



GURUKULA NETWORK

Newsletter of Neo-Humanist Schools and Research Institutes
affiliated with Ananda Marga Gurukula

Issue 20 10th Anniversary Edition May 2005

Ananda Marga Gurukula

- 3** Ongoing Programmes, Updates, and Announcements
- 4** AMGK Meeting March 2005
- 7** Kulapati's Tour

Schools and Programs in Focus

- 8** Defying Bullets the Haitian Way
NHE School, Haiti
- 11** The Emerging Curriculum
Sunrise Kindergarten, Australia
- 13** Happy 28th Anniversary to the Iceland
School - The Cottage of Bliss

- 15** A Pair of Well Matched Projects in
Bangalore, India
- 16** AMSAI Mindanao, Philippines
Monthly Themes
- 18** NHE YES - Yoga Education in Schools
Quiet Time Yoga Club, USA

Teacher Seminars

- 20** Education Training Camp at Ananda Shila
India
- 22** NHE Teacher Training, Holland
Education Training Camp, Bokaro, India

Neohumanist Education Philosophy, Principles and Methods

- 23** The Neohumanist Way – Preparing
School Staff /Families as
Neohumanists
- 25** The Values Game
- 26** The Four Classrooms -
A Neohumanist Game
- 28** Seven Life Principles
- 29** Effective Communication and
Counselling Skills
- 34** Conscious Self-Development

- 38** Other Global NHE News

- 46** Publications

Centrefold

CNS Around the World



School Children in Haiti - article on page 8

Sa'vidya'ya'vimuktaye - Education is that which liberates

Gurukula Network

Newsletter and Journal of
Neohumanist Schools
and Institutes
affiliated to
Ananda Marga Gurukula

Two yearly issues published October and May serve as a means of communication for Neohumanist Schools and projects around the world.

Please send us news of your schools and projects, reports on research and publication efforts, articles on Neohumanist Education, stories, pictures, ETC notes, classroom activities, etc. by **September 1st for the October 2005 issue**

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The articles in this newsletter represent an evolving process and not necessarily official policy.

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Donations are welcome for AMGK Endowment Fund and Gurukula Network as well as schools and projects.

Please make checks payable to Ananda Marga Gurukula and send to AMGK Liaison Office.

Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar inspired the establishment of Ananda Marga Schools in 1963 out of which grew an international network of schools and the Neohumanist Education system. In 1990 he founded the Ananda Marga Gurukula University.

VISION OF ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA

Ananda Marga Gurukula is engaged in creating an international network of Neohumanist Schools and Institutes to hasten the advent of a society in which there is love, peace, understanding, inspiration, justice and health for all beings.

OBJECTIVES OF ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA

- To serve humanity with neohumanist spirit and to acquire knowledge for that purpose.
- To establish a strong base in Anandanagar and around the world in order to carry on the legacy of it's founder for the benefit of future generations.
- To provide a sound and conducive environment for students for their physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual well being.
- To promote ethical values in individuals and implement these values in the management of projects, schools and institutions.
- To establish and maintain schools and special academic institutions around the world as well as a cyber university.
- To initiate teacher education programs to improve and upgrade the quality of education on all academic levels.
- To promote Tantra, Neohumanism and PROUT (Progressive Utilization Theory) as the foundation for building a universal society.
- To initiate intellectual dialogues and research for all around renaissance of society.
- To facilitate the placement of volunteers across cultures to help build meaningful relationships and to support community and social change projects.
- To support the building of a global eco-village network (Master Units) .
- To encourage the development of micro-enterprises for sustainability of social service projects.

Chancellor of Ananda Marga Gurukula

Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt., Kulapati
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Ananda Marga Gurukula serves as the Board of Education for Neohumanist Schools and Institutes around the world. These Neohumanist Schools and projects, some of which are featured in Gurukula Network, are managed by the Education Relief and Welfare Section and Women's Welfare Department of Ananda Marga.

ERAWS - Global Education In-charge Ac. Priyaksnananda Avt.

WWD - Global Education In-charge Avtk. Ananda Sucita Ac.

NEOHUMANIST EDUCATION

Universal Love and Values
Holistic Development of the Child
Astaunga Yoga
Ecological and Social Consciousness
Academic, Practical and Personal Skills
Knowledge of Self and World Applied for Universal Welfare
Joyful Learning through the Arts
Culturally Sensitive Approach
Emergent and Integrated Curriculum
Exemplary Role of the Educators



ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA GLOBAL LIAISON OFFICE ONGOING PROGRAMMES, UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ananda Marga Gurukula

<www.gurukul.edu>
amgk.glo@gurukul.edu

CNS – Centres for Neohumanist Studies

Croatia - cns.hr@gurukul.edu, <www.cns.hr>
Sweden – cns.se@gurukul.edu, <www.cns-se.org>
Taiwan – gkacademy.tw@gurukul.edu
USA – cns.us@gurukul.edu

Music College at Uma Nivas

<<http://www.gurukul.edu/~unmc>>

Acupuncture Institute at Ananda Nagar

<<http://acuindia.org/>>

AMGK Taiwan

<www.gurukula.org.tw>

Neohumanist Education

<www.nhe.gurukul.edu>
<www.neohumanisteducation.org>

NHE Forum

NHE Forum is an on-line discussion group for those interested in or working in NHE schools and projects. To join, please write to <anandarama@anandamarga.net>

NHE Resources

NHE Resources is a set of web-based resources for those working in NHE schools. It contains articles, information and classroom aides. If you would like to access these pages, please visit <www.nhe.gurukul.edu/resources.html>, and sign up for a login name and password.

Distance Learning Programmes

The two distance learning programmes for NHE teachers are both progressing with many students. The Neohumanist Diploma Programme is a one year or more in depth tuition programme, certifying the student as an NHE early childhood teacher. The Neohumanist Introductory Programme is a three month or more programme, with the option for certification as an NHE early childhood associate teacher. For more details see the description of Distance Learning Programmes at: http://www.gurukul.edu/instit_distancelearning.php

Standards Available

Ananda Marga Gurukula Standards for kindergarten and primary schools are now available. You may write to <amgk.glo@gurukul.edu> for a copy or you may download a copy directly from NHE Resources.

NHE Introductory Program in Spanish

Through the efforts of Didi Ananda Anuradha, work has been completed on translating the NHE Introductory Programme into Spanish. To get an electronic copy either through e-mail or on a CD, please write to amgk.glo@gurukul.edu. Didi Ananda Anuradha is coordinating the translation of NHE material into Spanish. If you have any other NHE material already translated, or if you are interested to help with this project either in translating or with financial support, please contact Didi at: <wisdom@racsa.co.cr>

Volunteers for Your Project

Mayadhiis'a from the Netherlands is the co-ordinator of the AMGK Volunteer Network. At our webpage <www.gurukul.edu -> helping us -> volunteers> we can put information about your project and volunteers can apply to it. A volunteer coordinator will get in touch with you if a volunteer is interested in your project. If you want your project to appear on the website too, then please fill in the form at http://www.gurukul.edu/help_projectmanager_application.php

YES - Yoga Education in Schools - Manuals

The YES manual for 3-5 year olds is in the final stages of production. YES is the inner core of the NHE curriculum. This manual gives theoretical foundations and practical guidelines for teaching yoga practices to young children in a gentle and safe way. It is composed of tested examples of materials from experienced teachers who have practiced in the classroom for many years. You will gain a deeper understanding of how to teach the subtle concepts of yoga, values and meditation to children. As a teacher you can use this manual as a foundation to create your own curriculum adapting to the needs of the children in your locality and culture. For further information please contact amgk.glo@gurukul.edu

STUVOL

New STUVOL booklets for KG 1 and KG 2 have been prepared for Delhi Sector by AMGK mostly from material from the Circle of Love manual. Anyone interested in reproducing them in their own Sector can contact amgk.glo@gurukul.edu

Ananda Marga Gurukula Meeting

March 15-20, 2005
Ydrefors, Sweden



This year will mark the 15th anniversary of Ananda Marga Gurukula, which was founded on September 7th 1990 by Shrii P. R. Sarkar. A six day international meeting was held in Ydrefors, Sweden with 12 participants, to further the coordination of AMGK activities. The sun was shining while the snow all around provided a beautiful back drop. Some highlights of the meeting were:



- ❖ Vision statement was updated and a SWOT analysis was used as a basis for strategic planning.
- ❖ The Constitution and Bylaws of AMGK Inc. were reviewed and approved.
- ❖ A detailed discussion was held concerning the NHE movement which included the NHE Diploma Programme. The process of affiliating schools and certifying directors of NHE Schools was initiated. See more details below.
- ❖ New NHE Publications and Resources were chalked out. See details below.
- ❖ Efforts were begun in the process of accrediting AGMK and its programs such as those offered by CNS and NHE Faculty. See foldout on CNS.
- ❖ Efforts were expanded to establish sectorial branches of AMGK in every sector as per the founder's guidelines. The process has begun in NY and Berlin Sectors and will soon be initiated in all other sectors.
- ❖ Electronic version of GK Network and cyber-related matters were discussed and a committee formed to realize the objectives.
- ❖ The AMGK Volunteers Program was reviewed.



Neohumanist Education

At the 50 year anniversary of Ananda Marga and 15 year anniversary of Ananda Marga Gurukula, we are happy to be able to present to the world our global network of Neohumanist Education as a consolidated system of education, firmly based in its own philosophy and principles and dynamically evolving its pedagogy. Neohumanist Education is the underlying spirit of the entire Gurukula. Its ideals are to be infused in all faculties as the living spirit that inspires the character of the entire educational edifice of Gurukula itself. NHE is a distinct faculty of Gurukula responsible for disseminating Neohumanist Education into all faculties. At this time work of this faculty is concentrating on NHE in Early childhood, elementary and secondary schools.

NHE Early Childhood Diploma Programme

Under the NHE faculty, with input from many NHE educators around the world, we have now finished producing a course for Early Childhood which has been offered as a distance learning pilot programme for the past four years. At present 24 of our senior NHE educators are in the process of reviewing the completed course to ensure its global applicability and endorsement. The course will continue to be available as a distance learning programme for interested and qualified students. At this point in time the NHE Diploma Programme is an "in house" course. Applicants must minimally complete some spiritual life style training before signing up for the course and must be associated with an acarya who will give their recommendation. A tentative price of \$1200 was set for the course, to be adjusted as needed. Those taking the course will be able to act as head teachers or directors of schools and be able to train other teachers working under them. This course will be a degree programme once Gurukula is registered as a degree-giving university. The course already has many students, some of whom are expected to complete the course this year. A graduation ceremony will be held at CNS in June 2006 as part of the NHE Seminar (see below).

NHE Teacher Training Programme for Elementary School

Work will soon begin on the NHE Diploma Programme for Elementary grades through consultation with our existing model elementary schools around the world.

Affiliation and Certification

As per Shrii PR Sarkar's instructions, we are starting the process of certifying all NHE schools and Directors and affiliating the schools and institutions with AMGK. The process has begun with our model schools around the world. This effort will be expanded to include all NHE schools in the coming years. The process of affiliation of schools involves meeting the NHE Standards set by AMGK and the director certification includes successful completion of the NHE Diploma Programme or equivalent.

NHE Publications

In coordination with the work to begin on the NHE Diploma Programme for Elementary grades, AMGK is beginning a project to produce books related to the specialties of NHE in the areas of Astaunga Yoga, Ecology, PROUT for kids, STUVOL, etc. These will be by age group – Kindergarten, Elementary, Junior High, etc. Many of you have a wealth of material in these areas that you have created, assembled and successfully applied over the years, and we will be asking you to share this material either by contributing to the AMGK publications, or by producing your own publications that can be distributed by AMGK. Work on YES and STUVOL has already begun.

NHE - YES - Yoga in Schools

See page 3, announcements, for an update on the YES manual for early childhood. Work on the manual for elementary level is beginning with Didi Anandarama and Kamaleshvara and we invite input from all our schools.

NHE - STUVOL

New STUVOL booklets for KG 1 and KG 2 have been prepared for Delhi sector with material mostly taken from Circle of Love. Work on elementary level will be next. See next page for more details on STUVOL.

NHE Educators Summit will be held June 6-16th 2006 in Sweden.

The programme will include an NHE Seminar, Graduation for those completing the Diploma Programme and an Ananda Marga Gurukula meeting. If you are interested to attend please contact:

<amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>

WHAT IS STUVOL ?

STUVOL - Student Volunteers is part of Neohumanist Education. This program was created as an extracurricular activity by Shrii P.R Sarkar and is similar to after school programmes or electives. STUVOL runs from Kindergarten to College. STUVOL offers students activities through which they can develop their service spirit and grow into caring and benevolent personalities. Through STUVOL activities, students apply their learning, gain practical skills and experiences, get scope to express their creativity and resilient spirit, gain confidence in their personal strength and share their joy with others in the society. In NHE schools, STUVOL can be a separate programme, or the elements of STUVOL can be integrated into the rest of the school programme.

STUVOL Age Groups

STUVOL 1 - KG to grade 2

STUVOL 2 - Grade 3 – 5

STUVOL 3 - Grade 6 – 8

STUVOL 4 - Grade 9 – 11

STUVOL 5 - College

Four Aspects of STUVOL

1. The Physical aspect of STUVOL aims at developing healthy habits, love and care for one's body and surroundings, resilience and strength.

- Health related knowledge of home remedies
- All-round cleanliness skills
- Yoga, kaoshiki, tandava (competition)
- Games, sports and martial arts training
- First aid, nursing, emergency training, safety skills
- Culinary and hospitality skills
- Construction and building skills, architecture and design
- Farming principles and nature related information

2. The Intellectual aspect of STUVOL aims at developing expansion of mind. As a backdrop for learning about the world we use the cycle of creation (Brahmacakra) to introduce general knowledge of the natural environment in relation to the child.

- Problem solving
- Learning English as the common world language
- General knowledge about what is going on around us
- Functional knowledge and independent thinking ability
- Mechanical, electronic and computer related skills
- Space related knowledge such as astronomy and astrology
- Different religions and mystical traditions

-Communication skills - reading, writing, speaking, dialogue, negotiating, debating, discussing, summarizing.

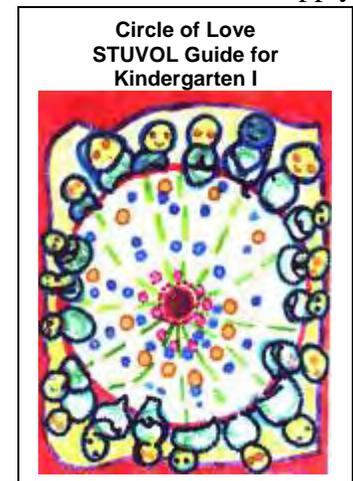
-Office management skills

3. The Moral aspect of STUVOL aims at developing trustworthiness, character and developing good habits in the child.

- Smartness, etiquette and social norms
- Character building and moral training
- Discipline
- Communication
- Problem solving
- Personal development skills
- Kiirtan, meditation
- Biographies of inspirational people
- Leadership skills

4. The Cultural aspect of STUVOL aims at developing omniscient grace, nice temperament and ideation of the Great in the child.

- Poems, songs and stories of inspirational nature
- Sentient entertainment - humour, jokes, magic and tricks, puzzles, riddles,
- Mysteries of the world.
- Drama, puppetry
- Multicultural arts and crafts
- Basic philosophical ideas
- The greatest places on earth



some highlights from Kulapati's Tour

Europe



At a fruit tree planting ceremony in Denmark Master Unit, Ananda Gaorii, with Amal from Norway and Amal from Long Island.

Meeting with Dr. Josie Gregory of University of Surrey in England.



working with the local monks who are helping identify the most needy.



Attending the Renaissance Cafe February monthly meeting. Participants included Tony Judge (Research Director of UIA Union of International Associations), Dr. Joseph Van Keuku (Director of Foundation for Innovative Leadership & Management Solutions), Nadia Mclearn, Environment Scientist & Renaissance Change Agent and Tim Bremmers of The European Institute for Law Enforcement Cooperation. Among topics discussed were Nature of Good & Evil; Value based Education & Social Transformation in Europe.

At NHE Teacher Training in Holland.



Malaysia



Meeting with some survivors from Na'm Khem Village (Pangna /Ranong Province, Thailand) of the tsunami disaster. Dada Prema is coordinating efforts and also



of the new school building.

