

Gurukula Network

Newsletter of the Association of Neo-Humanist Schools and Research Institutes
of Ananda Marga Gurukula

Issue 12

May 2001

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

Gurukula Network

Newsletter and Journal of the
Association of Neo-Humanist Schools and
Research Institutes of
Ananda Marga Gurukula

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

Please send us your news of schools and
projects, reports on research and publication
efforts, articles on Neo-Humanist Education,
stories, pictures, ETC notes, classroom
activities, etc. by **September 1st for
October 2001 issue**

Arete 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. Ananda Rama Ac.

Arati

Headquarters of Ananda Marga Gurukula

Kulapati, Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt.
Ananda Nagar
PO Baglata
Dist Purulia, West Bengal, India
e-mail: <kulapati@gurukul.edu>

AM Gurukula Global Liaison Office

c/o Arete Brim
146 Honness Lane
Ithaca, New York 14850 USA
e-mail:
<amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>

WEB PAGES

Ananda Marga Gurukula

www.gurukul.edu

Neo-Humanist Education

www.gurukul.edu/nhe

Teacher Resources

www.gurukul.edu/nhe/resources.html



Ananda Marga School Paraguay

VISION OF ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA

Ananda Marga Gurukula is engaged in building an educational township at Ananda Nagar, West Bengal India on a 525 square kilometer campus to bring about transformation of individuals and the society at large.

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

Ananda Marga Gurukula is supporting the building of a global eco village network (Master Units) in over 120 countries. These projects range from 5 acres to 1000 acres.

OBJECTIVES OF ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA

- 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, Neo-humanism, and PROUT (Progressive Utilization Theory) as the foundation for building a universal society.
- To initiate intellectual dialogues and research for all around renaissance of the 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.

Announcements and Works in Progress

NERI Teacher Education

Our first Teacher Education Center is beginning its first semester this September, 2001 in Holland. Please see the article included in this newsletter on page 6.

NEW Neo Humanist Education Research

Institutes (NERIs) have been formed in Holland, Australia, Norway and Italy. For information on participating in these efforts, write to <amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>

Spanish Translation of NHE Documentary

Didi Ananda Amegha and Ajay have been translating NHE articles into Spanish. One translated article has already been posted to NHE Resources <www.gurukul.edu/nhe/resources.html>. Didi Ananda Amegha has now undertaken the project of translating the NHE Documentary Book into Spanish. If you would like to assist in this effort, please write to: <amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>

International Song Book

This project was an inspiration from the NHE Conference in NY and we have further discussed it in our NERI team here in Holland. First, we would like to make a NHE songbook with notation for our primary schools. Later we would like to have a professional CD to go with it as well. We are thinking to have it as internal, non-commercial, educational material to begin with.

We are collecting the most beautiful neo-humanistic (uplifting, charming, with good meaning and feeling) international songs in different languages from all over the world. What we need is that you send one c.d. or cassette with your songs in the language of your country sung by children and if not possible then by adults. Please also write the song words on paper in that language using Roman script, plus translation into English. This way the children will be able to experience a different language and sing and understand it. Please state the source of the music and song and if we have permission to use it. We can also contact the composer directly to ask permission if you send us their contact email/address.

Please send to:

Sadhana c/o NERI
Ernst Schumacherstraat 26,
5237 BD 's-Hertogenbosch
Netherlands
e-mail:"Marianne Dudink"
<sadhana2020@hotmail.com>

AMGK Virtual University

With the growth of educational opportunities through the internet, we are planning to offer AMGK courses through a virtual format, pooling resources from many locations. Efforts have already begun and the goal is to obtain formal accreditation so that credits earned could be transferable and degrees formally recognized. While we are starting with accreditation in the US, we also hope to have additional accreditation through other countries around the globe. The plan is to start with single courses and then develop them into degree programs.

Beginning efforts are focusing on the administrative requirements. Soon we expect to seek faculty who have advanced degrees and can offer formal courses. These initial efforts will be without pay, but we expect faculty and administration to receive reasonable financial compensation once students begin enrolling for classes.

It will not be easy to achieve accreditation. We expect it might take several years of concerted effort. If you would like more information or if you have interest in helping with either the administrative or academic aspects of this Virtual University Project, please contact:

Bhavesh <sculthorp@eclipse.net> and
Raghuvira <maxwells@twcnny.rr.com>.

Video Productions

Work has begun on producing videos on our NHE schools and projects. One of them is called Education for School-Children-YES! - a project of NERI-Italia, a division of AMGK(Central). If you are interested in this video of Yoga in Public Schools in Italy - contact Kamaleshvara or Didi Ananda Rama <anandarama@compuserve.com>.

If you are interested in a Video of the School in England contact Tapasi at <innersong@goldnet.ch>.

Standards for our Schools

A collective effort for Standards for our schools worldwide is underway with the input of NHE representatives from each Sector. It is hoped that these will be completed and circulated by the end of the year.

NHE LOGO

A beautiful proposed NHE Logo has been completed by Didi Ananda Rama and Pamkaj with the input of representatives from several Sectors. If you would like to view it in color, it can be e-mailed to you. Please contact <amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>

AMGK Incorporation in USA

Ananda Marga Gurukula has received its incorporation in the USA.

NHE -Forum

Are you working in an NHE school or project? Do you have computer access? If yes, then do join the NHE-Forum. NHE-Forum is a discussion and sharing group for those working in NHE projects around the world. Currently there are about 80 participants worldwide. In the past 6 months discussion and sharing has included:

- news from established and developing schools
- book and film titles
- meditation techniques for children
- news from education conferences
- inspiring stories
- coordination of exchange programs between interested schools
- CD and Video productions in the making
- and much more...

To sign up write to Didi Ananda Rama:
<anandarama@compuserve.com>

Web Pages Updates

The first round of revisions have been made to the Gurukula and the NHE Web Pages. Artistic improvements will come soon. To view the new pages please visit:
<www.gurukul.edu> and <www.gurukul.edu/nhe>

NHE Resources

A private web page has been set up for our schools for sharing resources and articles on NHE. Currently there are articles posted under the following topics:

Neo-Humanist Education General Articles, Neo-Humanism Articles, Teachers Education, Teacher Reading Lists, Child Development, Innovations in Teaching, Communication Skills, School Profiles and News, Prospectuses, Brochures, Handbooks, Publications, Children's Book Lists, Research, Preschool, Meditation, Values and Ethics, Discipline, The Arts, Songs, Stories, Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, Science, Service, Web Page Links, In Spanish.

To access the Resource Pages please go to:
<www.gurukul.edu/nhe/resources.html>.

Gurukula Journal - Online Digest

A New Article on NHE, by Kathleen Kesson, entitled "Tantra: The quest for the ecstatic mind" is now posted on the web based digest, Gurukula Journal. Please visit <www.guruku.edu/journal.htm>. This essay is one of

a collection of original writings on spirituality and education edited by John P. Miller and Yoshiharu Nakagawa, and has been reprinted in our journal with permission by the publisher, Foundation for Educational Renewal.

Data Base of Alternative Technology contacts for our MU

is being compiled and will be accessible through our Gurukula Web pages in the near future.

Using Theater in the Classroom Resource Person Available

Vishva Shanti Ole Brekke living in Copenhagen, Denmark is available as a resource for anyone interested in using theater in education. Most recently his profession has been in theatre as a teacher, actor and director, but he also has experience as a classroom teacher of children in public schools. Currently he teaches a course at Linköping University, Sweden in using theatre in education for teachers and would be teachers. Courses he teaches are firmly based on Neo Humanist philosophy. Vishvashanti sits as chairman of the board of directors of Sunrise School in Copenhagen and was one of the parents who started the school 16 years ago, and all four of his children have attended the school over the years. You may contact him via e-mail: <obrekke@mobilixnet.dk>

Student Volunteers

Many college students are interested to work in our schools and projects as volunteers. A list of projects and interested students is being compiled to facilitate connecting interested individuals with interested projects. For more information or to be part of this program, please contact <amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>

Gurukula Sustainable Communities Research Program

AMGK is supporting research of sustainable communities around the world. The following research project is being conducted about Latin America

Visions of Sustainability

A project focusing on sustainable communities in Latin America

I am undertaking a project to explore sustainable community developments in Latin America. The goal of the project is to help get the message of sustainable communities to a greater audience so that more people can share their visions and participate in creating a sustainable future. The project will better define sustainable development by investigating a wide range of communities.*Continued on page 8*

News from Ananda Marga Gurukula at Ananda Nagar



Number of Students

The number of students in all the educational institutions of Anandanagar is increasing every year. There was an increase of 283 students from May 00 to January 01.

25 Primary and Post Primary schools - 1335 students
4 Junior High schools - 266 students
High School - 695 students
Higher institutions - 401 students
Total - 2697

Acupuncture Institute and Clinic

Acupuncturist Charles Fallick, Ciiranjiva, has recently visited Anandanagar and has taken up a program for raising funds in USA for a comprehensive medical school, including dormitories, in patient facilities and clinic, which would also provide viable wages to trained staff. Between May and December of last year, 3775 out door and 12 indoor patients were treated at the Acupuncture Clinic. Ciiranjiva and Dr. Singh from the College of Medical Pathies, have met with members of the Board of AMGK, and may exciting new programs are underway, including continuing education for all teaching staff. In addition many new improvements have been incorporated into the daily classes at the Acupuncture Institute. The Acupuncture Institute currently has 27 students and 5 teaching staff.



Veterinary Institute

Three graduated students from the Veterinary Institute were recruited as Prani Bandhu Saha yaka in Baladih, Dorhoda and Tulin Anchalas of Purulia districts in November, 2000. A piece of 81 decimals of land has been purchased at the original site in Tarun Anandanagar and a boundary wall around the existing college building in central Anandanagar is also under construction. The total number of students is 87 which includes 42 hostelers. Apart from 2 regular teachers a retired Professor and head of the Department, Ranchi Veterinary. College also gives classes once a week. 971 veterinary patients of different species and 94 artificial inseminations were recorded in the Veterinary Hospital. Till now 230 certificates of the two-year diploma course have been awarded

Ayurvedic College

The Ayurvedic College began conducting classes in January.

Medical Institute

Incorporation of a library containing 650 books, a laboratory, a computer for teaching and notebooks on preventive and social medicine has strengthened the infrastructure of the institute. There are 113 students including 25 hostelers and 6 teaching staff. 322 students from different states have so far graduated from the college.

Farming Institute

The Farming Institute has undertaken a program of intensive planting of fruit and timber trees covering an area of 3 acres in Gurudih & Gopal Anandanagar. The block development committee of Kotshila Block through the initiative of Karma Dhyaksa, Shri Nandu Gorain of Chitmu village has been kind enough to grant Rs. 60,000/- for the plantation work and completion of Gurudih Sayar. A good crop of paddy crop was harvested from nearly 2 acres of chakradhuri fields.

.....Continued on page 8

Teacher Education Program of NERI Netherlands

Courses Starting September, 2001

The NHE seminar in January in New York has culminated in many progressive ideas contributing to our planning the Teacher Education program here in Holland. First it was suggested that the word "Training" be replaced by "Education" as this would imply a more internal developmental process in the teacher rather than an "externally imposed training."

Further contribution we received from the visit of Krpamayii, Dr. Kathleen Kesson who helped to reorganise our programs and provided a very valuable academic framework. Kathleen is the head of the educational department of Goddard College in Vermont USA, which is known for its progressive ideas.

Kathleen says that ideas about Neo-Humanist education have developed organically; drawn from significant core ideas expressed in the teachings of Shrii P.R. Sarkar, as well as practical and theoretical ideas from various educational sources, a spiritual pedagogy has begun to emerge that is uniquely "tantric". What that actually means is a 'work-in-progress'. We believe that there is substantive work to be done in the development of both the theory and practice of Neo-Humanist education.

These courses of study have been designed to give a solid basis of educational theory, and to encourage teachers in our schools to continue to experiment and develop their own ideas about Neo-Humanist Education.

Teacher Certification Programs

NERI will offer NHE teacher certification programs for Early Childhood, Primary Education and Administration. The NHE Early Childhood certification program will start September 2001 and the other two in September 2002.

For high-school graduates from the Netherlands there will be 3 and 4 year on-site courses starting in September 2001.

Starting September 2001

NHE Teacher Certification Program for Early Childhood (0-6)

This NHE teacher certification program for Early Childhood will start September 2001.

This course of study has been designed to give the student a solid basis of educational theory and a focus on Early Childhood education of children ages 0-6. The student will receive a NHE diploma in Early Childhood education approved by AMGK after successful completion of the program and will be able to teach in NHE kindergartens.

This program may be taken as part time on-site in Holland or via correspondence. The course of study will be given in English. These courses are for teachers with a local teaching diploma or persons who have a bachelor degree in any liberal art discipline or who have a documentation of experience working with children. It is especially designed for teachers who are working in NHE schools and would like to receive a diploma in NHE. The delivery period of this program is one year. The certification in Early Childhood will be a prerequisite for taking the certification program in Primary Education and Administration.

It is also a prerequisite for these certification programs to have attended a 90 day spiritual lifestyle training or a similar equivalent training. The minimum age requirement is 18 years.

Cost of one program is US \$ 2000. Scholarships may be requested. For application and registration contact: <neri.nl@gurukul.edu>

Responsibility for Study

The student will be working with an advisor who is connected with NERI. That person will be responsible for receiving the written materials and giving feedback on the student's work. The student will also be assigned a mentor in the field, who may be an Acarya or a Margi who is experienced in the field of education. The student will be able to discuss his or her learning with them as well. The students will need to assume a lot of responsibility for managing their own time, setting goals, and getting the materials turned in in a timely way.

Specific local seminars may be organised to have dialogue and to be able to discuss ideas further.

Assessment of Learning

The most important part of these courses will be the relationship the student develops with his or her NERI advisor.

The conversations (oral or written) that the student will have with this person will help him or her assess the quality of his or her work. We also believe that it is important to develop the skills to assess one's own work in a meaningful way. Therefore, we have included processes of 'self-assessment' throughout the program. Upon completion of the courses, the student's portfolio will be submitted to a review committee who will assess the work, and make a decision about the award of the certificate. At the end of the program, we will also ask the student to assess the worth of the program, and offer suggestions about how it can be improved.

The Portfolio

In addition to mini-assignments that accompany each module, the student will be expected to complete five portfolio assignments throughout one course of study. A portfolio will be the student's own personal record of his or her growth and development as a teacher. These assignments are meant to demonstrate one's own competency in areas that we feel are most important. Portfolio assignments will require the students to synthesize and apply the knowledge that they gain from their studies. We may ask permission to copy all or part of the portfolio for the Neo-Humanist archives. The portfolio assignments will be explained in the context of specific modules of study. Some portfolio assignments will cover multiple modules of study.

Areas that will be covered in the Early Childhood program

We begin with the student's own educational autobiography, asking the students to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses as a potential teacher. Then we ask the student to develop an individual plan for growth, which will include the realms of spirit, intellect, and the arts. This reflects our belief that one of the most important foundations of teaching is the teacher's continuous process of self awareness and self-development. From this foundation of personal development, we engage the student in thinking about the "big picture" of education; the philosophical dimension of educational theory and practice. We situate Neo-Humanist educational theory within the context of other eastern and western approaches to education. As part of this "big picture", we introduce the study

of culture as a crucial area of study for Neo-Humanist educators.

