



# GURUKULA NETWORK

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

Issue 26

May 2008

## Ananda Marga Gurukula

- 3** Ongoing Programmes, Updates, and Announcements
- 5** Cultural Empowerment and Dogmatic Traditions
- 6** AMGK Meeting, Portland, UK
- 7** CNS Around the World  
(Centers for Neohumanist Studies)  
Sweden, Asheville, Croatia
- 10** International Microvita Seminar

## Sustainable Development Studies and Projects

- 11** The End of Fossil Fuel: Crisis and Opportunity
- 15** Neohumanist Ecology Festival
- 16** Service Communities – New Publication

## NHE Studies

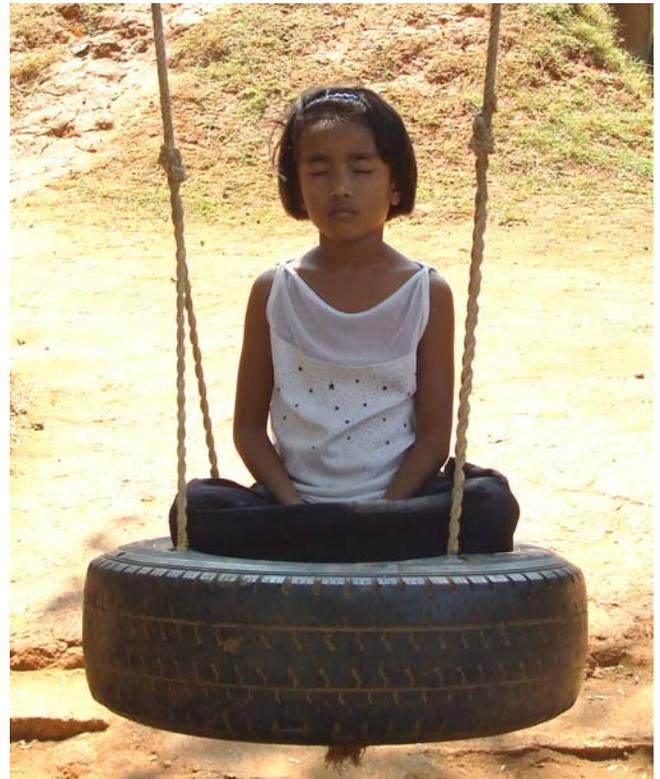
- 18** NHE Diploma Course Seminar, Thailand
- 19** The Golden Lotus of the Blue Sea
- 20** NHE Seminar in Bali
- 21** Building Community Projects through Literacy and the Arts
- 24** Project Work

## From the NERI Desk

- 26** Towards a Neohumanist Approach to Behaviour Management

## NHE Schools and Projects in Focus

- 31** Vistara Primary School, Australia
- 34** Zonnelicht Daycare Center, The Netherlands
- 35** Neohumanistisk Barnehage, Norway
- 36** Ananda Mela, Philippines
- 38** YES – What is Quiet Time?
- 39** YES – Portugal
- 40** Other Global NHE News
- 46** Book Review
- 46** NHE Publications



*Pjaw Pjaw, Burmese girl from Baan Unrak Primary School, Thailand, taking a recess break, swinging, meditating and softly singing*

## Gurukula Network

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

Two yearly issues published November 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 **October 1st for the  
November 2008 issue**

Gurukula Network c/o A. Brim  
146 Honness Lane, Ithaca, NY 14850 USA  
arati@igc.org

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

### Editor in Chief:

Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt.

### Associate Editors:

Avtk. Anandarama Ac., Arete Brim

### Electronic Version

Máyádhiisha

### Field Distribution Support

Is'pita - Taiwan

Vidyananda - Europe

Jayadhiira - Thailand

Maya - Indonesia

### Headquarters of Ananda Marga Gurukula

Ananda Nagar  
Dist Purulia, West Bengal, India  
e-mail: <kulapati@gurukul.edu>

### AM Gurukula Global Liaison Office

146 Honness Lane  
Ithaca, New York 14850 USA  
<amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>

**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.

## VISION OF ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA

The Sanskrit word "Gurukula" (pronounced gurukul) has the following etymology: Gu-darkness; ru- dispeller; kula- an institution. Gurukula is an institution which helps students dispel the darkness of the mind and leads to total emancipation of the individual and society at large. 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  
<kulapati@gurukul.edu>

**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. Ananda Marga Gurukula also 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.

## NEOHUMANIST EDUCATION

Universal Love and Values  
Holistic Development  
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  
Integrated Curriculum  
Exemplary Role of the Educators



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



Neohumanist Education

Ananda Marga Gurukula

<[www.gurukul.edu](http://www.gurukul.edu)>

[amgk.glo@gurukul.edu](mailto:amgk.glo@gurukul.edu)

CNS – Centres for Neohumanist Studies

Croatia - [cns.hr@gurukul.edu](mailto:cns.hr@gurukul.edu), <[www.cns.hr](http://www.cns.hr)>

Sweden – [cns.se@gurukul.edu](mailto:cns.se@gurukul.edu), <[www.cns-se.org](http://www.cns-se.org)>

USA – [cns.us@gurukul.edu](mailto:cns.us@gurukul.edu) <[www.pramainstitute.org](http://www.pramainstitute.org)>

Taiwan – [amgk.tw@gurukul.edu](mailto:amgk.tw@gurukul.edu)

Music College at Uma Nivas

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

Acupuncture Institute at Ananda Nagar

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

AMGK Taiwan

<[www.gurukula-tw.org](http://www.gurukula-tw.org)>

Neohumanist Education

<[www.nhe.gurukul.edu](http://www.nhe.gurukul.edu)>

AMAYE – Ananda Marga Association of Yoga Educators

<[www.amaye.org](http://www.amaye.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 <[amgk.glo@gurukul.edu](mailto:amgk.glo@gurukul.edu)>

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](http://www.nhe.gurukul.edu/resources.html)>, and sign up for a login name and password.

Distance Learning Programmes

The two distance learning programmes are available for NHE teachers. For more details see the description of Distance Learning Programmes at:

[http://www.gurukul.edu/instit\\_distancelearning.php](http://www.gurukul.edu/instit_distancelearning.php)

Standards Available

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

Volunteers for Projects

Ananda Marga Gurukula offers a service to bring volunteers in contact with NHE schools and community projects that are highlighted on the AMGK website. More info at the Gurukula website: [www.gurukul.edu](http://www.gurukul.edu) under the tab <helping us>

Gurukula Network On Line

Thanks to Mayadhiisa, an electronic version of Gurukula Network is available on the Gurukula web site. Many past issues are also posted there.

## *! New Projects In Process !*

### **NHE Resources**

NHE Resources now has a new home with an updated design and search function. Many thanks go to Umesh from Poland for his hard work setting this site up! Thanks also to Didi Aradhana for the graphics. As soon as all the material is transferred from the current NHE Resources site, details for login will be announced on NHE Forum. You are welcome to start sending all your digital materials and articles for posting into the new database to: <[arati@gurukul.edu](mailto:arati@gurukul.edu)>. Helpers are also welcome for maintaining the database.

### **YES Manuals**

A revised version of the Early Childhood YES Manual is in the works featuring detailed lesson unit plans, for each of the 10 moral principles of Yama and Niyama, based on stories, and including yoga, meditation and other activities. Didi Anandarama is continuing to compile material for the YES manual for 6 to 10 year olds. She welcomes any thoughts, suggestions, approaches, songs, stories, art, drama, philosophy discussions, activities, etc. related to teaching Astaunga Yoga.

### ***New Book - Service Communities***

#### **Documentation on Master Units Around the World**

This A4 book will be documentation in text and colour photos highlighting the concepts of Master Units. Please see article in this issue.

### **Spiritual Stories for Children**

Didi Anandarama is preparing a colourful book of spiritual stories for children and is collecting material. If anyone has any suitable direct experience stories please send to her. <[anandarama@gurukul.edu](mailto:anandarama@gurukul.edu)>



# Building Neohumanist Futures

July 12-25, 2008

## An International Conference

Hosted by CNS Sweden - Ydrefors, Sweden

*conference@gurukul.edu*

*special price for all three events 250 Euros*

### Neohumanist Educational Responses to the Challenges of the Current World Crisis July 12-14 (arrival 11th departure 15th)

How can educational systems and institutions respond to the challenges posed by the current rapidly developing global environmental, economic and social crises and the related psychological fallout?

**Program Coordinators** – Sid Jordan and Marcus Bussey

**Program** - This event will feature presentations, audience participation, open space networking, meditation and yoga, blending intellectual, practical and contemplative space to foster innovative and creative educational approaches to the pressing issues of our global community.

**Papers** - Attendees are invited to prepare and submit a position paper. 12 will be selected for presentation. All papers submitted will go into published proceedings of the meeting. Papers should focus on one of the three categories of crises - Environmental, Socio-Economic or Psychological - and include an educational response/solution. Please submit to: [conference@gurukul.edu](mailto:conference@gurukul.edu).

**Fee** - 100 Euros (includes room, board and conference fee)

For further information visit <http://www.gurukul.edu/conf2008/invitation.htm>



### Neohumanist University

July 16-18 (arrival 15th departure 19th)

This will be a time for all interested in Neohumanist University to make a move towards activating different faculties of AMGK. Already, some work is being done by the faculty of Neohumanist Education and the faculty of Yoga and Intuition Science. It is an opportune time now to consolidate these and other faculties. Those involved with Centers for Neohumanist Studies (CNS), Ananda Marga Association of Yoga Educators (AMAYE) and interested educators from within and without Ananda Marga are invited to help develop a vision and planning for a Neohumanist University. People with interest in any field may come and link up in open space format to start creating departments. Sample areas: NHE University, distance learning university, psychology department, education department, women's studies department, astrophysics department, economics department, various health care departments, microvita department etc.

**Program Coordinators** – Sid Jordan, Avtk. Anandarama Ac., Arete Brim

**Fee** - 50 Euros (includes room, board and conference fee)

For further information visit <http://www.gurukul.edu/conf2008/invitation.htm>



### Yoga Educators Conference

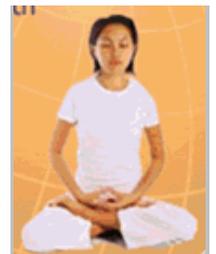
July 20-25 (arrival 19th departure 26th)

Individuals interested in expanding their knowledge and teaching yoga and the intuition sciences are encouraged to attend this educational event. A certificate of attendance will be provided by AMGK to all attendees.

**Program Coordinators** - Ac. Vishvarupananda Avt. and Ac. Shankarsananda Avt.

**Fee** - 150 Euros (includes room, board and conference fee)

For further information visit [www.amaye.org](http://www.amaye.org) or contact Dada Vishvarupananda <[petersage101@earthlink.net](mailto:petersage101@earthlink.net)>



# Cultural Empowerment and Dogmatic Traditions

*A Perspective*

By Dada Shambhushivananda



Cultural traditions are favorite and trendy. It is considered progressive to legitimize cultural diversities. Rightly so. All humans have their own way to dress, eat, laugh, sing, celebrate etc. Each human being needs the psychic space (freedom!) to express their emotions, feelings and sentiments.

However, traditions generally begin to take over and run our collective lives. Mass media today is also contributing to spreading established traditions. Most of the traditions find their origin in religious beliefs. Some are the product of geography, history or special events of history. If we deviate from traditions, there could be an inter-generational rivalry or we could contribute to furthering distances among people. Respecting others traditions is a very convenient way to begin dialogues and build bridges with strangers.

However, not all traditions are always healthy. Some are just meaningless routines and some, even dogmatic and environmentally unhealthy too. Some cause pain to innocent creatures and some cause divisions in human society unnecessarily. Every part of the world has their share of useless traditions and few of us ever challenge them based on logic and rationality. Dogma creates rigidities in life. No tradition remains the same for ever. However, the key challenge for us today is to bring traditions in harmony with cardinal values and universally accepted spiritual desideratum. Maintaining a balance between tradition and modernity is a difficult and sometimes tortuous exercise for all cultures.

The shift in traditions, however, should come not by force or by a decision of others. It should come with greater self-understanding and free choice guided by enlightenment and wisdom. Let there be a constant review of what we believe to be relevant, important and worthy of being adhered to. In the end, what brings us closer to our spiritual desideratum is the touchstone of real worth of our beliefs and traditions. It is however, not easy to discern or judge the intrinsic value of a tradition and that is why some cultural diversity needs to be preserved irrespective of their natural worth. Traditions may or may not have any relevance for an individual but for the society as a whole, a record of traditions is a useful database in order to trace the evolution of human thought. Their tourist attraction is an added benefit for every society. For these and historical reasons, it is important to document the folklores and folk life of small communities spread all across the globe. Knowledge of the tapestry of subcultures could be an aid in devising meaningful development strategies for neglected communities. Globalization and pseudo-culture is threatening the extinction of languages, customs, life styles, dietary habits, and relational dynamics. We are witnessing a destruction of a host of precious cultural artifacts. Any endeavor to preserve them would be a great service to humanity, a meaningful way to recognize our link with the past and to pay respects to the legacy of our ancestors. If our traditions happen to be close to the Truth, it would be worthwhile to revive them or at least preserve them. In some cases, they may be our savior and a guide to a better future for lost humanity.

*...Sentimental legacy includes factors such as language, historical traditions, literature, common usages and cultural expressions. It is the common chord in the collective psychology of a particular group of people which gives them their unique identity and sense of affinity. Human beings are predominantly sentimental by nature. They establish some kind of relationship with the many objects of the world through their day-to-day activities. If the sentiment for a particular favourite object is adjusted with the collective sentiment then that sentiment can be utilized for establishing unity in human society. The human sentiment for many objects may sometimes run counter to the collective sentiment and create great disunity, so those sentiments which are conducive to human unity should be encouraged, and the sentiments which divide human society should be rejected. ...*

*Shrii P.R. Sarkar  
A Few Problems Solved Part 9*

# AMGK Meeting Portland, UK February 2008

Amidst the cliffs, stormy winds and the vibrant sea, a five person working group met in a beautiful small cottage on the island of Portland off the southern coast of England from Feb 1- 4th, 2008. The primary agenda was to prepare for the July NHE Futures Conference in Ydrefors, Sweden. Among those present were: Kulapati (Chancellor) of AMGK, Dada Shambhushivananda; Varga Pratinidhii's (Academic Advisors) from the Cakradhuria (Steering Body) of AMGK: Didi Anandarama, Ac Vishvamitra and Dada Vedaprajananda; and the Director of the AMGK Global Liaison Office, Arete Brim. Many thanks to Linda Shannon and family for their very warm welcome to Portland and for all their help with preparations as well as hosting some of us in their home.

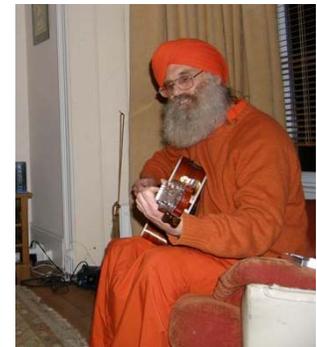


The themes for the three segments of the NHE Futures Conference were finalized. The first segment (July 12-14) will address, "How should Neohumanist Education respond to the current crisis of our times in all its aspects". The second segment, July 16 -18<sup>th</sup>, will be the time for all interested in Neohumanist University to make a move towards activating various faculties of AMGK. This will pave the way for creating a vibrant Mahasamiti (Academic Council). Associated scholars and faculty members from different fields will be encouraged to form working cyber-groups. Administrative aspects of AMGK will also be discussed at the July forum. The third segment, Yoga Educators Conference (July 20 - 25), is being organised this year by Ac. Vishvarupananda Avt., Varga Pratinidhii of AMGK and Ac. Shankarsananda Avt., current Vidya Pratinidhii (Faculty Representative) of the Faculty of Yoga and Intuitional Science.