Visit to Rakrook Nursery in Lampang, Thailand which is based on the principles of NHE.



Thailand

Intensive seminar on NHE for Sangkhlaburi teachers following inauguration

With the well-wishers of NH Movement-- Editor (Elfi Seitz) of Pattaya Blatt and Khun Chainarin Srfiueungfung, Managing Director of Horse Shoe Point.



Lampang Rajabhat University spent 750,000 baht to carry out a research on the application of Neohumanist principles for student personality development. Here, Prof. Thipawarn Seedolrusamee presents a report of the study to Dr. Shambhushivananda which was carried out in 2004 and in which 2500 students practiced yoga as well as neohumanist techniques for self-development. On behalf of NH Foundation, Nuntaka Taweepkul of Lampang served as an advisor to the study.



Eating Thai rice with a dear 11 year old friend at Horse Shoe Point.



Dance 101

Defying Bullets, the Haitian Way

Report from the Neohumanist School in Haiti

By Demeter Russafov

There is a shooting in the slums of City Soleil on this day. It is something normal, really, that's what the ten-year old boy standing next to me says with a shrug of his bony shoulders. He has long learnt not to pay too much attention to the almost melodic sounds of daily gunfire. His attention instead is transfixed on the action taking place in the large hall in front of us. Small whirling figures dance in concentric circles; the tempo slows only to pick up speed seconds later in a frantic urgency of intense motion. The beating of the drum, mesmerizing and joyful, overpowers for a brief moment the distant sounds of guns, and one can

almost forget that this tiny shrine of music and movement is situated in the midst of the social and political chaos of Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Welcome to Creole Dance 101, one of the 10 experimental programs recently introduced at the Delmas Center of Neohumanist Education, or so called CENEO. The school and its sister campus situated in the valley of Boudon base their teaching methods on the philosophy of Neohumanism - promoting creativity, introspection, compassion and respect for all creation. At CENEO an agronomist with a strong interest in urban organic agriculture teaches bio-intensive gardening, composting, and medicinal plants using the schools' rooftop tire-gardens as an example. A geography teacher with a passion for music incorporates songs, drumming, and play in his daily classes. A practical skills instructor pushes the limits of academic learning by inspiring students to use their newly acquired skills to build a simple dwelling for a poor family. Three times a week more than eighty middle-aged women finish their literacy class in Boudon with a short yoga session and meditation, and ten-year-old students start their day with a "mindfulness walk" and a "morning circle of love". A karate instructor teaches young girls the importance of coordination, balance and self-control, while next door a dance class pulses with the rhythm of Latin music. Students cross the ocean waters in open-deck canoes, learning the importance of team play and self-reliance. They spend the day exploring an island's flora and fauna, playing cooperative games, swimming and running down the sandy beaches, and nothing can take their smiles off their faces (or the sand speckles off their cheeks) on the way back home.

Neohumanist Education is based on the understanding that the most important task in front of an educator is to inspire the students' imagination and unleash their creativity in a systematic way, building-up their self-confidence



"Construction Workshop at the Delmas Campus"

and expanding their minds. The goal is to develop an increasing sense of compassion for all beings, and a growing interest in universal spirituality. This progressive educational system gets a new meaning in the context of the ongoing social and political crisis in Haiti. The impoverished Caribbean country can be a tough place for a kid to grow up in, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the slums of its capital. For decades the nation's poor have been streaming from its provinces to Port-au-Prince, looking for better employment and education opportunities. What they have found instead has only been a dense concentration of the nation's failed hopes and unmet expectations. While arguably offering better paid jobs and infrastructure, the city has also squeezed millions into poverty-stricken urban ghettos lacking electricity and running water. And with the nation slipping into a worsening abyss of economic collapse and social upheaval, the rising crime rate and the daily attacks and threats upon schools and students have led to the closing of many central district schools and to an unprecedented drop in student attendance.

One surprisingly quiet early evening I sit on the rooftop of the school with the Director of CENEO's Delmas Campus, Dada Karmavratananda, and with Jeanine Baez, a vivacious middle-aged Haitian American visiting us for the day. An unassuming yogi monk of African origin, Dada easily wins people's affection with his personal warmth, humble disposition, and selfless dedication to social service. Sitting amidst raised-beds of organic swiss chard and other green leafy vegetables, we talk of the school's history and philosophy. The first of the two schools in Haiti opened doors, so to speak, in 1984 under a mango tree with less than 80 students. Over the years numerous volunteers of Ananda Marga, the global social and spiritual organization responsible for the schools, struggled against all odds to create a progressive and dynamic educational model. Is the curriculum restrictive in any way, Jeanine asks, does it impose a certain doctrine? Dada answers with a laugh, and then calls over one of the students tending the closest vegetable bed. Olem, what do you want to do when you grow up, he asks the boy. After a long moment the boy answers, I want to help Haiti become a big garden. I can see that he means it too, with his big smile and sincere eyes. That is why the gardening, exclaims Jeanine. Yes, gardening is definitely a way to connect with the live divine energy around us, Dada adds. Similarly the students learn to incorporate spiritual principles and practices in their daily lives -



"Computer education with a creative twist"



"English-Creole Scrabble"



"Art is Fun!"



"A canoe expedition to the Isle des Cabris".

developing compassion, social engagement, determination, the importance of right diet, of discipline, of taking time off, and of universal spiritual morality.

Our conversation is interrupted politely by Olem who informs us that the karate class is about to begin. Jeanine has been wanting to see the young self-defense students for a while, and so we head down to the hall. In the hallway we pass through several large classrooms, each hosting various activities. Girls are quietly intent on their sewing assignments, next door several middle-aged women stand in front of a blackboard slowly writing words and sentences, and in another classroom an English teacher sings short phrases and greetings together with her students. We pass a group of jolly yet calm thirteen-year-old girls and boys clutching yoga mats - they salute us with their palms joined together in front of their hearts. Jeanine doesn't hide her surprise, you have them trained well, haven't you, she laughs, I can almost forget that I am in Port-au-Prince. The school strives to build respect for all cultures and spiritual



"Daily Yoga Stretches"



"Marching on - Karate Class for Girls"

beliefs, Dada explains, with the goal of integrating rather than isolating the student from her or his cultural and social surroundings. The objective is to create awareness in the students that all beings, all knowledge, and all experiences are interconnected and important, that learning never ends, and that it doesn't recognize boundaries or restrictions. As a result the values taught are universal and deeply personal.

The karate class has begun. At the front row there are a dozen ten-year-old girls - they stand in position, tall and straight as if to show the boys in the back that they belong there. As we enter the hall their little tightly clenched fists go up in the

Continued on page 12

The Emerging Curriculum Sunrise Kindergarten

by Sue Rolfe, Kindergarten
teacher
Sunrise Preschool and Long Day
Care Centre
Melbourne, Australia



It is Autumn in Melbourne, some of the trees are changing colour and their leaves are falling in all shades of gold. It will be a warm day but right now the air is crisp and still. The Kindergarten is in a quiet street, but 100 metres or so to the east it is loud and busy with morning traffic.

At 8 am all is quiet as the two staff members survey the Kindergarten and begin setting up the outdoor activities. There is a mixture of indoor and outdoor play and all the areas of child development are catered for through a range of activities which in themselves cater for more than one area of development.

The collage table is a permanent fixture and it is here that the children extend physical and cognitive development through making things. The sandpit outside provides the satisfaction of being with: friends (social development), the tactile sensation of playing with the sand (emotional development) and the manipulation of the sand and the containers and tools (cognitive development). The book corner and the puzzles are permanent fixtures also and provide opportunities for the beginnings of literacy and numerical development. There are other 'subtexts' but this is enough for a demonstration of how one activity can provide opportunities for development in more than one area.

The programme has been planned for 2 weeks for 5 children and in its execution will also cater for all other children, with careful observation and interpretation by the teacher and carers.

To bring about the programme, anecdotal observations are taken of each of 5 children, a number chosen for optimum attention to details. All carers are asked to record anecdotal 'happenings', such as how a child interacts with other children, how they went about doing a painting. Parents have been asked for their input for more insight, detail and information, such as any recent family celebrations, changes at home, etc. The teacher looks closely at these anecdotes and interprets them, for instance categorising them into the areas of development, and identifies an area for focus. Thus the programme begins to take shape with up to 3 areas of development on which to focus for the next 2 weeks.

This programme has goals of developing confidence and self esteem (social and emotional), becoming competent in management of the body to develop physical skills, and extending interests (cognitive).

The goal for each child is broad enough to encompass the needs of all children, and it is often possible for 2 children to share the same goal with different emphases dependent on age or ability. This is made specific for each focus child through objectives. For instance if the goal is to develop physical skills, one of the objectives might be either 'to determine hand preference' or 'develop pincer grip'.

Some children arrive shortly after 8 am and begin to engage in the activities. Someone may need extra assistance to separate from his or her parent, but soon they are settled into an independent activity or with the caregiver or with a friend at a small group activity. Many of the children like to help early in the day. These first activities often indicate the child's interests and later they may be guided to play in a small group where a

skill may be developed or extended, e.g. the wooden blocks are a good place to develop eye-hand coordination, the construction area will be where the children may develop that pincer grip of using finger and thumb.

We have our morning circle with Didi accompanying on her guitar and we sing our Sunrise songs and many of the children's favourite songs. Then we meditate before fruit time. Later, before lunch, the children join the yoga group or take part in the 'pre-school' group time for storytelling, drama and music. The latter is also a very important part of the emergent curriculum. The children's interests and abilities to concentrate and take part guide the content of each session. It is also lots of fun for the children and the teacher as a story or topic can lead into any adventure. For instance a trip to the jungle may require camping equipment, travelling on a plane -and then the animals we see -WOW!!

We enjoy our days at Sunrise. We share many of the tasks that go with looking after small children. As well as our Director, Didi Ananda Tapomaya, we have a Kindergarten teacher and two qualified Child Care workers. It is a Long Day Care centre, open from 8 am to 6 pm and the staff works a range of hours across the week. The children are 3 years to 5 years old, and we have 22 children. Some of them will go to school next year while for some it is their first experience away from home. We often think we are like one big happy family and we love to see all the children develop and grow.

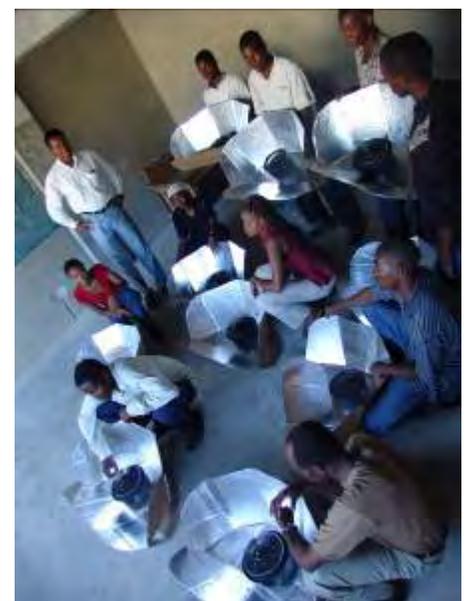


Defying Bullets, the Haitian Way Continued from page 10

air in a synchronized motion, their eyes showing firm determination are focused straight ahead. Jeanine can't contain her satisfaction and claps loudly right next to my left ear. I grimace and cover it, causing the kids to reel in laughter. Karate is one of the several disciplines emphasized at CENEO with the goal of developing in the students the ability to keep their focus on the present. Another one is the practice of meditation - the students learn to take a quiet break, to keep their attention on one task at a time, to visualize and to concentrate better. And yet another such discipline is yoga - this centuries old practice is practiced daily at the centre, and has been scientifically proven to help balance the body's glandular system, resulting in an increased mental peace and physical health.

The schools have developed a strong practical training focus - supporting initiatives such as solar ovens and construction workshops, sewing cooperatives and adult education classes, computer and Internet education, crafts and art. One of the main problems with education nowadays is that it has become too abstract and linear, suggests Dada. Education has lost its connection with the practical application of knowledge. Even worse, adds in Jeanine, it has lost its connection with the student's soul and imagination. By creating a safe and nurturing environment to grow and explore the human potential the two CENEO campuses aim to break the vicious cycle creating hopelessness and perpetuating violence in the capital. The philosophy of Neohumanist education nurtures the desire for individual self-expression, yet it encourages the inherent human tendency to give and to help, to withdraw for a moment, and to find peace and inspiration within. In a city like Port-au-Prince, where bullets fly more often than birds, such lessons might just make all the difference.

Demeter Russafov is an Ananda Marga full-time volunteer in Haiti
Project Contact: <coordinator@NHEhaiti.org>.



Solar Ovens Class

Happy 28th
Anniversary to the
Iceland School
Leikskólinn Sælukot -
The Cottage of Bliss
By Didi Anandamayii
DSL Reykjavik

In the land of climatic extremes, of fire and ice,
there is a place of unending sun, even in the
winter...

as the
bright
eyes of
our little
children
sparkle
and
shine,
even
brighter
than our
brother
sun.



In 1977, members of Ananda Marga in Reykjavik, the capitol of Iceland, opened the first Ananda Marga School in Europe. The school was given the name “Leikskólinn Sælukot” (A play school in a cottage of bliss). A few years later Didi Ananda Sukriti arrived to run the school. Didi, the “little orange nun” played a very active role in the community of Reykjavik. Our current head teacher has childhood memories of seeing Didi Ananda Sukriti dotting here and there around in town. In addition to Didi’s work at the school she was also well remembered as “the orange nun who gave us free soup.” The teenagers used to hang out downtown and Didi liked to cook for them. It was her positive relationships with the local members of Ananda Marga, parents, teachers, community and many social dignitaries that enabled her to establish Sælukot. The former Prime Minister, David Olson, and the president Vigdis played a major role in getting the land and permission for the school. Much credit is also due to sister Anasuya who was a young university student at the time and put all her energy into establishing Sælukot.

In 1995 Didi Ananda Tapatii came to Iceland. Her great care of the project and immense love for the parents and children helped Sælukot to remain well respected in Iceland for its innovative children’s program. Due to its popularity and waiting list Didi took the determination to extend the school. In 2001 Sælukot had grown to include a small summer greenhouse, a very large classroom, one new bathroom, two small rooms, a sports room, parking area, new fencing, private garden, and new play ground equipment.

Being posted in a school with a history as old as me is fascinating. I meet former graduates, now adults, and teachers in our school, and parents... and I see in this place, how Shrii PR Sarkar’s teachings have touched and shaped their lives. As educators we often don’t see the immediate effect of our work in the society, but here, I see flashes of that light: Not long ago there was some publicity about a group of children from our school who

organised a service project at the children's hospital. They took their old toys and things and sold them at the supermarket then gave the money to the children's hospital; they were around 8 or 9 years old, and all graduates of Sælukot.

Another parent, who had all 3 of her children go through our school, told this story. She was stuck in a traffic jam, and very upset when her son Sturtla, 3 yrs. old, began to teach her meditation... saying... "close your eyes..... relax..... and say.... Baba namKevalam...Love is all around me"

Sælukot is located near the sea, next to a primary school gardening project, an Elderly Care centre and a small local airport. The setting is big and fresh and great fun. On our land we have a tunnel, teeter-totter, sandbox, swings, climbing structures, outdoor vegetable and flower gardens as well as a few small hills that make for great sledding in the winter! Because of our location we are able to take regular visits to the sea and visit the elderly. Iceland is a great place to raise children. With its clean water, air, and safety they can run and play very freely. I was astounded that even during blizzards the children go out to play. Their mothers say that it is due to the fact that when they are babies they wrap them up well and let them sleep in their buggies outside on the doorstep!



Inspired by the classroom design of the NHE School in Den Bosch, we have just finished rearranging our classrooms with a separate classroom for each layer of the mind plus two additions, an eco-green house and a music room. It is wonderful to see how the arrangement of the rooms affects the flow and movement of the children so much. Our staff is currently very busy working on developing an in depth curriculum.

In May the school will be celebrating its 28th birthday. One of the projects that we have been working on is a documentary film. This has entailed much research mainly from photos and interviews. Every former student that I have interviewed, when I ask the question, "what do you remember from Sælukot?" says, "Didi, and circle, meditation, and home."



The children sing kiirtan and meditate twice a day. During free time, we find them organizing their own circle with each other and with the dolls and stuffed animals. There are a few who have their own spiritual stories.