We believe that it is important that educators be astute observers of children. Therefore, we next introduce the study of child development and learning theory. Here too, we compare and contrast Neo-Humanist ideas with other streams of thought. Next, we move into the practical dimension. Here, the student will study the important applied areas of curriculum development, teaching methods, assessment, and the design of learning environments. And finally, the student will cover the important area of the child within a social context, studying important ideas about the family and community, the impact of poverty on learning, working with children with special needs, and how to combat "pseudo-culture".

The Teacher as Inquirer

What does it mean to "do research?" One may have an idea in mind that research is only for scientists, or specialists. When one thinks of doing research, one may think of carefully designed experiments, control groups, statistics, variables, or worse yet, rats in cages! However, in recent decades, educational research has become much more qualitative, and now includes such methods as narrative research, autobiography, and ethnography, or the method that anthropologists use to study cultures. Most recently, there is an interest in the kinds of research that teachers carry out in their own classrooms. This is sometimes called action research, and its role is to generate knowledge from the "grassroots" of the classroom. Neo-Humanist education is an exciting new field of study, and the NHE teachers are "pioneers" in this area of knowledge. We believe it is important for NH educators to learn the basic skills of inquiry, and to become "reflective practitioners", so that all teachers might contribute to the growing body of theory in this area. Therefore, part of the requirements of this course of study is that one gains skill in classroom-based inquiry, and learns to document and share one's observations about teaching and learning.

The Modules of the Early Childhood certification program:

Module One - Intellectual development of the teacher in the content areas
Module Two - Creative development of the teacher
Module Three - Foundations of Holistic Education
Module Four - Child Development
Module Five - Culturally Sensitive Pedagogy
Module Six - Learning Theory

Module Seven - Curriculum and Teaching
Module Eight - Assessment
Module Nine - Social Context of Learning
Module Ten - Learning Environment
Module Eleven - School Administration

What does it mean to be a Neo-Humanist teacher?

"Neo" means "ever new" and in this spirit a Neo-humanist teacher is to keep an open perspective, free of dogma or limiting views. Neo-humanism stands for the liberation of intellect by nurturing devotion as the highest treasure of the human heart that provides the inspiration to the learner to break through all kinds of limiting attitudes.

This practice is embedded in the Tantric spiritual principles which aims at the continuous striving with vigour and dynamism to liberate one's own mind and move towards the subtle. The teacher is a contemplative practitioner continuously learning and educating. This practice is carried on to become one's mission in life which results in a deep sense of responsibility for the interconnectedness of all of life. The culminating vision of what it means to be a Neo-humanist teacher is that one's own individual nucleus is one with the cosmic nucleus, that is that one's being and action is in harmony with the greater cosmic purpose.

.....Continued from page 5
AMGK Ananda Nagar

Fine Arts & Music College

The Fine Arts and Music College is also running well with 40 students, 2 hostelers and 4 teachers.

Textile Institute

The Textile Institute, with 2 running hand looms, is preparing good quality gamaccha, bed sheets and saris.

Tantra, Tantra Sadhana and Microvita Symposium

A 3 day symposium on Tantra, Tantra Sadhana and Microvita was organized on 30, 31, December, 2000 and 1st January, 2001 under the auspices of Tantra Vidyapeeth of AM Gurukula, Anandanagar. Nearly 30 persons including overseas margiis attended it.

Music College at Uma Nivas

Interest is gathering in supporting the facilities of the Music College at Uma Nivas. Avtk. Ananda Gayatrii is running the Music College giving instructions in music, song and dance. The college is open to overseas

students. There are plans to construct more adequate facilities on the foundation stones layed at the time when Baba was giving instructions for the establishment of this college. The plan is to have an ashram type of atmosphere with accommodations where sisters could stay and study at the same time. Anyone interested in contributing to architectural designing, helping with construction and fundraising please contact Avtk. Ananda Rama.
<anandarama@compuserve.com>

.....continued from page 4
Sustainable Communities

In a world where society is struggling to keep pace with the staggering rate of environmental deterioration, there are some communities presenting models of hope for the rest of the world. By regenerating a sense of community and a connection to the natural world through the use of renewable energy sources, innovative agricultural techniques, efficient transportation systems, as well as social and educational programs, some communities are living examples of how to reverse environmental destruction. These communities present models for development and a shift away from the present paradigms which are recognized as deleterious to the environment and to human progress

There are three components to the project. The first component is to travel in Latin America and study communities that have taken the initiative to develop ecologically. The second is to summarize these discoveries in a book/travel guide, documentary, photo-journalism, and articles. The third is to provide a forum to facilitate the exchange of ideas between communities with similar goals.

If you are involved with or have any information regarding sustainable development, if you know of any sources of funding, or if you are interested in contributing to this project, please contact:

Seth Coan
University of California, Berkeley
(510) 601-0592
suprseth@yahoo.com

Highlights from Kulapati's Tour

November '00 - March '01

HONG KONG SECTOR

Taiwan

On his recent trip to Taiwan,

Dada Shambhushivananda gave 13 lectures on NHE in 10 days attended by several hundred people in each lecture. These lectures were organized by Ananda Marga of Taiwan. Attendees covered a broad spectrum of society. Dada also gave two talks on PROUT and Tantra Yoga. These talks were all translated into Chinese and put on DVD.



Kyoto

Dada Shambhushivananda met with people at the Kyoto Forum, sympathetic to helping Didi Ananda Kaomodii organize a trip of Mongolian children from the children's home for a visit to Japan.

BERLIN SECTOR

Holland

Dada Shambhushivananda and Didi Ananda Rama, member of Cakradhuria of AMGK, legally registered the newly formed NERI as a global AMGK education project in Holland. A Teacher's Education Institute will be opening in September as part of the NERI.

Dada Shambhushivananda gave two lectures to the teachers and the parents at the Den Bosch school on inner ecology. Dada also gave talks and led a meditation workshop in Amsterdam and Hoorn where many young people received instruction in meditation.

Italy

Kamaleshvara and Dada gave a power point presentation on Ananda Marga Gurukula to the public in Salerno and led a meditation session in Bolzano.

Dada also visited Switzerland, Norway, Denmark and Germany and initiated many people and forged alliances for AMGK.

MANILA SECTOR

Bali



Dada Shambhushivananda was the key note speaker at a Symposium on Neo Humanist Education organized by Dada Sudhiirananda and Dada Divyadiveshananda which was attended by 500 people. The Deputy of Education in Bali inaugurated the program. The entire program was broadcast on prime time television the same day.



A special program was arranged by the Hindu University of Denpasar, Bali, for the faculty and students. Dada Shambhushivananda spoke about the Gurukula concept of education. This event was attended by 200 people.

A proposal has been made to donate a building to set up an AMGK institute in Bali.

Thailand

Dada visited a **Burmese** refugee camp and participated in a distribution of a truckload of bananas from the local Ananda Marga Master Unit. A meeting was held with the staff of the local primary school at the camp. Dada was taken on a walking tour and introduced to all the 2,000 residents of the camp.

Master Unit

Dada visited the Sangklabhuri children's home and inspected their weaving center where the girls produce scarves and other woven goods for the self sufficiency of their home. Dada has brought together Norie Huddle in the USA and Didi Devamala in Sangklabhuri to create a market for these goods. Their goods are becoming popular in the USA through this collaborative effort.

Funds are already being raised for the purchase of another 40 rai of land adjacent to the MU for Gurukula development, and they expect to have it this May.



Kulapati performed 32 baby naming ceremonies (one by one) for sympathetic residents surrounding the MU. The families traveled great distances for this event.

South Thailand

Dada Shambhushivananda gave a lecture to 200 students and teachers at the Suratthani Teacher's Training College on the relevance of yoga to education. Some attendees were inspired to visit Ananda Nagar for training in Tantra yoga.

Dada also visited a Monkey Training School and a special program was organized to demonstrate to Dada how the monkeys are trained to break coconuts.

Horseshoe Point, Pattaya

Dada Shambhushivananda taught meditation to many persons at a recreational resort where there are 82 horses on 3,000 hectares of land. Dada was instructed in horseback riding by Mito Sison and Khun Chaikiri,

horseback masters, who also received meditation instruction from Kulapati. Six acres of land have been offered to Dada for building an international meditation center.

Chumpoorn Master Unit

Dada visited the children's home at the women's master unit at Ananda Shyama and witnessed the fruits of the hard work done by Didi Ananda Rama, Didi Ananda Anurga and Cidrupa in developing the children's home, land and buildings. Dada led meditation sessions with the children. The children demonstrated to Dada their skill and the special training they receive in the exhibition Yoga, Mudra, acrobatic and dance program there.



NEW YORK SECTOR

Dada has been meeting many people on the East and West coast and bringing together people working for progressive changes in the society through ecological programs, education programs and alternative technologies and forging more alliances for AMGK.

Dada attended the NY Sectorial Education Conference where much good work was accomplished in the development of NHE.

Washington DC

Dada gave two talks at the World Bank Institute in Washington DC.

Berkeley

A series of lectures were organized by Shivendra at the University of CA at Berkeley. Many students received instruction in meditation and have expressed interest to work in our AMGK related projects in different parts of the world.

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Education Training Camp INDIA

By Ac. Devashraddhananda Avt.,
Education In Charge- Central

A bi annual Education Training Camp was held on 15th of Dec to 19th of Dec '2000 at the Community Hall, Bokaro Steel City, Jharkhand State, India. Those attending came from different parts of Delhi Sector. The number of teachers in attendance was about 350. The ETC was inaugurated by the Science and Technology Minister of Jharkhand State Sri Samresh Singh and Ac Keshavananda ERAWS Secretary was the President. Sri Bharat Jajabar a Literateur in Hindi Language and Prof of Hindi Dept Chas College was the chief guest. On the stage were Didi Ananda Arundhuti Avadhutika, SWWS Delhi Sector, Ac Gunindrananda Avt, SES Delhi Sector, AC Devashraddhananda Avt, EI-I Central and camp incharge, and Vijay kr Singh Dy Supdt , Town administrator B.S.L Bokaro and each spoke during the inauguration ceremony.

The main focus of the training camp was on the practical aspect of Neo Humanist Education. During those five days, two evenings ie 16th&18th Dec were devoted to symposiums on Education. The subjects were "Impart Value Based Education" & " Importance of Neo-Humanistic Education" respectively. On 16th evening Dr Aditya Mahanty, Ac Amulya Ratan Sarangi, Ac Swarupananda Avt, Principal Ananda Marga Degree College, Ananda Nagar, Education Chief Bokaro Steel Plant Sri Kaushal Kishore (the Chief guest) and another Prof Uday kr Jha(Sanskrit lecturer from local college) were the speakers on the subject. All the speakers emphasized how necessary it is to impart value based education which does not exist in the present education.

Dr A.K.Mahanty explained how Neo-Humanist Education can awaken the human society from deep slumber. It is the human intellect that needs to get proper direction and the values that can guide the human being to reach the goal of Neo humanism. Ac Amulya ratan Sarangi spoke about how education is the first thing that will lead the human being to divine being. Sri Kaushal Kishore the Education Chief hoped that Neo Humanism would spread as fast as possible on this planet.

On 18th evening was the subject "Importance of Neo Humanist Education". On that evening Dr S.K. Sharma, principal, Vinoda Bhave City college, spoke

about how humanity is struggling with problems related to character and behaviour, and how people are so narrow minded that they don't want to know what is going on with their next door neighbors. On this condition of society Sri P.R Sarkar came forward with the idea of Neo Humanism to put the society on the right track.

A teacher from senior secondary school B.S.L. Dr. Balraj Dubey shared how he also appreciated the importance of Neo-Humanist Education after reading the book on Neo-Humanism. He said the future of society is bright and shared his optimism that a day will surely come, when Neo-Humanist Education will be available to all by the sincere efforts and struggles of Ananda Marga. Ac. Cidghanananda Avt., Principal Ananda Marga School, Anandapur, Banka, Bihar emphasized that the highest treasure in human life is devotion and the practice of sadhana for realizing this. Neo-humanistic Education plays a vital role in teaching this through education. Shri Sudhangshujii Headmaster B.S. Vidyapith, Ranchi, Bihar, also spoke in detail of Neo-Humanist Education that P. R Sarkar introduced in the society many years ago.

Ac. Svarupananda Avt. Principal Ananda Marga Degree College, Anandanagar, who was presiding at the symposium summed-up the whole presentation of the evening.

On 17th Dec evening a cultural program was organized by all the students of Ananda Marga Educational Institutions at Anandanagar. Two dramas were staged one was "Butterfly" and the other was " Mrityunjay" . Both the dramas were very informative and highly educational. The whole cultural program was directed by Ac. Tattvedananda Avt. singer and RAWA Artist and the Director of the cultural evening. It was a very enjoyable evening. Sri S. N. Varma, Deputy General Manager B.S.L (Retd) who was the chief guest commented that "I came here for half an hour but ended up staying for the whole three hours." He said, he has never witnessed such a gorgeous cultural performance before. Ac. Keshavananda Avt ERAWS Secretary was presiding over the function. During his speech he commented that Ananda Marga ERAWS department is committed to materializing the Neo-Humanist Education on this earth. During the training program of ETC, Dr. R.C. Samanta Ray Director Val Bhawan, Bhuwaneswar, Orissa, was invited to impart training to the teachers. He taught

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New York Sectorial Education Conference

New York Sector held a Sectorial Education Conference from January 18-22. It was organized by Dada Dharmapremamanda and Didi Ananda Anuradha. There were a total of 30 people in attendance. These included Kulapati of Gurukula, Dada Shambhushivananda and several wholetimers and margiis working in schools in Holland, Brazil, Taiwan, Venezuela and the USA. We also had two guest professors from the USA.

The conference began with a full day visit to the Progressive School of Long Island, a neo-humanist school under the direction of Arun, spanning grades kindergarten to grade 7. The day began with Quiet Time, where the entire school of 120 students gathers to sing and meditate together. It was a very beautiful and moving experience. Visits to the classrooms and interviews with teachers followed. The principles of neo-humanism were exemplified in all aspects of school life, including teacher student interactions, curriculum subjects, and the attitude and demeanor of the students. Both visiting professors praised the unique philosophy and pedagogy in evidence. The day ended with a presentation by Dr. Carlos Torre on a new model for Early Childhood Teacher Certification.

Saturday was a working day where teachers gathered to work on standards for neo-humanist schools. Much work on this had already been done by the teachers in Berlin Sector, and most recently by Didi Ananda Rama and Supriya. At this meeting the input of the teachers of New York Sector was added, and a new draft was put together that will now be refined. Standards will ensure the quality of NHE institutions and make possible accreditation by Gurukula.

In the evening presentations were given by the representatives from schools in Porto Alegre, Brazil, Holland and Taiwan. These are all highly inspiring projects. We heard about the schools in Brazil managed by Didi Ananda Vandana which have a total of 500 students spanning grades kindergarten through 4th grade as well as an after school program for adolescents. From Madhavi and Vidyananda we heard about the schools in Holland, which are both model kindergarten schools with 50 and 100 children respectively. Didi Ananda Nivedita shared about many of the efforts in Hong Kong Sector and the dedication of the teachers working in those schools, two of which attended the conference.