All present endorsed the proposal that Didi Anandarama coordinate the preparation of a documentary book that will highlight the concepts and activities of active master units (service communities) in cooperation with all Master Unit related workers. AMGK is supposed to have a strong presence on every master unit in the form of "educational activities". This publication will be something similar in style to the famous NHE Documentary Book coordinated by Didi and published by AMGK Publications a few years ago.

The group decided to prepare an updated version of the AMGK Guidebook, based on Shrii P. R. Sarkar's guidelines, in order to provide to all necessary information related to AMGK. AMGK is inclusive and encourages the participation of all those who are seriously interested in the development of AMGK within the established guidelines.

The group addressed all ancillary organisational aspects of AMGK and departed with the hope that all bodies of AMGK will continue to strive towards the highest standard of functioning in all aspects and that Gurukula members will leave a legacy that will be cherished by all future generations.



# CNS Sweden

## Colorful Events, New Years 2008 Ydrefors, Sweden

One hundred eighty persons participated in the New Year's Seminars and Celebrations. All the programs were held at the Gurukula newly renovated complex while 108 hours of Spiritual dancing (kiirtan) vibrated the entire Ydrefors.



### Events included:

- Youth Yoga Class
- Workshop by Hemavati on Sustainable projects and their funding
- Microvita Workshop by Dr. Manohar
- The Art of Teaching Yoga by Dada Vishvarupananda
- Laughs at the Cultural Evening
- NHE Workshop by Didi Ananda Tapomaya
- Self Development II by Dada Lokeshananda



## Upcoming Programme Special Training Workshop for NGO Workers Ydrefors, Sweden, June 26-28th

This 18 hour workshop will introduce students to basic knowledge of social work, NGO management and economic liberation. It will be led by Dada Shiilabhadrananda and Mahadeva from Croatia. The first day will be a theoretical introduction of community organizing and social work practices in comparison with some basic PROUT elements. The second day will include training in NGO management. The third day will include training in economic liberation and methods of cooperating with social programs for local community development. For more information please write to: [info@cns-se.org](mailto:info@cns-se.org)

## CNS Asheville

## Prama Institute North Carolina, USA

Moving into our second year of operation, the Prama Institute is growing rapidly through sponsoring rentals, artistic events and environmental conferences, as well as supporting our own retreats, seminars and a newly developing internships.



In the fall we hosted two large yoga groups, Lighten Up Yoga from Asheville and Moving Mantra from Raleigh who gave three and four day workshops. A Reike Workshop was held in October by Renate Sorensen a Reike Master of the Dr. Mikao Usui lineage. In November we sponsored a well published Jungian analyst, Bud Harris, who gave a workshop entitled “Becoming Whole as a Spiritual Necessity”, drawing on his recent book “Sacred Selfishness”, and a Peruvian shamanist, Jason Blaesing, who held a workshop at the dome. In October the Ananda Marga Atlanta Region Fall Retreat was held with 35 people attending.

This winter we held Ananda Marga meditation classes taught by Didi Ananda Usa and Ac. Vishvamitra. In March we hosted two Qigong workshops, one offered by Michael Clark on the Nine Step Healing Qigong, followed by a week long Qigong teacher’s workshop by internationally known Master Wu. On March 28 and 29 Robert Bly returned to Asheville for another highly acclaimed love/spiritual poetry reading, Awakened Heart, backed up by the world music trio Free Planet Radio, and a workshop for 45 writers the following day.

In April we had an Advisory Board luncheon that included a broad spectrum of individuals from the business, art, sustainability and spiritual communities that are available to consult with the Prama Institute (PI) regarding its development. With the support of our advisory board and the recommendations of the PI board we committed to starting an internship which will combine yoga and meditation classes and service work at the Prama Institute and Ananda Girisuta Master Unit. Dada Ajay will be the director of this program beginning in June as a one, two or three month internship assisted by the staff of the PI in the teaching and supervisory duties. Interested parties 18 and older should contact our website for more details on the internship.



Several workshops were held in April: Christine Kaoverii Weber gave a subtle yoga class for yoga teachers. Interplay, a group from Asheville engaged its participants in games, dance and drama to develop their creative and playful potentialities. Wholelife, a group from Louisville Kentucky, conducted shamanistic rituals, yoga classes, sweat lodge and ended with initiation of five participants at the Master’s level of Reike. The Wholelife participants were from New York, Savannah, Kentucky, Tennessee and Florida, as the PI begins to draw participants from the region and beyond.

Future workshops and programs include a retreat with Dada Nabhaniilananda, Atlanta Region retreat, and two yoga groups in May; beginning our internship and hosting a Raja Yoga group in June; Ananda Marga Yoga Teacher Training in July, and Yoga Fest representing all the yoga groups in the region in August.

The PI is engaged with Warren Wilson College, the Wilderness Society and a number of local writers and environmental groups in planning a bioregional conference for Southern Appalachia entitled “Headwaters Environmental Conference: a Community at the Crossroads” for March of 2009. Bill McKibben and Winnoa LaDuke will be keynote speakers at this conference that integrates the arts, science and activism among citizens of the bioregion.

The PI is committed to engage annually in sponsoring conferences that educate the public on critical issues involving Neohumanism and Prout themes concerning all round sustainability and social justice. Please examine the article on Prout and Master Units in the section on sustainability in this newsletter.



## CNS Croatia

### "My First Book" Project

By Didi Anandarama

The national contest for children to write and illustrate their own book has completed its 4<sup>th</sup> year with the prize-giving ceremony in the local theatre hall in Karlovac City. This year we received 360 books from 80 primary schools with a large number of wonderful books making it hard for the jury to choose only three winners. Graciously Karlovac City library took up printing three books and with support from local companies, the Ministry of Education, the city of Karlovac and individual parents we managed to print totally 10 stories! One story was performed by the city theatre's children's ballet group. We had a workshop discussing how to improve on the text and illustrations that was much

welcomed by teachers and children. In its fifth year the contest has a new poster design and a brochure for distribution. We have opened the contest without age restriction up to the age of 15 to give a chance for the best books to win regardless of age.

#### Thoughts on the project:

*When I first heard about "My First Book" project I was surprised about this interesting idea of story books created by children and wondered why no one thought of it before. And this is how these beautiful story books were created and many talents for writing and illustrating were discovered – for the delight of all of us. I congratulate everyone and I hope that "My First book" project continues for a long time. – Sanja Pilić, children's litterateur and member of the jury.*

*Time will tell the effects in psychological, aesthetical and cultural forming of young individuals that "My First Book" may have on each young author. But even at this moment we can say that in the soul of the innocent young authors the love for books has been kindled. And that is not a small thing, on the contrary! -Tito Bilopavlović, children's litterateur and member of the jury*



*I am glad that I participated in this contest. It is an opportunity to show outside of school what I have learned from my teachers. I thank them. I am looking forward meeting young people my age. I hope to make new friendships that I'll keep in memory.*

-Maja Gjajić 11y, student and winner in the contest.

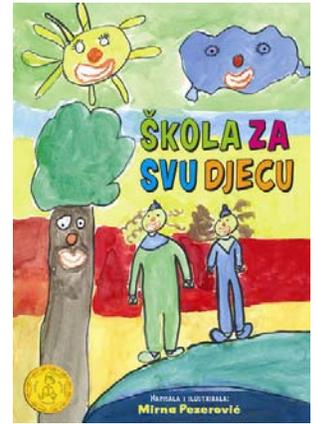
*Children are creative, full of imagination and ideas. It is important to recognize this and facilitate this creative process. In this way story books turn out as exemplary manifestations of children's creativity.*

*"My First Book" project is bringing this treasure of children closer to everyone. – Marica Zaberac, teacher*

*We at 'Holcim' are guided by this vision: 'We build foundations for future generations.' By writing their first book the future generation has an opportunity to present us with their vision, they can tell us what foundations they want, show us true values, help us make correct decisions... What a beautiful gift to us adults. -Žarko Horvat, general manager of industrial ecology of Holcim company (sponsor of the project).*

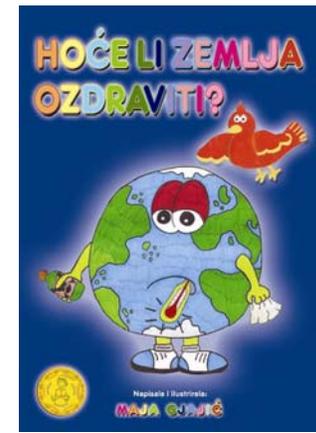
## "Watch out Mines!" Project

Volunteers have started to give workshops in schools and are distributing the books of which 10, 000 were printed. These story books made by five young students are warning other children who live in areas of possible mines from the last war.



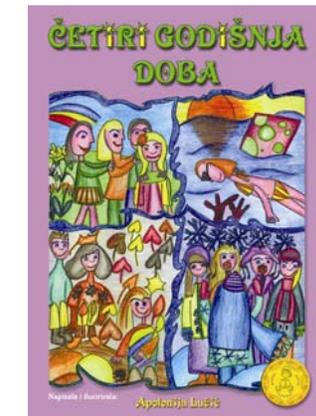
"My Zoo"

by Mihael Petranovic  
First Prize 7 years olds



"Can Earth Recover?"

by Maja Gjajic  
First Prize 11 year olds



"Four Seasons"

By Apolonja Lucic  
First Prize 12 year olds

*The Third Annual International Microvita Seminar*  
**Face to Face with Microvita of all Kinds**  
Berlin, Germany  
May 2-4, 2008

Amidst the natural beauty of flowing river, sunshine and flowering green lawns, the historic 3rd Annual Microvita Seminar on “Face to Face with Microvita of all Kinds” was held at an excellent facility called Wannsee Forum in Berlin on May 2, 3 & 4th 2008 with 36 participants hailing from 12 countries of three continents.

Among the topics discussed at length were: Microvita (MV) and inferences (tanmatras); string theory; MV and elementary particles; superluminal MV model of photons and electrons; hidden history of the quantum world; MV in biological life; musical theory & practice; Microvita in the life of a sadhaka and the how-to of dealing with positive and negative MV.

The excellent presentations were made by Dr. Hans-Joachim Rudolph, Ac. Vimalananda, Dr. Richard Gauthier, Dr. Brigunath Ragbourn, Mr. Kanwar Bir Sidhu and Mr. Michael Hackenberger. Interspersed in the thought provoking & mind challenging informations and discussions were creative & entertaining exercises led by Mr. Ole Brekke - director of the Commedia School in Copenhagen. Mr. Michael Hackenberger from Berlin also led the participants into the fascinating world of microvita as they manifest in music, dance and rhythms.

Many working groups were formed to further study and research as MV also apply to the fields of health, communications, agriculture and sadhana (meditation); of course, microvita-science being an integrative science has applications in almost every field of human endeavor.

Microvita Research e.V., a registered trust in Germany organized this annual event. Its offices are located at Am Kesselfuhl 13, 13437 Berlin (Germany). The trust has initiated its international membership drive in order to accelerate the work of Microvita Study & Research in the world. More information is available from [mri@microvita.org](mailto:mri@microvita.org)

MRI (Microvita Research Institute) is one of the cooperative institutions of Ananda Marga Gurukula.



The 4th annual Microvita event is scheduled to take place at the same venue in May 2009. The topics will include Microvita and spirituality; Microvita in sociology and history; sharing of Microvita experiences as well as other inspiring, spiritually thrilling activities.



*This article, [The End of Fossil Fuel: Crisis and Opportunity](#), takes the position that our current energy crisis offers an opportunity for a shift in consciousness which goes beyond changes in energy policies to a solution that is grounded in Neohumanism- a global spirit that maintains the balance of all beings in nature. This article speaks to a palpable problem everyone is feeling at the gas tank today and encourages us to think beyond the tank.*

*Next issue we will explore how today's problems of social justice, climate change, food shortages and energy utilization might be approached as we apply the integrative model of Prout (Progressive Utilization Theory) to the development of the service communities in Ananda Marga called Master Units (MU). These MUs serve the surrounding community by offering a model that is based on a four part bottom line - economic, environmental, social, and spiritual.*

## The End of Fossil Fuel: Crisis and Opportunity

By Roar Ramesh Bjonnes

Remember the old gasoline commercial, "I've got a tiger in my tank?" Remember the old novelty tiger tails that were available from Esso stations during that commercial's heydays in the 1960s? If some of the world's geological experts are right, the fuel tigers in our tanks of the future will soon be completely extinct. Just as extinct as dinosaurs. Just as extinct as that old gasoline commercial.

Deep down, we all know that. Even those driving expensive, gas guzzling SUVs know that fossil fuels are a limited commodity. Nevertheless, most of us behave as if this nonrenewable resource will always be with us. No further away than the next Shell or Arco station. But, according to some experts, it's time to reconsider. There's a fuel crisis looming on the earth's smoggy horizon. The most pessimistic of them, such as geologist Colin Campbell, estimate that soon there will be no more oil.

The experts do agree on one thing. The grand peak of oil production is going to occur when about half of the estimated ultimately recoverable reserves (EUR) of oil in the world have been produced. According to the World Resources Institute's Program on Climate, Energy and Pollution the "great majority of these studies reflect a consensus among oil experts that the EUR for oil lie within the range of 1800 to 2,200 billion barrels." And, writes, Jeremy Rifkin in his book *The Hydrogen Economy*, "the world has already consumed more than 875 billion barrels of the total." So, put on your seatbelts. The Battle for Oil's Armageddon may soon be upon us.

### **Oil and Corporate Capitalism**

The oil industry, like any other corporate enterprise, is made up of special interest groups whose main goal is to maximize profit, often at the expense of long term planning and of the environment. Therefore, we cannot plan for an alternative energy future unless we understand the political manipulation of the present.

The maximization of short term profit at the expense of long term planning is a fundamental aspect of capitalist society. Sure, some long term planning takes place, but this mainly occurs when it is perceived that the future may affect market share today. Thus the market may soon favor those corporations that are beginning to acknowledge the problem of an upcoming oil crisis. But because it is thus far less profitable to utilize alternative energy than fossil fuels, the corporations continue to favor the use of oil and coal.

Business, like government, is a servant of the citizen, of the polity - it is not a citizen in its own right. Citizens must therefore create mechanisms to ensure that the business community act for the common good-- including the adoption of green technology. In the words of Australian Green Party activist Ray Harris: "Self-regulation is a bogus concept. Recent revelations of the self-regulation of Tasmanian forests have shown that it is, in practice, no regulation. There has been rampant abuse. Tasmania's largest tree, which was supposed to be protected, has died at the hands of the self-regulated forestry industry. The essential problem is that unenforced regulations are ignored because of the cost and effort of compliance. Doing nothing costs nothing and must therefore minimize cost and increase profit."

Harris also contends that unchecked capital is not only rapacious in regard to natural resources -- it is also rapacious in regard to social resources. Capitalism treats everything as a resource to be converted into capital, he claims. Harris, writes: "The checks and balances that exist in other systems as a counterbalance, such as human derived values--are themselves 'things' to be converted into useable resources. Capitalism is actually now in the process of converting and commodifying all human values. It will marginalize any value that cannot be harvested for profit." Hence, the very political and economic system that is now so dependent on greasing its wheels with crude oil must radically change before a large

scale, sustainable energy grid can be constructed.

### **The Ethics of Energy**

Even though it is late, and the stakes are higher than ever before in human history, we have, perhaps, because of these insights, some advantages that people before us did not have. For the ancient Romans, the end-time came at around 500 AD. The slow but brutal force of entropy, in the form of deforested land, eroded soil, and impoverished urban and rural areas played a large role in crushing this mighty empire into environmental, economic, and political defeat. Many experts believe that the Mayans experienced severe environmental limitations when their empire fell as well. And, during the Middle Ages, Europe suffered greatly due to lack of timber for fuel and for construction. However, our forefathers did not know what we know today—that the earth, our precious Gaia, is a small green island with limited physical resources. Neither did they have the eco-scientific insights and the eco-ethical values that, as Hazel Henderson predicted more than 30 years ago, are becoming more and more global in scope today. Thus, as the Chinese would say, this crisis is also an opportunity. A great opportunity for change.