Tómas, now five years old ever insists that the spiritual teacher, Baba, is not dead. He will argue with Stora Didi (Didi Ananda Tapatii). When he sees Baba's photo he says..."He is not dead, I saw him digging in the sandbox." Tómas saw him two years ago, yet still cannot forget that memory.

Yesterday one of the children asked me, "Didi, did Baba eat animals?" I asked, "What do you think?" He replied, "No, I don't think Baba could hurt anything." The children's contact with Baba is merely through a photo. We don't discuss Baba, and still, they understand.

These stories are endless, the stories of how being in a spiritual environment, learning spiritual practices from a young age helps the children so much. This is my continual inspiration, like today when a crying child came to my office and said... "Didi, can we sing Baba Nam?"

Sælukot continues to be popular among the progressively minded people. Most of the parents are working in the fields of art, music, education and social work. More and more people, when hearing about the specialties of our school, especially the yoga and meditation, mention that in the future, “All schools should teach this.” And perhaps, very soon, that will be a reality of the future.

In honor of the 28th anniversary all of our permanent teachers attended the international Neohumanist Teachers Training in Den Bosch, Holland. It was fantastic and really brought a great flow bound to benefit all. In the month of May, on the full moon, we will be having a festival to celebrate the school’s birthday, and will be inviting all the former students, parents, and teachers. Before that we intend to set up a website and produce a DVD about the history of Sælukot.

A Pair of Well-Matched Projects in Bangalore, India

By Jody Wright

Sometimes the best service projects work synergistically, supporting each other in a way that helps both grow and be strong. So it is with the Seva Dharma Mission Centre in Bangalore, India. The Centre is a training centre for future acharyas in Ananda Marga. It also is the home of a day school for 130 local children.



What is the synergy? The school is open from 9 am to 1 pm each day. The trainees have a chance to learn how to teach at and run a school in the mornings, and in the afternoons and evenings they still have time to study and do extensive spiritual practices. The tuition from the middle-class students helps support the training centre, and much of the space is shared. Since almost all acharyas in India work in schools, often as the directors, this is an important part of their training.

Didi Anandashopana worked hard to grow the school from just a dozen children when she arrived in 1996 to a large school in 2004 that can support the centre and is an important connection to the community. In the beginning she set about making friends in the neighbourhood and in the wider community. Her philosophy was that the training centre should be well-known and respected in the area, and so she set up chairs in the front of the centre and opened up the gates for visitors. She kept a careful eye on the school, the children and the teachers so that she always was up to date on what was going on. She also set up other projects, such as a weekly clinic with a local Ananda Marga doctor which served the community more directly.



With the help of Didi Cirasmita and Dada Yatiishvarananda, Didi Ananda Shopana reached out to members of Ananda Marga in other parts of the world and was able to raise funds for building more classrooms. Her goal was to raise money for new buildings, but let the school support itself and the on-going costs of the project with tuition. That way no dependency was created on donations.

She handed the school and the training centre over to Didi Ananda Madhu Dhotana last summer, who will continue this well-matched pair of projects.

Monthly Themes at AMSAI Mindanao, Philippines

By Didi Ananda Carushila'
Davao Sister Training Centre



There were many activities throughout the school year 2004-2005 of AMSAI Mindanao and we would love to share these nice experiences.

At AMSAI schools in Davao, every year there is a calendar of monthly programs which help to engage the teachers, parents and students in activities that enhance the existing academic programs. Activities such as Nutrition Month, Filipino Day, Family Day, United Nations Day, Environmental Month, Sports Fest, etc. serve as a platform to forge close coordinated cooperation among the teachers, parents and their families, in moulding the child's mental, social and spiritual growth.

To promote our vegetarian diet to the parents and to introduce them to a healthy lifestyle, in **July we had a nutrition month program** with the theme from the government program "The importance of breastfeeding". A cooking demo was performed by Sister Amrta and Sister Amita from the Sisters Training Centre. A food preparation contest was also held which involved the parents and students, trying to outdo each other with a nutritious and delicious cook out of vegetarian dishes, which were beautifully presented before the judges. No wonder the judges had a hard time deciding which group would be the winner! A lively affair complemented with children's singing, poems, and very useful information on breastfeeding from the guest speaker.

"Linggong Wika" or Filipino Day was celebrated with a bang in August at AMSAI Atis, Mateo and Digos. Children in their traditional Filipino and colourful garbs added patriotism to the event which is held to commemorate the citizens of the country giving importance to Wikang Filipino as the national language by unitedly using and loving the language. There were dances, folk song renditions, singing, dancing and choral recitation by the children followed by Filipino-style games. It was a "Bayanihan spirit" (one of Filipino trait, meaning friendship by helping and working together as one) where the parents also put up booths with Filipino products and food exhibits, adding to the colourful celebration. It has been a very good activity for kids to learn about their own beautiful culture.

September's activity was Family Day. It was the first time that we had a parent seminar workshop. The topic was "Your child and Neohumanist Education" to develop the understanding of the parents and how they can support the child in the Neohumanist way. Mrs. Ciencia Y. Plaza, Dada Mantrajapananda and Didi Ananda Carushila were the speakers in the workshop, touching on the science of child psychology, morality, spirituality



and Neohumanist philosophy. It was an interesting program for the participants, which prompted the parents to request another whole day seminar for learning meditation and yoga.



The environment was given prominence the Neohumanist way, in the **Environmental Month celebrated in November** with tree planting. The children in AMSAI Digos planted vegetables “okra and eggplant” at the backside garden of the school. In AMSAI Atis and Mateo they also learnt how to do sprouting.

A variety of dance, chorus recitation, Christmas songs and parlor games were part of the **December Christmas party** in AMSAI schools. The children were very excited with the nativity-drama “Story of Jesus”. It was their first performance and with the help of the parents the children could perform it nicely. Our PTA became the Santa Claus complete with the costume, which made his own child wonder where his father was.

The Sports Fest in January where the children had a Field Day in sack race, 50 m dash, slippers relay, asanas and beautiful Callisthenics. They also played games such as Trip to Jerusalem, Bottle Filling and Statue Dance with prizes awarded to the winners and losers as well.

An educational field trip was organized in February with a visit to the Fire Station. The children were so amazed when they saw the firemen slide down the sliding pole. They also visited the Post Office and the Radio Station DXCP of General Santos City. At the radio station the children were given airtime to recite a poem “All things bright and beautiful” and to sing songs from the Circle of Love. Next stop was the Orphanage and Yusepeng Zoo where the children were excited by the sight of a large snake. The field trip gave the children an opportunity to learn things outside of school.



School was ended with **graduation ceremony in March** with deportment, co-curricular and loyalty awards and certificates awarded to the students. Parents were also recognized for their contribution and co-operation through Parents Recognition Awards. Sister Cetana our AMSAI volunteer consultant produced a very touching story “When God imagined the world”, in which the students acted out the drama. A beautiful story about when there was nothing in this universe and God was alone. So He imagined a world of order and beauty and created mountains, trees, flowers, blue sky, human beings etc. Then came the greedy loggers and fishermen to destroy His creations like fish, trees, etc. The children cried and Mother Nature heard their sadness and cast rain, thunder, wind and earthquake to teach those destructive people a lesson, making them tremble and fall with fear! She summons the people to never ever destroy God’s creations and begs them to take care of them. (The children complement the story with rendition of an equally beautiful poem “All things bright and beautiful). Everybody enjoyed the drama very much.

It has been a great experience to be involved with the activities of AMSAI !!!

And so May opens the schools for enrolment and new intake of students for another year of joy and learning adventure!

NHE YES – Yoga Education in Schools

Update from the Quiet Time Yoga Club in New Haven Connecticut

By Linda Baker

For the past four years I have continued to provide a Quiet Time Yoga class for students in the inner city magnet school where I work as the guidance counsellor for 700 children, kindergarten through eighth grade. I have been teaching this curriculum in an after school program to children in my school in two age categories. One class is for third and fourth grades and the other class is for fifth through eighth grades. I have seen the class evolve over the years and this year I have changed the format and the name to After School Relaxation. The class emphasis is on relaxation and artistic aesthetic expression. Here is the curriculum for the third and fourth grades that I used this past year.

Transition Activities

When the children arrived to the after school class they were very much wired from the day. The buses were also being called on the loud speaker for about twenty minutes. I started the class with transition activities that mostly included reading a story that brought us to a more relaxed state. Books such as *All I See are Part of Me* and *What If* were great transition books. Sometimes I read longer books (i.e. *Sky Castle*) and part of the book every week. As the weeks progressed, I would introduce stories with neohumanistic messages such as *Miss Rumphus* after which we would discuss the book's message for a few minutes.

Yoga

Once the school quieted down, each child would sit on their mat in half lotus. I would play music; I found a particular favourite was Heart of the Mystic. It was important for the music to be very calming, soft and in the background. The children would close their eyes and then breathe in through their nose and out through their mouths. We would then stand and do Mountain pose. It was important in the first part to have the children first sit than stand very still and practice

slowing down their breath. I found that they needed to be talked through every step while also demonstrating. It was important for me to be completely calm and in a meditative state as the children were very affected by my own state of mind. I used the same routine every week and then would add a few more difficult asanas at the end. I would make sure that the students did not hold any asanas for very long. It was mostly stretching and breathing to help their bodies to calm down. The sequence then was:



- Sit in half lotus and breathe
- Mountain pose
- Neck rolls, shoulder rolls, arm rolls
- Stretches up to the ceiling and rolling down to the floor
- Shaking their hands
- Sitting down and doing the three sister asanas
- Stretching their legs
- A few more difficult poses such as fish or shoulder stand

- Massage (modified, as fifth through eighth graders can be self conscious in a co-ed class)

Meditation, Relaxation and Guided Imagery

In the first few classes I would have the students do corpse pose and then a guided relaxation where I had the children concentrate on relaxing different parts of their body one area at a time. I also had kiirtan playing the entire time in the background. I then use a guided imagery. These were very simple visualizations that start with a walk in the woods or a beach or a mountain climb. They always end with something open ended where the children can go off on their own journey with someone they love. The idea is to first give children a positive internal image and feeling and then have them create their own special place full of love and people who love them.



About the third or fourth class I will introduce meditation before the corpse pose. I talk about it at the beginning of class as another way to relax their minds after they have relaxed their body. They still do corpse pose after and the guided imagery. I found that when I replace the meditation for the guided imagery at the end there was tremendous resistance. The children were so hungry for that positive imagery, they wouldn't give it up. When we meditated first and then relaxed and then did the guided story, they really were able to let go and meditate.

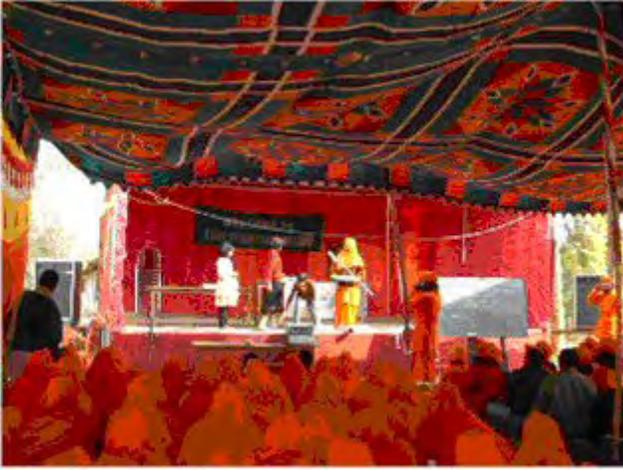
Extensions

After they get up from the guided imagery, we shared our imaginary stories or journeys. The children loved this aspect. They were so into sharing their stories and some stories were very beautiful and deep. We ended with an artistic activity such as painting drawing or crafts such as beadwork. The children got to express an aesthetic part of themselves in these activities.

Yoga for Teachers and Parents

It should be mentioned that for two years there was also a class of yoga for teachers taught by Anjali, a local Ananda Marga yoga teacher, and a few of the teachers received personal meditation instruction. The parents have also invited me to give a class on stress reduction and want more classes for themselves and their children next year. I guess we can say that one good thing that has come out of the current U.S. administration is a whole lot more stress in our lives and the desire to look for alternatives.

In American culture today the stimulation is so intensely external. The children in my school rely on TV and video games for most of their outside school experience. There may not be a lot of adults to interact with or activities to engage in. I found that the children are also exposed to a lot of violence, anger and harshness in their lives. There are children in my classes that have been homeless or lost a family member to violence. Their lives often are unstable and inconsistent. They might not know where they are going to sleep or how they are going to eat, who will care for them or will they be abused. Of course there were also children who had very loving and intact families. There were amazingly beautiful and spiritual stories that came from all the children no matter what their background. They really enjoyed creating a place inside that was beautiful, secure and loving. They had great capacity for this and great need also. It was an honor to provide that "Quiet time" for them.



ETC at Ananda Shiila, India - December 2004

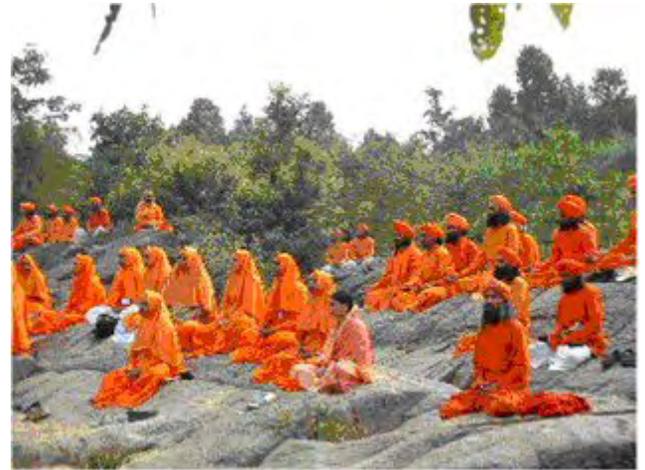
By Didi Anandarama

Ananda Shiila is in the countryside outside Ranchi in the state of Jarkhand. It is the place where the sage Bhrgu spent his last days in meditation on a rock at the river that passes through. In those days the area was a lush jungle and the tall forest trees still remind us of those days. Avadhutika Ananda Giita was telling us a story of when she was in Ananda Marga LFT training and came to do service with the local tribal

people. She said that in those days about 40 years ago when they arrived with a jeep, it was for the first time that the local people had seen a jeep. And the story goes that the local people thought it must be an animal and brought straw for it to eat.

In this still lush and peaceful nature the over 200 participants of the ETC were in a relaxed and joyful mood. The opening was presided over by the Minister of Education of Jarkhand state and performance of local cultural dances.

The weeklong ETC covered many topics such as an 'Overview of NHE' crystallizing its four pillars: philosophy, principles, pedagogy and teacher. The strength of NHE lies in its philosophical base, on which the guiding principles influence the emerging pedagogy and necessary personal educational development of the teacher.



Workshops were given on:

-Classroom management that advocated rotating class leaders such as 'discipline minister', 'health minister' etc. who would help the class with particular tasks.

-Art and craft activities that enhance the classroom teaching using inexpensive material in a creative way.

-Teaching charts and teaching devises that can be easily prepared and used to support the topic to be taught.

-Discipline in the classroom from the field of experience with lots of practical tips.

-Meditation and Yoga with children with practical demonstration of how to conduct a class

-Public Relations - its definition and clear application.

-Demonstration of a "Conversation" (see next

page)in a group of eight on the question: "How can we work towards implementing NHE in our school?"

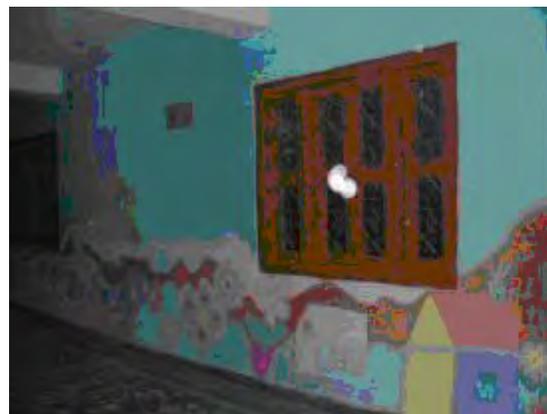


Practical activity:

- How to paint beautifying designs on school walls with the help of children
- First Aid for children
- Games
- Sharing of original rhymes and original stories
- Cultural programmes

Resolutions of ETC:

- Art syllabus from Kindergarten to class 12 to be prepared by Avtk. Ananda Carushila' Ac.
- NHE Introductory course to be translated into Hindi by Avtk. Ananda Sucita Ac.
- Decentralized ETCs in various places in Delhi Sector.
- STUVOL researched and booklets to be prepared by Avtk. Ananda Rama Ac.



