

CENTRAL BOARD OF SECONDARY EDUCATION
2, COMMUNITY CENTRE, PREET VIHAR, DELHI-110092

NO: D(A) / PA/2005/

December. 13, 2005
Circular No.39/2005

To

All Heads of Institutions
affiliated to the CBSE.

Subject : **Ancient India, R.S. Sharma, History Textbook for Class XI**

Dear Principal,

The NCERT has vide their Circular No. F.3-1/2005(C&P) dated 12.12.2005 has informed about the replacement of the passages made on pages 91-92 of NCERT Ancient India, History Textbook for Class XI by R.S. Sharma. The relevant portions are :

Pages 91-92

1. The Jainas believed that their most important religious teacher Mahavira had twenty-three predecessors who were called *tirthankaras*. If Mahavira is taken as the last or the twenty-fourth *tirthankara*, the origin of Jainism would be taken back to the ninth century B.C. But since most of the earliest teachers, up to the fifteenth one, were supposed to have been born in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, their historicity is extremely doubtful. No part of the middle Ganga plains was settled on any scale until the sixth century B.C. Obviously the mythology of the *tirthankaras*, most of whom were born in the middle Ganga basin and attained *nirvana* in Bihar, seems to have been created to give antiquity to Jainism. The earliest important teachings of Jainism are attributed to Parshvanatha, the twenty-third *tirthankara*, who belonged to Banaras. He gave up royal life and became an ascetic. But his spiritual successor Vardhamana Mahavira was the real founder of Jainism.

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2. He kept on wandering for 12 years from place to place. He would not stay for more than a day in a village and for more than five days in a town. During the course of his long journey, it is said, he never changed his clothes for 12 years, and abandoned them altogether at the age of 42 when he attained omniscience(*Kaivalya*).

The above portions are replaced by the following passages:

Pages 91-92

1. According to the Jainas, the origin of Jainism goes back to very ancient times. They believe in twenty-four *tirthankaras* or great teachers or leaders of their religion. The first *tirthankara* is believed to be Rishabhadev who was born in Ayodhya. He is said to have laid the foundations for orderly human society. The last, twenty-fourth, *tirthankara*, was Vardhamana Mahavira who was a contemporary of Gautama Buddha. According to the Jaina tradition, most of the early *tirthankaras* were born in the middle Ganga basin and attained nirvana in Bihar. The twenty-third *tirthankara* was Parshvanath who was born in Varanasi. He gave up royal life and became an ascetic. Many teachings of Jainism are attributed to him. According to Jaina tradition, he lived two hundred years before Mahavira. Mahavir is said to be the twenty-fourth.

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2. He would not stay for more than a day in a village and for more than five days in a town. During next twelve years he meditated, practiced austerities of various kinds and endured many hardships. In the thirteenth year, when he had reached the age of 42, he attained *kaivalya*(Juan).

Further, they have informed that this corrigendum will come into immediate effect and may be brought to the notice of all schools using NCERT textbooks for the current academic year.

You are requested to kindly take note of the above and bring it to the attention of all concerned in your school.

Yours faithfully,

(G. BALASUBRAMANIAN)
DIRECTOR (ACADEMIC)