### **A New Energy Economy**

In designing a new energy economy, we must first look at what went wrong. A) The most common criticism against classical capitalist economics is that natural resources are looked upon as a free lunch. B) The air and much of the commons are looked upon as a place to dump or release toxic waste, also largely for free. C) The law of entropy is not properly accounted for in economics or political planning. D) Progress has been measured in an increase in material welfare and profit, while the side-effects of such “progress” are often ignored.

A) If we look at the fossil fuel economy, the oil (natural resources) has been virtually free for the taking by those who could profit from its exploitation. In some instances, such as in Venezuela, Norway and Mexico, oil production is mostly owned and operated by the government, however much of the oil production in the world is run by wealthy corporations with GNPs larger than many countries. The profit made by the sale of oil by corporations or states often do not reflect the social and environmental costs offset by pollution. So, in the new energy economy, polluters must pay for the cost of pollution by cleaning up after themselves.

B) Fossil fuels are released into the air every time we drive our cars, fly an airplane or heat our houses. The social, environmental, health and economic costs of this pollution is not accounted for in economics. But, there is no free lunch; pollution costs. These costs must become part of a society’s economic accounting.

D) The law of entropy teaches us that many natural resources decrease with use over time. We must therefore create a low entropy economy, one that is based on maximum utilization and recycling of all resources in closed loop systems, and one that emphasizes an increase in non-material (low entropy) resources and activities, such as spirituality, sports, arts, literature, community and family gatherings, etc. As Hazel Henderson puts it, we need more software, not hardware.

E) All material progress has certain side-effects. Even the production of solar energy produces toxins such as arsenic. All of these side-effects must be considered and solved through recycling or other means before releasing these new inventions into the market place. As environmentalist David Brower used to say: “All new inventions are guilty until proven innocent.” Thus all new inventions should be environmentally approved by a government body on the local, state or national level before entering the market.

One of PROUT theorist P.R. Sarkar’s great contributions to the energy debate is his emphasis on true progress as being that which increases inner, spiritual well-being, and on future society’s balanced use of material and non-material resources. In contrast, modern society’s concept of progress has been that which increases material well-being. However, as Sarkar notes, all material progress creates certain side-effects, or an increase in entropy. Thus one of the foundations of a new energy economy must also be a change of values, a new concept of progress. Secondly, the new energy economy must reorient itself by not just creating material welfare but by creating a balance between inner welfare and material welfare.

### **The Real Cause of the Energy Crisis**

The Roman Empire did not fall simply because of lack of fuel or tillable land. There were political, military, economic and other reasons for the collapse. Likewise, the real cause of the upcoming energy crisis will not be lack of fossil fuels only. It will not be, as many alarmist experts claim, overpopulation. Neither will it be overconsumption. These are all symptoms of an imbalanced socioeconomic system. The real causes of these symptoms are more complex, more systemic. In large part, the main cause is due to a highly centralized economy and civilization not acting in accordance with the

principles of ecology. In the words of Lester Brown: “Unfortunately, by failing to reflect the full costs of goods and services, the market provides misleading information to economic decision makers at all levels. This has created a distorted economy that is out of sync with the earth’s eco-system – an economy that is destroying its natural support systems.” (The Ecologist)

If we go deeper, we will realize that the energy crisis has not just objective causes. It also has subjective causes that reside within the human spirit itself. Our current predicament is deeply rooted in a failed vision, a failed worldview—one that favors short-term profit over long term planning, competition over cooperation, conspicuous consumption over spiritual contentment, and exploitation of the earth rather than balanced utilization.

The real solution to the energy crisis is not simply alternative energy: huge forests of windmills, solar panels on every roof top, and hydrogen cells in every basement. The real solution certainly includes alternative energy, but can better be summed up as a “whole systems solution.” We need a whole new systems approach to economics, politics, culture, values, ethics, science, and yes, energy. Ted Trainer, author of *The Simpler Way*, writes that “the alternative is about ensuring a very high quality of life for all without anywhere near as much production, consumption, exporting, investment, resource use, environmental damage, work etc. as our present society involves.”

### **Designing the New Energy Society**

How our society is structured and designed effects how we live, what type of transportation we use, how much energy we consume, it even effects the amount of pollution that spills into water ways and floats into the air. The design of modern society is highly centralized. The energy grid is centralized around a few power plants. People are centralized in overcrowded cities. The economy is centralized in large corporations. Even farming is centralized on large, highly specialized industrial farms, often thousands of miles away from where we, the consumers, live.

In times of crisis, such as the power grid failure in the Eastern United States a few years ago, or, more importantly, we realize how inflexible, fragile, and energy inefficient such centralized systems are. However, modern society creates other disturbing, even absurd, trends often overlooked by the average consumer: It is estimated that 47 million pounds of butter is imported into the U.K. every year, while 49 million is exported. About as many millions of kilos of pork products leave Australia as enter. Not surprisingly, per capita use of fossil energy in North America--where thousands of gas guzzling trucks transports food thousands of miles back and forth across this vast continent--is five times the world average.

Thus, economist and PROUT writer Ravi Batra notes in his book, *The Myth of Free Trade*, that one of the most important contributions of a decentralized economy would be huge reductions in both pollution and the use of energy. A prominent feature of an alternative energy society will therefore be its decentralized energy and transportation grid, a feature mimicking how nature’s bio-diverse web itself is organized. Indeed, alternative energy promoters stress the fact that alternative energy by design is decentralized. However, they often overlook the need to also restructure the entire economy in a decentralized fashion. This is of crucial importance.

Otherwise, profiteering by a few huge, largely Western, corporations will again dominate the entire world economy, including energy. At best, the rich in the North will have solar powered homes and drive BMW’s with hydrogen cells, but the people in the South will still be congested, polluted, poor, and exploited. At worst, we will fail to change our energy grid in time. Millions will starve to death. The rest will be at war over dwindling resources like water, food, and left over fossil fuels. Not a pretty scenario.

A decentralized (read: localized), largely cooperative economy is thus crucial in a new energy world. Jeremy Rifkin, a strong proponent of a hydrogen-based energy economy, writes: “Power companies are going to have to come to grips with the reality that millions of local entrepreneurs, generating electricity from fuel cells on-site, can produce more power more cheaply than can today’s giant power plants.” When users become producers of their own energy, Rifkin holds, the only remaining role for the power companies would be in the form of “virtual power plants” that manufacture and market fuel cells and coordinate the flow of energy. On a global scale, Rifkin believes that cooperatives are “the best organizational vehicles” for establishing the new grid of renewable energy. “With 730 million members in 100 countries, cooperatives could help lead the way into a hydrogen era by establishing distribution generation associations in thousands of communities,” Rifkin writes.

What emerges, then, is an alternative economic structure in which large and small, localized, worker-owned cooperatives serve as the cornerstone of the economy. At the bottom of this three-tiered pyramid, there are small, privately owned enterprises, while at the top there are key-industries owned by the local or state government and run on a no-profit-no-loss

principle. Envision a future energy grid in which key industries produce fuel cells at very low cost and distribute the flow of energy where needed. Local cooperative enterprises will make everything from wind mills to solar panels to bio-diesel generators, and cooperatively and privately owned stores will sell alternative energy components to home owners.

### **Beyond Energy**

The energy problem is not just a problem of energy; it is a problem endemic to our wasteful way of life, to corporate capitalism, to our reductionist and materialist worldview, to our lack of an ecological ethics, and, most importantly, lack of political leaders guided by perennial ethics and wisdom.

For some renewable energy experts, though, the goal is simple: create an abundance of cheap and clean energy from renewable sources to replace fossil fuel. Jeremy Rifkin claims that the hydrogen economy is the answer, and that it is “within sight.” Hydrogen, he writes, is abundant, it will soon be cheap to produce, and it will, by its very nature, decentralize and democratize the energy web and help shape a whole new society formed around bioregions. Paul Hawken and Amory Lovins, authors of *Natural Capitalism*, claims we need a new industrial revolution based on more energy efficient products, the elimination of waste, and on investing in natural capital.

For others, the changes needed are much more complex and far-reaching: produce cheap and clean energy, yes, but, more importantly, to reorganize our whole economy and dramatically change our lifestyle and our worldview. Trainer, an advocate of this school of thought, claims there is no scientific, quick fix to this global problem. He promotes a dramatically new economy based on *The Simpler Way*: less luxury consumption, self-sufficient regions, local economic independence and cooperatives. Otherwise, we are likely to end up with a hybrid system of haves and have-nots: a few rich countries and corporations will own and profit from the renewable energy grid, while the poor are still poor and polluted, fighting over the dirty crumbs from the fossil fuel age.

P.R. Sarkar’s PROUT (Progressive Utilization Theory) outlines such an emerging economy in more detail: a three-tiered, decentralized structure, global political cooperation, a guaranteed minimum living standard and a maximum income, an economy driven not by profit but by production for human needs, dynamic balance between economic output and environmental needs, maximum utilization of resources (closed loop industries, “cradle to cradle” industrial designs), international barter trade, and much more. In addition, Sarkar extends the spiritual perspective of traditional peoples, and the world’s mystical traditions, by maintaining that we all belong to Nature. Moreover, that Nature and the Pure Consciousness that created Her are inseparable. Thus, he declares, the Earth is the common inheritance of all: people, plants and animals. Energy, water, soil, sun light, therefore, does not belong to anyone—especially not to the rich, nor to the corporations. Thus a fundamental tenet of the new energy economy, according to Sarkar’s principles, is that these resources must be respectfully shared and appropriately utilized by all.

The ideas promoted by Rifkin, Sarkar, Trainer, Hawken and Lovins, although very different, are quite complimentary. We need a new environmental ethics; hydrogen must undoubtedly be part of the new economy; industrial innovation and investing in natural capital is important in order to keep the biosphere intact; a simpler lifestyle is vital in order to reduce consumption and waste, but, as Sarkar’s PROUT theory maintains, without a new economic model beyond the greed of capitalism, we cannot create real change. In order to implement a more earth-and-human-friendly economy, we need, says Sarkar, a three-tiered restructuring of the economy as a radical new way to balance the ingenuity of individual enterprise with cooperation and collective human needs. Finally, he claims, all this must be balanced with neo-humanism, a global spirit that maintains the balance of all beings in nature.

According to PROUT, an alternative energy society will thus consist of both high and low technology, both personal lifestyle/worldview changes as well as radical structural changes to the economy: non-polluting hydrogen cars and public transportation, walking and bicycling to work and for shopping, computer and machine parts that are 100 percent recyclable, locally produced food (even in urban areas), energy efficient houses made of local raw materials (wood, straw, sand, clay, glass) that produce more renewable energy than they use, a cooperative economy with less working hours, a dramatic reduction in consumerism, frugality and self-sufficiency, and more time for recreation, family, friends, spirituality, and fun.

All things considered, there is no quick fix. No amount of conspiratorial agitation will scare us into economic equity, environmental balance, and spiritual equanimity. But, with a possible future without gas in our tanks, we must start thinking and acting outside the tank. We must turn inward and heed the wisdom and examples of those who advocate and already live the radical and systemic changes that must take place in our economy, our lifestyle, and our energy consumption. The current energy crisis may thus be our planet’s greatest opportunity for change.

*Roar Ramesh Bjonnes is a freelance writer, contributing editor of New Renaissance journal (www.ru.org), newspaper columnist and co-founder of the Prama Institute, a holistic retreat and seminar center. www.pramainstitute.org*

# Neohumanist Ecology Festival at Ananda Putta Bhumi, Poland now in its Eighteenth Year By Dada Vedaprajinananda

On July 14, 1991, the first Neohumanist Ecology Festival was held at Ananda Putta Bhumi in the southwest of Poland, and since then hundreds of people have enjoyed these summer festivals, combining holiday fun with a serious focus on improving life on planet earth.

Ananda Putta Bhumi, the venue of the festivals is a 46 hectare master unit (service community) run by Ananda Marga. Ananda Putta Bhumi is one of the larger organic farms in Poland and is scenically nestled in a valley which is overlooked by mountains that form the border of Poland and the Czech Republic. This beautiful setting lends itself to both the camping and the ecological theme of the festival.

The heart of the festivals consists of workshops on organic farming, cooperative economics, holistic health, animal rights, human rights, spirituality and related topics. Local and international experts give the workshops and the workshops are small enough to allow a lot of interaction and group participation.

The festival was first held just after the end of communism in Poland, and the Polish population was yearning to explore their newfound freedom. How do we know this? With just a few posters placed in the major cities of Poland, our farm was flooded with young festival participants, and the attendance of the first festival was higher than in subsequent years. Our farm was not actually ready for such a large festival at this time, as we had just purchased it and the main building was quite old.

Over the years the facilities at Ananda Putta Bhumi have been improved and now there are comfortable indoor accommodations as well as complete facilities for outdoor camping. An old barn was converted into a large meeting hall replacing the Russian army tents which were used during the first few festivals.

While the facilities have changed the basic format and feel of the festival has remained the same over the years. First of all, it is held on the same date every year, during the third week of July. This year the festival will be held on the 16-20 July.



Secondly, the core of neohumanism is spirituality, finding the inner source of inspiration that can make our love for humans, plants and animals lasting and intense. To this end, yoga classes and collective meditation sessions are held in the morning and evenings at the festivals. These activities are optional but most attendees take part in them and they provide the festival with a spiritual core.

If you would like to come to this year's festival then visit the websites [www.ekofest.org](http://www.ekofest.org) and [www.ru.org/ecofest](http://www.ru.org/ecofest) for more information. The address of the festival is:

Ananda Putta Bhumi  
Glebock 37  
58-535 Milkow Poland  
tel: +48 75-761-07-16  
e-mail: [vanditananda@yahoo.co.in](mailto:vanditananda@yahoo.co.in)



## Service Communities Documentation on Master Units Around the World *Publication project in progress*

This new A4 book will be a documentation in text and colour photos highlighting the concepts of Master Units as envisioned by Shrii P. R. Sarkar and documenting existing services of active Master Units around the world. Gurukula and its educational activities are supposed to be well established in every Master Unit. Please send us the following information on your Master Units:

1. Name of Master Unit and address
2. Land area, description of location, terrain
3. When was it started

4. History and activities since its start
5. Existing buildings and their utilization
6. Developed land
7. Projects and services to the community
8. Map of the MU
9. Master Plan of the MU
10. Action pictures of 300 dpi or printed photographs

Thank you for your kind cooperation in making this collective effort a success.

Didi Anandarama <service-communities@gurukul.edu>

*Here is one of the articles we have received as an example:*

**Ananda Kamala Master Unit**  
Prout Community Settlement Cooperative  
by Kamala Alister

Ananda Kamala is a hilly, lush area of 52 acres with Bridge Creek running through it in Maleny, Queensland, Australia. It was purchased by the Prout Cooperative members in 1987.



The entire land is currently owned as a settlement cooperative and 25 acres of land are used for the Master Unit and 25 acres are used for the family community. The share holders include five families, plus the resident Dada as a representative of Ananda Marga. Most of the original shareholders are still members. Members gradually were able to build homes, sometimes living in caravans or temporary accommodations for many years. There are three family houses with two more in process, plus the Mandala Yoga Studio and four rental cabins/houses. The name was given by Shrii P. R. Sarkar, appropriate because at the time one of the members was growing lotus commercially on the property. Now each household has a small lotus pond. On the Master Unit land there is the Ananda Marga River School and the Ananda Marga Maleny Meditation Centre.