Sunday featured a workshop on Morality by Didi Ananda Nivedita. Didi Ananda Nivedita is the author of five books on Neo-Humanist Education. This workshop shed unique light on teaching the principles of yama and niyama to children.

On Sunday afternoon, we heard about the Teacher Training Program beginning in Holland in September for Early Childhood Education. There is tremendous need for ECE training in Holland and government funding is available for programs being developed to address this need. Holland is the home of two model Early Childhood Neo-Humanist programs. The Teacher Training Program will take place adjoining the school in Den Bosch. This program has been developed under the direction of Didi Ananda Rama.

On Monday, Mahajyoti gave a workshop on Incorporating Music into every aspect of the Early Childhood Curriculum. Mahajyoti is the director of a 15 year old Neo-Humanist Preschool in Denver, Colorado, USA. Inspiration generated by this workshop led to a project being organized by Sadhana, a teacher in the Holland preschool, to put together an international children's song tape from schools around the world, whereby children can learn neo-humanist songs in different languages.

Kulapati provided much inspiration and encouragement to accelerate the speed of the NHE Movement as per the wishes of Reverend Marga Guru. A future planning meeting led to many exciting initiatives for the development of NHE in general.

Participants sharing their impressions underscored the inspiration they gained from the visit to the Progressive School of Long Island and seeing the principles of Neo Humanist Education modeled in every facet of the school. The workshops offered were also highly praised. Those meeting each other from other Sectors were encouraged to know they are not working alone, but are indeed part of a growing NHE movement.

A Home Grown Education Training Camp

By Kamala

At the Ananda Marga River School in Maleny, Australia, one of our greatest challenges has been teacher training. We have a small staff of Dada (the principal) and Prabha (the Administrator) backed by my husband and myself on the management committee. As our primary school has grown to around 90 children with four teachers we are constantly confronted with the problem that none of us are educators, and although we understand Neo-Humanism, we are not sure how to make it real and practical to the otherwise excellent and skilled teachers.

This year we found an NHE educator who agreed to travel some distance to give a one-day ETC (Education Training Camp) to our teachers before the school year started. We scheduled the day with the teachers, who expressed an interest in developing their understanding more fully of Neo Humanism and how it applies in the classroom. And then, our ETC trainer cancelled--he couldn't come.

So, forced into action, we decided we would all teach ourselves. Our ETC day went wonderfully and I think we found out that with our combined skills, we were able to conduct a good teacher training.

Each of the seven of us who attended organized a presentation. What made it interesting was assigning to some of the teachers topics on Neo-Humanism that they had to study and present. One teacher studied geo, socio and human sentiment and how they apply to Neo-Humanism (by reading the sections in PR Sarkar's book, *The Liberation of Intellect*). This brought up interesting discussions on how to teach this to children, the power of sentimentality versus rationality, and what sentiments we might harbour ourselves that limit our ability to teach neo-humanistically.

Another teacher presented the concept of Psuedo-culture and applied that to the concept of Critical Literacy, which gave many practical suggestions for the classroom. Critical Literacy is the idea of "deconstructing" stories or cultural influences and understanding what is the dominant cultural idea expressed, examining who's story is not told, understanding the hidden voices that are expressed or unexpressed in a story. (She used a lot of examples of male-dominance in the English language and in the psuedo-culture.) This lead everyone into discussing

how much we should limit psuedo-culture intrusion in our school (do we ban Pokemon cards?) and inspired everyone to look much more critically and carefully at the choices they make for stories, novels, etc. that they do bring in to their classroom.

Our first and second grade teacher presented the "Circle of Love" (Brahmacakra) which she was intending to adapt for her curriculum this year. She taught us all to sing a beautiful vedic hymn and explained what this circle meant for her. We discussed the Neo-Humanistic concept of evolution and physics and how it differs from standard science, and also completes the ideas that the New Physics has started to understand.

Dada Ratnadevananda presented the concept of Devotional Sentiment. This was challenging and important, because many people have some trouble with the concept of God (especially the word) and tend to be rather more rational in their outlook. Dada compared the feeling of devotion with the feeling of being madly in love, which fills you with a sense of optimism and a desire to serve your beloved. We discussed how without this sincere and genuine experience of devotion (expansive love) real Neo-Humanistic feeling is impossible--its just an intellectual concept.

Prabha lead a short discussion on "Tradition", challenging everyone to look at the "traditional" methods or resources they used in their classroom and to consciously decide if they were appropriate. One teacher talked about having to change his "tradition" of always staying behind his desk and making students come to him, and how he had had to change at our school, learning to move around the students and join with them more. We talked about traditional songs and choosing if they are appropriate, and even the traditional roles of teacher and student.

Finally one teacher gave a very interesting presentation on "The Six Hats," a thinking process developed by (Australian, I believe) Edward de Bono. She led us in a role play and then explained this very interesting system where children learn to understand which hat they are wearing when they think--the emotional one ("I don't like that!"), the judgmental one ("We don't have enough money"), information seeking ("How much will it cost?"), etc. She gave lots of practical ideas on how to

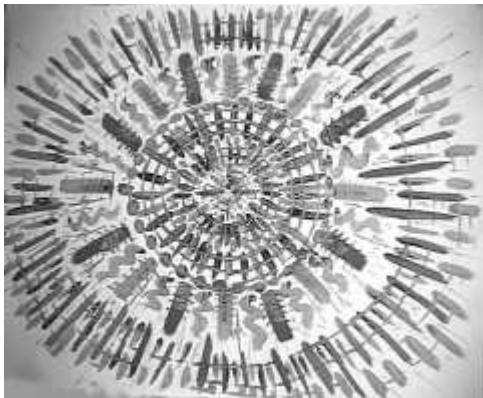
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Neo Humanist Education Seminar in the Netherlands

By Didi Ananda Rama

The NHE Seminar in s-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands was held April 26-29 in our Zonnelicht kindergarten. This was a very successful gathering with fifty participants from Italy, England, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Germany, Moldova and Holland.

Among the participants were acaryas, teachers from our schools, parents and interested teachers from Holland. It was the biggest ETC in seven years. The venue being the kindergarten was interesting for outside participants as they could get a good impression about the set up of the entire learning environment.



The opening was presided over by Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt. who also conducted several workshops on AMGK, NERI Teacher Education programs and "Microvita as building blocks of learning". Parallel programs were offered for the participants to choose from beginners and more advanced topics. This gave a variety to the program although some participants expressed the desire to attend all.

Avtk. Ananda Prama Ac. introduced Neo Humanism and a class on 'Brahmacakra - the circle of creation'

Special highlights were the "Drama in Education workshops of Vishvashanti Ole Brekke. This brought everyone into a dynamic collaboration of creativity and expression.

There were presentations on "Philosophy for children" by Avtk. Ananda Rama Ac. and a workshop on "The role of music in child development' by Brcii. Asiima Ac. Yaduranii presented special workshops for teachers of Zonnelicht on mental colours and curriculum design for individual children. Malika was able to bring out wonderful artistic talent in the participants with mandala painting.

The atmosphere of the NHE seminar was highly inspirational, revitalizing and new comers thoroughly enjoyed themselves and learnt meditation as well.



"Marigolds, insects and cabbages"

Workshop by Vishvashanti and notes by Didi Ananda Rama



This workshop demonstrated well these basic educational objectives while using theatre in the classroom.

- Knowledge; for example knowing that marigolds are used as companion plants for cabbages serving as repellent for insects.
- Inquiry and problem solving skills ; for example , being able to write a verse in the popular street slang, or being able to organize information into a usable structure. This would be for children more than seven years. Children up to 10 years would still need some assistance from the teacher .
- Psycho-motor skills ; for example miming the insects, growing of the marigold or resembling a big fat cabbage.
- Social skills; for example encouraging participation of all members of a group, leading a group discussion to a decision point or listening carefully to instructions
- Values ; for example, enjoying playing with words, resolving conflicts without destroying one party, or preserving the lives of plants and insects.

Definite constraints considering the children's capacity must be given, to ensure the success of a performance. Small children do best when the text of the drama is in rhyme and they recite every line collectively for all characters. This ensures that the role does not depend on one child who may be not able to perform in the last moment.

In this workshop the constraints were: no props, no other characters were depicted than cabbages, marigolds or insects. All children play one of these roles. For small children the costumes could be also easily exchangeable if a child would suddenly like to play another role. For these small children the teacher would have to come up with all the rhymes of the story to be enacted. In this way children are not frightened to speak individually and develop further until they are more ready for it. Children between seven and 10 could contribute to the make up of the story and would be able to add individually spoken lines, yet the rhyme character is still most pleasant and easily remembered. The teacher would closely supervise the creative process and help when necessary. In this period the children are inclined towards fables and hearing the messages of wise personalities.

Teenagers could also use the presently popular street rap and write their own conceived story to present their melodrama of heroes and villains and the sense of justice towards which they are inclined in this developmental stage.

The presentation our participants came up with well demonstrated a successful theatrical outcome to the entertainment of everyone.

SOME COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS AT THE ETC

Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt.: I am witnessing the growth of the Neo-humanist Education all over the world. I remember our first meeting here in Holland in 1989/90 with Yadurani when the inspiration sparked the 1st Global NHE conference in Ananda Nagar. This year in New York at our NHE seminar there was a very nice presence from Europe/Holland as well as Brazil, Venezuela, Taiwan and USA. We discussed standards and have taken steps forward in our Teacher Education and NHE movement. In the same spirit to give more concrete shape to our work we would like to have a gathering in July 7-14,2002 in Norway.

Annemieke: I came to learn about how to be a teacher and learnt how to be a better person.

Vidyananda: I feel something has been established in NHE in Europe. In future more and more people can join in this movement and establish a primary school in Holland. I feel we are ready to make a totally new step in education, a big step forward to have a primary school. It is very inspiring the vibration this weekend, I want to go out and just do it!

Avtk. Ananda Prama Ac.: It was wonderful to have the NHE seminar in the school, it was well organized, everyone doing their part and everyone giving what they can give.

Ac. Devavratana Avt.: It was way above my expectations, the organizing was good, it was pleasant to see so much progress, many people came together which is beneficial for NHE.

*Let us move together. Let us sing together.
Let us come to know our minds together.
Let us share, like sages of the past,
That all individuals together may enjoy the Universe.
- Rig Veda*

WHAT IS UNIVERSALISM REALLY ABOUT?

by Mahajyoti Glassman

We are blessed with a panorama of diversity in our world. There are the legion of physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, psychic, and spiritual capabilities as well as age, religion, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, income, interests, family, education, politics, diet, and lifestyle to mention only a few. However, instead of celebrating and enjoying these differences, there are many who with determined resolve are creating factionalism, division, and mistrust.

By the same token it is perhaps because of the complexity of the physical universe that the mind strives to anchor itself by formulating opinions, beliefs, world views and biases. As human beings, we have a need to define our world and our place in it so we may choose how we will interact and respond in our many relationships -- to ourselves; to our animal, plant, mineral "relations"; to other humans; to our environment; and ultimately to the Cosmic Self.

While we may consider ourselves open-minded, in reality, we all cultivate biases. A bias is nothing more than a preference, a mental inclination, a partiality. They cannot always be perceived as being negative. Take, for example, the case of spiritual bias. P.R. Sarkar has implied that even spiritual bias may be considered excessive in the case of the spiritual aspirant who is not only becoming alienated from society but is abrogating oneself from the responsibility of performing service to others. Every individual has the burdensome task of maintaining internal equilibrium. If a bias becomes too skewed in either direction, one may run the risk of becoming prejudicial. How does one ascertain that a bias is imbalanced? When it interferes with the proper development of oneself and/or others through inflicting an injury by thought, word, or deed.

The maximum development of the society will be reached when there is balanced development in the physical, mental, and spiritual spheres. P. R. Sarkar

Stereotypes are generalizations based on assumptions. They can frequently be based on inaccurate information and personal opinions rather than fact or experience. Consideration of the great diversity within a group is not apparent in a true stereotype or differentiations due to time, place, person or evolutionary trends.

All of these -- bias, prejudice, and stereotype -- are primarily learned from our parents, although they are reinforced by the media, music, school textbooks, and advertising. Prejudices

seem to thrive especially in the absence of first hand experience. They can become intensely rigid stereotypes based on fear, ignorance, habit, or lack of exposure, transforming into a singularly stubborn barrier which cannot be dispelled even in the face of the most rational logic.

We limit the opportunities for expansion not only for ourselves but for the world community by adhering to or by not confronting negative bias, prejudice, and stereotypes when we encounter them in the classroom. While the educational community has been touting its 'anti-bias' curricula for some time, the pro-universal outlook is an approach which is more comprehensive and deserves serious consideration. It may not be really possible or advisable to totally eliminate personal bias, but rather to seek to synchronize our biases and opinions in order to direct ourselves toward greater horizons of open-mindedness, open-heartedness, and tolerance.

Dharma means the balanced states of all aspects of human life. P. R. Sarkar

Bias in Literature

Some of the most prevalent prejudices and stereotypes being challenged worldwide are gender and racial issues as well as ethnic discrimination. While the Checklist is primarily directed toward gender and racial bias, it can be expanded to include any targeted groupism. This guide can be applied not only when we are selecting books to read but also when we are creating or sharing stories, experiences, and songs in the classroom. When reviewing the Checklist, ask yourself these questions:

- What happens to one's self esteem when others perform all of the brave and important deeds?
- What happens to one's self esteem when restrictions are imposed on the behaviors of a particular group?

Checklist for Reviewing Bias in Books, Stories, Literature, and Songs

Illustrations and Character Development

- What are the preferences? Boys vs girls. Thin body types vs other types.
- Who are the active "doers" and who are the inactive observers?
- Are the achievements of girls or women based on their own initiative and intelligence, or due to their good looks or relationships to boys?
- Are people of color, lower social status, or women in essentially supporting roles or simply observers?
- Who possesses the power, takes charge of leadership, and makes the important decisions?
- Are minorities in passive or subservient roles?
- Are people of color or certain social status depicted exclusively in ghetto-like environments?
- Are negative judgments implied of non-white or non-dominant characters?
- Whose interest is a particular character really serving?

Writing, Story Line, Standard of Success

- To gain acceptance or approval do the participants in the story have to be extraordinarily excellent or an exceptionally high achiever, such as winning in sports, getting “A’s” in school, receiving awards, etc.?
- How is financial success depicted?
- Are scenes portrayed in middle class suburban-like settings?
- How are the characters dressed?
- How are family relationships depicted? (In African-American families, is the mother always dominant? In Latino families, are there always lots of children?)
- Are norms established which limit any child’s aspirations and self-concept?

Resolution of Problems

- How are problems presented and resolved?
- Are certain types of people “the problem”?
- Is oppression misrepresented or inevitable?
- Due to depression of economy and/or environment, is passive acceptance or active resistance preferable?

(Adapted from “10 Quick Ways to Analyze Children’s Books for Racism and Sexism” by the Council on Interracial Books for Children)

There is one aspect for which there is no tolerance in neohumanistic education and that is for anything that hampers the development of the complete personality.

...we do not exclude anything or anyone, nor will we do so in the future, because we want to utilize the services of all.
P. R. Sarkar

Pro-Active Language

Attention needs to be brought to the language and words that we use in the classroom. To demonstrate acceptance of all genders, it is necessary for the teacher to make adjustments or to rotate masculine/feminine usage so that particular pronouns are not favored in songs, stories, and conversational language. Certain words may be thoughtfully modified such as fire fighters, rather than firemen.

