi, Goddess of Wealth. Please check with your local communities for information on parades/ celebrations

**January 25: Robert Burns' Night (Scotland, Canada)** Honours Scotland's national poet, born in 1759. Scots celebrate the night with a sit-down Burns Supper and with speeches, poetry and song. Haggis and Bag pipes are some of the specialties of the night.

**January 29: Ashura (Islam)** Commemorates the martyrdom of Hussain ((Prophet Muhammad's grandson) in AH 61 (680 E). Shi'ite Muslims commemorate this event for ten days from the first of Muharram. Mourning processions are held on the day of Ahsura. This date is also associated with the safe landing of Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat and Sunni Muslims fast on the 10<sup>th</sup> and an additional day prior or post 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram.

**January 30: Greek Day of Education or Three Hierarchs Day (Greece, Canada)** It is the anniversary for St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil and St. Gregory the Great who are honoured for their ancient knowledge combined with Christian beliefs.