### **The Ananda Marga River School**

The school has currently over 200 students aged from 2 1/2 years to 13 years. The school also is occasionally used for night classes and functions. The school has a number of classroom buildings, a large playing field, basketball court, several playground areas, staff room, kitchens, administrative offices, computer rooms, special ed rooms, outdoor lunch spaces and a permaculture orchard of around 50 trees, surrounded by rainforest and bordered by the creek, which the students use for swimming, meditation and science activities.

The Meditation Centre (jagrti) was built by the school. Upstairs there is a three-room living area used now for our school principal and guests. Downstairs is a meditation hall, currently doubling as a music room for the school. One more school building is in the

planning stages and will have, at ground level, a very large performing arts/gathering hall.



The River School is a vibrant, exciting, beautiful learning community, now in its 14th year. As a Neohumanist school, the children practice meditation daily, study “virtues” and participate in a large variety of service projects. There is a strong emphasis on learning through play in the younger years, with an abundance of art and active learning in the later years.

The school requires vegetarian food for school lunches (also, no junk food or excess packaging) and runs a “tuck shop” once weekly. Each classroom has separate bins for compost, recyclables and non-recyclable waste so the children learn these skills early.

The school began as a one-classroom primary school with 23 children of all ages. Each year the school has continued to grow, adding new classrooms nearly every year. There are now three early childhood classes, and seven primary year classes. We have specialist teachers for music, marimba, art, ecological science and special educational support. The school has gained an outstanding reputation as the children have repeatedly excelled in local art and sport competitions, while government testing has always shown year 7 students to be achieving above state averages.

The school is run by the principal and deputy principal and overseen by the Management Committee and the Ananda Marga Board of Education.

### **Developed Land**

All of the land was originally rainforest land that had been logged in the past 100 years. When we purchased it, the entire area was cow pasture with only a few trees and one house. Since this time we have planted hundreds, if not thousands, of native rainforest trees. The school and all of the families also have fruit orchards and plentiful organic vegetable gardens which produce food most of the year. One shareholder keeps dairy cows and supplies raw organic milk, yoghurt and feta cheese to members and others.



The land has been declared a “Land for Wildlife” area in conjunction with the local government council. Many native species are resident including a diversity of snakes, frogs and birds, and unique animals such as sugar gliders, ring-tailed possums, goannas, bandicoots, echidnas, the occasional koala or wallaby and many more.

Large areas of land remain undeveloped and are gradually becoming thickly forested. Three dams have also been created on the property.

### **Projects and Service to the Community**

Business projects on the family land include a film making studio, two painting studios, yoga studio, music distribution business and small music studio, the small organic dairy and a shed for producing bio-fuels (which the school bus runs on!) Weekly film nights are held at the Lotus Cinema!

Land adjoining the Master Unit is also owned by Members who have donated several acres for the Maleny Community Gardens. This group now has over 30 members and is a vibrant social and ecological group for the local area.

The local Ananda Marga unit is based at the Master Unit. Regular classes, group meditation, weekend seminars, and other cultural and spiritual events are held at the Meditation Centre.

### **Sustainability**

The Master Unit is entirely water self-sufficient depending on water tanks that collect roof water for drinking, backed up by a large dam and water from the creek if needed. Sewage is also processed on site, mostly through sand filtration systems as well as grey water recycling. Some of the families have some solar-sourced electricity, and a plan to collectively sell solar-sourced electricity back to the grid is currently in the plans. All of the families have solar-heated hot water.

# NHE Seminar at Baan Unrak School, Sangklaburi, Thailand

## Learning through Stories

Report by Didi Anandarama



The third of six NHE seminars was held at the Baan Unrak School in Sangklaburi from March 24<sup>th</sup> to April 5<sup>th</sup>.

After two NHE seminars there is a visible change among the staff of the Baan Unrak School. There is a stronger bond and coherence between teachers and administration. The seminars have stirred much reflection amongst the teachers as to how the content from the seminars could actually be implemented into the classrooms, and many changes have been made. The kindergarten adopted a rotation of children groups in its three large rooms that were set up last seminar with different learning corners. According to the teachers, who were first apprehensive about the change, the transition was smooth and the children are enjoying the learning corners.

As for the Primary School there is a visible improvement in the teacher's flexibility and creativity yet various elements from the seminars still need to be included concretely into the curriculum. Therefore this third seminar was set up to have one week for workshops and one week for teachers to work on systematically incorporating the material into the curriculum. Thus the seminars are becoming more practical.

Another change is that the school recently welcomed Janaki back into its administration, and she is helping with curriculum development.



*"If you want your children to be smart, tell them stories. If you want them to be really smart, tell them more stories. If you want your children to be brilliant, tell them even more stories."*

*-- Albert Einstein*

The main focus of this seminar was the use of stories and storytelling in the curriculum and its broad application as a method for teaching almost anything from math, science and language to values, discipline etc. Xana and Palavi, two story tellers from Portugal who were passing through Thailand, inspired the teachers through their well-mastered skill.

They showed various ways of dramatizing stories using lots of props, dolls and music to accompany the story.

The teachers proposed collecting at least 50 existing popular or neohumanistic stories to use to teach certain needed values in their class. They also proposed creating their own stories for any situation as needed.

Finally each teacher started making a picture book of 24 pages with their own original story and own illustrations. The seminar turned into a lively discussion as the teachers read their stories and invited feedback. The critical reviewers looked out for child appropriateness, child development applicability, conveyance of neohumanist principles and if the stories were interesting enough for children or not.



We discussed the advantages of choosing well-written literature with neohumanist values for each grade. Children would be exposed to well-written language and this literature could be the focus of further educational extensions and activities. This literature could be used be adapted for story telling.

The fairy tale "The Golden Lotus of the Blue Sea" by Shrii P.R. Sarkar was added into their curriculum and Didi Candrima will translate it into Thai.

### School Management

And finally we had discussions about management with the school management team. Didi Ananda Jaya visiting from Brazil gave valuable tips for school management:

Ready for Publication

## The Golden Lotus of the Blue Sea

By Shrii P. R. Sarkar

An exemplary classical fairytale for Neohumanist Schools – reviewed by Didi Anandarama

*The Golden Lotus of the Blue Sea*, by Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar, is a masterpiece of responsible modern children's literature. In every sentence of this fairy tale there is a wonderful attractive power – a crystalline simplicity and an open-heartedness. Through the storyline the author conveys to the child how life should be lived with purity and straightforwardness.

*The Golden Lotus of the Blue Sea* sets a refreshingly new standard in children's literature, conveying the essence of Neohumanist philosophy which Shrii P.R. Sarkar defined in short as 'the practice of love for all created beings.'

The fairy tale is child-focused from start to finish. The story itself starts with the children's keen sensitivity to nature alerting them that something was not right. The wise king has the ability to listen and respond to the children's grievances with decisive steps and thus the children are empowered and given due respect. Throughout the story the human children, along with the animal children, remain loyal to the noble hero.

The role of simple poor people is given prominence by attributing magical powers to them that are used in the service of a good cause. The story introduces the real world of exploitative rulers and the peoples' uprising in response, all the time maintaining the charm and fascination of the fairy tale.

The female role in the story is portrayed by the fairy who is magical, virtuous, innocent and spiritual in her unique lifestyle in her own realm. Her lapse is mended with the help of the hero and without guilt she asserts her inner strength and thus becomes part of the happy ending of the story.



*“The child's mind is filled with fanciful imagery, and so the litterateurs will also have to soar in the sky of imagination with outstretched wings. However, they cannot afford to give indulgence to intricacies and complexities in this visionary ascent. The thirst for the distant, and the earnest zeal to know the unknown that abides in the child's mind must be fulfilled by drawing pictures of magical lands and relating colourful fairy tales. “Real” or “natural” is not so important here. What is more important is to carry the child's mind along in the current of joy, and in the process to acquaint the child with the world in an easy and simple manner.”*

*Shrii P.R. Sarkar*

Pre-orders are welcomed as well as investments for the publication of the 72 pages colour hardcover picture book *The Golden Lotus of the Blue Sea*. Text of a drama version of *The Golden Lotus of the Blue Sea* is available for free upon request. Contact Didi Anandarama at: <anandarama@gurukul.edu>

### **NHE Diploma Programme Seminar – fourth session October 27- November 1, 2008 Thailand**

The next NHE seminar in Baan Unrak School, Sangklaburi, Thailand will be with Abha on the topic of **"Integrating Creative Montessori Mathematics from Kindergarten to Grade 6"**. Didi Anandarama will conduct observations of the teachers in the classroom later in the month during the school period.

# NHE Seminar in Bali

April 2008

By Didi Anandarama

Bali is an enchanted tiny green island where you feel like you are moving through a fairytale. At every corner you meet signs of spirits in the midst of lush green flowering trees and bushes that overflow half hidden one or two storey houses. In Denpasar City, the Bali Public School is situated in a good neighborhood within walking distance from the decorative free standing National Museum and its large parks and sports fields and the beautifully laid out Art Centre.

Bali Public School originated from the Pom Pom Kindergarten that was founded ten years ago by Sudiipa and Ananda. Pom Pom was popular and had a good reputation. Pom Pom School's name was changed to Bali Public School and has a new impressive building in the present new location. It is a square 3-storey building with a big inner courtyard lined with plants. The court serves as sports ground, play ground, and has a stage for school events. There is a parking lot and small canteen for staff between the entrance gate and the building. BPS opened its doors for the first children three years ago. At present the school is running with 172 children from Kindergarten to grade 3 and has rooms to expand to grade 9.

The NHE seminar consisted of basic introduction to Neohumanist Education, its philosophy, principles and practices. The Kindergarten teachers got new inspiration and new direction to re-introduce Circle Time and play-way methods after the initial period of emphasis on reading, writing and math.



We discussed story telling and ways to demonstrate them, discipline, communication with children, classroom setup and Multiple Intelligences. The teachers welcomed the short video clip on "Messages from Water" that demonstrates how thoughts and words can deeply effect the shape formation of water crystals. Good vibrations expand and cause beautiful

crystals while negative thoughts do not produce any crystals at all and rather shows disintegrated images.

On the last day of the Seminar Ibu Kirana invited teachers from 90 kindergartens and grade 1 to an Introductory NHE seminar. Along with local education officials over 130 people attended. There was a demonstration of teaching yoga to children and rhymes on the stage as well as the drama of "Fairy Flowers" which the teachers and children produced in two days during the seminar. The teachers were invited to regular yoga classes that are offered in the evenings at the school.



# Building Community Projects Through Literacy and the Arts

by Matt Oppenheim

*Matt Oppenheim is the Title I Family and Community Coordinator for the Albuquerque Public Schools in New Mexico, USA.*

Shrii P.R. Sarkar in a deep personal meeting asked me to devote my life to the facilitation of social prama. Prama is the equipoise and equilibrium underlying all the aspects of personal and collective harmony. My path since then has been to merge a Proutist practice of social transformation with Neohumanist education. Education is a social flow that happens everywhere in cultural life. It is not just isolated behind school walls, or just the responsibility of school-teachers. The Western colonial model places social institutions in isolated cells in an attempt to thwart genuine social movements.

When we critically examine our own notions of education, and the colonizing influences that inhabit our own consciousness we begin the path to liberate education from its ensnarements. Paulo Freire helped liberate the poor of Brazil by first having them reflect upon the forces that oppress them. Then he had them draw pictures about their ideal lives in order to reflect upon the values and processes that gave them a sense of liberation.

The next step once our minds elevate above those ensnarements is to flood our thoughts and actions with universal love. I believe in knocking down the literal and metaphorical walls of schools, encouraging educational cultures to lead by the aspiration of samaj samaja tattva, the principal of social equality and the spirit of collective social movement. What then can we do to integrate education with a flow of social transformation?

Understanding how community members and educational leaders come together in a path of transformation has been my focus of research and practice for quite a long time. This has led me to question a long-standing assumption that many Proutists have made in their own research. This assumption is that Prout work is primarily intellectual and that research is carried out by a lone researcher.

The field of participatory research inspires collective research that foregrounds the talents and skills of the collective and research that liberates and empowers the researcher through a cycle of action and reflection. Several scholars in this field emphasize indigenous research; or research that is founded on the spiritual philosophy, values and social processes of indigenous peoples. Here the leadership and wisdom of elders is recognized and social processes such as community rituals, collective problem-solving, and actions in harmony with the earth are transferred to the process of community research. I believe that our own quest for an ideologically based research paradigm has a lot to gain from indigenous based research; which like our own philosophy foregrounds the intuitive and creative; the collective and the processual.

I believe in liberating this unexamined colonizing paradigm by introducing proutists to a process I call transformative research, as well as introducing educators to transformative processes. On a very basic level, we know that our personal and collective flows are physical, psychic and spiritual. On a deeper level, we know that the expressions of our chakras and related kosas not only manifest in personal expression but in collective expression as well. The field of critical education foregrounds an experiential learning cycle that mirrors many of the highest expressions of our chakras and kosas, integrating the intuitive with the creative and innovative; the practical, the conceptual and somatic; the emotional and the psychic.

It is in this spirit that I offer the following exercises as a step in evolving an integrated practice of social transformation with experiential education. Our social flow becomes vibrant, vital and resilient when artistic aspirations and social expressions merge together; when we flow together through creative and somatic processes that heighten and give purpose to our intellectual and psychic skills.

I welcome the reader to experience the following projects and practices as an experience in the creation of education and social transformation as one project. Time and time again I have used this in mutual projects between schools and their communities. Here we can integrate the often demanding pressure to develop literacy skills with a natural process of inner joy and creative expression. As Proutists, we can paint the sometimes dry work of the Proutist researcher and

intellectual with a heightened spirit of social prana dharma, a movement in which all of our expressions come to life in social movements.

Each of these projects encourages the participant to think about their individual and social lives as integrated. The first step is reflecting upon the cherished values, experiences and cultural life of their ancestors; their present lives, and then to consider what values, experiences and culture they want to pass down to future generations. Each of these projects also inspires people together to create a collective social flow as a way to return back to the spirit of community that was once an integral part of their heritage.

Let me know if I can help you and the schools and communities you work with in any of the following processes. And I hope you feel the joy and deep inspiration for both social change and education reform that comes out of experiential education. Matt Oppenheim <oppenm@earthlink.net>

## The "Community Story-Tree"

Participants bring their community history alive through an art project, developing a sculptural tree that speaks of the community's past, present and future. Together, community members plant the tree sculpture in a special place, and then gather to share stories around the sculpture.

To begin with, families bring artifacts from their histories and share their stories, their struggles and their triumphs. Participants collect rocks and other objects from the community, interview residents and draw pictures and take photos of the special places in the community.

Together participants experiment with art forms; the use of clay, carving, framing, and recycled materials to create an artistic pattern reflecting the ecology and social life of the community. Within this pattern individuals use photos, family treasures and pieces of discarded objects so that the stories of families are woven into the community story.

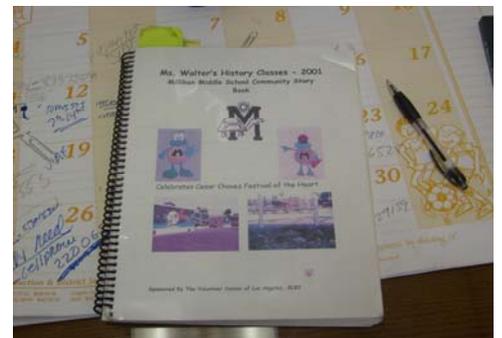


The tree sculpture is planted during a community celebration of song, dance, poetry and art as participants reclaim the land in the name of their neighborhood. From then on, the space around the tree becomes a gathering point for school literacy, history, social studies, and art classes to shape their own stories and for community events to contribute to the ongoing story and evolution of the sculpture.