By honoring all students unconditionally and being all inclusive, a certain dynamic element blossoms forth. When universalism is enthusiastically embraced, new attitudes begin to emerge laying the foundation for personal transformation by adding dignity to the lives of everyone. A new sense of self and community is fostered.

Every individual or community will advance by virtue of its own inner vitality and assist in the collective fulfillment of the entire humanity. *P. R. Sarkar*

Celebrating Diversity

There have existed in some schools the tendency to be overly conscientious about what is introduced into the classroom to

assure that no individual or family is offended. In one case Thanksgiving was being discounted because it was originally a religious pilgrimage. Birthdays were avoided due to the possible offensiveness to certain religious groups who do not honor birthdays. Halloween was omitted because it was originally practiced by pagans or was perceived as provoking fear. And, of course, everyone in America knows that St Patrick and St Valentine’s days were perpetrated by certain religious leaders and so one by one every cause for a celebrating unity was banished.

The greatest obstacle in the collective progress of the human race is the ignorance of the individual mind. Knowledge is for all .. it should be open and free like the light and air of the sky. *P. R. Sarkar*

At Morning Star Preschool this past December we celebrated Hanukkah, a Jewish holiday of miracle, commemorating determination of faith; Christmas, honoring the birthday of the spiritual leader of Christianity; and Kwanzaa, an Afro-American holiday respecting the heritage of a vital segment of our American community. All of our families loved this diversity of celebration. The students who grew up in these traditions expressed open appreciation of our respect for their specialities. Everyone in the school benefited from these experiences for in every religion or ethnic group there can be found universal elements that are inspiring for all.

Religion, in the sense of Dharma, is the unifying force in humanity. *P. R. Sarkar*

To recognize and respect ethnicity in the classroom, the teacher can make enormous contributions towards maintaining an individual’s healthy balance of self esteem. Differences can be acknowledged rather than ignored. Teachers can provide opportunities to enable children to appreciate and recognize their own ethnicity as well as others. These types of activities endeavor to connect the teacher to the student as well as bonding the students to one another.

The sole cause of the internal weakness of human society is its ignorance.
P.R. Sarkar

Pro-Universalism

In America there is often great national pride taken in the fact that we have become a “great melting pot” of ethnicities. However, in the process of Americanization we have all become rather like one homogenized mass. Most of us do not celebrate the customs and traditions of our ancestors, much less speak our original languages. In neo humanist education we are not seeking to maintain the melting pot analogy, but rather the “tossed salad” paradigm where it is the differences of the individuality of the ingredients that contribute to the enjoyment of the experience rather than the blending and synthetic assimilation into mono-culture.

Diversity is the law of nature; uniformity will never occur.
P. R. Sarkar

Exercises in Universalism

As neo humanist educators, we guarantee that everyone's point of view is important, allowing no one to think that they are less valuable. Dissimilarities are respected. Teachers and students work together to embark on the journey of celebrating diversity, observing and recognizing differences without judgment. How are we different? Dates of birth, food preferences, hand color, eye color, pets, hair, hand preference in writing, emotional responses to various situations, interests, favorite colors, abilities, physical height, sports activities. These opportunities afford us the understanding that we are actually a part of many groups and that membership in one group doesn't totally explain or define who we are.

Humanity must be guided to follow the path of synthesis and not the path of analysis. P. R. Sarkar

Teachers facilitate positive interactions between the students when remarking on our similarities and differences, focusing on the uniqueness and individuality of every person as a wonderful gift! Together we look at and change those things that prevent differences from being valued.

We must discover unity in the midst of colorful diversity. P. R. Sarkar

Reenactments of specific historical events can help students feel the unfairness of discrimination - such as Rosa Parks' actions which led to the ending of racial segregation on buses. Other compassion building stories and lesson plans can be found to reinforce kindness and caring: 1) Dancing to music. When the music stops, everyone gives a friend a 'bear hug'. 2) Gently washing off the dust that has collected on leaves of indoor plants. 3) Practicing how to rescue a friend who has been hurt on the playground. 4) Not only caring for a school pet but learning when it needs something. 5) Drawing 'get well pictures' for another student. 6) Collecting trash and litter which has accumulated on Mother Earth in the neighborhood. 7) Having pairs of students paint a picture together. 8) Drawing a picture for a friend with the caption "I like you because ----". 9) Saving pennies, nickels and dimes for a worthy cause. 10) Taking time to smile, laugh and have fun together.

Self Actualization

Beyond ethnicity lies our emotional being. How are our students coping with fear and anxiety? Do we see inferiority complex so acute that it manifests as superiority complex? Is there defeatism, perfectionism? Complexes can be challenging to identify and assess. Frequently when there is a deficit in one area, the mind will overcompensate in the opposite direction. "I am the prettiest one here." "Isn't my picture the nicest one in the class?" "I'm the strongest one." "I can't". Universalism includes providing an emotional safety net, replacing mental imperfections and weaknesses with positivity and encouragement. Through the application of our intellect and intuition, the neo humanist teacher seeks to understand each student, supporting them to bring feelings and insecurities into a greater balance.

Just as that little bird confined to a cage developed rheumatism in its wings, the human mind, due to constant negative thoughts, gets paralyzed. P.R. Sarkar

In our strategies for empowering children to overcome their negative tendencies and/or complexes, simple conflict resolution skills can carry them a great distance. Instead of teachers always intervening in student conflicts and disputes, we can provide them with "tools" to support their desire to be self sufficient and independent. We can "set the stage" for role playing to practice acceptable ways of how to respond when someone: 1) hurts your friend, 2) hits or bites you, 3) is hurt, 4) says your dress is not as pretty as 'hers', 5) will not share, 6) calls you a name, 7) gets in front of you in line, 8) removes leaves from a bush, 9) says 'he' is stronger than you are, or 10) says 'I don't want to play with you'. There are many techniques that can be offered to build a logically based foundation to cope with hurtful or painful behaviors which strengthens compassion for oneself and others.

Every human mind is but the diversified individual manifestation of that same indivisible Cosmic Mind. P. R. Sarkar

Psychological Differentiations

In the classroom the teacher distinguishes vast differences of personalities as well as learning styles. Some students will flow along quite smoothly and effortlessly. Others may seem to be an infinite source of conspiracy and mutiny with an ever increasing appetite for consuming vast quantities of the teacher's time and energy. Still others may ever so slowly be quietly struggling to where they tenuously take that next step.

Every individual has a preferred method of learning and integrating information. For example, some are more visual, some auditory, tactile or kinesthetic. The most effective teacher applies all the sensorial avenues of experience into instruction in order to maximize the whole potential of every child. From time to time the ideal teacher researches and seeks to expand one's knowledge of various types of physiological, psychological, and emotional difficulties that challenge learning and social situations. A brief study of diverse communication and therapeutic methodologies assists in the development of positive strategies to ensure the progressive forward movement of every student to the best of each teacher's ability.

You should always be vigilant that not a single individual of our collective body is in the least neglected or ignored. P. R. Sarkar

Universalism in the Curriculum and in the Environment

Young children are masters of keen scientific observation. By two or three years of age they have already been taking notes and are "testing out" opinions, biases, prejudices, and stereotypes on their peers for validation. What steps can a teacher take to implement universalism in the classroom? In

order to promote that inner spirit of welfare and caring for the collective society, it is necessary to examine:

- What kinds of pictures do we have on our walls?
- Whose perspective is heard? Whose is silenced?
- How does the dominant culture and its biases affect our non-dominant groups?
- What are the power and equality issues?
- What multicultural units are presented?
- What kinds of festivals or events are celebrated?
- What types of music are sung and played?

While self interest is a natural development, it needs to be kept in perspective. Diversity is to be presented with sensitivity, nonjudgmental in approach, and in small bites so that it is easily digested. Teachers show by example that it is possible to honor, validate, and respect traditions that differ from one's own.

Pictures from magazines and newspapers as well as posters mounted on the walls can further advance self esteem. Some children need more positive images of themselves because such images can't be found in their home or community. Others need positive images of people who are different.

The fun of playing with multicultural materials such as musical instruments, baskets, dress, dolls, books and songs can propel students across barriers of prejudice.

The influence of the environment has a tremendous impact on the human mind.
P. R. Sarkar

Introspection

When introducing universalism in the classroom, teachers are compelled to practice constant self examination. When designating cleaning or working activities, do we have girls straightening up the dress up and dishes area while the boys are putting away the blocks? What anxieties or fears that we possess are we consciously or unconsciously transmitting to our students? These questions enable the teacher to adopt a more humble and tentative attitude about the accuracy of our own personal judgments and opinions. But to possess a truly universal outlook, we must be aware of what Africans, Asians, Latin Americans, and Native Peoples say, and what they think which requires being open to hearing other points of view.

Bioculture and Reduction of Prejudice or Fear

How much are we extending universalism to the environment and ultimately to the world community? For example, how do you feel about: rabbits, cats, deer, baby animals, doves, and dolphins? And then, how do you feel about: snakes, spiders, wolves, cockroaches, bees, bugs, and carnivorous animals especially when they are eating? We all subscribe to certain biocultural prejudices and biases. One of the most effective means of breaking down any extreme prejudice (especially one that is grounded in fear) is by maximizing the knowledge base. We can learn all about the subject by

broadening one's informational background. Teachers and students examine how each being interacts with humans, as well as other plant and animal species, with particular emphasis on its contributions to the world society.

Real education leads to a pervasive sense of love and compassion for all creation.
P. R. Sarkar

Summary

Neo humanist schools embody the microcosmic reflection of what we feel the most ideal society can be. What is the single most important factor in the lives of children next to their parents? Teachers.

It is the teacher's responsibility to expose students to the versatility of creation. Although it may be human nature to fall back on prejudice or stereotypes when encountering circumstances beyond our experience, by constantly introducing new situations and information, we show our students how to replace fear and apprehension of differences and the unknown with logical and progressive thinking skills and practices.

The psychic environment is more powerful in human life than the physical environment. P. R. Sarkar

At the same time we are refining and upgrading the incomplete picture of the world community which is emerging on the canvas of the student's mind eye, learning to look at things from another point of view. Throughout this process the teacher advances concern and compassion for the well being of all.

Unite the entire humanity under one banner. P.R. Sarkar

To remain anchored in universalism is an endless journey and relentless struggle in which conflicts are inevitable. As we continue to practice universalism in our daily lives and learn to identify bias, prejudice, and stereotypes; we are opening the windows to diversity, greater balance, and personal integrity. Fundamentally to cultivate universal outlook is to change one's perspective and extend equal respect to all differentiations existing in our world family. In the teacher's continued effort to transform our classrooms into a safe haven from the hostility of the world, we encourage and expand the understanding of universal well being and teach magnanimity of mind. The students' strengths can be supported through the emphasis of neo humanist values and building on the foundation of their relationship with the Cosmic Self, remembering that He is the starting point. He is the originating point and He is the culminating point of all creatures. Thus there lies an inherent tie of fraternity among human beings, among all living creatures. You are all spiritual aspirants. You are all devotees. You are all going to be one with the Creator. P.R. Sarkar

A Summary of Steps to Implementing Universalism in the Neo Humanist Classroom

1. Make multicultural and multi-diversity displays, materials and curricula which reflect more than the local dominant culture, bioculture, race, language, ecosystems, etc.
2. Exhibit art, tools and artifacts; enjoy musical instruments, foods, costumes, and articles from other cultures.
3. Expand curriculum frontiers to address issues of bias and the joys of diversity, including the celebration of holidays and social events which grace many cultural, racial, ethnic, and other groups.
4. Present auditory experiences (via live performances, cds, cassettes, etc.) of various cultures and indigenous peoples, languages, music, songs as well as a diversity of wildlife and sounds of nature
5. Introduce classroom activities and conversations where children may discuss similarities and differences, likes and dislikes, in a supportive, non judgmental, and compassionate environment.
6. Design visual displays of men, women, and children in and out of the house engaged in nontraditional, non stereotypical tasks, etc. Closely inspect our interactions with students to ensure minimization of gender stereotyping during activities and communications in the classroom.
7. Create visual displays of 'differently abled' persons; children of all ages; elderly people; and others of various backgrounds working and playing. Initiate class discussions and observations of these 'specialties'.
8. Reinforce respect for all beings -- forces of nature, inanimate, mineral, plant, animal, human, Spirit.
9. Resist the tendency to discriminate against any animal, plant, or mineral because of its dharma or innate tendency. Maximize the existing knowledge and understandings.
10. Initiate and carry out activities with children that question and take action against injustice not only against humanity but the earth, various habitats, and species.
11. Use daily conversations, events, music, dramas, books, dances, and stories to better establish universalism within ourselves and our students.
12. Embrace opportunities to individually and collectively discuss remarks that are based in bias or intolerance as well as appropriate responses.
13. Practice exercises in conflict resolution and general interactive communication skills among staff as well as students.
14. Strive to continuously reexamine our personal assumptions and attitudes, to reeducate and to deepen our personal understandings of universalism for ourselves and for others.
15. Endeavor to value diverse perspectives and points of view.
16. Construct alternative strategies for accommodating students with unique learning styles and/or capabilities.

17. Assemble a plan for supporting students in achieving a stronger psycho-emotional foundation, particularly when certain complexes or imbalances become evident.
18. Develop and implement character strengthening activities with an emphasis on yama and niyama for the staff and students.
19. Interact with children's families in authentic, benevolent, and respectful ways.
20. Strengthen the children's and staff's abilities to seek shelter in the Supreme and to remember our ultimate Goal.

From this very auspicious moment, you should take a vow to progress individually and collectively and build a new society on the planet Earth. We have come to build a new society, to construct and to remain engaged in constructive works throughout our life. This would be the greatest mission in our life. P.R. Sarkar

...Continued from page 11 - Delhi Sector ETC

on creativity. In course of his training he gave lots of practical ideas on how children should be taught along Neo-Humanist lines.

Ac. Vijayananda Avt, one of the global education in charges and trainers on education gave a series of classes . There were several other trainers who imparted training on various aspects of education, such as Rhymes, PT, Sports and administrative affairs. They were Sukumar Nandy. Ac. Tattvavedananda Avt., Ac. Pratyagatmananda Avt., Ac. Gunindrananda Avt., Ac. Didi Ananda Arundhuti Avadhutika, Sri Sudhangshujii, Ac. Omkareshwarananda Avt.

On 19th Dec in the afternoon a procession was taken out in the street with many placards with Neo-Humanist Education slogans written on them. On the concluding ceremony there was a prize distribution program. All the participants were very enthusiastic to carry on the message of the ETC to their respective fields.

...Continued from Page 13- Suva Sector ETC

teach and use this system in the classroom and we made a decision to adopt it as an all-school program.

This program took from 9 to 3 with a lunch break and lead to some very interesting discussions. I feel it really educated us all, and we were able to share some of the depth of Neo-Humanism without dry, philosophical lectures.

PERSONA DOLLS

A tool for promoting self-esteem and combating prejudices

By Supriya



This was the theme of an informative seminar I attended in February at a Montessori tutors' conference in London. Lauren Joffe of the Montessori Centre International showed how we can use persona dolls to introduce children to social diversity, to allow children to see their own individuality, to see the richness of their own culture, and to value other cultures.

