



# GURUKULA NETWORK

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

Issue 14 May 2002

## Ananda Marga Gurukula

- 3 Updates and Announcements
- 4 News from Anandanagar
- 8 Highlights of Kulapati's Tour

## Teacher Education Programs

- 10 NHE Distance Learning Programs
- 12 Berlin Sector Education Training Camp
- 14 Delhi Sector Education Training Camp

## Neo Humanist Education Methods

- 15 Memory
- 16 Mandala Art with Children
- 18 Teacher Self Development
- 20 Yama-Niyama Stories
- 22 Small I and Big I
- 24 Importance of Play
- 25 Teaching and Bliss; Culture in the Classroom
- 26 Cooperative Games
- 27 Creative Discipline

## Schools and Projects in Focus

- 28 Zonnelicht-Hoorn, Holland
- 30 Yoga Club, USA
- 32 River School, Australia
- 35 Yoga Gan, Israel
- 36 NHE in East Africa
- 37 Dolls from Peru
- 38 NHE Learning Centre, Malta

## 39 Global News



*Children in Istanbul, Turkey displaying Mandala Art  
see page 16 for more details*

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

## **Gurukula Network**

Newsletter and Journal of  
Neo-Humanist Schools and  
Research Institutes  
affiliated to  
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 news of your 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 the October 2002 issue**

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

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#### **Ananda Marga Gurukula**

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

#### **Neo-Humanist Education**

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

#### **Teacher Resources**

[www.gurukul.edu/nhe/resources.html](http://www.gurukul.edu/nhe/resources.html)

Donations are welcome for AMGK Endowment Fund and Gurukula Network as well as schools and projects. Please make checks payable to Ananda Marga Gurukula and send to AMGK Liaison Office.

## **VISION OF ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA**

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 also 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.

## **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.

### **Chancellor of Ananda Marga Gurukula**

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Ananda Marga Gurukula serves as the Board of Education for Neo-Humanist Schools and Institutes around the world. These Neo-Humanist Schools and projects, some of which are featured in Gurukula Network, are managed by the Education Relief And Welfare Section and Women's Welfare Department of Ananda Marga.

**ERAWS Global In-charge** Ac. Parmeshvarananda Avt.

**Education Global In-charge** Ac. Priyakrsnananda Avt.

**WWD Global In-charge** Avtk. Ananda Giita Ac.

**WWD Global Education In-charge** Avtk. Ananda Prajina Ac.



## ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA GLOBAL LIAISON OFFICE UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Standards Completed

Ananda Marga Gurukula Standards for kindergarten and primary Neo- Humanist Schools

are now available. You may write for a copy from <amgk.glo@gurukul.edu> or you may download a copy directly from NHE Resources <www.gurukul.edu/nhe/resources.html>

### Distance Learning Programmes

Two distance learning programmes for NHE teachers are both progressing with many students. The Neo-Humanist Diploma Programme is a one year or more in depth tuition programme, certifying the student as an NHE early childhood teacher. The Neo-Humanist Introductory Programme is a three month or more free programme, with the option for certification as an NHE early childhood associate teacher. For more details see the description of Distance Learning Programmes in this issue of Gurukula Network on page 10.

### Workshops Credit

Teachers attending ETC's and other educational workshops may apply to AMGK to obtain a certificate for their participation. This process involves attending the workshop, reflecting on what has been learned, and completing an assignment afterwards. To receive instructions for this, please write to <amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>

### Circle Of Love Reprints

The Circle of Love activities manual for Preschool and Kindergarten which was compiled by Didi Ananda Mitra in 1982 in Manila, Philippines, has since then been translated into many languages and has been in use around the world. It has been out of print for some time. Updates to the original are in the works. In the meanwhile, photocopies will now be made available through AMGK for internal distribution. To obtain a copy, please write to Mahjayoti <mjyoga@go.com>.