## "Community Treasures" - Community Storybook

Participants share the special places, stories and people of their community through the creation of a book, using family literacy, art, and photography.

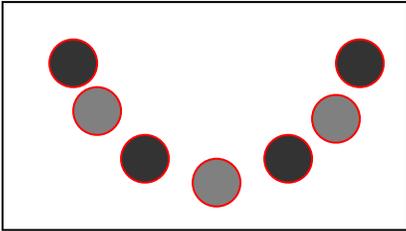
In the first stage, families discuss the important places, objects and people in their community. They may choose a special tree under which they often have a picnic, a neighbor whose house is inviting and creative, a local church, business, community center or park; or a local "hang-out" where students skateboard, share music and talk about their day. They may have special friends in the neighborhood or a grandparent who welcomes everyone into their home to eat the best home-baked cookies.



Together the family takes photos and writes stories about these special places. The community then comes together to create a book representing all the special people, objects and places in the community.

This exercise becomes a superb way to develop family literacy, to survey and understand the community better, to build teamwork and a sense of community spirit, and as a tool for students in school and their families to reflect upon the community in order to plan special events, outings and projects that build upon the treasures uncovered.

## "Cultural Heritage Necklace"



Through this exercise, participants create an artistic necklace which reflects the special values, experiences and cultural treasures of their past, present and future. First, participants think of two generations in the past to their own grandparents. They discuss and write about the special values, experiences and stories of their grandparents, then choose a bead or two that reminds them of these experiences. They list the important events that they want to remember about their grandparents and stories that they want to pass down to their children. They then think about the same experiences with their parents, and choose a bead or two reflecting the stories their parents told them.

The third set of beads represents the present life of the participants; the stories, experiences and values that are most sacred to them. The same process continues for their own children. Parents discuss what values, experiences and stories are most important to pass down to their children's generation, and then again to their children's children's generation.

After they have chosen beads representing the past, present and future, they combine the chosen beads with other artistic charms and trinkets, and shape their own "Heritage Necklace." As they carry on with their daily life, they remind themselves of these special values and stories by rubbing the beads.

To celebrate the creation of these necklaces, each participant stands before the group and shares the stories enshrined in each particular bead. Participants create a community celebration by bringing all their families together to share their stories and discuss the special values and experiences shared throughout the community. These shared values and experiences create a lasting bond amongst participants and community members, creating a strong foundation with which to create future community projects together.

## "Community Visioning" Workshop

Community Members (families, community residents, students, local business owners, agencies, and school staff) use guided imagery to develop a rich vision of the future of their school/community.

In this process cherished values are expressed and participants commit to important projects for the support and development of a true community spirit. Out of everyone's imaginations a holistic picture of their community develops; and community groups are formed around common projects and themes.

The workshop creates an open atmosphere where each participant feels deeply valued for their contributions. More than that, shared values become incorporated into vision and mission statements in order to create a shared culture of community organizing. A deep appreciation for individual and cultural values and experiences also develops. This workshop has successfully created shared long-term community projects in Australia, New Zealand, Los Angeles, and the Ozarks of Missouri. Examples of projects include: Community Center; After School Programs; Local Economy; Environmental Programs, etc



*An artist worked with the facilitator and sixteen art students to paint this mural.*

# Project Work

## Notes from a workshop given by Didi Anandarama

Project work is based on in-depth studying of particular topics that teacher and students undertake together as a result of collective discussion

Guiding philosophy: “*Educated are those who have learnt much, remembered much and made use of their learning in practical life*” – Shrii P. R. Sarkar

Project work is experiential and aims at long-term memory. It is part of the NHE Teaching Methodology, preferred methods for long term learning:

- Service (local and global)
- Projects
- Drama
- The Arts (music, dance, fine arts, crafts)
- Games
- Hands-on
- Visits and visitors coming into class and telling about their work
- Literature Extensions

Characteristics of project work are fluidity versus control, emergent versus prepared curriculum and questioning versus knowing the answers. Especially during project work the teacher views a the child as strong, powerful, rich in potential, as partner and driven by the power of wanting to learn, know and grow.

### Three types of projects

- The school **theme projects** that all children will do in the course of one year.
- The **daily life projects** spontaneously emerge during circle time or daily life at school.
- The **self-managed projects** are set up for the children to do independently, alone or with a friend. They can be collective, in small groups or individual.

### Benefits of project work

- Child’s mind is engaged in challenging work, making decisions, coordination, resolving conflicting views of contributors etc.
- Project work increases children’s confidence in their own intellectual powers, and strengthens their dispositions to go on learning.

### Projects

- Can emerge from children's ideas and/or interests
- Can be provoked by teachers

- Can be introduced by teachers knowing what is of interest to children: shadows, puddles, tall buildings, construction sites, nature, etc.
- Should be long enough to develop over time, to discuss new ideas, to negotiate over, to induce conflicts, to revisit, to see progress, to see movement of ideas
- Should be concrete, personal from real experiences, important to children, should be large enough for diversity of ideas and rich in interpretive / representational expression

### At the beginning of a project

- Discussions emerge and ideas take shape. The students talk and are listened to. The children are encouraged to make their own decisions and choices, usually in cooperation with their peers, about the work to be undertaken.

(Teachers take notes on what is said or tape record the conversation to transcribe later and add to the display of the documentation of the project)

### Role of the teacher

- To co-explore the learning experience with the children
- To provoke ideas, solve problems and resolve conflict
- To take ideas from the children and return them for further exploration
- To organize the classroom and materials together with children to be aesthetically pleasing
- To document children's progress: visual, videotape, tape recording, portfolios
- To help children see the connections in learning and experiences
- To help children express their knowledge through representational work
- To have a dialogue about the projects with parents and other teachers
- To foster the connection between home, school and community

## Role of teacher and child

- Teacher has high expectations of child's ability to represent their thoughts, feelings and observations with graphic skills such as drawing, painting, sculpting etc.
- When adults communicate sincere and serious interest in the child's ideas and in their attempts to express them, rich and complex work can follow, even among very young children
- Children sense what adults/teachers think
- Children observe how you value their conversation and work
- Children sense what you care for
- Teachers and children examine topics of interest to young children in great depth and detail
- Teacher-child relation is focused on the project (not on routine or child's performance and academic tasks)
- Both are children
- Teacher and child meet on matters of real interest to both of them
- Teacher listens to child's suggestions, questions, interacting with each other rather than over-assisting.

## Observation

- Keen observation will reveal a wealth of information about students, about their development and about your work as a teacher.

## Documentation

- For children to reflect on their own work
- For children to connect to and reflect on other children's work
- For adults to reflect on children's work
- For families to relate to the project study and explorations of their children
- To document children's growth over time
- To develop a complex and detailed picture of the child in all developmental areas
- To provide a resource for the wider community of educators to understand children's learning better.
- To share with the community at large what is happening inside the school.

## Documentation presentations

- Wall panels (with or without narrative)
- Booklets
- Poster board display

- Student work assembled on cards
- Books
- Student portfolios of drawings or paintings
- Paintings or drawings on large boards
- Videos
- CDs of photos or music



This wall collage was created by students at Vistara Primary school as part of a collective project on classroom rules. The students and teacher of each classroom come up with the rules and consequences together based on the underlying concepts of respecting each others learning and environment, etc.

# *From the NERI Desk - Neohumanist Education Research Institute*

*From the Neri Desk provides information, updates and overviews on developments in Neohumanist Education as well as educational trends, practices and theories in the broader global context (from a Neohumanist perspective).*

## Towards a Neohumanist Approach to Behaviour Management

### Part 1-Overview of Current Practise

By Guru Charan, Ananda Palli, Suva Sector

A few years ago I started a NERI research project in behaviour management. It had long been an interest of mine and seemed to be an increasingly controversial topic in Australian schools. However, I had no idea of the complexity of the journey I was about to undertake. What began as a simple examination of current behaviour management practices became an exploration of what it means to be a Neohumanist and how to educate to become one. In part 1 of this article I present a summary of the research findings and conclusions that I came to on that journey.

My research was initially prompted by my understanding that the behaviour of students was becoming an increasingly significant issue in both independent and public schools across Australia. As debate began to heat up in both the public domain and educational circles, I found myself questioning mainstream paradigms and asking: "What would the Neohumanist approach to these issues be? What are current behaviour management practices and which ones are suitable for Neohumanist schools? What practices and strategies do our schools need to develop to have a Neohumanist approach to behaviour management?"

#### **Why has this issue become so important?**

Behaviour management is an important part of pedagogy because of the profound capacity of individuals to influence those around them through their behaviour. This is true not only in schools, but in all areas of social and working life. In his discourse, *Keeping Company with the Virtuous*, Shrii P.R. Sarkar suggests that every individual has a sphere of influence, and that this can be either good or bad in its effect. The effect of an individual's sphere of influence depends on the strength of their personality. If a person with a strong negative sphere of influence spends time with a person who is good, but weaker, then their resultant behaviour will be negative. However, if that same strongly negative person spends time with someone who has an even stronger good sphere of influence, then the resultant behaviour will be positive. In the same way, the resultant behaviour of a group of people will be the sum of all their negative and positive spheres of influence.

Putting this in educational terms, we can say that the 'learning flow' of a classroom is the resultant of the combined attitudes and learning behaviours of the individual students and their teacher. It is common knowledge among teachers that the absence of one or two disruptive students in their class will result in a more positive learning flow for the remaining students. On a

more subtle level, the absence of an enthusiastic student in whom the 'thirst for knowledge' has been awakened will weaken the collective learning flow. Imagine that in one classroom on one day, a teacher is expending sixty percent of his or her time and energy on teaching curriculum and forty percent on managing classroom behaviour. Much of this latter forty percent may be spent on managing the behaviour of two or three disruptive students out of twenty five. The next day when two of these students are away, the teacher finds that the energy she or he can give to teaching curriculum has jumped to eighty percent and the energy needed for management has dropped to twenty percent. In these terms, the on-going challenge for teachers is to manage their classroom behaviour in such a way so as to minimise the behaviour of disruptive students, while maximising the positive learning behaviours of other students.

Statistically, within a given classroom, eighty percent of students have a naturally, positive 'learning flow'. These students require little if any behaviour management. Another fifteen percent of the students have a borderline learning flow. This means they need some management energy to maintain a positive learning flow and will generally respond well to routine behaviour management strategies. However, the remaining five percent of students are those with strong negative attitudes towards classroom learning. These students need on-going, significant amounts of management energy to maintain even a minimal positive learning flow. They usually require resource intensive, individual management plans to integrate successfully into the learning environment of the school. It is these latter five percent of students who provide the greatest challenges for teachers in their endeavours to create a strong positive learning flow in their classroom.

It is little wonder, then, that many books have been written espousing different approaches to behaviour management. Books have even been written summarising the ideas of these many different books.

However, generally speaking, strategies and approaches can be categorised as follows:

- Those based on rules and consequences.
- Those that use language to manage behaviour.
- Those that build teacher to pupil relationships
- Those that promote self-management of behaviour and values.

It should be noted that these categories are not mutually exclusive. Teachers usually use a combination of strategies from a number of different categories according to their teaching style.

### **Strategies Based on Rules and Consequences**

The expectation that students will behave according to an imposed set of rules has been a part of the schooling system since the commencement of formalised education. It has long been recognized that schools provide a microcosm in which students can learn the social and cultural norms of their time, and as such, will need a set of rules and consequences to operate successfully.

With some variation, rules usually include expectations of obedience, moral behaviour and respect. Historically, the consequence for breaking rules has been punishment.

Punishment, in its traditional form, has been based on the ideas of justice and deterrence and as such, is the oldest and most widely used form of classroom management. Advocates of it stress its corrective benefits and claim that it prepares children for life in the outside world.

However, like many other strategies, it is how it is used that counts. Used negatively, punishment makes use of intimidation, anger, threats, humiliation and physical abuse to create an environment where dread of dire consequences controls students and makes them conform. There is no notion of student welfare involved and the relationship between the student and teacher is based solely on fear and power. Those that use punishment in this manner justify its use by claiming that it somehow strengthens children and prepares them for the harshness of life. They will readily quote such proverbs as: "Spare the rod and spoil the child." However the evidence is strong that it is more likely to create a failure identity, especially in those children whose self-esteem is already weak. P.R. Sarkar notes:

*"I have already pointed out that it is improper to extort anything from students through undue pressure and intimidation. Intimidation appears to work to some extent, but it does not yield lasting results. Whatever students learn from their parents and teachers out of fear fades into oblivion as soon as the agencies of fear*

*disappear. The reason is that their learning and their fear were inseparably associated, so with the disappearance of fear, the knowledge that they had acquired in the course of their education also disappears from the more developed parts of their minds."*

However punishment can also be used in a positive manner. A loving parent may punish a child in order that she or he learn critical lessons that otherwise may not be learned. In *Carya Carya* part 2, P.R. Sarkar iterates:

*"Before punishing a person, you should consider whether you love him/her or not. You do not have the moral right to punish one whom you do not love."*

From an educational point of view, this form of punishment is more commonly viewed as 'discipline'. Discipline is recognised by many societies to be both acceptable and reasonable. It is the expected outcome of breaking known rules and is consistently enforced. The recipient knows and accepts this. In a school setting it aims at helping the student avoid discipline situations in the future through learning better behaviour and making reparation.

Positive punishment or discipline makes use of natural consequences and emphasises the need for rectification. The breaking of a rule is seen as an infringement of the social contract the student has with the school as well as with the other individuals involved. The consequences that follow are therefore not seen as punishments but as processes whereby the social contract is re-established and as such are, as far as possible, service-oriented.

Those that support this kind of benevolent, corrective discipline believe that it has the capacity to teach students responsibility and help them manage their own behaviour. Some schools have developed 'whole school approaches' based upon it. For example, at one school I visited, children were placed on a neutral behaviour level (level 3) on enrolment. They then either ascended or descended levels according to their behaviour. While the majority of students stayed on the neutral level throughout their entire schooling, those who demonstrated strong aspects of service mindedness or exemplary leadership ascended to higher levels or ranks that carried with them privileges and benefits (levels 4 and 5). Those who descended ranks to levels 1 and 2, found themselves facing an escalating scale of sanctions and consequences until they were suspended or, at worst, expelled.

Schools that use this kind of approach often appear to run very smoothly. Students know the school's expectations and rules and exactly where the lines are drawn. They learn the consequences of breaking the rules. They make choices to avoid the unpleasantness of these consequences.

Individual classes can also be run on this kind of approach with clear boundaries and positive and negative consequences for behaviour.

To critics of it, this ‘monitoring of individual behaviour.’ approach exemplifies an external control system at its most refined. Students are taught to conform without having to think very much for themselves. However, because everything runs smoothly, those schools which have implemented it, often become keen proponents of it.

From the perspective of moral development, this kind of approach typifies what P.R. Sarkar calls ‘*simple morality*’ – the adherence to an external set of principles in a static ‘right or wrong’ fashion. As they are not given the opportunity to explore the relativity of values or rules against universal moral principles, the possibility of students learning ‘*spiritual morality*’ is minimised.

What this means in real terms is that students are prevented from developing self-discipline. Well behaved students, who have thrived in a school where their behaviour is regulated in this manner, will often have great difficulty coping with the more loosely based culture of higher education.

Another disturbing failing of this kind of approach is its inability to cater to students who misbehave as a result of social or background factors of which the school or teacher may be unaware. Rather than recognising and helping these students, the monitor-behaviour approach places conformist expectations upon them that are unrealistic given their circumstances. The result can be the development of a ‘class’ based social structure in the school or classroom. I knew of one teacher who decided to divide her classroom up (as if it were an aircraft) into first class and second class. Those students who behaved and performed (and conformed) well were put in first class. The others remained in second class. First class students had perks that included a ‘hot drink’ corner, ‘first to leave at break time’ privileges and ‘free time’ periods. Second class students missed out. Needless to say there were those students who remained in second class for the entire school year. Predictably these students not only intensely disliked the teacher but also formed their own rebellious, under-achieving subculture.