Every child needs to be seen as an individual and treated as such. If a child's self-esteem is low, the teacher needs to heal any emotional damage through care, attention and the support and promotion of a positive self-image. A child's natural acceptance of others may also be harmed by negative discrimination from other children or adults, and the teacher's role is to reverse these negative influences. A small child notes differences like skin colour, gender or social situation in

others, but doesn't by her/himself view them in a negative way. In the words of the song in 'South Pacific':
"You've got to be taught before it's too late,
Before you are six, or seven or eight,
To hate all the people your relatives hate,
You've got to be carefully taught."

Persona dolls are special personalities or individuals brought into circle time, or used at other special times, to help raise awareness and solve particular problems. The dolls are typically handmade, large (maybe 75cm), made of soft fabrics (it is difficult to make emotional contact with hard dolls), beautiful and with genuine details of skin colour, hair, clothes etc. They need to be very attractive to the children and realistic. For each doll used the teacher creates a detailed persona for it (hence the name *persona dolls*) – family and cultural background, where s/he lives and sleeps, languages spoken, preferred foods, what things s/he likes doing, what things s/he doesn't like, things s/he can do and things s/he finds difficult.

The dolls are used in a very interactive way with the children. The doll sits on the teacher's lap and s/he talks to it in a normal speaking voice. The first time the children meet the doll, the teacher selects details s/he thinks will be of most interest to them. The aim is for them to make friends with the doll, and to develop empathy with it – the child should be able to put themselves in its shoes. The teacher facilitates the discussion asking open-ended questions to

the children such as 'what do you think ...?' 'do you ever feel ...?' to get the children's participation and explore their feelings.

Lauren gave several examples from Dr. Glenda MacNaughton's early work with persona dolls in Australia. In one study a doll Harry was used to help solve a problem in a reception class where the girls were being excluded from the boys' games. A different situation was used to mirror the problem in which Harry was excluded from the group. After introducing the persona Harry and the situation, the teacher helped uncover the children's feelings by asking 'How do you think it made Harry feel? Have you ever felt like that? What does the word *exclude* mean?' The children were able to gain insight into their own behaviours, the girls expressed their feelings about their exclusion, the boys their feelings and the problem was solved.

MacNaughton's Study also used persona dolls on a one-to-one basis with children in an Australian community. She used four dolls to reflect the children she was working with: a rich white Australian girl, poor white Australian boy, an Aboriginal Australian boy and a Vietnamese girl. With each child MacNaughton asked:

1. Which doll is most like you?
2. What's different about the dolls and you?
3. Tell me what you see when you look at the dolls?
4. If you could choose one of the dolls as your special friend who would it be?
5. Which doll would you like to invite to your birthday party?

One girl Kim, a Vietnamese origin inner-city girl, said that Olivia (the rich white Australian girl) was most like her and then blushed. Her fascination with Olivia went on for a long time before she could identify she was more like Wilkie (the Vietnamese girl). Shiree (the Aboriginal Australian) was the doll rejected most by the children. So they thought how they could make Shiree more appealing to the children. One way was through 'Shiree's badge': Shiree's grandmother gives Shiree a badge with the Aboriginal flag. The children learn about the facts of the badge such as the yellow sun and become fascinated with the Aboriginal culture. Each day Shiree tells a new story about the Aboriginal culture, the teacher saying "What story will Shiree

tell us today?" In this way the children became really interested and their repugnance went.

The teacher needs to identify which dolls and which characters are needed for the diversity of her/his class. They must be authentic cultural characters. The authenticity of the doll is vital to give the children an awareness of that culture so they can change attitudes. The teacher listens carefully to see what prejudices are there and where the children are drawing them from (e.g. 'my brother said...' or 'my Dad said...'). Then s/he lets the children make up their minds about what they feel is fair and why. S/he encourages the children to share their experiences and ideas and to listen to each other without interrupting.

Lauren gave us practical demonstrations and recounted her experiences of using the dolls successfully. She found the dolls were very popular with the children and were a useful tool for tackling questions of equal opportunities and for the social, emotional, personal, and language development of the child.

Useful resource:
 Unlearning Discrimination in the Early Years - by Babette Brown (1991)
 Combatting Discrimination - Personal Dolls in Action- also by Babette Brown
 Books and Persona dolls can be ordered through Babette Brown, Persona dolls, 51 Granville Road, London N12 OJH tel. 0208 4467056 fax 0208 4467591.

Moral Teaching

A few notes from a workshop given by Didi Ananda Nivedita at the NY Education Conference

In Ananda Marga Gurukula, Shrii PR Sarkar outlined an entire faculty for moral teaching. In addition morality is to be infused in all faculties. At AMGK one will be able to earn a masters degree in moral teaching.

At the NHE Conference in New York Sector, Didi Ananda Nivedita gave a workshop on Moral Teaching. Part of this workshop focussed on Yama and Niyama. She said that in the first phase of moral teaching one needs to focus on do's and don'ts, but in the second phase, one starts to manifest virtues embodied through the principles. These were outlined as follows:

1. Ahimsa - security, kindness, compassion, ecology
 2. Satya - balance, trustworthiness, personal integrity, courage
 3. Asteya - sincerity, trustworthiness, personal integrity, honesty
 4. Brahmacharya - madhuvidya, sweetness, peace, satisfaction, magnanimity
 5. Aparigraha - detachment, simplicity
1. Shaoca - straightforwardness, purity, open mindedness, success
 2. Santosa - simplicity, humility, balance

3. Tapah - happiness, sacrificing spirit, self value
4. Svadhyaya - wisdom, discrimination, knowledge
5. Ishvara Pranidhana - focus, surrender, intuition, devotion

The question is how to develop virtues in children? The answer is through personal example, modeling, role playing, drama, stories, songs etc. The teacher must also be on the lookout for "teachable moments". Daily conflicts that arise in the classroom situation are good moments.

Children don't know what it means to be angry, to be happy. There are innumerable virtues and vices, but the children don't know what they mean. The teacher's use of words of virtue daily will make the child aware of virtues.

"Oh - you are very eager to get your lunch. But I need you to be patient. Thank you for being so patient."

"I know you like to do something else, but right now thank you for concentrating."
 We have to acknowledge every moment of virtue (one correction for two words of appreciation.

"Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf"

or

How to Tell Neo-Humanist Stories in English for Non-English Speaking Children

By Didi Ananda Muktiavrata

I have been teaching in our Ananda Marga schools in non-English speaking countries for 16 years. I believe that stories are one of the best ways for children to learn. They are also the best way for us to transmit moral values to children.

When I was a new Didi, I was working in Japan. I had a lovely school where I taught by myself along with a Japanese assistant. My biggest frustration was how to tell stories. The children didn't understand English so I couldn't tell the stories in English (or so I thought). I didn't speak Japanese so I couldn't tell the stories in Japanese. My Japanese assistant could understand English and tried to translate the stories. Yet this didn't work very well. Somehow the charm of the story was lost in the translation

STORY TELLING TECHNIQUE



Over the years, I learned a technique to solve this problem. My inspiration came from Didi Ananda Cetana who told me, "you can tell any story in English if you have enough pictures." Didi Cetana's technique works very well and doubles as a method for teaching English. In this article, I'd like to share her method with



you. The technique is actually very simple. It involves six aspects:



1. Tell a simple story and tell it all in English.
2. Use exaggerated gestures and actions when telling the story
3. Use repetition in the story.
4. Use as many pictures or puppets as possible
5. Tell the story many times with as little variation as possible.
6. Ask the local teacher, who speaks the language of the children, to translate abstract concepts that are difficult to translate by using pictures or the puppets. You can also do this if you speak the local language, but it is better in terms of teaching English to have the local teacher do this. Then the children will associate you with English and try to speak English with you.

HOW TO TELL THE STORY'

The following example is how I tell the story, "The Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf." Under the column "Story" you'll find what I say. Under the column "Pictures and Puppets" you'll find what kind of pictures or puppets you can use and how to use them.

STORY	PICTURES AND PUPPETS
1. "Once upon a time there were three little pigs."	1. Hold up simple puppets (I made mine from paper) of the three little pigs. 
2. "And a BIG BAD WOLF." (Make your voice strong and exaggerated.)	2. Hold up a puppet of the BIG BAD WOLF. (Again mine were of paper. But the wolf should look mean and have long sharp teeth. Children love this.) 

<p>3. "The first little pig lived in a house of leaves, the second little pig lived in a house of sticks and the third little pig lived in a house of bricks." (Point to each pig's house as you talk about him).</p>	<p>3. Hold up a picture of each of the pigs in his house. I pasted some leaves on the drawing of the first little pig's house. I pasted small sticks on the second pig's house. Since it was impossible to paste bricks on the third pig's house, when I say, " and the third little pig lived in a house of bricks" I point to the bricks in our school wall.</p> 
<p>4. The wolf went to the first little pig's house and said, little pig, little pig, let me come in. But the little pig said, "No, no., no. Not by the hair of my chinny-chin chin." The wolf said, "Then I'll huff and puff and blow you house down."</p>	<p>4. Picture shows the wolf at the first pig's house.</p>
<p>5. "Oh, no ! Poor little pig." (Say this with deep regret in your voice as we are mourning the loss of the little Pig's house.</p>	<p>5. Picture shows that the first pig's house was blown down</p>
<p>6. "The first little pig ran to his brother's house."</p>	<p>6. Move the pig puppet in a running motion.</p>
<p>7. "The BIG BAD WOLF came to the second pig's house, he said, 'Little pig, little pig, let me come in.. But the little pig said, "No, no. no. Not by the hair of: my chinny-chin-chin. The wolf said, "Then I'll huff, and puff and blow your house down."</p>	<p>7. Picture shoes the two pigs in the stick house and the wolf at the door.</p>
<p>8. "Oh no, poor little pig !" (Again you are expressing the tragedy of the little pig's loss.)</p>	<p>8. Picture shows that the house was blown dawn.</p>
<p>9. "The first little pig and the second little pig ran to their brother's house."</p>	<p>9. Move the pig puppets in a running motion.</p> 
<p>10. "The BIG BAD WOLF came to the third little pigs house. He said, 'Little pig, little pig, let me cone in. But the little pig said, 'no, no, no. Not by the hair of my chinny chin-chin. The wolf said, 'then I'll huff, and puff and blow your house down."</p>	<p>10. Picture shoes the three pigs together at the third pig's house and the wolf: is at the door.</p>
<p>11. But the wolf couldn't blow the house dawn so he climbed on tire roof to try to go down the chimney."</p>	<p>11. Picture shows the wolf on the roof.</p>

<p>12. But the three little pigs put a big pot of boiling water under the chimney</p>	<p>12. Picture shoes the wolf going down the chimney and the boiling water.</p> 
<p>13. "And the wolf landed in the water."</p>	<p>13. Picture shows the wolf in the water.</p> 
<p>14. "And the BIG BAD WOLF ran all the way home. He said, 'Ouch, ouch, ouch.'"</p>	<p>14. Picture shows the wolf: running and holding his behind.</p>

ENDING THE STORY

It's nice to end the story with some kind of moral insight and discussion with the children. Here are some possible ones I have thought of for this story (Use only one at a time as you don't want to confuse the children.)

1. It's not good to destroy your friends things. What do you think?
2. Animals are: our friends and we shouldn't try to eat them. Do you eat your friends?
3. It's not good to destroy other people's houses. (This has a bit of a Prout flavor and could lead into a discussion of refugees and war.) How would you feel if you didn't have a house?
4. Everyone wants to have a house. Have you ever known anyone who didn't have a house? Was there ever a time when you didn't have a house?



**Ananda Marga School
Lima, Peru**

You should explain the moral in English and the teacher should repeat what you've said in the local language. It is better to rehearse this with her before, hand so she has a proper translation.

Enjoy yourself when you are telling the story and the children will enjoy themselves also. The children in our Lima school are all Spanish speaking. When I told them the "Three Little Pigs" story, they spontaneously applauded me at the end!

Dada Laliitananda has already established an art exchange for his school through the NHE Forum e-mail group for NHE teachers. Since his posting several months ago, several other schools have also begun an exchange with each other. If you would like to be part of an exchange you may do so through the NHE Forum. You can join the NHE Forum by writing to Didi Ananda Rama <anandarama@compuserve.com>. If you do not have e-mail access, you may inquire about an exchange by writing to the editor of this newsletter.

Art Exchange from Kuala Ketil in North Malaysia

by Dada Laliitananda

Kuala Ketil is a small village in the countryside in North Malaysia. There we have a kindergarten and children's home. Most of the

students come from the rubber tree plantations around the town. Chandra Shekar, who is in charge of the project, goes around with the van collecting the children. This service is very important, because there are no kindergartens in the plantations, and if we don't go to bring the children to school, they will remain at home without education. Even if our teachers are not yet trained in NHE system, to attend our school benefits children's development to a great extent. Bro. Candra Shekar also is running two yoga classes for children at a near by Hindu temple. We work mostly with the Tamil community. Tamilians are one of the ethnic groups which compose the Malaysian population, the others are: Malays (related to Filipino) and Chinese. I visit the project once a week to conduct a children's meditation and to give suggestions to the teachers in the kindergarten.

Other days I will be busy running the other school we have in a town a couple of hours from Kuala Ketil (that is another story).

At the children's meditation we gather 12 to 15 children from our

neighborhood, their ages are from ten to thirteen years. Now that we are in the holidays we decided to have some arts sessions. I got the idea of



Kuala Lumpur City

language barriers. I narrated to the children my experience when I went to a big supermarket in a country where I couldn't speak the local language. After looking for a long while I just drew the article that I wanted and showed it to one of the employees. He immediately brought it to me. I invited the children to come the next morning for the art session. Chandra Shekar ran to the shop and bought some water colors and paint brushes. I gave the children a few basic instructions and we started painting. The atmosphere was wonderful, the sun was shining and the children were concentrated in their work. I moved around giving them some suggestions about painting with water colors. For many of them this was the first time they held a brush in their hands. Even Julie our pet

goat was complaining because she wasn't allowed in the class room (Julie believes that one of the boys from the children home, who saved her from slaughter is her mother). During the class we got a telephone call, the father of one of our graduated students suffered a heart attack and we had to rush to the plantation with a homeopathic rescue medicine (Chandra Shekar is also a homeopath). When we came back, thirty minutes later, the children were still concentrated in their work; we painted for

about two hours. Once the work was finished, we started to comment about it.



Bananas

Suggestions for activities:

I read somewhere that to organize an art session you need to put together three elements:

- the children,
- the art materials and
- the situation.

Once these three elements are together the creative act will happen naturally. The teacher has to inspire the children and give them self-confidence

about their capacity to express themselves through art. It will be important that you have some basic knowledge about using the art materials and color combination. It is more creative if the children can mix their own colors instead of getting them ready from the color tubes.

Purpose and subject

The art work should have a purpose. In this case we wanted to communicate with children from other countries, and as a subject, we wanted them to know, what the landscape is like here, what the houses are like, how people dress here and what we look like.

Public speaking

After the art work is finished every one can explain his creation to the others.