Homework for participants until December 2005:

- Focus on one creative skill to take up to study and practice as one's personal development.
 - To take up one intellectual skill to study as one's professional improvement.
 - To improve the school facilities through garbage management and creative designs.
 - To improve the teaching with practical teaching tools such as charts etc.
 - To submit evidence of above study in a portfolio with pictures, papers and written feedback.
- Participants also agreed to submit their original work such as rhymes, stories, games, activities, workshops, presentations in written form at the next ETC 2005.

Conversation Meeting

Conversation Meetings are conversations in a small group with the purpose of initiating an open dialogue with all present on a particular question relevant to all. It has been found that in a small group of 8, the participants feel at ease to open up without hesitation to contribute their thoughts and ideas on issues that affect their lives. This simple process leads to constructive actions supported by deeper understanding.

Conversation Process

The organizer will invite 8 persons informing them of the topic, which can be put as a question such as "How can we improve our school?" The host will set the time of beginning and ending. The Conversation Meeting should not go more than 90 minutes.

At the assembly, the host will post the rules:

Acceptance : suspend judgment as best as you can

Listen: with respect

Curiosity: seek to understand rather than persuade.

Diversity: invite and honour all points of view.

Sincerity: speak what has personal heart and meaning.

Brevity: go for honesty and depth but don't go on and on.

Round 1: Each person, one after the other speaks briefly to the topic, others do not give feedback or response at this time but listen attentively. An object can be passed around which the speaker will hold while talking. This gives a reminder that the attention is now on that speaker and when he or she is finished he or she will pass on the object.

Round 2: Now each person deepens their own comments or speaks to what has meaning now in the group. Again the conversation is going from one to the next while the others only listen without responding directly to the speakers.

Dialogue: After the second round the host will open up the conversation. The host or another person may serve as facilitator if there is domination, contention, or lack of focus. The facilitator can stimulate the group to go deeper with questions such as:

-What happened that led you to this point of view?

-How does this affect you personally?

-I'm curious, can you say more about that ...

-Here's what I heard ... is that what you mean?

Final round: with talking object each person says briefly what was meaningful to them and how they wish this to lead into practical outcome

Neohumanist Education Teacher Training Program

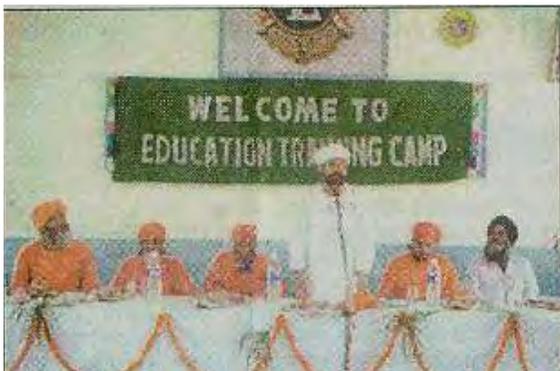
Den Bosch, Holland
February 4-6, 2005

The Teacher Training program in Den Bosch was attended by 30 teachers with participants traveling from as far away as Iceland and Greece. Kulapati, Dada Shambhushivananda conducted three workshops; one on the Kosas, one on The Brahmachakra Cycle and another one on Life, Death and Samskaras..



Vishvashanti led a theater workshop on the "Elements" which was fun and educative. All enjoyed the skits that were performed and participants studied body language dominated by the different elements.

Yadhurani led a workshop on the Practical Aspects of the Layers of the Mind for children ages 0-6.



Education Training Camp Bokaro, India May 2005

An ETC Camp was held in Bokaro in May 2005, in the outskirts of Anandanagar. Namdhariji, a well known social worker was the Chief Guest who said that he was impressed with Ananda Marga's dedication to provide quality education to children. He said that he has discovered that Ananda Marga Education System is humanistic and practical. It provides a way to bring about genuine welfare of the people. A new STUVOL book prepared by Ananda Marga Gurukula NHE Faculty was released on the occasion. More than 300 teachers attended the Camp. The Camp was held at the Lions Club in Bokaro Steel City, 17 kms from Anandanagar. The Chief Guest said: "Today's leaders need the training that will make them swallow poisons and provide nectar to others. NHE shows the way towards transmutation of negativity into positivity". On the occasion an ERAWS 2005 souvenir was also released. Ac. Dhruvananda Avt., Priyakrishnananda Avt., Parmeshvarananda Avt., Avadhutika AnandaJyotirekha, Ac. Anarvananda Avt., Ac. Yatiishvarananda Avt. were among those present at the Camp. Ac. Sudamshuji conducted the ETC ceremonies.



The Neohumanist Way

Preparing School Staff and Families as Neohumanists

By Marcus Bussey

Neohumanist educational theory and practice follows in the venerable footsteps of the critical pedagogical tradition. This point can easily be established with reference to the central themes of social justice, reflective action and a commitment to practical not theoretical engagement with the real-life issues of teaching in situ found in the heart of critical pedagogy.

It is important to realize that a name tells a story and that in the context of critical pedagogy the word ‘critical’ does not mean to criticize. It means to look beneath the surface of the taken for granted, to question assumptions and to ask that telling question: ‘Who benefits from things as they are? And of course, ‘Who loses?’ As a way of approaching the world it is not narrow and the term can only be loosely defined. I like the descriptive definition given by Symes and Preston here:

“[Critical pedagogy] is an orientation, not a closed paradigm; it is a way of addressing problems, not a set of answers; it is ready to be amended at any time; it is therefore somewhat resistant to precise statement of how it is to be implemented; it is truly ‘educational’ in the etymological sense of the word, leading out to new and revised forms...Critical pedagogy is committed to engaging social realities (the pragmatic impulse) but it is not to be bound by them, just as it sees no reason to apologize for a visionary dimension (the romantic impulse). Indeed, in the quest to distil from contemporary social theory an adequate basis for education policy and practice, the emphasis on utopian praxis is essential.” (Symes 1997, 78)

Neohumanism shares this utopian dimension. Such a vision serves as a catalyst for engagement (praxis), generating the momentum for developing the visionary energy to describe and strive for the ‘good-life’ well lived. Yet critical pedagogy is not the only stream that converges in the neohumanist tradition. There is also a healthy dose of post-colonial critique in which the privileges and oversights of a Eurocentric academic and theoretical tradition are challenged. The fingerprints of feminism can also be found here as we find the gendered and partial narratives of patriarchy overthrown and new models of thought and action proposed. There is also a post-structural sensibility present here that allows the neohumanist to challenge narrative, seeing it as layered and causal in nature. And beyond the post-structural lies the indigenous sensibility of an ecological and mystical kind. Tantra here is the most potent strand, in the hands of P.R. Sarkar it functions almost as an anti-narrative that merges vidya and avidya in a transcendent social theory that weaves human struggle and consciousness into an ever unfolding cosmic drama.

This is truly liberating stuff! Neohumanism is both critical and spiritual, analytic and synthetic; merging as it does the scientific rigor of the west with the integrative embrace of the east. As Sarkar likes to remind us, Rudyard Kipling was wrong when he said, “East is east and West is west, and never the twain shall meet!”

To step beyond the theoretical maelstrom we find the neohumanist individual bringing together an ethical sensibility, a desire to serve with a deep awareness of belonging. It is difficult to know if there is an order of appearance, I suspect that they emerge differently according to an individual’s samskaras. What is clear however is that there are different processes available to us that help establish us in the neohumanist way.

There is no doubt that sadhana or contemplative practice of some kind is essential. Lifestyle folds into this and becomes a sadhana of its own. Awareness grows out of theoretical immersion in the pool of neohumanist specific material and also in a broadening awareness of the theoretical and historical context of the neohumanist philosophy. Beyond this there is the labour of love (karma), applied neohumanism as service, which instills in us an awareness of body, working with mind and with soul towards a worthy end. The utopic stance (adarsha)

of an end worth striving for inspires and generates hope in the heart of the worker. Work in itself can be a creative expression but singing, painting and artistic expression of all kinds kindles joy and when shared with a community of kindred souls quickens the joy and commitment to go ever deeper.

In neohumanist schools seeking to develop neohumanism in their staff there are more site-specific tools at hand. Nothing is more important than a mentor who inspires the new staff members to challenge their own fears, insecurities, prejudices and doubts. Simple rules on life style are also something that some schools can enact, though this can prove difficult in the more permissive western cultures who take all such acts as attacks on individual autonomy. Such people need to be shown the difference between the isolated and existentially alienated individualism of advanced capitalism and the ecologically situated grounded individualism of neohumanism.

The taste of success, the experience of trust, the sense that they are not alone, the joy of working for goals that keep on expanding as they become more neohumanistically aware also work towards establishing new staff in the neohumanist path. Workshops and collective gatherings are also important. **Workshops such as the Four Classrooms and The Values Game really help people understand what it is that makes neohumanism unique.** They feel the power of it and at the same time come to acknowledge the wounds that hold them back in their own neohumanist journey. Collective gatherings whether job specific as in reflection times, conferences, school celebrations, sharing occasions or just spiritual gatherings for shared meditation, collective meals, kiirtana, singing or spiritual sports also develop a deepening sense of belonging and commitment.

Ultimately of course each of us has to cross that bridge on our own. This is the point at which we are graced with the realization that we have a mission. Many never reach this point because we do not clearly understand the long role of nurturing in our lives. The patient love required to see people to this point is an incredible thing. Sarkar talks of developing a 'loving stamina' for just such occasions.

The two group activities that follow are useful tools and can help all involved become more reflective beings. They have been designed for teachers, school staff and university students but are generally applicable to anyone. They can be modified for any context but the end result needs to be an increased self-awareness along with an emerging knowledge of the forces that have shaped us. The great Brazilian critical pedagogue Paulo Freire noted that: "Only beings who can reflect upon the fact that they are determined are capable of freeing themselves." (Freire 1998)

This is an essential awareness for a neohumanist: the recognition that we are culturally and historically bound. It is only when we recognise this fact that we begin to be free.

Freire, P. (1998). "Cultural Action and Conscientization." Harvard Educational Review 68(4): 499-521.

Symes, C., & Preston, N. (1997). Schools and Classrooms: A Cultural Studies Analysis of Education, 2nd Edition. Melbourne, Longman.

Today's humanity is in despair; people think too much about their imperfections. They think, "Can I do it?" But in that supreme, Neohumanistic status, they will say, "Yes, I am a Neohumanistic being and I am destined to do great work. For that purpose I have come onto this earth. So there is no scope for doubt whether I can do it or not."

Once long ago I went to Purulia. I was carrying heavy baggage. I asked a village man: "Can you carry this baggage?" He replied: "Why not, certainly I can!" I appreciated his answer very much. And I am sure that one day this Neohumanism will inspire the world population to say, "Why not, certainly we can!"

And I am confident that on that day no geo-sentiment will be able to rear its head, no socio-sentiment will be able to erect barriers of discrimination in human society, nor will any demon be able to harm millions of people in the name of humanism by exploiting their gullibility. And when those ever-vigilant human beings, those physico-psycho-spiritual entities, will be able to merge their existential nuclei with the Supreme Existential Nucleus, then only will Neohumanism be permanently established, and human beings will be ensconced in the joy of freedom forever. On that day they will proclaim in full-throated voices: "We have come to the world to perform great deeds -- for the physical welfare of all, for the psychic happiness of all, and for the spiritual elevation of all -- to lead all from darkness unto light."---Shrii P. R. Sarkar

The Values Game

Values determine what kind of reaction we have to situations we encounter in life. Some of these values we wear on our sleeves while others lie hidden in our unconscious. Such values cause us to react in different ways. Take for example a man who has no trust. He will see the world and others as out to get him. He may also have fear, and therefore react either aggressively or with terror when faced with a threat.

The Values Game allows students to experiment with root causes to personal and social responses to situations.

1. Ask the class to generate a set of values. These need to include both positive and negative ones. They need at least twenty.

2. Put these into a 'hat' and divide class into groups of 4-6. Have each group draw four values from the hat and ask them to use these values to explore possible responses to the following set of unexpected events.

- You win the lottery
- A shadowy figure follows you as you walk through a dark park
- A woman offers you a gift
- A parking attendant books you for parking too long
- You take a friend out for a meal and find they are vegetarian

These scenarios can of course be added to by the class.

1. Have the class reflect on the way they chose responses according to the matrix of values they had.
2. Replay the game a week later and observe any growing sophistication on the part of students in handling the process and thinking.
3. Have the settings role played for greater effect.

For further elaboration of the thinking involved:

Look at history.

4. Choose figures from history and look at their actions and make educated guesses as to the values that underpinned their choices and actions.

Look at the recent history of the group.

5. Consider some recent experiences faced by the group. What were the values that generated the responses to these situations?

The Four Classrooms

A Neohumanist Game

Preface: These notes are for the facilitator who can use these notes as part of the reflection after the activity outlined on page 27.

Teachers usually fall into three groups:

1. *The old style authoritarian teacher (as Authority) who has a paternalistic attitude to students and their families; [Positive values Respect, Discipline, Order]*

2. *The humanist teacher (as Scholar) who has a devotion for the mainstream (middle-class) knowledge categories and a desire to share (in order to enlighten/inculcate) with children and their families; [Positive values Respect from sense of Relationship, Self-Discipline, Order, Cooperation, Curiosity, Life-Long Learning]*

3. *The critical teacher (as Revolutionary) who has an awareness of how knowledge and power go hand in hand and a desire to develop critical literacies in children and their families. Classroom is democratic and children have a say in learning. [Positive values Respect from sense of Relationship, Self-Discipline, Order, Cooperation, Curiosity, Life-Long Learning, Sense of Justice, Issues-Based Awareness, Confidence, No Fear of Change, Self-Awareness and Reflexivity]*

Teacher No 1 sees classroom practice in terms of discipline and information transferral. – defining quality: **FEAR**

Teacher No 2 sees classroom practice in terms of collaborative learning, curiosity and a sense of knowledge acquisition as an end in itself – a passport to higher social status and value. – defining quality: **ENGAGEMENT**

Teacher No 3 sees learning as a practical, democratic and liberatory project in which students gain critical capacities and the skill and confidence to engage with social change – defining quality: **PASSION**

Teacher No 4 There is a fourth category:

The Neohumanist teacher: defining quality: **JOY**.

This individual builds on Teacher one, two and three. They integrate and synthesize positive value structures with a spiritual context and a sense of depth, promise and joy. This is not expressed so much in words as in practice. Sadhana builds the foundations, there is a clear sense of the spiritual and social mission directs personal energy, devotion is contagious – children feel connected to something greater. The teacher is both co-learner and wise guide.

No1. Teacher as Authority Rule of Law

Discipline and Punish dissent
Discourage Questions
Heavy Structure and Knowledge
Factory
Reward correct answers.

No2. Teacher as Scholar Rule of Reason

Teach through fascination and curiosity
Reward interest and ignore dullness
Preference for Academic Disciplines
Restricted appreciation for Learning Styles
Praise and Dramatize.

No3. Teacher as Revolutionary Rule of Questioning

Democratic process challenged by questions from teacher
Information shapes opinion and guides social action
Self-interest identified with the group and the globe
Classroom a microcosm of the globe.

No4. Teacher as Authority-Scholar-Revolutionary Rule of Love

The Rational is applied benevolence of mind.
Classroom as ongoing conversation.
Choice shaped by emerging process
Teacher will initiate activities and processes that open heart-head dialogue both for individuals and the group.
Collective singing and other creative none-language based actions.
Meditation is either implicit or explicit according to sense of teacher.
Wonder-awe a key feature as is sense of mission and the interconnectivity of all things.

The Four Classrooms Game

This game explores these four positions through role play and reflection.

Step 1

Divide workshop into four groups.

Step 2

Introduce the four categories of teacher-in-the-classroom as in side bar above:

Step 3

Tell each group they will team teach according to the profile given above. They are not to tell the other groups what their profile is.