### **Strategies That Use Language to Manage Behaviour**

In our everyday teaching, when managing behaviour, we use language to establish expectations, give instructions, acknowledge success, encourage, redirect, give choices and follow-through. In the broader learning environment, we also use it to lead, inspire, instruct and

convey information. It is a tool which lies at the heart of our teaching.

Yet such a tool is open to both positive and negative use, and it is an unfortunate truth, that the negative use of language to control students is still very common in modern classrooms. A negative verbal control strategy uses the willingness of a child to feel badly about himself to control him. Teachers who use these strategies try to gain the upper hand by using shaming, moralising, sarcasm, criticism, blaming and nagging to make their students feel guilty about their own shortcomings. .

#### **Consider these phrases:**

‘Why can’t you be more like .....?’  
‘Are you happy making the other children late .....?’  
‘You’ve really let us down .....’  
‘After all the effort everyone else has put in .....’  
‘Would someone else have a go, ....’s daydreaming again?’

The main thing these utterances have in common is their capacity to make a child feel inadequate or ashamed.

Body language and facial expression are also used to considerable effect in this negative verbal control or ‘guilting’ approach. Sometimes, the only thing a skilled ‘guilter’ needs to use is a particular facial expression to have the desired effect.

The more important the adult is to the child, the more effective this approach is and the more devastating the consequences. Children in guilt-controlled classrooms often develop a failure identity, learn to feel badly about themselves, compare themselves to others and develop negative self-talk.

Students often intensely dislike teachers who ‘guilt’ - often without really knowing why. It is often very difficult for teachers to recognise and overcome this fault because it can be as subtle as a tone of voice. It is perhaps interesting that verbal control strategies often begin to emerge as a behaviour management approach when teachers no longer feel comfortable, or are not allowed to use, the bullying tactics of negative punishment.

Ironically, many teachers who use such verbal control strategies use them unconsciously as a habitual part of their teaching practice. They often view themselves as good teachers who care about their students.

P.R. Sarkar, however, is unsparing in his opinion of teachers who “*even after studying numerous books on psychology ... deliberately wound the sentiments of their students.....*” (Discourses on Neohumanist Education P 15) and calls them ‘despicable’ (ibid.).

From the Neohumanist perspective, teachers will have to establish themselves in Satya which “*implies action of mind and right use of words with the spirit of welfare*” (P.R. Sarkar, A Guide to Human Conduct). Our use of language will then become a matter of consciousness rather than the following of hard and fast rules. If we truly have the welfare of our students in mind, we will naturally tend to use language that leads and inspires rather than that which bosses and bullies.

### **Strategies That Build Teacher-Pupil Relationships**

The teacher pupil relationship lies at the heart of learning and, over time, teachers develop their own teaching personality unique to themselves. This teaching personality often predicates what sort of relationship the teacher will have with his or her students.

One teacher I knew had been a salesman before becoming a teacher. When he had his first class, he treated curriculum like a product that he needed to sell to the students. He would say to me, "Teaching is a selling game!"

Another teacher had been a football coach. He ran his class like a coaching clinic. His teaching was full of motivational speeches and appeals for students to do their best for the team. His relationship with his students was one of coach to team member.

Yet another teacher I have known tended to take on the role of additional parent especially for those students for whom school was the only place they felt safe and valued.

And there have been many more -some who liked to lecture, some who liked to play, some who liked to facilitate, some who liked to direct and many who just could not be labelled. Some had quiet, industrious classrooms. Some had busy, energised classrooms. Some had colourful, playful classrooms. Some seemed energised by chaotic creativity. Some moved steadily with well thought out methodology. Yet, in all their separate journeys to become effective teachers, these many colleagues had their individual successes and failures and all, over time, developed their own successful teaching personality.

With regard to teacher to pupil relationships P.R. Sarkar writes:

*“Teachers must bear in mind that their students – whether adolescents, youths, old people or actual children – are to them all just children of different ages;*

*and they themselves are children like their students. If teachers distance themselves from their students or continually try to maintain a forced gravity, they will not be able to establish sweet, cordial relations with their students. The free and frank exchange of ideas is simply not possible.”* (Discourses on Neohumanist Education Pg 20)

Yet he also points out:

*“Teachers must possess such qualities as personal integrity, strength of character, righteousness, a feeling for social service, unselfishness, an inspiring personality and leadership ability.”* (Ibid. pg. 16)

Clearly P.R. Sarkar expects that teachers must cultivate “*sweet and cordial relations with their students*’ before learning can occur. However he also implies the need for a balance between the recognition by the teacher that he or she, like his or her students, is a child (a life-long learner) and leadership, which may involve discipline.

### **Strategies That Are Based on the Student Self Managing His or Her Own Behaviour**

The view that students are at their best when managing their own behaviour and, to some extent, their own learning, has become increasingly popular in recent times and has been especially promoted by William Glasser, the architect of Choice Theory.

Strategies based on this approach work on the principle that, if students know and have ownership of the values of their school community, they will develop an internal motivation and sense of quality that will enable them to take responsibility for their own actions. The goal for students is focussed on internal rather than external control – they become self-managing.

To work successfully, the self-managing approach relies on developing a culture of values and behaviour common to the whole school. It does not mean that there will be no rules, discipline or consequences. What it does mean is that these will have been developed by sharing the school’s vision and values with the entire school community in such a way that everyone – students included – will have an understanding and ownership of them. In this sense self-management strategies operate within a culture of ongoing values education that takes commitment, time and patience to implement and maintain.

To become self-managing, students need to develop a sense of ownership for their behaviour and to take responsibility for their actions and respond reflectively rather than reactively to situations in which they have been involved.

In schools with a Neohumanist ethos, students would be expected to develop both conscience and discrimination. They would be encouraged to care and show respect for others and the environment through developing a set of universal, internal ethical principles and values and learning strategies for implementing them. They would not only work to correct their mistakes, but also attempt to learn from them.

However, for the strategies that promote self-management to work, they need to be part of a whole school approach. It takes time for students to learn how to reflect, how to develop rational, rather than sentimental, thinking patterns, and how to value themselves as individuals able to make independent choices. Such learning happens over years rather than weeks or months. For this reason all members of the school community need to share the same values and be working towards the same vision.

These strategies also recognize individual differences. Students are at different levels of readiness for reflective thinking and are at different stages in their moral development. Then too, many students like to be managed and feel threatened by suggestions that they manage themselves. In other words: for students to become self-managing a definite on-going educative process needs to be occurring throughout each grade level of the entire school.

There is also a recognition that students who have not yet developed self-management skills will still need to have their behaviour and learning managed by rules and consequences.

The other important consideration when examining behaviour management strategies is whether the goal is to simply minimise the impact of the unacceptable behaviour on learning, or to actually change an individual student's tendency to behave unacceptably. For example, a student with a tendency to steal can be managed in such a way as to minimise his or her stealing at school with no real effort to address or change his or her tendency to steal. Alternatively, however, the school can also make a proactive effort to help the student overcome the tendency for stealing.

With regard to this, Neohumanist schools recognize that teachers have an educational responsibility for the all round development of their students and will therefore naturally favour an approach that helps the student overcome the tendency to behave unacceptably. As P.R. Sarkar has written:

*"If one has already become a thief or a criminal, in that case a university education for such a person is of no avail. One is to be moulded in one's childhood. If one receives the fundamentals of education in the formative period of life, one will keep oneself aright in the teeth of the heaviest odds later on."* (Prout in a Nutshell, part 18, pg 37).

## **Towards A Neohumanist Approach**

In the first part of this article, I have attempted to share with you some of the insights and knowledge I have gained in my examination of behaviour management practices. One of the key things that emerged for me in my examination is that for behaviour management to be truly effective, it needs to be considered part of the curriculum. Students need to learn how to behave as much as they need to learn how to read and write. By this, I don't mean that they are simply learning how to cooperate with the teacher. Our behaviour is an expression of who we are....and we are Neohumanists. So, what we really want for our children is for them to become, and behave as, Neohumanists.

Yet what does this mean? What are the characteristics of Neohumanist behaviour?

In his writings on Neo-humanism, PR Sarkar has given us a number of indicators of the behaviour of those who would be Neohumanists.

### **A Neohumanist is one who:**

- Recognizes that devotion is the highest treasure of humanity.
- Recognizes that this devotion needs to be protected from the onslaughts of materialism and acts on that realisation.
- Bases his or her life on the principle of Sama Samaja Tattva, the principle of social equality.
- Acts with 'awakened conscience' or what PR Sarkar calls rationalistic mentality.
- Is guided by proto-psycho spirituality.
- Realizes that *"Just as one's own life is dear to one's own self, so the lives of other creatures are equally dear to them. Those who realize this truth are the real sa'dhus." In this phase of sa'dhana', such sa'dhikas feel that all living beings are their own. In sympathy with the joys and sorrows of all living beings, they help all creatures.* (P.R. Sarkar: Perfect Spirituality and Neo-Humanism)

Yet the question then arises: "In practical terms, how do we teach for this? How do we teach children to become Neohumanists?"

This question will be answered in part two of this article which will appear in the next issue.

# Vistara Primary School Celebrates their 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Lismore, Australia  
Report by Kamala



In November, 2007 Vistara Primary School in Lismore, New South Wales, Australia celebrated their 20th anniversary. While this is itself a great accomplishment, they also put on a fantastic celebration. There was a band, children's games and candle making, beautiful food, displays of children's art and continual screening of videos of past plays, a display of some of the great costumes that have been sewn over the past 20 years, an amazing exhibit of photos including a full poster of photos for each year of the school (everyone loved looking over these and remembering), and speeches and songs and performances by the children. (and more!)



The presentations began with a very sweet kiirtan joined in by some 200 participants, and then an opening by school Principal Didi Anandavitandra, who spoke simply and warmly about Neohumanism and thanked all the dedicated pioneers of the past who contributed to the welfare of the school. She was warmly applauded and presented with flowers by the appreciative audience. There were also speeches by teachers. One very special speech was given by Lyn Brown, a current teacher at Vistara who has been with the school since it's beginning, only taking time 5 years off to have her children (a total of 15 years). Everyone was nearly in tears by the end of it, and I've included it below as a wonderful testament to the power of Neohumanist Education.



Didi Anandavitandra and Rukmini have been running the school with amazing dedication and skill. Many thanks also go to Madhuchanda/Marsha for all the years of hard work in establishing the foundation of the school within the Lismore Community. Her dedication and pioneering work continues to be an inspiration to the school even today. The school now has 60 children and is fundraising for building extensions to accommodate the many children on their waiting list which extends to the year 2013.

## Vistara Anniversary Speech by Lyn Brown, Teacher

I've been asked to speak today about the many children of Vistara. To speak of individual children and their achievements would take far too long so I will need to speak of them largely as a collective.

In Little Family we have a program known as Strong, Wise and Beautiful. Neohumanist schools throughout the world practice similar systems of acknowledgement and affirmation. These three qualities can be used to describe all of the children who come to Vistara and spend time with friends in our classrooms. They soon come to recognise these qualities in themselves and they learn to seek them out in others. Just yesterday I had a small child poking his head in at my door. He wanted to know if we were all the same.

“Some boys just said that we're all different. Is that right?”

“Well, we all have love inside,” I said. “That's the same for all of us. He was delighted. “Yes, that's what I told them. I told them that we look different on the outside but we're all the same in here”.

He patted his chest emphatically and ran off to play again, a big reassured smile on his face.

These conversations are not uncommon. I have had contact with many children in Vistara over the past twenty years and I am privileged to be included in conversations such as this one on a regular basis. I have sat at my desk and been amused by the complex theories on the nature of reality as Kindergarten students talk among themselves while they are drawing and painting. They have very sophisticated ideas. Not all the conversations are esoteric in nature but they inspire me nonetheless. The surprising thing here is not that these conversations and discussions take place - (I believe they are natural to children) – but more that they are given scope to take place. I have worked in many schools over my career and this characteristic on the classroom culture stands out as something unique to Vistara.



Our children are not more special than other children. It's just that they are allowed to claim who they are. The classroom culture fosters trust. This school fosters trust. Where this exists, anything is possible.

I have always been struck with the physical beauty and vibrancy of the children who become Vistara kids, even if they are with us just for a short time. We have always believed that children find their way to this place when they need to be here. Over the years I have watched as children have begun their tenuous first days at school. Some of our children have had different school experiences before coming to Vistara. Some of these experiences have been positive and some have been less so. Already, young as they are, some bear lidded eyes, scars of a harder world. Their eye contact is either shaky or they stare defiantly, challenging authority. Their experiences have taught them not to trust. Not to trust their teachers, not to trust the adults in their lives, not to trust their peers who guard their own hearts so well, not to trust their own hearts and instincts. They have learnt to protect their true self by revealing little. They are cynical. Yet the children who find their way to Vistara learn to open their eyes. They learn to trust again. I think this is why they look so beautiful. No one who has ever been to a Vistara Play Night can deny they shine.

Strength and Wisdom develop in our children here also. Sometimes wisdom comes through sadness and challenge, facing loss and accepting disappointments. Life stretches us. It forces us to grow as conscious beings. We are not about denying the realities of life. Challenging times are treated as opportunities for each of us to become a greater person. Rather than teaching our children to fear hard times, we endeavour to help guide them through to the other side. Resilience and optimism for the future are habits and life skills that serve us all through our lives. We ask our children not to run from problems but to breathe deeply, take their own courage in hand and walk forward with friends.

I could talk for a long time on academic success of past students. I could talk about their sporting and cultural achievements. But the strongest success for me are those of humour, those of compassion and those of love. Sometimes simple innocence can remind us of what's important. Through the heavy rain last week, one of the children was seeing the brightest possible side of the situation. He considered himself personally responsible for the weather conditions and was most pleased with himself.

"I asked God last night to make it rain so I could jump in puddles!" He was thrilled with the results of his request. Life is an adventure and it is comments like this that encourage us to celebrate our own part in it all.

Self-awareness can come unexpectedly. A long time ago I taught a little girl. She never stopped talking! I despaired of ever managing to teach her to look at anything with more than superficial understanding. She was loud and egocentric and put herself in everything. One day, a little bird got trapped on the verandah and was terrified, flapping from one plastic blind into another. The children were all gathered at the entrance waiting for it to fly out. Suddenly, the bird dropped to the floor, exhausted. I was about to move in when some instinct stopped me. A child had silently stepped forward. It was the girl. There was a curious focus in her face that I had never seen in her before. The other children watched her, as transfixed as myself. With infinite gentleness, this little girl kneeled before the distressed creature and took it smoothly into her cupped hands. She rose again and walked softly through the gathering. Once in the open she raised her hands and the bird sat calmly, considering for a moment. Then away it flew! This little girl followed it with her eyes for a few moments more and she turned and looked at me. It was like I was looking at a different person! Her eyes were deep and still and she looked at her hands again, mesmerised.

"I could feel it's heart beating," she said. "It was so warm". Her hands moved quietly to her own heart.

This little girl moved away to a new home in Sydney a few days later. She was only in Year One yet she graduated as a Vistara Kid just as surely as any of our students going through to Year 6. She learnt about the connection between all living things in a very personal way. This is Neohumanism.