### COL Verses and Songs Tape

Efforts are also underway to produce an audio tape of all the verses and songs contained in the COL manual. For updated information on the progress of this project, or to offer your assistance, please write to: <amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>.

### AMGK Web Pages

Revision of the Ananda Marga Gurukula web pages is almost complete. The web address will be the same as

now <www.gurukul.edu> The new pages will feature an invitation for volunteers to work in AMGK affiliated projects. If you would like to register your school or project to receive volunteers, please see below.

### Volunteers for your Project

AMGK is setting up an international volunteer programme connecting young volunteers to schools, master units, children homes and other educational projects. All volunteers will receive basic introduction to NHE prior to going to their project. If you are interested to have volunteers come to your project you can request an application form from <amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>. Your project is ready for volunteers if you have the following criteria ready for volunteers:

- A mentor for the volunteer who will give guidance and see to the needs of the volunteer
- food and lodging
- appropriate work for the volunteer.
- appropriate free time, recreation, introduction to the local culture
- ready to receive feedback from the volunteer and give feedback on their work

What you can expect from the volunteers:

- own return ticket, own health insurance and visa
- daily work 4-6 hours
- adjusting to sentient lifestyle and being sensitive to local cultural norms
- have basic introduction to Neo-Humanist Education.

### ONGOING

#### NHE Web Pages

The Neo-Humanist Education web pages can be found at <www.gurukul.edu/nhe>. If you would like your school's web pages to be connected to this site, please write to <arati@anandamarga.net>.

#### NHE-Forum

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

#### NHE Resources

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

# Ananda Nagar News



## **Student Enrollment at Ananda Nagar**

There has been increase in student enrollment in all the institutions of Ananda Nagar. The increase in comparison to last year is 270 students. There are currently 25 Primary and Post Primary schools with a total of 1442 students and four Junior High Schools with a total of 302 students. The High School has 802 students and there are 472 students enrolled in higher institutions.

## **Primary School Standardization and Teacher Training**

A special meeting of ERAWS and Gurukula and concerning authorities was held at Ananda Nagar under the auspicious of Ananda Marga Gurukula on December 18<sup>th</sup> 2001. The functioning of the previous GK council of Primary Education was reviewed and 19 new members were appointed, comprising principals, L.F.T.s and others. The objectives of the council, whose work is already underway, is the standardization of Primary Schools, input to the Teachers' Training Programme, reviewing the courses of studies and syllabus, reviewing the books of GK publication and their implementation in schools.

## **Psycho Spiritual Health Exhibition at Ananda Nagar**

Dr. Jitendra Singh and Ac Bhaskarananda Avt held a Psycho-spiritual Health Exhibition at Ananda Nagar during the January DMS gathering, displaying Ananda Marga philosophy in pictures and graphics. It was an overall view of the philosophy putting social, intellectual and spiritual ideas in perspective. The exhibition was open for three days and on each day a one and half hour commentary/demonstration was presented by Dr. Singh and Dada Bhaskarananda. It was well attended and widely appreciated with very good feedback all round. A similar presentation is being planned for next year, on a different subject.

## **Computer Center**

A Gurukul Computer Center has been started at Anandanagar by Ac Rudradevananda Avt. At present they have five computers and two printers with net working facility. There are 25 students in four shifts. One shift attends from 7 to 8 am, one from 5 to 7 pm and two on Saturday and Sunday. Dada is teaching them typing, Windows, MS Word, MS Excel, Power Point and DTP. As Anandanagar is still a very poor rural area, many students cannot afford to pay a fee, and yet many students from the village have an interest to learn how to use the computer. Dada is currently teaching them for free for this reason. He is currently the only teacher. The Center is in need of educational VCD's. Dada Rudradevananda may be contacted at <rudradevananda@yahoo.co.in> or <amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>.