Give each group a number on a card with their profile attached and allow 5 minutes (maximum) in private spaces to work out how they will run their class. (see side bar on first page)

Step 4

The facilitator then calls the groups together and sets some rules.

1. Follow instructions of the leading group;
2. Act quickly as there is only 7 minutes for each group's role play;
3. Don't talk/reflect while in process;
4. Behave as you would if a student in a class;
5. Keep questions till after the four groups have run their class.

Step 5

The facilitator then runs the classrooms in numerical order (1, 2, 3 & 4). It is important to progress in the correct order so as to get a sense of the opening up of the personal, psychological, emotional and spiritual space. The facilitator calls out the next number when 7 minutes is up. There should be no time for reflection until all the classrooms have been run.

Facilitator calls STOP!

Step 6

Reflection Time 1

Allow 5 minutes for people to talk in their own groups about the experience.

Step 7

Reflection Time 2

Entire group now discusses the experience led by the facilitator who asks these questions:

1. What were their emotional responses?
2. What names can we give to each classroom?
3. Where would we find each classroom in the country where we work?
4. What are the strengths of each model?
5. What are the weaknesses?
6. If we were teachers, and some of us are, what do we need to do to work towards the NH model.
7. How do we build a bridge between language (rhetoric) and practice?

The personal development of the teacher is an essential element of Neohumanist Education. The three articles that follow are shared with this in mind.

"Academic certificates do not necessarily confer on a person the right to become a teacher. Teachers must possess such qualities as personal integrity, strength of character, righteousness, a feeling for social service, unselfishness, an inspiring personality and leadership ability. They are sama'ja (social) gurus (teachers who lead from darkness to light) and for this reason it is not possible to accept just anyone as a teacher. Because teachers have an extremely important role to play, their professional standards must be very high." Shrii P. R. Sarkar



Seven Life Principles

from a talk given by Dada Shambhushivananda
at CNS Sweden

Life is a bundle of **choices** (conscious decisions). Some choices are dictated by our past karma and almost all of them are determined by our level of awareness at any given point in time. Some are motivated by our inner weaknesses and some are product of our innate strengths. Some choices are guided by our life-long ambitions while some are influenced by our social conditions, educational training or temperament. Some are rational and predictable while others are purely whimsical and unpredictable. Some choices are calculated or wise while others may be impulsive or self-destructive. Some may be influenced by our family members while others by our peers or others. Some choices make us regret them all of our life while others leave us elated and proud. It is important to recognize that we make choices every day of our lives. The sooner we can

begin to become conscious of the pros and cons of our choices, the sooner shall we begin to direct our life towards our cherished goals. Only when we begin to “own” our choices and their results, can we begin to take responsibility for our lives. If we can do so while maintaining a cosmic ideation, so much the better.

1. Choice- do we have one? 'Owning Choices'.
2. Responsibility- how to deal with failures?
3. Hard Work- Are there short-cuts? Working Joyfully.
4. Vision- if not, then what?
5. Moving Together- a time tested principle
6. Surrender –to what and how?
7. Walking Alone- even when the world walks away.

Responsibility carries with it a lot of anxiety, stress, fears, complexes, challenges and often, excitement and joy. Sense of responsibility is a rare trait and is always in great demand. Nothing great can be accomplished unless executed with a sense of responsibility. Responsibility carries with it sincerity and sense of purpose. Responsibility helps build trust and goodwill. It helps set examples for others and initiates change at all levels. Whatever our choices, we cannot escape the responsibility of our choices and what follows from them. The greatest challenge, however, is how to wipe away or reconcile fear, guilt and other complexes that accrue due to human imperfections. When the goal is noble and for individual and collective good, there is no reason to get bogged down. One has got to march ahead without fear or hesitations.

There is no shortcut to **hard work**. Work done joyfully and with love is the most potent ingredient for a happy and peaceful life. Skilfulness in work is the secret of success in life. One who shirks from duty and work can rarely achieve prosperity. Hard work is the necessary condition- though not a sufficient condition to move forward in life.

Vision inspires action and guides the strategy and action plans. If we do not have our own vision, we shall surely be led by others' visions which may or may not contribute to our individual and collective welfare.

Continued on page 33



Effective Communication and Counselling Skills

Notes from
A workshop given by Dr. Sid Jordan at
CNS Sweden

This experiential four-day workshop on Communication and Counseling Skills led by Dr. Sid Jordan delved into the world of Getting to Know Oneself; Ways of Active Listening; Interpersonal Dialogue; Conflict resolution; Understanding Cultural Biases/Gender Inequities; and Counseling in times of Stress, Traumas, Disasters & Special Situations. Good communication skills are very important for us to bring across our message and to do service.

1. Communication with Ourselves – Self- Awareness

In order to communicate with others we have to know ourselves first. We need to be authentic and honest about who we are, our feelings, thoughts, desires and needs. Without this self-knowledge we might find ourselves projecting onto others our thoughts, feelings or desires. It is said, “What we conclude about others says most about ourselves.” We have to become aware of our sensations, emotions, feelings and beliefs. We have to go inwards and see from where we are being influenced; through external elements such as sounds, light, cold, hot etc, through internal body processes such as pain, breath, blood flow, muscle movements, or through an internal thought projections. Once we are aware of these things it will be easier to strengthen ourselves and move our vrittis to higher kosa’s through biopsychological processes.

Identifying our beliefs – To become more aware of our beliefs we should identify them and express them. What do we think of fear, anger, grief, despair etc.? If our beliefs seem to be negative we should turn them into positive affirmations. Affirmations can be made on all levels physical, mental and spiritual. Art is another way of expressing these beliefs, through this process we come to a synthesis of our beliefs and feelings in a drawing.

Eidetic Imagery (ISM) – ISM is a visualisation exercise to identify, release, and surrender certain feelings. ISM stands for Image (multi sensory), Somatic (bodily response), and Meaning (making sense of it). Through visualisation you imagine yourself in a specific situation when a certain feeling like anger was aroused, including the details of setting, surroundings, bodily responses etc., and become aware of the meaning of this situation. In the next phase you create a new image of the situation where you handle things differently. The image should be spontaneous, plausible and beneficial to all involved parties. After the visualisation you can also role play your new image to make its effect stronger. Through these types of exercises we can build our self-confidence of dealing with things in a positive way and not letting our feelings of fear, anger etc. control our lives.

Psycho synthesis – This psychology combined with spirituality is helpful in encountering our sub personalities, desires etc. Visualisation is again a useful tool to see our desires (in symbolic way) and bringing them to a higher (spiritual) level. We should develop a dialog with our desires and intuition.

Truth Mandala – In this group exercise we learn to express our higher vrittis. The mandala consists of a stick (despair), a ring (hope), a flower (love), and a stone (fear). While standing in the circle we come to a synthesis of these feelings by expressing our truths about each of them. For progress we need to find a balance between positive and negative elements.

2. Communication with Others

After becoming aware of ourselves, we should become aware of others and their needs and feelings; one cannot go without the other. It is important to know when we are in contact with others what message we give (verbal or non-verbal). Sometimes people need to hear something other than our message. Generally what we conclude or say about others says more about us than the others. We don't really listen to what people are really telling us.

Johari Window – There are certain areas in our lives that are known or unknown to ourselves and known or unknown to others. The public area (A) is what is known to self and others, the blind area (B) is known to others but not self, the secret area (C) is known to self but not to others, and last the unconscious area (D) which is unknown to both self and others. When we want our communication to be more transparent we should move from the unknown areas to the public area thru feedback (others telling us things we don't know about ourselves) and self-disclosure (we will tell others our secrets).



Participants of workshop in Sweden

Awareness exercise – We should become aware of others, who leads, who follows, what are their qualities, their characteristics etc. We have to be careful not to judge and mix our observations with past experiences, leaving aside our own things and being totally with the other person.

Communication Skills – Observations, feelings, needs and requests are the ingredients for communication both for expressing and receiving.

Observations – The concrete actions we are observing (seeing, hearing etc.) that are affecting us. We should not mix observation with evaluation and neither make generalizations.

Feelings – Emotions or sensations in relation to our observations. We should discriminate thoughts from feelings. We are responsible for our own feelings not others (emotional slavery vs. emotional liberation).

Needs – Connecting our feelings with needs, values, principles or ideology (I feel... because...). We have to be clear about our feelings and needs, only then can we have a clear communication.

Requests – Requesting clearly that which would enrich our lives without demanding. A request is an objective relation of honesty and empathy.

Active Listening – When communicating we have to become aware of observations, feelings, needs and requests, to do so we have to be with the other person 100%. For a better understanding we should restate the feelings and needs of the other person, but not too quick as it might be offensive as well. We should empathize with the sender and touch deeper levels and not try to advice, sympathize, interrogate etc.

“I” Messages – These messages are direct and honest expressions of our feelings and perceptions of others' behaviour without evaluation or interpretation. This leads to a better understanding of effects of the behaviour on the sender and the relationship. The messages can be positive and negative. An “I” message consists out of four parts: the other person's behaviour, the effects of the behaviour on you, the feelings you have about it, and the needs you have.

For clear communication we should use both active listening and “I” messages so that we become more transparent (public area in the Johari window).

Socio-sentiments and Social Equality – Sentiments for a certain culture, group, sex etc. can be obstacles in communication. We should become aware of our own sentiments as well as how others perceive us. To overcome socio-sentiments we should develop a proto-spiritual mentality. Through that, devotion as a practice transforms into devotion as a principle. In knowing ourselves and communicating with others, we need to respect the unity in diversity. We need to acknowledge and remain aware that each of us is affected by the lifelong influence of our cultural background, to various degrees and in different ways. Social equality therefore can only be attained if everyone, individually and collectively, makes efforts towards that goal. On a personal level we need to take responsibility for our thoughts, words and actions. On a social level for the dissemination of true spirituality, activities to raise awareness and understanding of the issues and psychological and emotional education of the public are a must to achieve gender equality. None of these is possible without communication, to which we each individually and collectively as a family are to contribute. The goal of coordinated cooperation is without doubt only feasible if an understanding of another's thoughts, feelings and needs is established. Until then, a universal family remains a concept of theory only, deprived of the warmth and love flowing from hearts open to listen and share.

3. Conflict Resolution

On the road to unity, conflicts are surely to come. Critical is the resolution of these in a Neohumanist manner. A conflict is any situation in which people have incompatible goals, interests, principles or feelings. There are four types of responses to conflicts:

Active-Constructive – Through individual effort the conflict will be reduced.

Passive-Constructive – Without individual effort the conflict has dampened.

Active-Destructive – Through individual effort the conflict has escalated.

Passive-Destructive – Due to lack of individual effort the conflict continues.

Win/Win resolution – This means to seek a mutual understanding of the problem and mutually agree upon solutions that are beneficial to all parties. Everyone should be treated equally and active listened to without preconceived ideas. Steps to take: problem definition, alternative solutions, solution evaluation, mutual agreement on solution, implementation of solution, and re-evaluation of solution.

Neohumanist Approaches to Conflict Resolution – Many conflicts find their origin in elements of geo-sentiments, socio-sentiments and gender inequality, we should replace these sentiments with a devotional sentiment to resolve all conflicts and achieve social equality and cooperation. Only then can the obstacle of conflict be turned into a friend, a helping force that aids to establish us in the achievement of social equality and cooperation. At the base of conflict resolution is trust, a prerequisite factor for open and benevolent communication. And for trust to develop communication is needed, alongside our sincere efforts to raise our self-awareness.

According to Shrii P.R. Sarkar's "The Liberation of the Intellect – Neohumanism" there are 5 principles for conflict resolution and decision making:

Study – Defining the conflict and solutions through acquiring all the relevant knowledge related to the conflict according to time, place and person.

Rationalistic mentality – Analyze all the positive and negative sides of the points, accepting what is positive and rejecting what is negative.

Final Analysis – Collective decision to the decision/resolution to accept what is conducive to the welfare of all and then propagate it.

Social Equality – The decision making and conflict resolution should follow the principle of social equality, representing the "collective march of all in unison".

Proto-spiritual mentality – We should move towards the Supreme Entity, once established in proto-spiritual flow, devotion as a practice is transformed into devotion as a principle and only then we can fight against socio-sentiments.

Communication Steps

1. Enhancing relationships of all parties, through expressing love towards everyone, developing unity, active listening and creating an open and accessible and open atmosphere.
2. The next step is to transform emotions through acknowledging our own feelings and those of others and transform them towards compassion for self and others, goading all our thoughts, feelings and actions toward the welfare of all.
3. The last step would be to resolve the conflict through creating a safe environment with clear guidelines for the dialogue, looking for consensus, communicating openly and honestly in a benevolent manner, seeking solutions that honour the dignity and needs of all, and strengthening the collective decisions and solutions with concrete plans for ongoing cooperation and collaboration.

4. Stress Management

Stress – An external pressure that leads to disorganisation (external) and emotional distress (internal). Many things can cause stress in us such as environment, people, disasters, work etc.

Everyone has some kind of stress and it is not per definition negative, it can also work for us, in fact stress is a normal reaction of the body to compel us to action.

Stress management – We need to find out what is the optimal level of stress for us and how to manage stress instead of eliminating it. The following steps can help in stress management: we should become aware of our emotional and physical reactions, recognize what we can change, reducing the intensity of our emotional reactions to stress, learning to moderate our physical reactions to stress, building our physical reserves and maintaining our emotional reserves.

Transformation through visualisation – Eidetic Imaging (ISM) is useful to change our stress experiences, like we can do with our emotions. While doing the visualisation about a stressful event we can feel our bodily responses such as sweating, heart beating, anger, frustration, fast breathing etc. All these bodily responses are related to our cakras and vrittis (second, third and fourth cakra). Through bio-psychology (asanas, mudras and sadhana) we can change these body responses and reduce our stress reactions. To establish ourselves in higher cakras, we have to pay attention to all levels of our being, physical, mental and spiritual. Through mythic imaging another type of visualisation we can transform stress feelings related to persons or situations into something subtler (transforming fearful love into fearless love). Again in this exercise we can feel our body responses, but this time they relate mostly to our fourth and fifth cakra.

5. Crisis Intervention

Once an external hazardous event (a traumatic experience) influences ones life, stressful symptoms will occur. Depending on the individual's reaction to an intense stressful situation professional help may be sought, or support from peers might be sufficient. The level of distress however, does not depend solely on the event itself. Rather the level of distress as experienced by an individual is determined by the perception of the individual, depending on the individual's samskaras, state of mind, etc. With respect for the individual's reaction we can listen and observe how best to serve the person, realising that the individual's defences are there for a reason. When it is not be within our capacity to help a person we can refer them to professionals.

Individual Crisis (Individualistic patterns) – Natural disasters, human disasters, losses of any kind (death, jobs, relations, divorce etc.).

Generic Crisis (predictable patterns) – Related to development of person (ex. going to college), family life cycle etc.

Trauma Symptoms – Symptoms may vary from crisis and person, but general stress reactions can be listed as follows: sleeplessness, excessive sleep, irritability, startle response, nightmares, weight loss, flashbacks

(images, sounds etc.), depressed mood, anxiety, fear, social withdrawal, emotionally flat, dissociated, preoccupied, intrusive thoughts, physiological arousal (shock), anger, compulsions to re-expose self to traumatic stimuli, hopelessness, loss of control, undoing things, survivors guilt etc.

Crisis Intervention – We should become aware of the trauma symptoms in people and try to help in dealing with the trauma or when needed referring them to mental health professionals. If possible we should intervene within the first two weeks after the event. In that case the persons involved can readjust to their lives as before (status quo) or even to a state of being better than before. If no help would be offered to the persons they might get a chronic post traumatic stress disorder, and not come back to their status quo.

Acute Crisis Intervention (6 weeks-2 months) – If intervention happens in this period the chances for recovery are still good.

Chronic Crisis Intervention (from 2 months) – Two months or more after a traumatic event the stress reactions can turn into a stress disorder (PTSD), and will be more difficult to deal with. In this case extraordinary stress causes biological changes in the people.

Actions after crisis – When a traumatic event occurs we should take the following steps:

Natural Grouping – In case of big disasters where more people are involved we should group the people for the debriefing and defusing. Groups can be such as neighbours, families, helpers (police, fireman) etc.

