Consumption As Dharma
Reading Govardhanram Tripathi's Sarasvatichandra

TRIDIP SUHRUD, Author

Abstract
I wish to produce, or see produced, not this or that event—but a people who shall be higher and stronger than they are, who shall be better able to look and manage for themselves than is the present helpless generation of my educated and uneducated countrymen. What kind of a nation that should be and how that spark should be kindled for the organic flame: these were, and are, the problems before my mind. I lay down this as, for the present, the only one fixed objective before me.

With these words Govardhanram Madhavram Tripathi (1855-1907) articulates his svadharma. This paper attempts to understand Govardhanram's project of tempering the minds and souls of his countrymen through his Gujarati classic novel Sarasvatichandra (1887-1901), with supplementary inputs from the author's notes to himself, Scrap Books and the biography of his daughter Lilavati Jivankala.
The Dharma teaches us the origin of our suffering. The majority of the world’s climate scientists are unequivocal that on the external physical plane climate change is caused by the historic and ongoing use of fossil fuels and the greenhouse gases they generate when burned. Destructive land management practices such as clearing forests also contribute by reducing nature’s capacity to sequester carbon. The Dharma informs us, however, that craving Susan Stone gave this dharma talk on Jan 17, 2017 at the Insight Meditation Community of Charlottesville. The precepts are fundamental ethical guidelines for sane and joyous living. In a world filled with competing views and an overabundance of choices, the five precepts provide a commonsense framework, a trellis, that guides our efforts and promotes integrity and well-being. As part of our series focusing on the precepts, tonight we will focus on mindful consumption.