## *more Vistara School news*

Rukmini worked with five students at Vistara School to create their school newspaper, Vistara Voices, for the Northern Star's "Newspapers in Education" program for 2007. A local newspaper, The Northern Star sponsors a "Newspapers in Education" competition for all primary and high schools in the area. A total of 42 schools were involved in the program. The program allows schools and students to be involved in the community newspaper and see their work published. Vistara School's May 2007 entry won the runnerup for the best environmental story and the best photograph. The story was entitled "Our Future is in Our Hands"



In the June and July issues Northern Star published Vistara Voices' poems by the children entitled "I Am". One example is a poem by fourth grader Zarinka Sindén

*I am different  
I wonder if the world will change  
I hear the sound of people singing  
I see gardens of flowers  
I want so see peace all over the world  
I am different  
I pretend to fly in the sky  
I feel happy and sad  
I touch the clouds above  
I worry about the endangered species  
I cry when people are sick  
I am different  
I understand that we are all different yet the same  
I say nice things  
I dream that the world will change  
I am different*

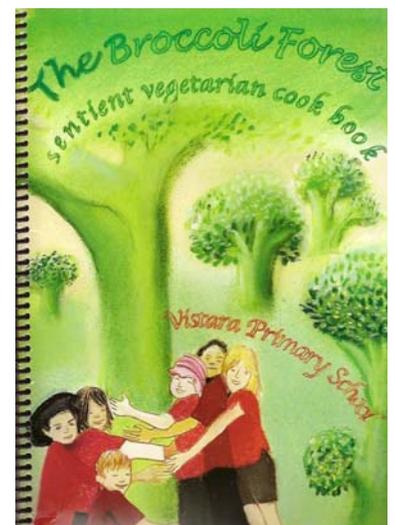
## *New cookbook available from Vistara School* **"The Broccoli Forest: A Sentient Vegetarian Cookbook"**

A cookbook was published as a fundraiser for Vistara Primary School in Lismore, Australia. 12 years in the making, this is a great collection of recipes, beautifully laid out, and easy to use.

The cookbook is nearly 200 pages long and contains many useful sections including: Breakfasts, Soups, Starters, Mains, Kids' Lunches, Salads and Desserts. All the recipes have been parent-tested and the book especially caters to children's tastes. There are some nice additional sections as well, such as a list of Great Vegetarians and a glossary of some of the more unusual ingredients.

This book would also make a great gift as well as an important kitchen resource. Here are a few of the yummy-sounding recipes: Thai Lemon Grass Soup, Carob Hazelnut Spread, The Never Boring Salad, Nutty Rice Cakes, Really Alternative Sandwich Fillings, Spanish Olive Parcels, Festive Curry, Celestial Carob Cake, Boiled Moist Fruit Cake and Butterscotch Birthday Cake!!

If you are interested in a copy, please contact Kamala. Books are \$25 AUD (\$23 USD) each, plus shipping. No discounts are available, as this is a fundraiser for Vistara, but we would be happy to send out volume orders. (I can receive checks to a US bank account or receive funds in Australia.) <[inrsong@ozemail.com.au](mailto:inrsong@ozemail.com.au)>



# Zonnelicht Daycare Center Den Bosch, The Netherlands By Yatindra



The Zonnelicht Daycare Center in Den Bosch, the Netherlands, has been growing steadily in the past years. It became more and more necessary to expand the building. For half a year now bricklayers, electricians, painters, drillers, plumbers and other noisy, dusty, helpful people have been around to build a two-floor extension to the old building, in many ways assisted by director Yadurani and her husband Vidyananda. Yadurani also manages to ensure that the children of Zonnelicht can play and even sleep in peace, in spite of towering cranes and huge, mudcovered drilling machines only meters away from the windows.

In the new building there will be much-needed extra space for an office, for team meetings, for the growing BSO and a baby group, and – a deep wish of Yadurani's – a Neohumanist room where teachers, Dutch colleagues and international guests can access the great amount of valuable Neohumanist notes, articles and manuals that she made and collected in the past twenty years. A separate little building is a beautiful *Plants and Animals Room*, Yadurani's other long-held wish. The new building will be opened in May.

In the near future the new building is planned to house a kindergarten as well. This will be very good because in the Netherlands kindergartens have been made a part of primary schools a few decades ago and in that way the moral and intuitive development of the preschooler was left unattended. Research has shown that the level of development of the preschoolers went down since the government made this change. Rather than joining the preschool child and the primary school child, Zonnelicht wants to join the preschooler and the daycare child.



## Fundraising Concert

On April 19<sup>th</sup>, a concert, dance performance and auction were held by Zonnelicht. This was to give more than forty Zonnelicht children the chance to express themselves and show what they had learned in their lessons dance, piano and African drum, and also to raise money for a children's home in India. This home was founded by the Dutch organization *Colourful Children*. After the 3 to 9 year olds had danced and made music, three professional Indian musicians gave a concert. The morning ended with an auction of works of art made by children, their parents and others. This way nearly \$1000,- was raised. Later this year even more



will be sent to the Indian children's home, to buy a new bus before the present one collapses from very old age.

The fundraiser was made possible thanks to many staff, parents and children who volunteered to help organize it.

## Teacher Training How to Bring about Goodness in Children

A teacher's training programme was held on February 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> on the theme of "How to Bring about Goodness in Children". The Programme included: Astaunga Yoga, Using Colors for Calmness, Yama and Niyama Storytelling, Creative Discipline, Art for Service and more.





# Neohumanistisk Barnehage Oslo, Norway

By Carolina Fossum

Our Neohumanist Kindergarten in Oslo has existed since 1991. Through all these years our kindergarten has been doing a lot of service providing spiritual knowledge to the Norwegian society. Many children have been blessed with the feeling of infinite love they experience through the daily kiirtan with the “Baba Nam Kevalam” mantra.



Our goal and main focus is “Self Development and Service to Others”. We present Neohumanism as “Love in Action”! This love is taught to the children through:



## KIIRTAN

Kiirtan is the main focus in our school. Our children, teachers, and parents love kiirtan. We listen to kiirtan all the time, while we work, while we eat, when the children sleep or relax and when they play outside. Father universe and mother nature dance and sing kiirtan with us every day. We are thankful for the blessing of Kiirtan!

## MEDITATION

Daily simple and short meditation is used daily to teach children inner peace and self discipline. We teach children to identify and get in contact with the great

power they carry within.

## YOGA

Our children love Yoga. It teaches them to establish contact with their best friends, “animals”, and helps them to relax. They know yoga keeps their body healthy and strong.



## VEGETARIAN ECOLOGICAL FOOD

We are very conscious about what we eat. There is only sentient food in the kindergarten. Everyone is a vegetarian: children, teachers and some of the parents. In addition we eat food of ecological quality. We teach vegetarian cooking classes to the children, teachers, parents and the local community. We are known and accepted in the area as the vegetarian school.



## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Our children are very active in doing service to nature. We pick up garbage off the streets; we recycle glass, metal and paper. We support different environmental organisations and we do service to plants, animals and nature around us. Every child has a plant which they learn to love and take care of every day.

## BRAHMA CHAKRA - CIRCLE OF CREATION – CIRCLE OF LOVE

Our academic and creative pedagogical aspect is presented through themes based on our brahma chakra circle of creation. We present each theme through songs, dance, music, theatre, and practical activities.

## LOVE THROUGH ACTION – SERVICE

Our children learn ethical values which guide them to understand and experience the meaning of love. First they learn to love their creator; the divine energy or universal love within them; then everything and everyone around them. They

**Continued on Page 37**

# Ananda Mela

at Ananda Suveda, Cabantian  
Davao City, Philippines  
By Didi Rainjita  
December 15, 2007

One of the biggest occasions in Ananda Marga schools in the Philippines is Ananda Mela, which means blissful festival. This is the event where children and parents alike can show their talents and have the chance to meet pupils from other Ananda Marga schools. So the big Ananda Marga family is really reflected in this event.



The Ananda Mela started with a motorcade. Various vehicles big and small, personal and jeepney made a long procession around the city proper and created a traffic jam on Cabantian Road before all were safely parked inside Ananda Suveda, the Master Unit about 15 minutes drive from Davao Training Centers. For the first time Ananda Mela was held with big pomp in the master unit. The big clearing and garden in front of the DC Hall with the final touch of decoration with coconut leaves, artificial sunflowers and flags welcomed 300 parents and pupils.

Nine AMSAI Pre-schools of Mindanao participated in the event. Each school represented a certain country and the pupils dressed accordingly. So here and there were pupils in Hawaiian tutu dresses of Palm Drive and Kimonos of Spring Valley schools. Chinese-long-dressed pupils of Cabantian mingled with Indian-costumed ones of Digos schools. NHA and Baruganan schools both represented Maharlika and the 3 schools from General Santos: Atis, Alabel and Mateo, dressed in Balinese clothes of Indonesia.

The program was officially started with the opening remark by DSWD representative and the exciting performances were begun by Savitri's dance troop presenting Mindanao dances which were quite rare to see. With their various xylophone musical instruments, glittering costumes and nimble movement, they brought pride to Maharlikan cultural heritage.

The children did their best in their performances, however with nine schools participating, it was a tough competition. There is a need to be extra good or extraordinary in order to win first prizes. The first competition was cultural dance. The first prize went to Gensan pupils, performing a welcome dance with a sacred procession of a priest guarded by warriors with spears and kris and elaborate costumes and long woolen black hair on the girls. However special prize went to Digos pupils performing Prabhat Samgiita dance. With beautiful coordination and timing, they brought out the sweetness of the song. It was a pity that only one school performed Prabhat Samgiita dance as this was an Ananda Mela occasion. The breeze and the sway of coconut leaves were what Palm Drive pupils impressed on the audience as they danced a Hawaiian dance. They won the third prize.



The dance performances by parents highlighted the contrast between culture and pseudo-culture. There is a need to promote cultural heritage and popularize it among the masses.

The chorus competition confirmed all the rhymes and songs the children have learnt. The chorus was delightfully complemented by various props and movements as showed most significantly by some pupils with the opening of lotus flowers and various asanas postures.

Competitions on poems by Nursery, storytelling by Kinder One and declamation by Kinder Two showed how amazingly children could learn when they recited their part in fluent English in a confident way. In story telling, how they could memorize the story and recite it in front of audience was a wonder. In various ways the pupils performed in story telling competition. There were actors playing the parts of the story as moving trees, flowers and animals with various costumes and masks while the storyteller told the story to the audience. Other storytellers brought the pictures with them, sat in front of audience and told the story according to the pictures shown.

In Declamation competition, only one pupil stood on stage, recited and acted various characters without props. It must be hard to stand alone where there is nothing to help you to remember. Drawing competition was also held at the back stage, while parents were performing on stage.

Ananda Mela surely gave a chance to children to walk and stand on stage, facing hundreds of eyes, to perform. Certainly it is an unforgettable experience as it needs courage and practice and is such an inspiration to parents and teachers to be better in guiding the children.



So we are impatiently waiting for another Ananda Mela, as stated by an ice cream peddler, cycling all the way up from Buhangin to Cabantian, hoping to be invited again for the occasion.

## Education Training Camp at Davao Global Training Center, Philippines December 20-22, 2007 By January Lynn, teacher

The Ananda Marga Special Academic Institution of Buhangin, Davao City had an ETC for teachers last December 20-22, 2007 held at Dada's Compound Buhangin. We were fortunate to have Sister Abha as the resource speaker all the way from Montessori, Taiwan. She brought with her a bagful of different techniques, devices and tips in teaching preschoolers. One technique that amazed us was teaching addition, subtraction, and multiplication using hand made beads. Each of us tried to solve numbers using the beads. It was fun. These activities will surely help the children learn the concepts easily. Teaching mathematics was made easy. Sister Abha showed a DVD about teaching reading through sounds. Classroom management, behavioral problems and parent teacher relationship were discussed. It is of utmost important that teachers have a good rapport with the parents or guardians of the children in school, Sister Abha told us. The second day of our training was spent learning new songs, yoga postures and games. We did have a very fruitful ETC with Sister Abha.

\* Abha Akyer our resource speaker is a Filipino. She has been working as the trainer of Montessori School in Taiwan for more than 20 years. We are very fortunate to have her and she will be coming again for 2 weeks in May 2008 for the summer ETC.

---

### Continued from Page 35 Noehumanistisk Barnehage

...learn to be kind to themselves, and then be kind to others. They learn to share; to be honest, to think rationally and express their feelings, both good and bad. They learn to love everyone and everything around them; living and non-living. They learn that everything has an existential value.

Our kindergarten supports several projects in the third world, and also the AM organisation in several different ways. It supports the work and expenses of several workers around the world. Our kindergarten is known to the local area, the local authorities, and the minister of education of Norway. We are known through different magazines, TV programs and personal contact, and our kindergarten is becoming more and more popular because of the essence behind its Neohumanist Education system – “LOVE” !!

# YES - Yoga Education in Schools

## What is Quiet Time and why is it important?

By Didi Ananda Devapriya

Children's minds are naturally very much engaged in exploring the external world. Neohumanist Education stimulates and encourages this exploration and extroversial movement of the mind, and a healthy curiosity is fundamental to learning.

However, modern life has become increasingly fast-paced and packed with sensorial stimulation, which overstimulates young children. Advertising and mass media study scientific ways to specifically target young children and stimulate many material desires in order to sell products to their parents. This happens because the society values profit-making as a higher priority than nurturing deeper non-materialistic values in children.

As a result, children's minds, which are still in a delicate formative stage, can become easily influenced to constantly run after satisfaction of material desires. This makes them restless, demanding and irritable. The abilities to center oneself, concentrate, be peaceful and quiet, and have patience, are becoming rarer. Rather the attention span of children is becoming shorter, and disorders such as hyperactivity and attention-deficit disorder are becoming more and more common in young children. It is a fact that many modern diseases are stress-related. The speed of technological development has brought many improvements to modern life, but at the cost of increasing levels of stress. It is important to counteract this stress by learning to consciously cultivate inner peace and contentment.

Young children, if free from overstimulation, have a natural tendency to have a rich imaginative inner life, to be fascinated with nature, and to feel a deep peaceful connection to the universe. Often they may be found playing with an invisible friend and they can be easily absorbed in simple activities such as playing with rocks, sand and water for hours. These innocent experiences of peace and contentment are becoming rarer for children who spend hours passively watching television and advertising, which overload their senses, but do not engage them in interactively expressing their energy.

Neohumanist Education recognizes the importance of protecting and enhancing the inner life of the child. To balance the increasingly strong external movement of the mind, young children need to learn how to make the mind flow introversially. Learning to relax the body and breathing, listen inside, and discover the peaceful joys of silence are important experiences. Children who learn such techniques from an early age will be able to have more resistance to stress, and have more access to their inner resources of creativity, reflection, and discrimination.



*Photos from Neohumanistisk Barnehage, Oslo Norway*

# Yoga Education for Children, Portugal

By Narayana

April, 2008

By Grace I came in contact with that which fulfills me completely – working with children! I found that they can receive ALL my Love – **they know how to unconditionally receive It!** It is so gratifying!

Recently we organised a full day program with Yoga class, lunch and treasure hunt in the forest.



Here is a summary of the story we used.

*There was a group of young children who loved to play near the forest. They used to often listen to the story of a treasure which was hidden in the forest. Nobody could ever find it! Nobody could even enter the forest for it was guarded by a big monster! “What does he look like?” children used to ask. But the answer was always a deep silence.*

*So the children went to ask all their neighbors (the Turtle, the Rabbit, the Snake, etc) advice about how to approach him. Then the night came. They lit a candle and slept..... and a fairy came to them. “If you want to pass the monster and enter the forest you have to make a present for him”. And so it was. They made him a present and entered the forest.*

*In the forest, after overcoming some obstacles, they came upon a Saint doing meditation near the cave. The Saint taught them meditation and gave them the clues to find the treasure. They were all so excited and happy when they found a “real Saint” there!!! The treasure was, of course, LOVE!*

**To see the children having fun and learning Yoga and Meditation is indeed a great blessing!**

Regular weekly Yoga classes for children are being held by me in two schools, and several other holistic centers and children’s venues.