Debriefing/Normalizing – Normalization of symptoms frequently experienced by individuals who are exposed to extraordinary stress of natural and human made disasters of trauma. It can be done in groups of max. 20 people or to individuals but it should be done by leaders.

Defusing – Through active listening defusing feelings of the people, letting them express their experience, feelings, needs etc. This should be done in smaller groups.

Referral – If people have severe reactions referring them to mental health professionals.

Continued from page 28

Seven Life Principles

Vision should be articulated in such a manner that it serves the role of compass for all our actions. Vision engages human emotional energy and aids the conversion of human potential into well defined concrete results. All plans and standards emerge out of our chosen vision.

Moving Together is a time tested principle of life. Human beings are social-creatures and derive pleasure from collective living. The success of family organizations and other social organizations stems from this basic trait of humans. When we learn to move together in spirit of collective welfare, we begin to experience the unbounded joy of universal love. The spirit of moving together (samgachadvam) is another secret of blissful living.

Surrender to the Ultimate Good. We are what we think and feed to our minds. Negativity breeds cynicism. Optimism and Positivity generate strength and inspire great deeds. Faith in the Ultimate Good brings us in closest proximity to inner-most aspirations of all beings. While we must not be oblivious to the limits of relativism, we must keep our faith in the power of the Greater. Subjective approach and Objective adjustment is the secret path of supreme surrender.

There comes a time in our lives when we must **walk alone**. When the whole world walks away from us, we must still follow our convictions and conscience and walk alone undauntedly. That alone is the path of heroes, of those aspiring to attain the highest goals of life.



Conscious Self-Development Leadership Seminar at CNS Sweden given by Dada Lokeshananda

notes of Rasamayii and Iishiika

The central theme of the 4-day seminar by Dada Lokeshananda was how to move forward on the path of conscious self-development in a faster and better way. It included:

1. Five pillars, foundation for becoming a sadvipra.
2. Tools for conscious self-development.
3. Effective written communication

Five Pillars, Foundation for Becoming a Sadvipra

What is a sadvipra? A sadvipra is a person who is developing him/herself in all areas of life, physical, mental and spiritual and is engaged in a mission rendering service to society.

The key for becoming a sadvipra lies in conscious self-development in all the areas of life. The foundation of progress on all levels lies in the 5 principles: responsibility, causality, philosophy, sa'dhana and surrender.

1. Responsibility Principle

The starting point for all self-development is a complete and unconditional acceptance of full responsibility for all of your actions. Progress stops when the mind falls into one of the psychological traps, in attempts to avoid responsibility or the five weapons of mind destruction:

A. Alibis – Rationalisation; “I do this because others also do it.” (“Nobody works hard, why would I?”)

B. Blame – Put blame on others; “It is their fault, not mine.”

C. Criticism – Putting attention on others faults; “He is doing it wrong.”

D. Denial/Delusion – Escaping from reality; “It is not my fault.”

E. Excuses – “It is not my fault, because so and so.”

We have to become aware of these destructive mental expressions. Awareness, Consciousness is the cure. We have to start thinking: “I am responsible for all my actions.”

2. Causality Principle

The law of cause and effect is the other side of the coin. We have to deeply understand and accept that this universe is based on cause and effect. There is no such thing as something for nothing. Two guidelines that will help:

1. Decide what you want,

2. Pay the price in advance. To make a fire you will have to put the wood in the oven first.

You can't cheat though sometimes it seems to work to get something for nothing, but in the longer term reality will set in. This is the *principle of causality* or more commonly well known as law of *karma*

Disaster – A few errors in judgement repeated everyday.

Success – A few simple disciplines repeated everyday.

3. Philosophy Principle

Philosophy is the collection of the real reasons why you do something. When you ask yourself why you do the things you do, there will be two reasons. The first reason is the one that looks good, the second reason is the real reason. Your philosophy, your set of sails, will determine where you will end up. By taking more control over this philosophy we can change the course towards our goal **“It does not matter what happens to us, what matters is what we do with what happens to us.”**

4. Sadhana Principle

Sadhana means any sustained effort to achieve the goal. On the path towards a goal, the question is not “Can I do it or not?” Instead the question is “What are the necessary steps to achieve the goal?” The *sadhana principle* is taking that action. By doing the proper action, anything can be done.

5. Surrender Principle

You have to surrender your actions. There is a paradox visible here. You are required to choose, to be responsible and at the same time you have to surrender. Normal instinct is to hang on to our ego and try to escape the results of actions. The spiritual path tells us that we must own up to all our responsibilities and surrender the I-feeling.

Tools for Conscious Self-Development

To help us in establishing ourselves as sadvipras we need to develop ourselves in many areas. Here’s an introduction to a few principles and skills that will help us in our conscious self-development.

Pain / Pleasure principle – Every single thought and action is motivated to avoid any pain and to experience pleasure. This is the root of all success and failure. In all actions there is an immediate result and a long term result that will either include pain or pleasure:

1. Pain – pain: These actions we will try to avoid.
2. Pain – pleasure: This is the source of procrastination. An action might be painful but give a benefit in longer term. Here we should transform our idea of pain into pleasure, we should think of the benefits rather than the short term pain.
3. Pleasure – pain: Here generally we make a mistake; we enjoy the short-term pleasure but will have to suffer later. Here we should rewire our minds and turn the pleasure into pain and therefore avoid these actions.
4. Pleasure – pleasure: These actions will not give problems.

A few inspirational phrases shared by Dada Lokeshananda

Sometimes you win, sometimes you learn.

There is no something for nothing

It does not matter what happens to you. What matters is what you do with what happens to you.

Every spectacular success is the result of long unspectacular preparation

Preparation is the key to success

Winners are those who are willing to prepare themselves until failure is impossible

“The word impossible only exists in the dictionary of fools” (Napoleon)

No matter what you do, you can always do it better or more.

If you want to fly with the eagles, don’t spend time scratching with the chickens.

Formula for Disaster: A few small mistakes repeated every day

Formula for Success: A few simple disciplines repeated every day

“You should forget what you do not want”

You will be the same person 5 years from now except the people you meet and the books you read.

The first sign for success is the confidence that it will bear fruit.

Tension relieving / Goal achieving – Another way to look at the pleasure-pain principle is through tension relieving and goal achieving. Tension relieving actions might be pleasurable but will not lead to big goals, it is the easy way out, reacting to our stimuli. Goal achieving will surely give pleasurable results but it might take some effort and pain to actually achieve the goal. The sadvipra movement is from tension relieving towards goal achieving.

Preparation – “Every spectacular success is the result of long unspectacular preparation.” We need to study, prepare ourselves for any kind of situation. One way to learn is through “masters” that have gone the long way before; read biographies and spend time with the right people.

Language (metaphors, vocabulary, questions) – We need to improve our language skills to empower ourselves.

1. Metaphors: They are the basis of language and of thinking. They create certain feelings in the mind. We should avoid using negative metaphors and replace them with positive ones.
2. Vocabulary: There is direct link between our vocabulary and our I.Q. So learning new useful words and developing the knowledge of our mother tongue and English are some of the most powerful investments we can make.
3. Questions: By asking the right questions we will empower ourselves. What is the best use of my time right now? What is not perfect yet? What am I willing to do to make it the way I want? etc.

We can study the patterns, the recipes of successful life by learning from the masters, their books and biographies. We can observe how they communicate to themselves, in the metaphors and vocabulary they use, and the questions they ask. How different is the effect of your mind if you replace the word “failure” by “outcome” and if you ask yourself “How can I do this?” instead of “Why does this happen to me?” “I want to buy a master unit, but it costs too much.” Becomes “I do not have the money yet”, and the mind remains in a resourceful state, able to take the necessary action.

Financial Literacy and Intelligence

Financial vocabulary and accounting - You should be able to read and write (your own) financial picture.

Cash-flow – Movement of cash between income, expenses, assets (something that has value and puts money in your pocket (passive income)) and liabilities (something that takes away money from your pocket). We discussed 3 cash-flow patterns; poor, middleclass and rich. The most interesting cash-flow is that of the rich, he/she will use his/her skills and abilities to create assets that will provide the money for all other expenses and liabilities (a permanent income). This is contrary to the other groups where the income out of skills will be used for the expenses rather than creating assets (a temporary income).

Cash-flow of service – The cash-flow principles can also be applied in the field of service or in any other field. We can generate temporary service and receive some results, or we can generate permanent service/results by creating assets. So in the field of service we should all try to create assets with lasting results.

There are two ways to get more results (to become rich):

1. To compete – Trying to get a bigger piece of the cake.
2. To create – Making the cake bigger. To create value you should increase the quality and/or productivity.

“Find a way to serve the most, with the highest possible value with longest possible time.”

“Become an asset for society.”

Goal (S) Getting – Every successful person in history had a major purpose that defined their life. If your goal is clear in your mind, and you control your attention towards this goal and act accordingly, then progress is achieved. Goal setting, the art and science of developing clarity about your aims and objectives, boils down to two things:

1- Decide what you want specifically.

Ask yourself the right questions (“What activity, if done well, would bring the biggest benefit?”) The key to success in prioritising your goals lies in the ability to say “no” to the good in order to achieve the best. There are urgent and non-urgent and important and non-important things to do. Between these we have to decide whether the things we do leads towards our goals. Urgent and important things will be done, important but not urgent things tend to be left aside easily (sa’dhana, education). On the other hand non important urgent things tend to take most of our time because they put pressure (phone ringing, unimportant problems), also unimportant non urgent things take our time easily (watching mindless TV, oversleeping). Goal achieving lies in the important but not so urgent area, say yes to this and no to the not important urgent or non urgent things in life. Make sure that the most important things in your life get done. Don’t be satisfied with good, go for the best. (The enemy of the best is good).

2- Write it down. Writing is a key to success, the mind will take it more seriously. Keeping a diary is a very beneficial way to keep track of your goal getting and gives focus to your mind.

In addition to clarity about our goals, we need firm determination. The first indicator of success is the confidence that it will happen. Another observation is that great people have almost always spent some time in solitude in preparation for a great achievement. It gives momentum, and increases your awareness.

Life long learning – We have to feed our minds, but not with mental candy (watching TV etc.). Imagine what your health would be like if you would eat only candy. And still many people live psychologically on mental candy, which results in depression and frustration. Feed your mind by the (greatest) people you spend time with and the books you read. Utilise the time you spend travelling or waiting in queues by reading or listening to inspiring ideas and information. Don’t waste your time, utilize every minute when travelling, waiting inline etcetera. Turn this time into study time. Prepare yourself when you go out.

Dream of big goals! – A final inspiring thought: What is the reason to aim at the highest goal? Think of what you have to become to achieve it! What do you have to become in order to achieve the goal is what counts not the result.

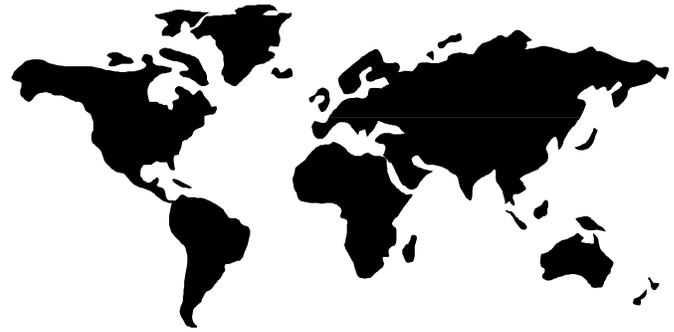
Effective Written Communication

There are several key elements in written communication such as in a message, poster, advertisement or fundraising letter.

1. Offer – What do we offer? This should be something valuable.
2. Audience – To whom do you offer?
3. Message – How does your target audience come to know about the offer? Make an offer they can’t refuse.

Generally you have to start with the end of the process and see what you have to do in order to get the end result. The end result is the “Most wanted response” (MWR) – the action that you want your audience to take after reading your message. Once things are clear you will have to do the preparation work for the message. This includes making two lists, a list of features / facts and an audience profile. The list of features should include anything that is directly or indirectly related to the offer. The audience profile is a description of the best possible audience, but it should be one person and described in detail. The next step is to turn the features into benefits, thinking about your ideal audience. As long as you can ask the questions “So what?” and “Who cares?” the features are not benefits, so keep extracting until they are benefits to your audience. Then choose your most important unique benefits to make up your message.

To create the message we follow AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action). You want to get the attention of the audience followed by their interest to read the rest of the message that will create a desire in your audience that will put them into action. The minimum requirement of the message is a headline (your “biggest gun”), list of benefits, different benefits and the action (MWR). Of course the length can be different depending on the purpose of the message, a poster, advertisement, fundraising letter etc. Once the message is ready test it, refine it, and polish it. The meaning of communication is the result you get.



Manila Sector

Malaysia

By Dada Laliteshananda

In Taiping Malaysia we had another teenagers camp on December 16, 17, 18th 2004. A group of 36 children attended the program. This time we focused on nature. The first day children were introduced to basic ecology concepts and ideas. We went for tracking in the rain forest and at the end of the day each child wrote a letter to a child 100 years in the future. The second day we visited a national reserve which is only 20 Km from our unit. We managed our way up the mountain to a paradisiacal waterfall. The third day we had a lot of fun with cooperative games introduced by some former yoga students (they are primary school teachers and have been teaching kaoshikii dance in the government school). Below is one of the letters the children wrote.

16 December 2004

To my dearest friend,

I hope you and your family are happy and well. You are reading this letter 100 years after I wrote it. I am 17 years old, possibly the same age as you. Let me tell you about Mother Nature's beauty which I enjoyed 100 years before you.

The tropical rainforest where I am at now has many types of herbs, shrubs and grasses. Besides the plants, there are also tall trees whose tops almost reach the sky. What a sight! The greenery around me is refreshing. I am surrounded by green trees on all sides. I am also attracted to the cool waters of a nearby waterfall, so swift and clear.

Animals are aplenty here: ants, leeches, monkeys and insects. I can hear them all. I heard these noises and sounds as I trekked through this rainforest. Some sounds were quite frightening yet some were so melodious that I strained to hear more. There were, of course, some challenging moments during my trekking. Some places were so steep that I had to grab onto tree branches to climb up. Despite it, I felt courageous.

I believe you would like to experience this wondrous place. Yet I do not know if the greenery will continue to exist 100 years from now. If forests are cleared continuously, I am afraid soon all animals,

insects and greenery will be extinct. Landslides, flash floods, water pollution and air pollution will occur too.

That's why I hope you and your generation will continue to preserve nature. If you come here, try not to dirty or destroy this place. I hope you will be able to understand what I am trying to convey. I also hope you get to experience what I am experiencing now.

Yours sincerely,

Sudha a/p Gunasekaran (17 years old)

Philippines

The AMSAI school in Lapulapu, Cebu Province, Maharlika has been running beautifully for the last 12 years. Principle and school founder is sister Madhurita. This kindergarten school's capacity is 25 students, and it is usually full each semester because it has an excellent reputation. Every year a large percentage of the students are accepted by high level primary schools after their graduation from AMSAI. The next graduation ceremony is scheduled for April 20th. The highest local government officials always attend our colourful entertaining ceremonies. Also in Cebu Province we have two much smaller kindergartens in Carcar. These two are attended mostly by children from impoverished families. Sister Laksmi is principle of both schools. There are presently 20 children attending.

Thailand Huay Malay

Dada Ramakrishna experiments with simple clay ovens and other appropriate technology at the P.R.Sarkar Vocational Centre.



Sangkhlaburi, Thailand Baan Unrak Primary School Inauguration of the New School Building

There was an inauguration ceremony for the new elementary school building in Baan Unrak Primary School, Sangkhlaburi, Thailand on February 19th. The program started at 9:30 am with the monks from the local temple as per tradition and included children's performances and a collective lunch at 12 o'clock. In the evening there were further performances with the school and home children. Mr. Chong, the contractor of the new building made a donation to the School for a handicapped child, and Didi Ananda Devamala received an award from the Ministry of Social Development and Human Welfare in Thailand.

A group of supporters from Malaysia visited our projects in Thailand and participated in the Inauguration Ceremony. They brought a few boxes of school materials and other needs for the children during the Chinese New Year Holidays.

Afterwards, Kulapati, Dada Shambhushivananda conducted an NHE training seminar with six teachers in the school. The topics covered included Fundamentals of Neohumanism, Specialties of NHE, Brahmachakra & Neohumanism and Questions & Answers Session. Sister Janaki translated into Thai.