## **Veterinary Institute**

The Veterinary Institute is doing well with the present enrollment of 94 students and 44 hostellers. 1727 animals of different species were treated in the hospital and 700 were treated through various camps conducted time to time in distant villages in the last 6 month period. The principal, Ac Bhavananda Avt has also taken up a programme of starting a goatery attached to the institute under the guidance of a retired visiting specialist from Ranchi College.

## **College of Fine Arts and Music**

The College of Fine Arts and Music is running well with 66 students, learning painting, classical vocals, Tabala and Gittar. One of the graduating students of the music college got a job at Andaman Radio Station. The students of the Fine Arts College contribute to decoration, painting and other fine arts work on the Anandanagar premises.

## **Textile Institute**

Textile Institute is regularly producing bedsheets, gamacchas and other cotton cloths and has received a total sale of Rs. 40,000 during the last 6 month period.

## **Hospital**

A medical team headed by Dr. J. Singh is working on upgrading the existing hospital, improving the current training of community workers, establishing a women's health care centre and designing a multidisciplinary rural medical college according to the vision of Shrii PR Sarkar at Anandanagar. (for more details, see announcements on page 7).

## **Community Medical Services Institute**

The present enrollment is 104 students. Many more students are expected to be admitted in the upcoming session. The library has added another 630 books on different subjects of medical science. Laboratory and computer facilities have also been incorporated to upgrade the academic standard of the institute. 347 trained graduates of the institute are doing well in the field. One new doctor, Dr. Ajaya Kumar Prasad, has been recently appointed in the medical services.

## **Acupuncture Institute of Ananda Nagar By Ciiranjiiva**

At Ananda Nagar, we have been successfully running a rural Acupuncture Clinic as a part of the Primary Medical Program here since 1991. During this time there have been two other directors, and I have been responsible for the clinic maintaining its function since 1997. While director of the program, I have also started a three year degree Acupuncture Institute. This coming year will see our first graduating class. Introducing the concept of acupuncture as a healing art in rural India has been a very big undertaking. Last year we treated 3, 972 patients with a variety of ailments ranging from polio to sore throats. Our community has shown they have trust in our clinic, coming as far away as Calcutta and Ranchi to consult with our acupuncture doctors. Parents carry their children, some of whom at five years of age are unable to sit up and walk on their own.

## ***News from Ciiranjiiva's recent three week visit to Ananda Nagar***

This is the first year that all three years of our three year acupuncture program are taking place all at once. Our third year students are busy working through their last year, putting it all together - working in the clinic three to four days per week, in addition to taking five classes. Graduation is only 8 months away. This feels wonderful to me, after five years of perseverance and Lord's Grace.

We have a new class schedule, a new principal, two new teachers, a new school director and our first volunteer acupuncturist. This was a very busy three week visit.

Dr. J. Singh of Australia is also working for the composite medical faculty as the chairman of board for all pathies

## **Cakradhuri Complex**

With influx of donations from Dada Shambhushivananda (Rs 500,000) and Rs400,000 from Dada Citkrnsnananda and Dada Susmitananda, the work of Cakradhuri has re-started. We welcome further contributions for the completion of this project.

## **Music College at Uma Niva**

A team of interested sisters from Turkey, Greece and Holland will visit Uma Nivas by the end of the year and finalize the design and plans for construction of the Music college with Didi Ananda Gayatrii. Meanwhile fundraising is in process.



Dada Sanjiananda has taken over the position of acting principal. His duties will be to oversee all the staff and the students, maintaining policy and enrollment of new students. He will also be introducing acupuncture as a career to high school students through our Ananda Marga high schools.

This year we need to re-write the course outlines. Dr. Dilip Rout, who has been with this project from the very beginning has taken the responsibility to oversee the course outlines and the development of both students and staff. In the future his wife, Sony, also an acupuncturist, will join the staff as soon as we can

afford them both to give up their private practice and give them housing for their family. We are very fortunate to have them so committed to this project.