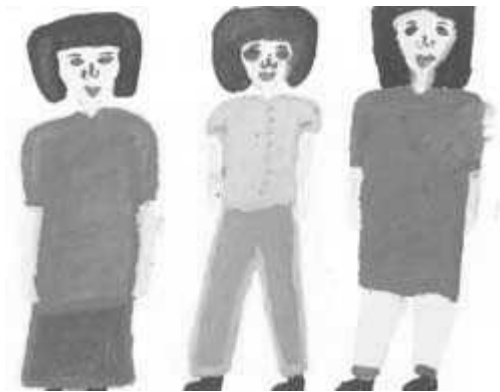
We fixed two rules:

- every body has a right to speak
- when somebody speaks the others listen respectfully

The purpose of this activity is to increase self-confidence by exposing one's ideas in public and developing respect for others' views and work.

"Art critic"

After somebody has explained his artwork, the audience, the other children, will ask questions and gives suggestions. The teacher should encourage a sense of humor and respect during this activity.



Our Dress

Sending Pictures

Then send the drawings to correspondents on the other side of the world and wait for an answer. Every drawing should have a signature, as well as the age and gender of the child. Names in different languages can create doubt about the artist's gender.

The reply

When the reply comes the class can meet again. Suppose you got drawings from one school in South Africa. First locate the country on a map or globe and then let the children express all their ideas about South Africa. Then start to look at the drawings. Speak about what the artist on the other side of the world was trying to say. Guess age and gender. Probably you will also get some letter from the teacher or the children if you are able to communicate in a common language. The letters should be read at the end to give the children the opportunity to use their imagination as much as possible.

We reply

This time you know who you are exchanging with. The children can choose to write to one specific artist that they feel interested to communicate with (that's why it is good to identify the works properly) or send his/her new art work to any or everyone on the other side. You can prepare a list of questions about the other side and send them.

Some suggestions

- You can send artwork: drawings, paintings or collage using any technique that you know.
- You can send individual works or collective works, i.e: all the children paintings in the same piece of paper, this way is very interesting and helps to develop the group feeling.
- You can send photographs of your school
- Flowers, seeds and leaves from local trees and plants
- Finger and hand prints
- Bus tickets, telephone cards
- Christmas, Chinese and Deepavali cards



Blue Village

- You can also send tapes with the children singing kiirtan, nursery songs in local language, or simply their voices.
- You can also record the local birds and the frogs and insects at night
- And any thing that your imagination and your budget allow.



Rainbow

Our schools are everywhere on this planet. We cover all the environments and cultures and our children come from all the ethnic groups and social strata of the

society. We have an amazing potential to connect through the school network. NHE educators are communicating already through NHE - Forum and the newsletter. As part of the NH curriculum we can also encourage the children to communicate, exchange and feel that they are part of a universal family. The idea is that the children can realize that we are all members of one family and children at the other side of the planet, even if they live in

different environments, feel very much quite the same. I think that this is one of the ideas of NHE, isn't it?

Teaching Astaunga Yoga in the Public Schools in Italy

By - Kamaleshvara (Christian Franceschini)

It is a great pleasure for me to share some of my experiences regarding teaching astaunga yoga in the schools .

I wrote a small article in a former issue of Gurukula Network. Now I can tell a bit more, also because now I'm almost full time going (or better running) from school to school giving yoga classes. Since the Italian ministry of education has given the permission to all public schools to experiment with Yoga in the classroom, the demand for a Yoga teacher in Italy is growing greater and greater. There has been some agreement between the government and a confederation of Yoga associations to use Yoga as a medium of teaching in primary, secondary and high schools.

I started teaching yoga in the schools several years before this agreement. In the beginning, I taught some classes in an art high school and some in a primary school. All together I taught about 10 hours a week for one whole school year. Now I am teaching 23 hours a week, and have taught 45 classes over the past 7 months alone. All together I have 240 children from 6 to 14 years of age.

The teachers and parents were inspired by some of my introductory lectures and we made an agreement on how we should start the courses. Normally a complete course has 12 lessons. Every lesson is a mixture of yogic teaching, from postures, to relaxation,

to meditation, kiirtan, stories of great yogis, hints on hygienics, universalism against dogmatism etc. The children enjoy the yoga classes very much, and many of them (more than half) practice at home also with their friends and parents.

Once the Major of the city of Trento came to the school for a visit. He was not informed about my yoga course there. He asked the smallest children of the first class primary what they like mostly in the school. Everybody shouted: "Yoga". He was surprised and told them that they were very lucky to have this kind of teaching so young and especially in the public school.

From time to time I organize lectures on Yoga education and Neo humanistic values where teachers and parents can become more informed about our system of education. Kulapati Ac. Shambhushivananda held a simposium on "Yogic Education for the Future" especially for the teachers joining my yoga classes.

Three weeks ago one Acarya, Dada Dhishuddhananda was invited to one of my public schools, and we gave a demonstration on asanas, kiirtan and meditation to 110 children and 20 teachers. Still now children are asking me when Dada will come again.

There is a lot of work still to do, creating material (books, videos etc.) in order to keep the memory of these courses alive for the next years of the children's growth. Right now I'm working on a book on : "Yoga and Philosophy of Life for Children", and a TV format (for a national TV) on "Yoga for children".

Two Sunlights (Zonnelicht) in Holland

an interview
conducted by Avtk.
Ananda Rama Ac.



For about 14 years now two kindergartens in Hoorn, North of Amsterdam and in 's-Hertogenbosch (Den Bosch) have been directed by Madhavi and Yadurani respectively.

Madhavi started the kindergarten in her living room and was running it like that for several years until eventually it moved to a small building on a nearby government ground. Although the school seems small, it is quite 'healthy' radiating like a little jewel case with about fifty children enrolled. The surrounding community of Hoorn is quite conservative in comparison to the more alternative atmosphere of Den Bosch yet those who came in contact with Zonnelicht Hoorn, teachers and parents, learned to appreciate the vibrant and educational atmosphere. Some children now in primary school still come by sometimes. Recently a small group of former pupils took initiation. Madhavi is giving regular weekly yoga classes open to parents and the public besides the two evenings where she gives yoga at the local sports club. The local Dharmacakra is also held in the school every Sunday and often weekend seminars are held there as well.

The kindergarten in s-Hertogenbosch started in the center of the city in a big old school building with 4 children and later moved to the present area. Now the kindergarten is surrounded by Montessori, Steiner and a public school and is located near a lake surrounded by woods and greenery and an animal park. The children enjoy this park and regularly take turns to visit the animals to feed them.

The school has about fifty nursery age children up to the age of 4 and they stay partly half day and partly full day. In the afternoons another fifty children ages 4-12 come for special activities such as art, drama, acrobatics, sports, yoga and others. This is an after school care program in coordination with the neighboring schools. (Due to lack of teachers in Holland, some schools can take children only 4 days a week).

The very small children, ages 0-2, are taken care of in three rooms where they also sleep. The rest of the school is set up in such a way as to stimulate the development of the different layers of the mind. Different groups of children, ages 2-4, take turns moving to different rooms. There is one room for developing the gross motor movements. Everyday the first group to use the room will set it up with their own created arrangement of balance beams, wooden crates, cushions, bridges, trampoline for jumping, a tunnel to crawl and a slide to climb. The children will move in a circle to go through this course of challenges. When the weather allows the children will be outdoors instead.

Another corner is for exploring practical life skills with



doll houses, prams, a complete kitchen set up, blocks,

wooden cars and toys and other floor activities. In the same big room there is one corner for intellectual development with puzzles, books, table games and science activities to be done at the table.



The creativity room is specially for activities such as painting, wood and clay working and making crafts. The 'intuition and spirituality' room is a carpeted room which is almost empty besides some music instruments, a dress up corner and cushions. This room is to stimulate the creative fantasy, music, dance, language skills and drama. The morning circle is also held here with the quiet meditations and story telling.

Yadurani found it to be a natural process for children to be focused in one layer of the mind as they go through their developmental stages. First they are concerned with their physical strengths and abilities become aware of their movements and gain a certain control. The next focus is to explore their senses, they touch, taste, smell, hear and see. Then they move on to learning from the objects they perceive through their senses and start to manipulate them. Eventually the children become more and more fascinated with manipulating materials that need the

application of intellect. Then comes the joy of random creativity which they can express in the art room where they can paint, explore colours, use clay, paper and other material. Yadurani observed that at this creative stage the child is full of ideas but they are not fixed, not yet formed or controlled.

These developmental stages are usually well known and given attention in general educational systems.

Yadurani is specially interested in the intuitional and spiritual layer of the mind of the child. She says that the child become aware in this stage of intuitive inspirations at the age between 4 to 5. This is a unique stage where benevolent intuitive ideas come to the child, especially when stimulated through music, dance, meditations and stories. The room used for this has not many objects so that the interconnectedness of the group of children remains the main issue. Here the teacher must be looking out for intuitive moments in the child and confirm them positively or 'feed' them. This is done by affirming the great and noble quality or intention the child is expressing. An intuitive moment is defined by Yadurani as when the child moves from being creative to wanting to be a hero, or wanting to be great. When guided with awareness the children invest their whole willpower into a fixed idea of being clear, needed and unstoppable in their determination and imagination. The teacher must be aware not to ridicule or laugh but be supportive and guide the child towards servicemindedness.



Yadurani says it is a magical age full of miracles beyond the normal world. The stories that are told act on these inherent longings in the child. The child opens and becomes receptive to great ideas and philosophy.

Yadurani tells an example: One child told to an adult who passed by : "I would like to move!" The lady answered, "Oh you don't like your house?" The child replied "No, I want to move the whole area to Spain because Santa Clause is there!" Here needs to be an



explanation that at Zonnelicht Santa Clause is depicted as the real person Saint Nicolaus who was a bishop in Spain and who became well known for his loving kindness. He used to leave

silently gifts in front of the doors of the very poor in the bitter cold winter. So for the children Santa Clause is a hero and even now when it is spring time they still play in their play boat 'rowing to Spain'. In this child the idea of a possibility popped up as a noble intuitive flash. He felt the attraction to the saint and wanted to be there with his whole house, school and community! This intuitive greatness will lead the children on to be service-minded with conviction. In this way they will develop spiritual ways in themselves. This spiritual quality is not an incidental emotional state, it is not a shallow "play" but they are in control, they are themselves, with full awareness, their whole being is for others. In this they have to be encouraged.

For utmost spiritual development a loving environment must be created. There has to be subtlety, correction based on love, understanding and seeing the uniqueness in each child. Yadurani feels that in this regard it is essential to build a trusting relationship with the parents as well, since the children are at this stage still one with their parents. The parents are the ones who have to guide and support the spirituality in the child from their hearts and they have to get the understanding of the spiritual development of their child.

With the specification of the room set up the teacher can easily observe the ability of each child individually and follow how the child is progressing. The teacher gets an insight into the qualities and capacities of the child on a daily basis and can work on the weak points of the child. The teachers and student teachers (at the

moment there are 6) can easily grasp the educational objective and understand how the child is functioning in relation to the layers of the mind.

The teachers keep record of each child and instead of report cards the teachers have twice a year 10 minute talks with each parent to tell about the progress of the child.

What the community tells about the school:

Government authorities know that the school is very thorough in the pedagogical work. The parents have great trust that the children are taken care of well. Parents find personal attention and support and contribution in the upbringing of their child. There are 6 parent evenings in a school year and 3 school festivals which are attended by about 200 people.



Other activities at the school open to parents and the public are charity vegetarian dinners, seminars, weekly two regular yoga classes and collective meditations.

Due to popular demand Zonnelicht is considering to expand to primary education and is planning to expand its facilities. The employed teachers have been receiving regular training in NHE as part of their work contract. Student teachers are always invited to participate as well.

With the development of expansion, the need arose to have a permanent institute set up for teacher education in general and in particular in NHE.

NERI (Neo-humanist Education Research Institute) will have its office and one classroom in the adjacent new wing of the school. It is an ideal setting as the students of NERI will be able to observe practical teaching in action.

Sunshine School

Vientiane, Laos

By Didi Ananda Shubra



Barely two months ago, I gathered our children in our small library. My initial plan was to have an exercise which would give the children scope to think for themselves and to introduce meditation which up to now has been limited to our kinder classes.

Our children are happy at school and our teachers and staff are friendly to them. The children are encouraged to express themselves to everyone. In the classroom however, it is not easy for them to think independently.

On the first day of our session, about 40 children came from grades 2-5 (grade one naps at this hour from 1-2 pm). Though it was a new experience for them, I was satisfied with our first meeting which was mainly warm ups, simple actions, and guided visualization. Our schedule was for once a week but as the number of children increased, we decided to divide the group into two. Grade 4 and 5 meet together and grades 2 and 3 form the other group, which worked out well because children in the same age group are generally at the same level with these activities.

I encouraged all the children especially the "challenging" ones to join, as this class gives them the opportunity to be heard where normally they sit quietly in the classroom. In the beginning, the shy ones were really hesitant to do something and say something during discussion time at the end of the activities but as we go along they are slowly gaining confidence and say something even in short sentences.

My initial plan was to just develop the children's ability to think and to let them meditate, but now this has expanded. The children are also developing how to listen, communicate, to organize (in group set ups), solve simple problems, analyze, develop self-confidence, develop their creativity and best of all they really have fun. During one of our discussions one child said that she really enjoys the activity and that it develops her to think quickly.

My target for the next term is to build a bigger building where the children can express more and freely move. If anybody knows a website for creative drama, please send the address. <a.shubhra@laonet.net>



Jamaica School

By Didi Ananda Ragamaya

The school has been blossoming, slowly but surely. We have 13 new students this term, which brings our attendance up to 72. Despite the increase we still need even more to cover our basic costs. But the progress is positive.

Our PTA meeting was quite successful after past struggles merely getting parents to attend. This time we were able to set up a parent body with committee, which is a major leap to say the least!

Twenty-five students will be graduating and so preparations have started for the event. Over here in Jamaica it is generally quite a big occasion. One of Jamaica's famous traditional dance groups, Ashe, will be performing as well as teaching the children dance.

The clinic is barely scraping through, but somehow we are managing to hold it once a month at the school premises.

In April we will start a skills training program for the local community. We will begin with a dressmaking course, which we hope to expand into a cooperative. Let us see where that will lead.

The recycling program is underway and the plastic bottles are piling up waiting for collection, things take a little time here to happen, but our staff bathroom is swimming in bottles! We now share with the kids!!

The Optimist Club of Mona is still optimistic that they will install electricity for us! After one year they are still testing our optimism! Meanwhile the kids get hot under the zinc roofing. That is life here! Not so terrible really and it is amazing how people learn to adjust.



The Kiwanis Club of North St. Andrew donated some school furniture, which was very welcome indeed. They will be helping us make the play area fun for the kids, as currently it is more like wasteland.

And through all our ins and outs the children are blossoming. They bring such joy and sweetness to our lives at the school and it is a real pleasure to watch them unfold so beautifully. We are very fortunate too in having such a loving team of dedicated staff.

Being a very strong Christian country, (more churches per square mile than anywhere in the world!) people have some fear about meditation. Finally after many years of working with Ananda Marga two of our teachers finally learned meditation. This might seem strange as they have been with us so long, but everything happens at the right time and my teachers are now very happy with the new life that meditation has brought them. One called me up just so thrilled at how well she was feeling and how much energy she had and just how happy she felt! She said I have been a teacher at this school for over 10 years and never have I seen such vast improvement in the children. I

firmly believe that it is because I have made a total change in my life. I honestly believe that without meditation I could not have made it. Meditation to me is one of the most powerful ways to realize the source of all my existence.