Workshops on Yoga for parents and children are conducted on a regular basis in several places also.

In May I am to give a talk for about 150 parents in a public school. The talk will be given on the topic “Yoga for Children”.



In Other

# Global NHE News



## Manila Sector

### THAILAND

#### Lampung

Rajabhat University in Lampung, Thailand has embraced Neohumanist Education's YES program with over 400 students choosing to practice yoga and kaoshiki regularly. Three professors from the University attended a Bio-psychology workshop at CNS-Sweden in Ydrefors.

The University completed a million baht study last year that lasted over six months and found that the Neohumanist approach to yoga is good for students' all round well being and concentration. Prof. Nuntaka Taweeikul, Prof. Yupa, Dr. Tipawan and colleagues are teaching a course on Self Development and Quality of Life using Neohumanist techniques including Yoga. 1500 students in the university have taken the classes. Eighteen persons are trained to give the training to the 1500 students. Now, a yoga club is also being started under the guidance of Professor Surachai and his colleagues from the Faculty of Education and Psychology.



Dr. Shambhushivananda who brought yoga and Neohumanist Education modalities into Lampung and the surrounding areas eight years ago participated in a special performance given by students of the University during his visit last November, 2007.

In January, five weeks of yoga were provided as a supplemental activity to about 400 students who study science as a quality of life subject. A brief lecture about brainwaves and positive thinking was included. Dada

Shiilabhadrananda also conducted a workshop for staff and students.

#### Chiang Mai

Recently, Mumfort College in Chiang Mai invited Prof. Kitiawan from Bangkok due to a growing interest in Neohumanist Philosophy among its staff and students in Northern Thailand. As a result of the yoga-kids program of Rakrook Neohumanist Nursery, the Assumption School has also included yoga training in its curriculum. The graduates of Neohumanist Yoga Centre are teaching yoga and neohumanist methods at different places now.

#### Sangklabhuri

Dada Ramakrsnananda's project now has 50 children. 40 volunteers passed through his project last year. With a donation he received from Norway he built a weaving center. During his recent visit, Dada Shambhushivananda inspected Didi Ananda Anuraga's school. She will build a three story building for more

space for the school within the same campus. 250 children are currently in the school. 80 of them are from the children's home run by Didi Ananda Devamala.

## Bangkok

On his recent visit to Bangkok, Dada Shambhushivananda initiated CNS Thailand with its center in Bangkok. Jayadhiira and Nandita are coordinating the proposed centre in Bangkok under the guidance of Dada Krpamaya.



## INDONESIA



### Cirebon, West Java By Didi Vanii

I have been here since May 2002. We have a Play Group and Kindergarten. The school is using a 315m<sup>2</sup> building on a 603m<sup>2</sup> piece of land which is located in a quiet section of the city. Normally we have 20-25 students and last year we had 25 students. This year we have 15 students. We have 4 teachers including a principal. The children have morning circle, asanas or PT exercises alternately, and do a simple meditation with kiirtan totalling 30 minutes. All the activities are led by the teachers. Last November the Education Department came to school for Accreditation, and we got an A (89, 43) mark.

To help with the finances I started teaching a Free English Course for everybody; 1 class for kindergarten, 1 class for elementary, Junior and senior high school and also for adults (one class for each grade). In this way, I also utilize and refresh my English since Indonesian is my second language. One class is for an hour, some twice a week, some once a week. Beside that, I have private class. In this way I am also earning some money. The other purpose of the free class was to promote our school since many people didn't know about our AMSAI school. In the beginning many people didn't believe that there was a free class. I started in January 2008 with 1-3 students. Now I have 14 students for the private class, and about 50 students for the free class.

The school program runs in the morning, so I utilize the place for the private and free class in the afternoon. I am planning to get more English teachers and a Mandarin teacher, and then expand it to an English and Mandarin course. In this way we can help people to earn their living and teach them to do some service by teaching a free class to those who can't afford to pay.



## Nairobi Sector

### KENYA

Wanted! A sister volunteer in Mombasa, Kenya: to work in a school of 470 children, and a girl's children's home. The atmosphere is very cordial, the children friendly, and great potentials to develop Neohumanist Education practically. Contact Didi Ananda Giiitika <agiitika@yahoo.com>

## Delhi Sector

### INDIA

Since New's Year Day 2008, a good number of Ananda Marga schools organised sports which inspired the local margiis and sympathisers. More than 53 schools in total organised Sports Day. All the guardians with great inspiration extended their cooperation for making these competitions successful. In some places, guardians actively participated in making the sports event successful. A few of these programs are included in the following list.

#### Kharibari

On 19th January Ananda Marga School, Kharibari at foothills of Darjeeling (north Bengal) organised Annual sports. Thousands of people including hundreds of guardians enjoyed these sports.

#### Kulkuri

Ananda Marga School in Kulkuri Master Unit organised a beautiful sports competition on 16th January, in which hundreds of guardians and villagers took active interest. Shri Harimohan Karmakar, Head master of the local high school presided over the prize distribution program.

#### Karandighi

Ananda Marga School, Karandighi in North Dinajpur, organised a sports competition on 23rd January. The competition began at 9.30 am with flag hoisting. Mr. Kalpa Sinha, a well known and reputed teacher, distributed the prizes to the winners. The entire program was organised by Avadhutika Ananda Karmavrata Acarya, the principal of the school.

#### Maynaguri

23rd January is the birthday of Netaji Subhash Bose and was celebrated at Maynaguri (Jalpaiguri district) by organising a sports competition by Ananda Marga School. It was inaugurated by Shri Nripen Bera, a reputed teacher.

Annual sports day was also celebrated by Ananda Marga School in South Dinajpur district, Chandrakona School

of Midnapur district, Amta and Chauldharia in Howrah district, Krsnanagar and Habibpur school in Nadia district. They organised the sports day in the month of February. The competitions included 100m race, 50 metre race, biscuit race, long jump, musical chair etc.



### Ananda Nagar, Pundag District GRACE - Gurukula Rural Advanced Computer Education

This institution is located in Pundag Village of Ananda Nagar. It was started in 2005 by Dada Rudradevananda on 5 acres of land. It is a self-sufficient unit which started out with manufacturing torch lights in its own factory and selling throughout India. The income of this business generated the funds needed for the entire infrastructure of the project, which now has the following components:

- High power electricity for industrial purposes.
- Bag factory employing 10 people and producing bags.
- A dairy farm of many cows and calves.
- An iron works making different tools and fences.
- Soya milk distribution made of purchased soya and ground for making milk.
- A seed grinder that can make flour. The villagers bring their cereals for grinding here.
- A pond for water catchments.
- A deep well for water supply and irrigation.
- Gardens of various vegetables and orchards.

There is also a computer school with 65 students and it is expanding. Among the students there are also a few women from the surrounding area. The course is for 6 months.

A satellite project of GRACE is in Bokaro Kashijharia which is a Gurukula Public School that started April 2007 and now has 155 children in nursery and kindergarten and 7 staff. The school is also expanding to provide for primary education.

## Pune, India

DSL Pune, Didi Ananda Jyotirekha recently arranged a cultural programme and took out a procession. This programme was based on "Neohumanist Education". She organized all this with the help of her AM school children. News media printed this news in all leading newspapers of Pune.



## BANGLADESH

Ananda Marga School Anuwara, Chattagram presented a beautiful cultural program based on Prabhat Samgiita on January 24<sup>th</sup> .2008, which was attended by more than 2000 guardians and public.

## Chandpur in Thakurgaon district

Ananda Marga School staged an attractive cultural program on February 10 which attracted more than 3000 people including guardians.

## NEPAL

### Kathmandu, at Hetauda

By Ac.Omkarshvarananda Avt.

We have an AMSAI school with 223 students and a Children's Home with 11 boys. Pictured here is:

1. The interschool Science Quiz organised by the National Private and Boarding Schools Association,

Nepal, hosted by our school.

2. Our participation in a rally on International AIDS Day

3. Ananda Marga Children's Home boys performing in a cultural programme by RAWA Nepal.

We have been invited by all the schools to conduct YES programmes, after our NHE schools Yoga, Asana, Kaoshiki and Tandava demonstration in the District Interschool Tournaments.

With my medical background, I was posted in A.M. Gurukula University at Anandanagar by Baba. I was looking after Composite Medical College and Hospital from 1990 to 2003. Here in Nepal also I am continuing to treat the needy persons through Homeopathy,



Acupuncture, Yoga and Herbal medicines. I am planning to expand these activities through medical camps. Last October we gave Asthma and Allergy treatments with herbs at midnight in moonlight. The follow up was Yoga and Music therapy with Prabhat Samgiita. 150 persons benefited. Now we are going to organize the same on June 7, 08. If we get someone specializing in acupuncture it will be even better.

### Itahari Sunsari

By Tara



This is the 7 room school building we have newly constructed. Now we are going to open a new session from April from class nursery to grade 3. This is the building of AMURT Itahari, Sunsari, Nepal and AMURT is helping the school. The school has a very good future here.

## Berlin Sector

### ROMANIA

Excerpted from news reports by Didi Ananda Devapriya



#### Bucharest -

**Earth Day**, which is internationally recognized on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, was celebrated in Bucharest at the two Sunrise Playschools for the first time. We had a variety of discussion themes - what makes the earth happy, what makes it sad, how we can be good friends to the earth. We also discussed differences between chemical and natural materials. But one of the most interesting projects was paper making to practically demonstrate recycling! At the **Mihai Bravu** the children recycled paper step by step into a very beautiful artistic creation. Here is a link if you would like to do the same.

<http://www.wipapercouncil.org/makepaper.htm>

At the **Bucuresti Noi** school, the children went on an adventure in the forest to find a magical fairy...only the children could see the fairy and they had to

become very quiet and follow a magical trail through the forest blindfolded listening for fairy music in order to find her. At first the fairy was sad, because big people are forgetting about nature, but when she met our children who were so enthusiastically saying that they love the Earth - even singing a song specially made for the occasion, her spirits lifted and she guided them through a nature walk...When we met with other big children in the park, the fairy and our children shared a message about the earth with them. They also were excited to do something positive for the earth by picking up litter and throwing it in the right place. It was a memorable event!



#### Special Needs work Mihai Bravu school

In our Sunrise School, Mihai Bravu, where we have been pioneering the integration of special needs children into a normal setting since the inception of the project, an innovation that we are experimenting with this year is that we have hired a "psicopedagog" in order to provide more individualized attention, planning and parent involvement for our special needs children. Her job includes making a detailed evaluation of each case and a individualized plan with specific learning objectives which are presented to the parents and shared with other staff. Her name is Gabriela, and she herself is a very positive example for the children because she also has cerebral palsy in her legs, but through physical therapy, and a very determined spirit, she has been able to overcome it to a great degree



#### Panatau

**Fountain of Hope** is a new after school center in Panatau, a small village in rural Romania. Since its opening in October, the after-school center has been serving warm, nutritious vegetarian meals and giving homework support to 30 of the most disadvantaged children in Panatau daily. The opening ceremony of Izvorul Sperantei, took place on Nov. 2nd. The project has received several generous contributions, but is still in urgent need of



more sponsorships in order to cover the costs of providing the hot meals. It costs 16 euros per month to cover the food costs of one child - or about 190 euros in a year.



## NORWAY

Ac Shambhushivananda Avt participated in the deliberations in the conference on "Peace and Reconciliation in South Asia" held in Oslo on April 10-11th and organised by The International Association of Human Values. Among the speakers were some members of the European Parliament, representatives of conflicting parties in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, victims of Maoist movement in India, representatives from some state governments of India, peace scholars, women peace activists and members of the media community who shared views on "How does media fuel or solve world conflicts?"



## ITALY

During the Spring Retreat held at Selva di Cadore in Italy from 21st to 24th March a Neohumanist Education workshop was held with 18 participants from Norway, Italy and Spain. The workshop covered the background of NHE; a presentation of what makes a NH school: policies/practices, building and environment, teachers, students, curriculum; and then a discussion of NHE principles with practical examples and materials. Due to the variety of backgrounds of the teachers we discussed age groups from nursery to primary and high school.



## New York Sector

### MEXICO

#### Santa Catarina, Nuevo Leon

The Escuela Elena Emmanuel Carballo school opened in 1983 in Santa Catarina, a poor county near Monterrey City in Mexico. It now has 38 students in kindergarten through grade 3. There are four teachers now and a daily yoga program with a'sanas, meditation, and stories. The Director is Arcana and the Yoga and meditation instructor is Mahesh.

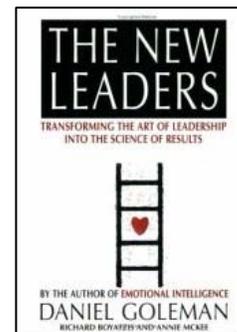


## Book Review by Avtk Ananda Ragamaya Acarya

### The New Leaders

Transforming the Art of Leadership into the Science of Results

By Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee



A reader-friendly and captivating book that speaks to all people in a position of influence, *The New Leaders* takes a look at leadership in a refreshing and in-depth way that no other book I have come across has done to date. It looks at different leadership styles, some of which are known as resonant, helping organizations and companies to flourish. Such styles include the visionary, coaching, affiliative and democratic approach. We are also shown, the more frequently identified as dissonant styles, (though when used in the right context they can be beneficial), of pacesetter and commanding.

At the heart of the healthy leader lies emotional intelligence (EI). Such a person has the leadership competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. This leader is someone who lives not only their own dreams but also those of the institution they serve, inspiring others to be a part of the vision and encouraging them to realize their full potential. Leaders of a resonant nature have the agility and capacity to be in touch with what is needed at any given moment to help a workforce move ahead with dynamism and enthusiasm. Tapping into a myriad of studies to prove their findings the authors have demonstrated a deep understanding of what qualities are necessary for a benevolent and healthy leadership.

What I find particularly encouraging is that leadership can be learnt, it is not necessarily about being born with certain qualities. Over time, the limbic brain, responsible for our emotions, can relearn and be educated to function in a more empathetic way where EI competencies can be developed.

*The New Leaders* shows how positive change can be sustained through mindfulness and conscious learning styles as well as through developing the power of relationship and team building. The last part of the book deals with developing and sustaining emotionally intelligent organizations. Taking a look at what constitutes toxic as well as healthy organizations through dynamic inquiry, it offers ways in which one can develop, guide and maintain emotionally intelligent teams giving life as well as a hopeful and sustainable future to the organization.

I was drawn to this book knowing that the author of *Emotional Intelligence* could only be a part of a progressive, meaningful and revolutionary book on leadership. I was not disappointed.

## NHE Publications

### NHE Summit 2006 DVDs out NOW!



Two of the presentations given at the NHE Summit in 2006 are compiled on this set of DVDs

**"Directing an NHE School"** – Eric Jacobson, the director of PSOLI (Progressive School of Long Island) presented from his experience of developing and directing an NHE school for 21 years, focusing on implementing Neohumanism in all aspects of the school. With his effective practical methods he fascinated and inspired all the participants.

**"A Spiritual Education for the Child's Personality Development"**, presented by Dada Caetanyananda, showed us a wonderful way of adjusting spiritual

concepts for the public in a way that is easily understood and accepted. Dada is running a successful kindergarten and language school in Indonesia with 2500 children.

Cost for the whole set: 49.99 US\$ Order from [www.nhe-press.com](http://www.nhe-press.com)



## Circle of Love Poster

This beautiful full color poster measures approx 20 X 30 inches. Cost is \$10 US plus shipping for developed countries and \$5 US plus shipping for developing countries. Order from [www.nhe-press.com](http://www.nhe-press.com)



# Neohumanist Education



*YES Yoga Class, Rajabhat University, Lampang, Thailand*



Gurukula Network  
146 Honness Lane  
Ithaca, New York 14850