Dada Vishvadevananda has taken on the responsibility of monthly seminars to upgrade the teaching abilities of our staff. All Gurukul teachers at Ananda Nagar are encouraged to attend; all will benefit from this great service. The top two students, Vikesh and Sasong, have been



teaching the first year students half of their classes. This is the only way to get all the classes we need in. This was actually the plan I had three years ago, Lord's Grace again.

We have also out grown our classroom space, so we are now renting space from the hospital. This will help bring the Composite Medical School program and our acupuncture program closer together, which was Shrii PR Sarkar's goal - a Composite Medical Program - all medical modalities working together, under one roof so to say. This way the patient is best served. The time has come to realize this dream. I am proposing that an acupuncture wing is constructed off the existing hospital. Being attached to the hospital will allow us to better serve the community by offering both allopathic and holistic medicine in the same location, as well as allowing us to refer serious and life threatening cases



quickly. The complete cost of this project is 32,000 U.S. dollars. This amount includes the facilities to treat brothers and sisters separately, treatment tables with clean sheets and pillow cases, proper medical sterilization, staff facilities, a waiting area out of the sun or in a pleasant garden, and diagnosis desks for our doctors. All of this will create the healing environment that will allow both the Clinic and Institute to expand to meet the needs of the community.

This year also brought us our first volunteer acupuncturist, Alison Guiring, Asiima. Not only did she come to help, she worked hard, doing as much as she could, always going the extra mile; the students loved her. Working both clinic and classroom, Asiima fit right in; she says she will return.

We are about to upgrade and bring up to date our web site. Also in the high tech world a lap top was donated to us, and some new software for bookkeeping. A new power point presentation is being put together, and a special thanks to all the supporters in Vermont, teaching me one step at a time on the use of computers, or just doing it for me.

Dada Susmitananda, Gurukula's Office Secretary, was in Ananda Nagar the same time I was, and I could not have accomplished all I did with out him, and Lord's Grace again, thank you.



With plans for a new clinic, classrooms and living space for staff and for students our needs are big. Many appeals have been written, but very few have been successful. I will not give up. With many hands, large and small, every donation makes a difference, thank-you. Together we will succeed. Lord's Grace again.

**You may contact Ciiranjiiiva at < "acupuncture institute ananda nagar" <[aiccan@hotmail.com](mailto:aiccan@hotmail.com)> or visit the Acupuncture Institute's web pages at <[www.acuindia.org](http://www.acuindia.org)>**

## AMGK AT ANANDA NAGAR ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Bio-Psychology Training Course**

**A week long training to prepare you for teaching  
Biopsychology**

**Presented by Ananda Marga Gurukula**

**November / December 2002**

**Ananda Nagar, India**

**Conducted by Dr. J Singh and Associates**

Biopsychology is fundamentally the science of spirituality. In the past spirituality has been explained primarily either in the language of philosophers that is incomprehensible to the masses or in the language of religions that has led to widespread dogma. Needless to say that these dogmas are rejected outright by the expanding section of modern intellectuals and rightly so. A plausible scientific explanation of spirituality is essential to make advances in the intellectual sections of society. In 1987 Shrii PR Sarkar gave a credible theory of spiritual science that came to be known as Biopsychology.

Many of us have the courage and conviction to share the ideas of Biopsychology but lack the skills, material aids and support to embark upon this noble deed. The purpose of this seminar is to upgrade your knowledge and skills and provide you with the material aids and technical support so that you may conduct your own classes in your locale.

The week-long course will consist of lectures, workshops and rehearsals. The following subjects will be covered:

- Teaching methods
- Art of public speaking
- Evolution – biological and psychological
- Integrated human biology
- Psychology – conventional and tantrik
- Hormones and behaviour
- Brain and nerve cells
- Cakras and hormones
- Lymph and vitality
- Samskaras and disease
- Sadhana and growth of mind
- Biopsychology of 16 points

A certificate of completion will be provided on completion of the course. The course will require intensive study. Please also note that the course will be conducted in English. A recommended advance reading list will be provided with the application.