The new school building has 6 big classrooms, a science room and a library as well as a big office and a small counseling room. The dining facilities can accommodate 150 students. Now the new school year has just begun and enrolment is 19 nursery children, 18 KG children, 40 in grade 1 divided in two classes, 13 in grade 2, 10 in grade 3, 13 in grade 4, 9 in grade 5 and 6 in grade 6.



Thai monks from Sangkhlaburi join in the Inauguration Ceremonies



Didi Ananda Anuraga and Kulapati with Supporters from Malaysia



Children perform a drama



Didi Ananda Devamala receives the award from the Ministry of Social Development and Human Welfare

Delhi Sector

Bhuvaneshavar, Orissa

An NHE workshop was given by Ac. Priyakrsnananda Av. at the Conference of Democratic Education in Orissa in December 2004. Dada was accompanied by Dada Anvayananda and Didi Ananda Kaoshikii, SWWS Delhi sector.

Ranchi Region

A new school building was constructed at **Ananda Shiila**. It has 6 rooms covering a total area of 4500 sq. ft. Sixty-five new students have been admitted to the school. A successful ETC (Education Training Camp) was organized at Ananda Shiila which was inaugurated by the Minister of Education of Jharkhand, Shri P.N. Singh. All of the local newspapers gave wide coverage to the Camp, including a 90 minute presentation of Ananda Shiila on a local cable TV channel.

In **Loherdoga** the school building construction is in full swing. An additional 40 new wards have been admitted to the school.

Seven new rooms have been constructed in our school in **Daltonganj** at a cost of 2 lakh. Three classrooms were repaired at our school at PO Saharaspal at a cost of Rs. 15,000. A new wall, new gate and electricity upgrading were also done.

A 1500 sq. ft. school building was constructed in **Gwalior** after two ministers of State raised Rs. 60,000 for the work. The DM of Gwalior donated a computer for our school.

New York Sector

Nicaragua

Didi Prema successfully ended the last school year with 35 students in Nicaragua. Dada Vishnupremananda has 115 students in his school. He recently got some sponsors for 7 kids and has been able to include an English and a Dance teacher. February 27 was the 5th anniversary of the school and was celebrated with many festivities. Dada has included sports as a way to get the children more interested and focussed and it has worked very well. The sports kids now have a uniform with T-shirt, shorts and the badge of the

school, which was designed by the Didi who started the work in Nicaragua.

Monterrey, Mexico

The school has 125 children and has recently been registered with the Ministry of Education. Didi Ananda Sujita is working as DSL.

Hong Kong Sector

Taiwan

Dada Cidatmana conducted a Teacher Effectiveness Training program at the Amatyakul School for one week with 15 teachers. The program was composed of asanas (with kiirtan music), kaoshiiki, tandava, short spiritual philosophy and meditation (Baba Nam Kevalam).

Bali

New Children's Home

by Didi Ananda Mohatiita.

A children's home was started in October 2004. After 3 months a small house was donated by a senior member of Ananda Marga. In that small house we began our small children's home with 2 children. Now we have 5 children and they are either parentless or from a very poor family background. We also have one small house for starting a school, and we are working on starting the school in the next school session.



Nairobi Sector

Ghana

Ejura

The school at Ejura has continued to develop. The number of students has reached 230, and more children come nearly every day. Dada Haranath and Dada Shiveshvarananda are running the school, with local staff. Overseas volunteer teachers continue to add a lot to the school and make it more popular locally. A boundary wall around the school has been constructed and a new building with three extra classrooms, is under construction.

Accra – Sorkor

Didi Ananda Shanta runs a nursery school in the children's home with 22 students. Volunteer teachers from overseas teach art every day to the children. The Children's Library is popular with children in the locality.

Accra – Korle Gonno

Brother Pamkaj manages the jagrti nursery school with 70 children. The school has a separate classroom for art, where an overseas volunteer teacher is in charge. The school classroom needs renovation and they need more furniture.

Kasua

Didi Ananda Shanta and Shankar are trying to start a model school in Kasua. Land has been bought and construction will start soon.

Ivory Coast

Abidjan – Yopogoun

The school, after nearly 20 years of operation has 316 students and 15 staff and is running very well. The main struggle is for permanent authorization from the government. The staff is working hard to resolve this impasse.

Togo

Lome – Cacavelli

Dada Tapan is managing the nursery school at the master unit in Cacavelli at the outskirts of Lome. The school has 23 children now, and cannot grow more with the current limited facilities. The Ananda Marga members are trying to raise funds to install water and electricity and are looking for sponsors to help construct a school building with four classrooms.

Kenya

Our projects including the Ananda Marga Academy-Nairobi were visited by the delegates to the conference in Kenya called Globalization for the Common Good, the Quest for Peace & Justice. Dada Vratadhiirananda was also one of the speakers in that 4 - day conference. The Ananda Marga Academy high school now has full registration from the Ministry of Education.

Kahira Sector

Athens, Greece

By Didi Ananda Uttama

We're in the beginning stages of starting a school here in Athens with preschoolers coming 3 mornings a week and a few after school yoga classes for older children. The 15 or so children are a mix of Greek and non-Greek so it's a very international classroom. Vimala has been training to be the teacher and Lavanya, a long time sympathizer, has been working a lot with the mothers in areas of nutrition and communication and other parenting issues.

Croatia

The Centre for Neohumanist Studies in Croatia completed a national contest for children and youth for writing and illustrating their own stories. See the full story in the centrefold of this issue.

Budapest, Hungary

Didi Ananda Rama gave a workshop entitled "Empowering Children Spiritually" at the Path of Peace Conference in Budapest in October, 2004. The conference was an inspiration of the first Soul in Education conference in Findhorn. Didi also taught yoga and meditation to those interested. In May, 2005 she gave a follow-up workshop on "Circle Time" in Budapest, Hungary which was organised by SEAL (Society for Effective and Affective Learning). Didi introduced elements of Circle Time that can be practiced in normal school settings by teachers who are inspired to work on community building within the classroom or the school.



Suva Sector

The River School - Melany, Australia

Report by Kamala

Rave Reviews from School Board

We recently had our first official inspection in many years by the Non-State School Accreditation Board. This board is responsible for determining if we are fulfilling the criteria to run a school. The inspecting group were all high-level education specialists with many credentials. School Deputy Principal, Prabha, writes about the visit: "They were here for about two hours... When they first arrived they were quite formal; by the time they left they were very sincere about their admiration for what we have achieved here at the River School-- yes, they could feel the vibe, too! For me it was an important confirmation of the school's integrity in the larger world of education. They have since sent a letter to the school management committee commenting that they enjoyed their visit immensely and wished us well for the future."

Huge Ten Year Anniversary Celebration

December 2004 was the end of our tenth year. To mark the occasion parents and staff organised a gala ten year celebration event attended by around 400 people from the school and the community. The evening included performances from all the school children, especially highlighting the new music program which was in place for the first time in that year. There was also a beautiful DVD video made by Narada Muni showing the school's history and including interviews by past students, talking about how meaningful the school had been for them. The evening ended with a lovely vegetarian dinner followed by a friendly and enthusiastic bush dance! Everyone was so impressed how in ten years the school had grown from 23 children to over 130!

We also had a beautiful school graduation which felt like a microvita explosion there was such joy and positivity expressed. Each child received a certificate from their teacher, which was read aloud,

telling a special quality that child offered to the school. Then the graduating class gave beautiful speeches, gifts and appreciations to the school. There wasn't a dry eye in the room by the first ten minutes-- it was so touching and powerful. (Knowing how it would be from past experience, one of our teachers began by walking in with armfuls of tissue boxes so we would be prepared!)

Uplifting Our Meditation

At the end of the recent holidays, we held a "Meditation In-Service" with the Primary teachers to discuss how to improve our "Quiet Time" programs. The half day program was inspiring and informative, and we all feel it has brought together some nice changes in the classrooms.

We began reviewing the current programs the teachers were using in their classrooms. It was interesting to hear about a variety of techniques teachers have used integrating music, meditation, visualisation, relaxation, yoga, virtues, discussion, journaling, storytelling, sending love to the world, and gratitude work in a variety of ways. Generally the teachers thought their programs were going well and I was impressed with the creativity and sincerity of the approaches.

We discussed the reasons why we teach meditation at the River School. These included:

- Helping children utilise their full potential
- Giving our minds a "rest"
- Helping children



find happiness and contentment inside, so they don't feel only material objects can fulfil them

- Change ourselves, change the world
- Creating peace and relaxation to enhance the ability to learn
- Creating an environment so that children may have a genuine taste of spiritual bliss and peace at least once, and ideally often, in their school experience. Such deep experiences will never be forgotten.

We also discussed with the teachers some in-depth information about meditation such as the science of mantra, techniques for helping mind withdrawal, and scientific research showing the many benefits of meditation in education, health and general well-being.

One change that will affect the whole school is we have decided to begin our Monday morning circles with meditation. This means the children come in and seat themselves quietly. Then we dance the kiirtan dance, and sit for a meditation before we start our songs. Our first trial of this on Monday went very nicely with plenty of enthusiasm.

Tuck Shop

We now have a "tuck shop" once a week. This means children can order sentient vegetarian food from a short menu (pizza, lavash rolls, mac and cheese, some cakes and ice blocks) in advance, and get served the food at school. The parents run this, and it helps raise money for various programs. (otherwise the children bring their lunches.) The food is yummy!

New Jagrti

Late last year the school finally completed building our new Jagrti. This is a two story building with a meditation hall below and a three-bedroom "Dada house" above. No sooner was the paint dry on the walls, then we began pracar classes and workshops which have all been well attended. The new hall also gives us a venue for our all-school morning circles and is used as a much needed music room several days a week.

Swimming Carnival makes a Splash!

We held our first swimming carnival last month at the town pool where all the River School children

had been having lessons for the term. The carnival included races, where children received "ribbons" based on their own level of improvement (rather than competing against each other.) There was also lots of fun, dancing and games!

Berlin Sector

Stockholm, Sweden

NHE Preschool run by Didi Ananda Bhadra has 15 children.



Georgetown Sector

In GT sector we have 24 schools – 17 in Brazil, 3 in Paraguay and 1 each in Peru, Colombia, Venezuela and Guyana. In Porto Alegre, Brazil one of our schools is Primary level and our Barranquilla school (Colombia) also has Primary level. At present 10 of our schools in Brazil receive full funding from the local government.



Barranquilla, Colombia

The school now has 170 children who receive free education. Photo shows Dada Divyapremananda meditating with the children.

Paraguay

Sojonia, Asuncion

The school year started in March and we have 21 children in school. We are giving daily refreshments to the children. Local people of this area where our

school is located are very happy with our education system. The school also has a built-in medical clinic, where treatments are given to children and adults.

Capiata, Asuncion

The Capiata school on the outskirts of Asuncion is running well and now has 320 students. The school teaches up to 9th grade (around 14 years old). Recently a meditation room was constructed and meditation is done there with the children daily. Didi Ananda Sushila writes: "I have started yoga course including basic knowledge of yoga, asanas and meditation with the 7th and 8th grades. Recently we renovated the office and preschool too. After one year of meditation regularly with the children, everything is moving smoothly now in the school. I also started collective meditation with the staff, mothers and neighbours every Tuesday after school hours."

Brazil

Guarapiranga, Sao Paulo

A wonderful Education Training seminar was held in our, school with 50 participants. Classes included spiritual philosophy, the art of play, story telling and there were workshops on painting, drama, music and voice. The flow was really inspiring and a lot of practical learning was done. Two more trainings will be held in the beginning of next year in different parts of Brazil.

Araruama, Brazil

Documentation has been received permitting the opening of the proposed school. The school will begin next year.

Ponta Grossa

The new pre-school is running well. Shantimaya writes regarding a yoga teachers training course which has been started to help the school. "The whole Ponta Grossa team worked very hard. 25 people attended the yoga training, 14 are paying and the rest are Ananda Marga members and school staff that also are taking the training. The main goal of this training is to create a nice positive flow in the unit and to raise funds for the school; with the money of this course we expect to run the school for the rest of the year until we get funding from the local government." Before coming to the school, two of the very young children used to go around the streets with their mother as she collected waste

materials to sell. They were suffering from various diseases and psychic problems. In the loving environment of our school they received medical care, proper nutrition and personal attention. They are now very much improved.

Porto Alegre

Our primary school and 5 pre-schools continue to run well. A teacher training was held for the staff of all the schools which focused on giving the participants an understanding of Ananda Marga philosophy. Topics included Layers of the Mind, Neohumanism and Prout.

Venezuela

Barlovento

The AMURTEL Community Centre

This project, directed by Didi Ananda Sadhana, began in the year 2000 with the purchase of three and a half hectares of land. Now the second floor of the 160 square-meter AMURTEL Community Centre has almost been finished. The focus of the Centre is to serve the surrounding impoverished rural villages of Barlovento through education, health, agriculture and cooperatives.

During April and May, the children of two villages regularly attended a special reading and writing program in which stories, drama and art helped strengthen their literacy skills and their self-esteem.

In July, Children's Day was celebrated in four villages, with clowns, games, songs, and food. This is the fourth year that AMURTEL has celebrated this event with the people of the villages nearest to the centre.

For two months during the summer vacation period, a special program was designed for 20 young people of two villages aged 9-12. A bus was hired to bring them twice a week to the AMURTEL Centre where a variety of activities developed their self-esteem and sense of values. Science classes, a field trip, games, stories, reading, writing, art and drama all focused on presenting universal moral principles. The attendance was excellent, and both the kids and the AMURTEL volunteers thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Neohumanist Preschool "El Universo Infantil" Caracas, Venezuela

Update by Didi Ananda Amegha

Our Neohumanist Preschool is running now in its 2nd year. Although we couldn't yet complete the registration with the education department, the quality of the school is getting increasingly better. We have now 9 staff – 1 director, 4 teachers, 3 assistant teachers and the lady who cooks and cleans the school. Forty-five children attend, mostly from low-income families. Nine children are completely sponsored by us, 32 are getting partial scholarship and 4 are paying full fee. Two volunteer doctors are providing free medical care on a regular basis. We also received donations of school materials, food supplies and a cooking stove from sympathizers. An Ananda Marga couple donated all the Christmas gifts for the children.

The children practice yoga and meditation and are eager to hear the Circle of Love and other related stories which they then retell and dramatize. They also know a large variety of children's songs; one of the teachers was a professional singer before. Recently we had a painter give an art workshop to the children. They enjoy creative work tremendously.

A member of Ananda Marga is working on a video to present to the public, to explain Neohumanist Education and for fundraising. We still need to increase enrolment of full paying children and after the registration is finished we will be able to ask the government for funding, but until then we depend on donations to keep the school running.

Yaracuy Master Unit, Venezuela

Since several years Ananda Marga owns a 16 hectare piece of land in La Parreña, in the mountains of Yaracuy, about 1300 meters above sea level. Part of the land is planted with coffee which is the main crop in this area.

The people living in the neighbourhood of our Master Unit are suffering from multiple neglects. Transportation has become a real problem, one time going up and down the mountain by jeep costs about the amount of a 3 day salary of a worker in the coffee plantation and walking down the



mountain by foot takes anywhere from 1 to 2 hours. The living costs have increased tremendously because of the inflation, but the salary of the workers has almost remained the same.

Since the increase of the transportation costs most of the children have stopped going to school. Most of them are girls and Didi Liina who is working in the Master Unit has given individual classes to them in order to help them pass to the next school year. Two of the girls are walking every day to school and another two have moved to Caracas with us to stay with the Didis permanently. After seeing this situation, myself and one of the sympathizers who has helped us to cover the costs of cleaning our land for the last year, have forwarded part of the money to buy a house in the village for our caretaker's extended family. They will pay it off gradually, and at least the children will not have any more problems attending school. The property is located right in front of it.

We also bought another piece of land in the village of Tartagal for the Didis, since staying alone up in the mountains is not very safe and also is very lonely. The land is plain with a beautiful view towards the mountains, it is also very fertile and much easier to cultivate. We already planted many fruit trees and the construction of the house is almost finished. In the near future we would like to start a small industry with aromatic and herbal plants to help generate income for the many unemployed women and adolescents in the area.

If you are interested in sponsoring a child or work as a volunteer in one of our project, please, contact Didi Ananda Amegha - e-mail: amegha@etheron.net. You can also send a tax deductible donation through our AMURTEL office in Vermont.