In future, when we have electricity in the school we will be starting some basic computer courses as well. Our office could greatly use a computer and printer if you or anyone you know is letting go of an old one. Didi Ananda Ragamaya
<ragamaya@cwjamaica.com>



Sunrise Playschool Copenhagen, Denmark

by Rukminii



It was a wonderful opportunity I had last year, to travel from Lismore, Australia to Europe. I was asked by Arati, if I had the opportunity, to visit our sister schools and write something for the Gurukul newsletter. I am happy to say, that I was invited to see Didi Nityabhakti's school in Copenhagen. It was wonderful. The school is a magical place for children and teachers Didi Nityabhakti, Malinii from Brazil, Lotte' from Denmark and their newest staff member Zulfia from Russia, create an atmosphere of joyfulness, safety and excitement in which to learn in. Below are some of my impressions when I visited in October 2000.

Children arrive early and settle into free play. Music from 'Deep in my heart' plays in the background and I quietly observe the atmosphere.

The room is bright and welcoming. Two large windows face the street for curious children to look out from. Vibrant pink walls decorated with art work and animal posters makes the school look happy. There are comfortable cushions on one side of the room with some books and toys and tiny red, green and blue desks with chairs on the other side of the room.

The children are adorable. Some arrive as young as 2 with pacifiers in their mouth, some sleepy,

History

by Vishva Shanti.

Sunrise Playschool began as just a volunteer babysitting group in the early 1980's. In 1984 with the permanent posting of a Didi here the present location was purchased and a regular pre-school was established. Most of those first enrolled came from Ananda Marga families. However, the word quickly spread that there was an international preschool available in Copenhagen for the first time, and children from the international community started arriving. Since then, the school has had nearly a full enrollment (18) with some Danish children also enrolled in the English language medium school.

The school is approved by Copenhagen City and some of the children receive allowances from the city diplomatic corps based in Copenhagen. Now and then, we get letters from parents now posted in far away places who had their children in the school years ago and wish to express their appreciation for the development of their children in those all important early years.

For several years now there has been a waiting list of children wanting a place in the school. Under the new principal, Didi Nityabhakti, we are currently planning an expansion program which will include two sections, one Danish and one English Medium.

some active announcing their arrival, some curious and inquisitive. All so distinctively individual.

Didi Nityabhakti and teachers gather the children around to begin Morning Circle. Nirmala asks me to join in. They begin the circle by singing the following songs:



1. Good morning have a beautiful day.
2. Good morning dear Earth.
3. I love you
4. This is the way Iwash my face....
5. Clouds are floating
6. If you're happy and you know it...
7. This little light of mine

8. Clap your hands so gaily
9. Baba Nam Kevalam
(meditation)
10. Love everybody



Didi and Malinii were inspiring and so animated during morning circle. The songs were wonderful and all the children sang loudly and danced. Kiirtan was great. Meditation time was still and quiet. I could not resist taking photos.

After morning circle, it was time for numbers, letters and colours. It was impressive to see children were counting past 10 and were reciting the days of the week in sequence. The day continued with stories, pasting, drawing and snacks.



It wasn't long before my presence sparked curiosity amongst the children, wanting to know where I was from, if I was going to be here tomorrow etc. Two little girls, Vu Vu from Swaziland and Christine from the Phillipines. later asked me if I would draw them some pictures. I was interested to see how far my drawing abilities would be challenged and they did. Vu Vu asked me to draw her 'a kitchen', Christine asked me to draw 'a garden with a apple tree in it' and finally Vu Vu asked me to draw 'a purple princess with yellow earrings'.

All staff are very much loved by the children and parents. Didi and teachers work very well with children teaching and modeling respect, gentle yet appropriate discipline.

I have been working with children for over 20 years now, having spent the recent 10 working with children aged 5 -12 yrs. at the Vistara Primary School in Australia. I was very impressed with the cultural diversity of the school. Children being exposed to multicultural enrichment at such young age are bound to be a blessing for the future of society.



It was a great pleasure to be invited to visit our Ananda Marga Playschool in Denmark and give my most sincere appreciation to staff, parents and children for their hospitality and time. With schools like these and dedicated, committed people working in them for the welfare of the future generations, the future is very bright."

Sunrise Kindergarten, Melbourne, Australia

by Rita Saville

The year 2001 has started off well. Our new playground is looking beautiful and has provided an interesting addition to the inside. Both areas have merged together with a harmonious feeling. Our educational program is developing steadily as we teach our new and old students the underlying principles of the NH philosophy.

The children are very keen to practice their asanas. At the beginning of the year, we use cards with illustrated asanas to teach the different postures. As the children become more familiar with the asanas, we introduce various new ways to teach the classes, such as introducing a story line incorporating the animals in the poses.

Centering at the beginning of the day is important. We use activities such as presenting a felt cloth, beads, feathers and sequins and asking the children to create a picture out of them. Another activity is that each child is presented with a small box in front of them. The children are asked to see what is inside and to describe the object. Other times we use bindis or body glitter to help us focus. We use the 'quiet game' (meditation) at the beginning and/or at the end of the class. The snuffing of candles is always popular.



One week's creative dance and drama was based on our objective of understanding the process of growth. We introduced the concept by telling the story of the very hungry caterpillar who ate lots of fruit and eventually changed into a butterfly. The children experienced the growing process using drama. The children first used a green pipe cleaner (representing the caterpillar) to work out how a caterpillar crawled. Then the children used their own body to do the caterpillar crawl which is not an easy thing to do; however they all did very well. After this dramatization, the children danced with butterfly props before evolving into butterflies themselves. The children learned about spatial awareness such as 'flying' low and high, softly and gently just like a butterfly. We had a few 'heavy footed' butterflies who were gently reminded that butterflies flutter around softly in the air!



As part of our philosophy to foster empathy for others, we had a discussion about the new NHE school starting in Papua New Guinea. We asked the children to choose one of their own toys to donate, thus fostering global love and appreciation of the fact that we have more than others and that sharing is an important step towards recognizing and respecting other people's needs.

Global News

Georgetown Sector

In **Asuncion** the construction work of the new school building is almost complete. The construction was funded by the government.

The **Sorocaba School** has been approved to receive a grant from the local government of US \$1,500 per month.

The school in **Barranquilla, Colombia** has started the year with 70 students. Medical treatment is being given to the people living around the school.

The **Belo Horizonte School** increased its enrolment from 18 to 34 students.

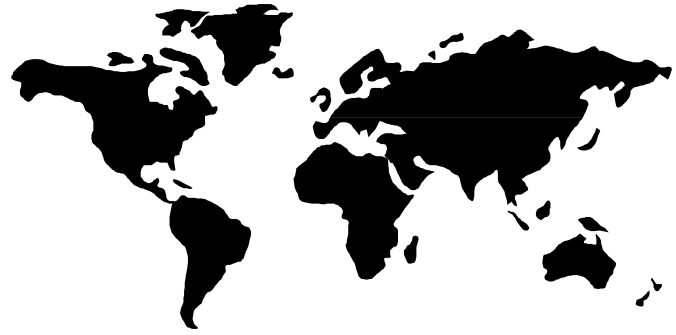
Qahira Sector



Albania

by **Ac. Vedaprajnananda Avt**

We now have 80 students. There are twenty students per class and we have two classrooms and work two shifts. The older students (aged 5-6) come in the morning, and the younger students (4-5) attend the afternoon session. We recently celebrated a local festival and all 80 students and their teachers came together in one classroom. We are following the Circle of Love curriculum. The school is fairly well equipped as we have received donations of school supplies from other non governmental organizations. We are serving one of the poorest communities in Albania, and were it not for this school, almost all of these children would be out on the streets instead of in class. After the KG



classes I also teach English to older children (aged 10-15) and to young adults. This is the only school currently running in this Sector.

Nairobi Sector

South Africa

by **Didi Ananda Japasiddha**

In South Africa we have been maintaining several pre-schools in the rural areas for a very long time. We just got our volunteer named Aryama from Ann Arbor, Michigan in the US who has come to help me run the first Neo-Humanist teacher's training for our schools. All along I was planning to start including other schools in the training, to encourage more schools to start following our system of education, but I presumed that would be in the future. I was wrong. Our teachers invited several of their teacher friends and although our room is small we managed to accommodate 16 teachers representing 13 schools in the townships of Madadeni and Osizweni and the surrounding farm areas (greater Newcastle and Dundee area). We are starting an educational resource center as well which will be accessible to the teachers. So far it includes books for children and teachers and a few toys (toy library), but in the future we want to include many other things when we have space including a language lab for the teachers to use and other educational films and books. Africa needs so much education and it was inspiring to see how thirsty for knowledge some people are. In this very first session we introduced meditation and Baba Nam Kevalam which were eagerly absorbed. We spoke about the benefits of meditation for teachers and their students and we will be traveling to the schools to see that the course is implemented in the classroom. We told them there is no pass and fail in our system. We just keep trying until we succeed. All were very happy and went home singing Baba Nam Kevalam.

Our volunteer is leaving in July, when this session ends. We would like to run another training session but we need another volunteer. **See page 42.**

Berlin Sector

Iceland

by Didi Ananda Tapati

We had a beautiful Christmas celebration at the school. The children together with the teachers organized a wonderful and inspiring program for everybody. We started the program by singing Baba Nam Kevalam, followed by a violin duet by two children who had been in our school 7- 12 years ago. Then, our little ones (2-3 years old)wearing traditional doll clothes and hats presented a famous Icelandic children song with a dance. Our big ones (4-6 years old) performed a play about the Land of sunshine and joy , a story from the Circle of Love. We incorporated some asanas and meditation creatively, in the play and included beautiful songs in it. It was wonderful. I was so impressed to see our children performing without any fear, shyness and other complexes. They performed as if they were in our normal morning circle. Iceland is small, close society and added to this, they are isolated, so most of them are shy. They are very reserved in nature, so to see this lovely children's performance is like a breakthrough in Icelandic nature. It was so inspiring to see some parents with tears in their eyes as they watched their children's theater. I know deep in my heart that kiirtan, asanas and meditation are really helping these children to unfold themselves to the fullest, developing them into a whole child.

Now we are preparing for the inauguration of our new building. It will be a big celebration. We will be inviting the Prime Minister , the mayor and the Director of the Ministry of Education and all the parents (previous and present parents) and well wishers of our school. They, the margiis and the parents have helped in the formation of this school. We have been fortunate to get the support of these people in the government. The Prime Minister, who was the mayor years back had been instrumental in donating the land to us. The present mayor has been very as well. The Ministry of Education, gave us 1/3 of the finances for the construction of the new building.

Hong Kong Sector

Taichung, Taiwan

by Didi Madhuka

I am teaching yoga to children in the public school with stories , meditation and some game activities. For a long time I was only teaching in kindergartens, but for the past six months I also have been teaching in

primary schools where we have children yoga activities. I am learning new techniques for teaching yoga to children.

Suva Sector

Australia

by Manorainjana

At the Summer Sectorial Seminar, we had an education meeting with our new SES Dada, Didi Ananda Shamita. Didi Ananda Vitandra, Rukmini, Gurucharan, and Manorainjana. We will be starting up our Australian NERI and organizing some site specific ETCs this year - also a small newsletter offering practical classroom advise to our teachers.

Melany, Australia

by Kamala

The Ananda Marga River School at Ananda Kamala Master Unit in Maleny, Australia is off to a great start in its sixth year. We have four primary classrooms, with around 90 children, plus a kindergarten and pre-school. Some of our classes are full with waiting room only for new students.

It's been very busy leading up to our new school year (which starts end of January in the Southern Hemisphere.) We just completed (in a mere six weeks of school holiday) construction of a beautiful new classroom overlooking the surrounding rainforest. We had a full day ETC with our teachers on the subject of Neo-Humanism. They all participated enthusiastically, and each shared in teaching an aspect of neo humanism. They spoke on: The Circle of Love (Brahmacakra), the sentiments (geo, socio, humanist, NH, etc.), pseudo-culture (and the use of "Critical Literacy" to teach children about it), and enjoyed a talk by Dada Ratnadevananda (our school principal) on devotional sentiment and a story/discussion by me, on the meaning of the pratik.

The teachers are very inspired about teaching this year. Yesterday morning when I walked to school for a meeting, kiirtan was pouring out of three of the classrooms! The teachers have developed a "meditation curriculum" which details the meditation-related skills children develop as they move through the seven years at our school.

The school has a beautiful creek which the children will thoroughly enjoy in the hot days at the start of school. We have also just completed a fully

.....Continued on Page 40

Dear Dialog: with Mahajyoti Glassman

How do you decide when to bring a concern to a parent's attention and then how do you go about it?

Signed, Indecisive

Dear Indecisive:

Like adults, children are not well behaved every second of the day. There lies beneath the surface so many skills and samskaras which have not yet emerged. Naturally it is not necessary to share every little annoying, nonconforming behavior and cause needless alarm to the parent. Young children progress through so many developmental phases that one educator has said if your body could grow to a size reflecting one's mental development -- that by the time the child reaches the age of 5, the body would be about the size of the state of Indiana.

HANDLING A SITUATION WITHIN THE SCHOOL

Once the school staff has thoroughly discussed the behavior of concern and devised a thoughtful plan, most undesirable behaviors dissolve within a few weeks with conscientious united and determined efforts. Continually dialoguing with the child may or may not help every given situation, since the root of some challenging behaviors arise from a subconscious level and cannot always be verbally explained or understood on a conscious level. Having the student draw pictures can frequently prove very insightful.

While observing behavior, the staff needs to determine :

- What time of day (or during what activity) does it manifest and with whom?
- How are the staff interacting with the child during these dilemmas?
- Is the staff consistent in handling the situations?
- Does the child receive a lot of positive reinforcement and nurturing from the staff during these interchanges and at other times throughout the day as well?

Generally a concern is not brought to a parent's attention unless an extremely stubborn aggressive behavior (such as repeated biting or pinching) is being exhibited. In such cases, we have on occasion requested parents to have some family discussion and perhaps to withhold a privilege at home and/or more commonly to provide extra positive loving reinforcement for exhibiting the more desired behaviors. With aggressive behaviors, there exists a reasonable possibility that the parents have experienced these at home as a result of the child's inability to cope with frustration, fear, and/or anger.

VOICING THE CONCERN

When presenting a concern to a parent, we do not want the parent to feel either defensive or threatened. Occasionally this tendency can cause the parent to conjecture that perhaps the staff are underqualified or that perhaps the child is unhappy at the school. In an effort to avoid these consequences it is essential the staff member convey and reiterate their affection and caring for the child. Try to avoid using the word "problem" or being judgmental. "Melanie, I

want to meet with you because I'm concerned about Maria's biting. I'm wondering if you've noticed this at home?" Make sure the parent understands that it is the behavior that is in question -- not the child. Choose your words with care, considering delicacy and tact. If the teacher is grounded in a place of sincere caring and loving concern for the well being of the child, all generally proceeds surprisingly well.

ASKING FOR INPUT FROM HOME

"Would you mind sharing with me what you've seen at home and how you've handled this?" Let the parent do the talking. Listen carefully. Repeat what you have heard to ensure your understanding as well as reinforcing your respect for the parent. Because social interactions in the school environment can be more difficult for the child than interactions at home, misbehaviors at school may be more acute.