NHE Materials For Sale from AMGK and Other Sources

Joyful Things by Kamala

CD of songs includes the voices of 70 children from the Ananda Marga River School in Australia along with top musicians
<inrsong@ozemail.com.au>.



Circle of Love Early Childhood Education Manual and MP3 Songs on Computer CD

Thanks to Mahajyoti and Arun this CD version of the manual is now available. The original songs have been retrieved and converted to MP3 format thanks to Giridhara. On this computer CD, the manual is available as six PDF files which can be read directly from your computer or printed. The Circle of Love Songs are available as 307 MP3 music files. Cost \$10 US plus shipping. To obtain a copy, please write to:
<amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>



Children By Didi Ananda Ragamaya

A song about honouring the rights of our children, loving them and encouraging them to reach their full potential.

<http://www.griotmusic.com>

Kid's Yoga Poster

This brightly coloured poster, made in Taiwan, is available for sale from Gurukula Academy of Taiwan. Measures approximately 20 x 30 inches.

<ihuad@ms48.hinet.net>

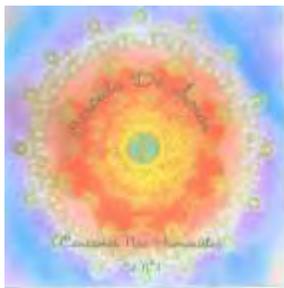


Circle of Love Songs on Music CDs

The Circle of Love manual includes over 300 songs for children. Through the efforts of Giridhara, the original tapes have now been transferred to a set of four music CDs. This set of four CDs is available for \$20 plus shipping. To obtain copies, please write to:
<amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>.

New CDs from AMGK PowerPoint Resource n. 1

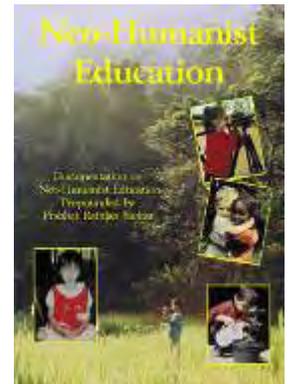
a CD collection of PowerPoint presentations useful for teacher training and introductory lectures on NHE. To obtain copies, please write to:
<amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>.



**Circulo De Amor
By Didi Prema**
Didi Prema sings 20 Neohumanist songs for children in Spanish.
amgk.glo@gurukul.edu

Neo-Humanist Education A Documentation on NHE Schools Around the World Edited by Avtk Ananda Rama Ac

This full sized 100 page book provides a colorful picture of the Neohumanist Education system world wide, with over 40 articles and 260 pictures from NHE schools around the world. The articles are written by teachers working in the schools, giving a first hand look into the NHE classroom. Available through amgk.glo@gurukul.edu



Puppets and Dolls from Peru

You can order from www.rurapuk.com or contact Didi Ananda Muktiavrata (didiamv@ec-red).



Circle of Love STUVOL Guides for Kindergarten

New STUVOL booklets for KG 1 and KG 2 have been prepared for Delhi Sector by AMGK mostly from material from the Circle of Love manual. Anyone interested to reproduce them in their own Sector

can contact amgk.glo@gurukul.edu

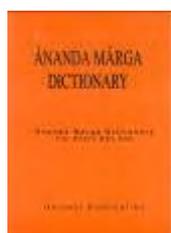
Other Publications from AMGK



Yoga Warm-ups Prepare your body for subtle asanas – by Mita Chen and Kaomudi

Yoga warm-ups is a compilation of poses that comes with complete instructions to guide you through your exercise routine. Suitable for all ages and levels of fitness and

strength. Mita Chen with her wealth of knowledge and experiences as a yoga teacher has carefully selected and demonstrated the poses which are helpful for yoga aspirants. Kaomudi is a registered physiotherapist with the New Zealand Board of Physiotherapists.



Ananda Marga Dictionary For Every Day Use Compiled by Ac Premayananda Avt

An Ananda Marga dictionary compiled by Dada Premamayananda has been published under the guidance of AMGK Publications in Bangkok.

The book has 160 pages and contains more than 1500 entries. Order at: amdictionary@eudoramail.com The cost is \$6 wholesale, and \$12 resale.

Status of Books and CDs Published by AMGK

Books Currently Available

Discourses on Neohumanist Education - Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar

Documentation of NHE – Ed. Avtk Anandarama Ac
Head in the Stars, Feet on the Ground - Avtk Ananda Nivedita Ac

Teach me to Fly – Avtk Ananda Nivedita Ac

Bio-Psychology - Dr. Jitendra Singh

Situating Sarkar - Sohail Inyatullah

Transcending Boundaries - Eds. Sohail Inyatullah and Jennifer Fitzgerald

Ananda Marga Dictionary - Ac Premamayananda Avt

Yoga Warm-ups - Mita Chen and Kaomudi

Wisdom and Mystical Verses of Sanor – Ac

Shambhushivananda Avt

Tantra-Conf. Proceedings -Ac Shambhushivananda Avt

Books Available in India Only

Ananda Sutram Word Index - Ladli Prasad

Notes on Varna Vijanana - A. R. Sarangi

Books Out of Print

Gurukula through the Ages - Ac Shambhushivananda Avt

In Search of Ideal Education - Ac Shambhushivananda Avt

Conference Proceedings on NHE – Ed. Ac Shambhushivananda Avt

Gurukul Education-Mumbai speech – Ac Shambhushivananda Avt

Teacher Resources Produced by AMGK

(see page 3 for details)

NHE Resources

NHE Diploma Programme

NHE Introductory Certificate Programme

AMGK Standards for NHE Schools

CDs and Multi-media Productions by AMGK

Circle of Love (Revised Edition) – manual and songs – Ed. Avtk Ananda Mitra Ac

Kids Yoga Poster - Arunima

NHE Power points and NHE video clips

CNS Around the World

Centres for Neohumanist Studies



Centres for Neohumanist Studies are developing in Sweden, Croatia, USA, Italy, South Korea, Taiwan, Holland and Haiti. The purpose of CNS is to engage in educational activities and social actions in order to liberate the intellect and further individual and collective welfare. These activities include public seminars and retreats, community research and development projects, personal growth services, and the dissemination of related publications and materials. All CNS programmes and activities support its core values of spiritual progress, social and economic justice, respect for all living and non-living beings, and community empowerment.

CNS, Sweden

The College of Neohumanist Studies in Sweden is a relatively new programme established in May, 2004. CNS plans to offer an equivalent of Bachelors/Masters/PhD in Yogic & Intuition Science; and Neohumanist Education (NHE) & Allied Sciences. Students may register in either of the two currently running faculties: Faculty of Yoga and Intuition Science or Faculty of Neohumanist Education. The Institute draws on a wider faculty base of Ananda Marga Gurukula worldwide and gets regular visits of researchers, scholars and speakers for short-term courses, workshops, lectures and seminars. CNS also has a collaborative relationship with the Commedia School, an international theatre school in Copenhagen. In addition CNS is hosting a Study Circle on "Social Ethics" with the sponsorship from ABF-an institution in Sweden which has been supporting public educational initiatives for over 90 years.



In the past 6 months, CNS Sweden featured the following programmes:

"Myths of Free Trade" - a debate held November 2004

"Web Sites Management" - a workshop by Iishika.

"Conscious Self-Development" - a leadership seminar by Dada Lokeshananda, January 2005.

notes included in this issue.

"Communication and Counselling Skills" – an experiential four-day workshop led by Dr. Sid Jordan, March 2005.

notes included in this issue.

Upcoming workshops include:

Yoga Education for Kids on June 11-12th 2005 by Christian Franchasinii.

Story Telling Workshop on Aug. 13-14th by Ole Brekke.

Bio-Psychology Workshop September 19-26th by Dr. Richard Maxwell.

For further details please visit <www.cns-se.org>





'Detektiv Ribica' (Detectiv Fish) is by winner Karla Sutalo, aged 12, from the middle age group. This book is available in Croatian.

CNS Croatia – update on Moja Prva Knjiga My first book contest



On April 22, one year after its announcement and with lots of love and hard work from a few volunteers, the "Moja prva knjiga" - "My first book" contest came to the close of its first round at the prize giving ceremony at the city theatre in Karlovac.

About 10 schools came from different places in Croatia, such as Zadar, Rijeka, Zagreb, Varazdin, Cakovec, Koprivnica, Stubicke Toplice and others. Most of the schools arrived exactly on time at 3pm and joined local school groups on a tour of

Karlovac old city. Karlovac has a fixed 'birthday' when it was strategically built as a defence post again invasions from the South. It has a six pointed star with a deep moat around its walls at the intersection of four rivers. At the centre on a smaller six pointed star all the schools assembled and introduced each other.



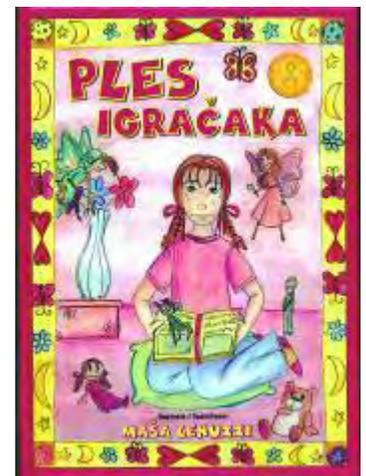
Groups of children from 10 schools meet in the six pointed star in the City center before the Prize giving ceremony and tell about their schools



Toys) - the winning story of the 14 year old Masa Lenuzzi from Karlovac. It was a lovely fresh simple and wonderful story line, well choreographed with lots of little elves and toys dancing among the main ballet characters. The stage was an explosion of children's joy to dance and perform and the same for the audience to watch it!

After that they had some free time to stroll around and see the exhibition of the books by children. We had a beautiful artistic display of the 150 best books and of course a table with the newly five published books for sale.

In the early evening, the theatre was full to the brim with about 400 people and children. The programme started with the Zorin Dom children's ballet performing "Ples igracaka" (The Dance of



'Ples Igracaka' (Dance of Toys) is from Masa Lenuzzi, she is 14 and from the oldest age group. Her story was made into a ballet play by the children's ballet from Karlovac and is now going to other cities in Croatia!

Lukrecia and Armin, two young members of our Kuku (klub za kreativno ucenje-creative learning club) of CNS presented a PowerPoint of some images from the 335 books that came from 40 different places in Croatia. It was wonderful to see how children wrote and illustrated. The slides started with themes of Children's Rights where children expressed their thoughts and feelings. One book was titled "My father has improved" and had an image of him drinking. Next were images of children's sensitivity and care for animals and nature. And lots of fantasy and adventure stories! Some authors got special mention, such as the

youngest who was only 6 1/2, one who lost her book and wrote it again and two who submitted two books!

Children's choir "Cicibani" - were lots of kids bursting to sing, ages kindergarten and above - they brought the most laughter to the audience with their childlike presence. The whole theatre was alive!

Sanya Pilic, a very popular children's writer came to give the prizes with Tito Bilopavlovic, also a children's litterateur and editor of a children's magazine. Romana Leko as president of CNS introduced CNS. Sanda spoke about the contest and announced the second contest (2005/6). A local company director publicly agreed to give support on the stage! Finally Helena gave thanks to the city, county and all who helped. One parent expressed her support and desire to start a CNS branch in Zagreb.

Some concrete outcome - a budding idea and steps towards setting up a children's centre in Zagreb... and lots more enthusiasm and plans for the future.

Here is the text of the book of the youngest winner a boy of 9 years. It is a translation into English. He made beautiful tempera paintings for each line.

I Whisper to the Sea

*The sea is like a big blue child.
It likes to play and tumble. It can sleep peacefully, yet it can get angry at times.*

*I whisper my secrets to the sea, both big and small,
my wishes and dreams,
my problems and everything that I like.*

*I tell it how much I like its waves, little fishes, crabs
and shells.*

*I wish I could dive into its blue depths and discover
all its secrets.*

*I wish it could carry me on a wave to some far away
place.*

*And the sea listens to me. It comforts me when I am
sad, it laughs with me,*

and its murmur puts me to sleep in the evening.

*It reveals my secrets to nobody, neither to the wind,
nor to the seagulls.*

*That is why I love it so very much, because we are
both alike.*

*Every morning it greets me anew with another little
shell or a starfish*

And when we have to part, it gives me its most beautiful shell.

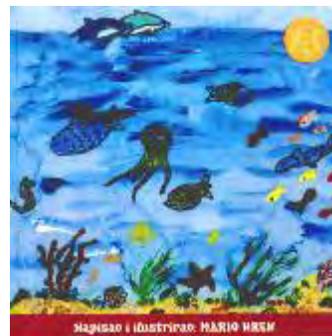
When I press it against my ear, I hear the sea whispering the secrets that I alone know.



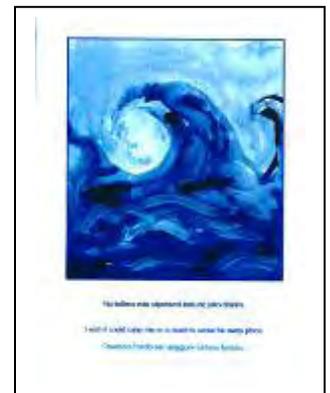
Grade2 winners with Sanja Pilic and Tito Bilopavlovi, popular children's litterateurs.



Exhibition of Books



'Saputao sam moru' (I whisper to the sea) by the youngest winner Mario Hren, 9 years old. This book is in English and Italian.

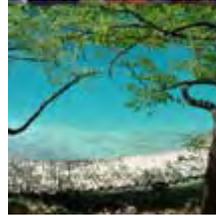


A page from his book. The winning books are for sale from Didi Anandarama. Price is 10 Euro plus postage.

CNS Karlovac, Croatia

Centre for Neohumanist Studies in Croatia inspires initiatives towards progressive life-long learning, teaching and sustainable community building in balance with the natural environment. CNS promotes applied neohumanistic learning that stands for extending the love of the human heart to include all human beings, animals, plants and the inanimate world. CNS Croatia has its office base in Karlovac and from this office it implements activities locally and nationally. CNS Croatia addresses society in general in four areas:

- Healthy lifestyle
- Environment
- Education
- Economy



Activities

“Circle Time” – Workshops and seminars for teachers on concepts and activities that teach values and character building in children.

“Moja prva knjiga” – National contest for children and youth on writing and illustrating their own story. This project is under the patronage of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport. The first CNS Croatia sponsored year long programme "Moja prva knjiga" - "My first book" contest came a the close at the prize giving ceremony at the city theatre in Karlovac in April.

“Kuku” - klub za kreativno učenje – Club for Creative Learning

- After school programme for creative writing and illustrating.
- Playgroup for toddlers and preschoolers where children have activities that develop creative intelligence, through arts and crafts, music, dance and movement, storytelling and drama.

International Conferences

CNS organized and participated in international conferences in Dubrovnik (2003), Prague, Macedonia, London and Budapest.

Future Activities

After-school programme for primary school children to help them in their homework.

Regular monthly workshops and lectures on all-round health, personal development, bio-psychology, liberation of intellect for adults and similar topics.

For further details please visit: <www.cns.hr>

CNS Asheville, North Carolina, USA

At the Asheville CNS, Sid Jordan, Brett Sculthorpe, Kristine Weber, Basil Savitsky, Howard Nemon and Cindy Sobering are initially focussing on the development of a seminar centre that would organize regular public events for exploring Neohumanism through five thematic areas: health, ecology, education, science, and socio-economics. Other core strategies to be developed later on include youth programmes, volunteer development programmes, community development projects, and alternative health services.

CNS South Tirol, Italy

Christian Franceschini has begun work on a Centre of Neohumanist Study in Italy in coordination with other CNSs around the world. He has worked as a Yoga teacher in public schools for almost 8 years, instructing 1000 children (youths) every year, and is in close contact with hundreds of teachers of all school-levels. The local government is more and more interested in getting teachers informed, educated and trained in the field of Yoga (the whole practice, from physical, to mental and also existential). Concentration at CNS Italy will be at first on three faculties: Yoga and Intuitional Science, Neohumanist Education and Sustainable Development.



Neohumanist Education



*Ananda Nagar, India; Stockholm, Sweden; Kingston, Jamaica; Sangkhlaburi, Thailand
India and Thailand photos by Takako Nakasu*

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