Agree with the parent whenever possible. "Yes, that's exactly what we are seeing at school". Usually parents offer insights which are invisible to the staff. Examine how frustrating the situation is for the child. It is vital that the dialog include what the parents and staff sense to be the child's perspective, frustrations, and genuine feelings. (By this stage in the game hopefully the staff has had enough observation time and conversations with the child to be able to assess this.) How can we jointly best support and help the student to find the answer to this puzzle?

SHARING WHAT HAS BEEN OBSERVED AT SCHOOL

When reviewing the situations at school, try sticking to the facts observed by the staff, rather than jumping into interpretations or labeling, i.e., "hyperactive", "emotionally disturbed". Sharing just a few brief observations may be preferable to overwhelming the parent. The teacher wants to make a strong effort to ensure that the parent will not be made to feel guilty or directly responsible for the misbehavior. Remember that parents feel vulnerable to criticism.

BRAINSTORMING TOGETHER

Our ideal goal is to develop a joint united understanding and cooperative plan of action, incorporating ideas from home and school. Brainstorm a list of solutions that may help the child with the parent. The teacher reiterates the changes or suggestions the parent has proposed and summarizes how the plan could be implemented. Throughout the entire process, the key emphasis is on the spirit of sam'gacchadvam', uniting intentions and working together. The teacher endeavors to be a joint partner in this adventure and not to appear superior or overbearing.

CHOOSING A PLAN

What positive behavior of words are you encouraging the child to demonstrate instead of the undesired behavior? You may choose to consider role playing the situation on a daily basis to familiarize the child with other behavioral or verbal options. To have a variety of options is ideal so the child may choose what works best for him/her. When a plan has been agreed upon, we want to be certain to give the new

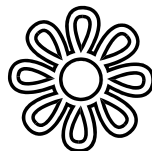
approach adequate time. Review the effectiveness of the strategy with the staff, the child, and the parents daily, before making adjustments.

IMPLEMENTING A STRATEGY

When progressing with the plan, teachers and parents are continuously attuning to the feelings of the child and implementing the steps as compassionately and as respectfully as possible, including the student's input and assessment of the situation's status. Supporting the new positive behavior with enthusiasm generally drives the point home. "I like the way you used your words, Maria. Great job!"

Thank the parents and the child for the patience and helpful cooperation. Always remember "the only thing that really matters is kindness."

If you have other concerns you would like to see addressed in this column,



**Contact Mahajyoti
at**

<mjyoga@go.com>

or

**Dear Dialogue
Gurukula Network
146 Honness Lane**

Ithaca, New York 14850 USA

<arati@igc.org>

Mahajyoti Glassman has been the Director and Head Teacher of Morning Star Preschool for the past 12 years. Morning Star Preschool is a Neo-Humanist School in Denver, Colorado, USA.

.....Continued from Page 38 Global News

professional basketball court which the children themselves raised most of the money for. We also just received a grant for an "edible landscaping" project, so we will be planting 25 fruit trees around the school oval to provide healthy snacks for the children.

The AM River School receives some government funding as an independent school. But our main source of building funds, etc. comes from the very hard work of Acharyas and Margiis each year in December when we put on a big Ananda Marga Vegetarian Cafe at a very large music festival for six days. This year, the school made around \$10,000 US from this endeavor.

Another Volunteer is needed in South Africa

A background in education is not necessary. At this point we need an experienced meditator and neo humanist in the program to emphasize the meditation and Neo-Humanistic aspects of the training in the schools. If you are a teacher or have minimal experience with Neo-Humanist education all the better.

About South Africa:

South Africa is not a malarial area. This is the arid zone and is not prone to all the odd diseases you find in jungle nations. It is safe, and our volunteer has been traveling with the local transport and walking all over the countryside without trouble. South Africa still has a colonial veneer which allows you to get your granola or computer discs. The cities are like First World. But under the veneer is the Third World real need for service.

**Contact Didi AnandaJapasiddha
<a_japasiddha@yahoo.com>**

Tasa and the Moon

by Kamala



Once there was a young woman named Tasa. She lived in a beautiful place. As she walked by the stream she would feel its peace and clarity, near the ocean she felt the expansiveness and purity of the great waves. Sometimes she went to the top of the mountain where she could look down and see everything in perspective from the clarity of the great height.

She felt peaceful and happy inside and in time she met a great teacher who taught her meditation and yoga. As she practiced these things, she realized she could feel the peace of the river or the clarity of the mountain even deeper inside herself. As she meditated by the sea or on the mountain top she felt her love and peace grow even stronger.

One day as she meditated on the mountain top she opened her eyes and looked far away to the city. She saw pollution over the tall buildings, the buzz of traffic, and the din of construction. She thought to herself, “My teacher says I should share my inner peace through service. I would like to go the city and be able to help. I know, I’ll become a teacher, and help the children feel this beautiful inner love.”

So she went off and studied for several years. Finally the day came when she entered the classroom. It was not quite what she had expected. The students crowded rowdily into the classroom. She was accustomed to listening quietly and accepting each person’s view, but soon she became overwhelmed: “Hey teacher! Can we watch the Gladiator video?” “I don’t have to study because I’m going to become a supermodel and be filthy rich!” “Hey, that kid has kinky hair--isn’t she weird?” “Teacher, all the kids are teasing me! I don’t want to be here! Can I go home?”

The principal of the school came in during the din and said sternly, “Your job is to teach these children the basics and get them through school. They have nothing of importance to say--they are here to listen to you only. Your job is to maintain strict discipline....”

By the end of the first week, Tasa was completely discouraged. How could she teach anything to this classroom? How could she bring them her beautiful ideas?

During the weekend, she went back to her beautiful countryside home. Late at night she was walking alone in the darkness, feeling completely confused and lost. She was singing...

“Some times I feel so helpless So sad and so alone I don’t know where I’m going And I feel so far from home...”

Then she heard a lovely voice singing back to her,

“You are never alone or helpless No matter what you do. The force that guides the stars guides you, too.”

She looked up and saw the glittering full moon, singing that beautiful song.

“Oh moon, I’m so happy to see you. I used to feel that you were always with me, but these days I feel so alone. Just like my innerself, sometimes I see you so brightly, other times I can’t find you at all!”

The moon replied, “Indeed, just like your innerself, even when you can’t see me in the sky, or if you can only see just a tiny sliver of me, yet I am always there in the sky, always with you.”

“Moon, I don’t know how to help the children in my classroom!”

“Dear One, you have a great ideal. You want to do great work. I will give you some guidance to help, but you will still need to do much work yourself. I will give you a symbol to guide your teaching.”

(The moon gives her a pratik.)

“That’s beautiful, but what does it mean?”

(I made four cards on stiff paper. On the front of each was the downward triangle, the upward triangle, the sun and the swastika. On the back was the same symbol with the meaning written on it was well.)

“First is the downward pointing triangle (show the front of the card.) It means that you must teach the children that true happiness is inside themselves. They must always look inside for lasting peace. To achieve that you must teach them spiritual practices so they have a means to achieve that happiness and morality so that their minds will be balanced and peaceful. [Turn over the card and “**Inner happiness**” is at the lower corner”: with the “**spiritual practice**” and “**morality**” at the top two.)

“The upward pointing triangle stands for loving service. You must teach the children that the real fulfillment of action comes when it is for the collective interest. They can only really understand this when you also teach them that they are all members of one universal family. You must also teach them rationality, so that they can render service in the best possible way.” [This card shows “loving service” on the top corner, with “universalism” and “rationality” at the base corners.]

“Now there is the shining sun. It stands for total positivity. You must remember to have a positive outlook in everything you do. Like the sun which rises brightly each day, so our lives start anew each moment. Each challenge helps us grow. Teach this to your children. [The rising sun has the word, “positivity.”]

“Finally there is the ancient symbol, the swastika. It stands for endless dynamism. As you teach you must remember that you and children are constantly growing. You must be prepared to change your programs often, to adapt to new situations and environments and teach children to embrace change and value growth.” [The swastik card has the word “Dynamism” on the bottom, with growth, change, and movement around the sides.]

“So take these ideas and use them well. Of course it will take so much work to find out how to apply this each day, but let it be your base. Good bye!”

Thank you moon,” said Tasa, feeling tears of joy trickle down her cheeks. Holding tightly to the moon’s gift she walked home through the night. She was so excited with these new ideas, that she walked quickly, singing...

“I am never alone or helpless No matter what I do the force that guides the stars Guides me too.”

[That’s the end of the story. Now I let the teachers divide into groups of two. They will help Tasa take these theoretical concepts and make them practical for the classroom. Each couple drew one of the four cards. Working together they had five minutes to brainstorm ten ideas they could use in the classroom to teach the ideas on the card (like “loving service” or “positivity.”) After that we shared the lists from each group and had some lively discussion.]

PS--The name Tasa came from our four teachers, Tim, Ann, Sue and Anna!

Continued from Page 10 - Kulapati Tours

Alabama

Dada took part in three television interviews to raise funds for the earthquake disaster in India.

Hawaii

Magnus Olander is helping Kulapati compile his verses, Wisdom and Mystical Verses of Sa'nor. Dada has written 107 verses since September 2000, which will soon be published in a small book. Dada also made contact with a man who is making a battery powered, pollutant free, electric scooter. He will be bringing it to Ananda Nagar and is interested to set up a solar farm project at Ananda Nagar.

Selected Verses from Wisdom and Mystical Verses of Sa'nor By Dada Shambhushivananda

Verse #26.

Your love has gripped me, O Lord! Day and night, I feel an impelling urge to sing Your glory and celebrate our meeting, our eternal relationship and our inseparable union. I have found you today after ages of searching, O' my eternal friend.

Verse # 94

I have traveled from country to country, from home to home and filled up my heart with the nectarian love. My little cup of mind is overflowing with sweetest bliss, shining with hues of diverse experiences. The exchanges of affection' have carved streaks of unusual patterns on my soul and now, I wait at thy door-to offer it all to You, my loved one !

Verse # 98

How would I know the joy of light and knowledge if there had been no darkness & ignorance; How would I appreciate the pleasure of sweetness & bonding if there had not been bitterness & hatred; How would I value the truth and peace if there was no falsehood or war.

It is in the moments of unconscious misunderstandings that we learn to cultivate communication based on mutual respect and total understanding.

Every step along life's journey is a blessing if it brings us closer to the stance of Fulfillment in Pure Universal Love.

Let us not be afraid of mistakes as they are our doorway to progress; Let us not be afraid of failings as they are the steps on the ladder of forward movement; Let not the wrongs deter us as they are the indicators of the correct path.

As they say: "When we lose, let us not lose the lessons !" When we move, "let us not stop until the goal is reached !" and "Where there is will, there is always a way !"

So, Do not give-up and Strive On.

Books and Films Recommended on NHE Forum and by Our Readers

"Cosmic Message" by Shomei Yoh 1997 printed in Japan. ISBN4-333-01653-6

This is a very brilliant book with beautiful drawings of the cosmos and philosophical short quotes suitable for children 10 years and up.

"But never fear whatever happens, do not worry.

Hold on to courage and hope.

All is change for the better

Live with joy, believing in the love of the cosmos."

"The Family Virtues Guide" by Linda Kavelin Popov ISBN 0-452-27810-4

"The Virtues Project", an international organization dedicated to inspiring spiritual growth in young and old alike, has published a book for parents. The idea is to empower adults and children in diverse cultures around the world to live by their highest values. As written in the preface "It is not about the practices or beliefs of any one faith but is sourced in the virtues which are the common elements of spirituality found in all sacred traditions." Some of the virtues listed (with ideas of how to practice them) are compassion, generosity, kindness, modesty, tolerance, unity. You can find out more about the project and their materials on their home page <www.virtuesproject.com>.

There is a CD "Virtues in me" accompanied with a booklet with charming songs and more creative ideas of how to implement some of the virtues. You can order those through Tapasi < "**Jovan Drapsin**" innersong@goldnet.ch>

"Teaching Your Children Values" by Linda and Richard Eyre Published by Simon and Schuster 1993 ISBN 0-671-76966-9

This book is written by a couple with 9 children. The blurb on the back cover says it's a "practical, proven, month-by-month program of games, family activities, and value-building exercises for kids of all ages." It's creative and definitely worth reading if you're looking for books on values.

Other titles by the same authors-

Teaching Children Joy

Teaching Children Responsibility

Teaching Children Sensitivity

Let's Co-operate Activities (ideas for teachers and parents of children aged 3-11) by Mildred Mashedor

published by Peace Education Project of the Peace Pledge Union 1986 ISBN 0/902680/13/7

The project produces its own teaching materials about the facts, concepts and controversies surrounding the

complex issues of war and peace, liberation and justice, violence and non-violence. The chapter titles are: A positive self-concept; creativity; communication; co-operation; getting on with others; peaceful conflict-solving; resources.

"It's in everyone of us "

This is a short film, of 6 minutes, ideal to use at education seminars just to give a feeling of universalism. It shows faces of different cultures, young and old changing into each other, the shining eyes always remaining.

It can be ordered at New Era Media 425 Alabama Street PO Box 410685 W San Francisco Ca 94191- 0685 Tel. 415 863 3555.

Film by the Teaching Tolerance Project - Southern Poverty Law Center 400 Washington Ave. Montgomery, Al 36104 Fax 001 334 264 3121

This film on teaching tolerance in kindergarten was shown at the Findhorn Education Conference. It very touchingly shows children handling prejudice of colour, culture etc. You can ask for information on how to order the whole kit. They also give this kit for free or affordable price to those who can't afford it. You can write for information on ordering the "Starting Small Early Educators Kit,"; specify Americana standard or British standard.

"Tomorrow's Children" by Riane Eisler

This book is advocating "partnership" education which stands for an awareness of a truly coordinated cooperation between all sections of society. It takes a far view into humanity's past history and wants to contribute to rewriting it from a wholistic perspective. With this perspective and commitment towards win-win ideas, the book wants to give a vision for tomorrow's children.

Yoga Stories - Stories and Relaxation Exercises for Children by R. Tamminga published in Taiwan ISBN: 957-0339-37-3

Stories told to introduce different yoga postures to children. Text is both in English and Chinese. The book is fully illustrated with children in yoga postures, and a CD of the stories is included with the book.

The Best Treasure Ever - a children's book by Tamzin Blair (Premavati)

Join us on an exciting journey to find our magic treasure. Lifting flaps as we go, looking in dark caves, on mountains tops, and even in our belly buttons, we search until we discover the best treasure ever is in our hearts.

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- To develop the full potential of each child: physical, mental and spiritual.
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- To promote neo humanism - an awareness of ecology in its broadest sense - the realization of the inter-relatedness of all things; and to encourage respect and care for all living beings and the inanimate world.
- To awaken a thirst for knowledge and love of learning.
- To develop physical well-being and mental capabilities through yoga and concentration techniques, sports and play.
- To equip students with academic and other skills necessary for higher education
- To develop a sense of aesthetics and appreciation of culture through drama, dance, music, art, and literature
- To encourage students to become active and responsible members of society, and to develop a spirit of service mindedness.
- To encourage a universal outlook free from discrimination based on religion, race, creed or sex, and to foster a respect for all cultures
- To awaken social consciousness and a sense of justice.
- To recognize the importance of teachers and parents in setting an example.

Gurukula Network
146 Honness Lane
Ithaca, New York 14850