For further information or to receive an application please write to: Dr. J. Singh <jaisin@bigpond.com>

**Rural Medial College at Ananda Nagar,  
Jharkand, India**

**Abha Memorial Composite Rural Medical  
College (AMCRMC)**

*A new concept in medical training and health solutions  
A project appeal*

In spite of an increasing number of graduates coming out of our medical institutions there remains a great vacuum in the availability of qualified doctors in the rural areas where the majority of the population lives. This mal distribution of medical services needs to be addressed urgently before the divide between the "haves" and "have nots" becomes unbridgeable.

Health in rural areas has special needs as their medical conditions somewhat differ from urban areas. AMCRMC is offering a solution to the rural health problem by proposing a unique center of learning. The special features of this medical institution are:

1. Training the doctors in a rural environment.
2. Including a rural perspective to the training.
3. Including a specific rural medicine component in the training.
4. Introducing a component of professional ethics and personal morality in the training.

In addition they will offer students diversion and/or additional qualification in other forms of therapies such as acupuncture, homeopathy, ayurveda, naturapathy and yogic medicine. Modern medicine is becoming increasingly dependent on high cost technology decreasingly affordable to the majority of the world's population, particularly to the poor and sick in the rural areas. Affordable and effective forms of therapies such as mentioned above need to be researched and encouraged. With this holistic and multi -disciplinary approaches as motive the present composite rural medical college is proposed.

The Abha Memorial Composite Rural Medical College will endeavor to provide degree courses in modern medicine, ayurveda, acupuncture, homeopathic medicine and naturopathy.

Donations are graciously accepted and welcomed.

You may contact Dr Jitendra Singh:

<jaisin@bigpond.com> or

Medical Superintendent

Abha Seva Sada

Ananda Nagar, Baglatta, Purulia, WB, India

amcrmc@hotmail.com

# Highlights of Kulapati's Tour

In the past six months, Kulapati, Dada Shambhushivananda's travels have taken him to many countries in Europe, Asia and North America. He gave talks on Ananda Marga Gurukula, conducted workshops on Neo-Humanist Education and forged alliances among persons interested in the development of both AMGK and NHE. Most recently he was in Taiwan where he gave 30 lectures.

## EUROPE

### Torino, Italy



Dada Shambhushivananda was a speaker at an October, 2001 conference entitled: *East and West: Different Theories and Medical Systems* which was organised by Cesmeo, an institute of Torino. He spoke to a group of 400 doctors, researchers and scientists on *Spirituality in Tantra*.

### Oslo, Norway



Here with parents and children celebrating the United Nations Day in Holmenkollen , Oslo Kindergarten.

## Brussels, Belgium



With the Secretary General of Union of International Associations (UIA) in Brussels, Belgium

## ASIA

### Thailand



A Seminar Dadaji gave on Neo-Humanist Education was attended by 70 persons in Lampang, Thailand.

### Malaysia



Dadaji conducting food distribution among aboriginals in Malaysia.

## Taiwan



Ananda Marga Gurukula meeting held with a core group of interested people. Neo-Humanist Education training has begun and materials are being translated into Chinese. The AMGK web pages will also be translated into Chinese.

## NORTH AMERICA

### Washington DC



In January, Dada Shambhushivananda gave a talk at the World Bank. The talk was entitled: "*Spiritual Renaissance- the Basis of Social Transformation*"

### Florida



Dadaji spoke on a live community radio program on Gurukula in Yalhala, Florida.

## California



Dadaji gave talks in Santa Clara on Neo Humanist Education and in Berkeley on "Spiritual Ecology of the Mind."

## Idaho



Dada Shambhushivananda gave a talk to 90 people on Cardinal Human Values and led a discussion on the Science of Meditation and its application in building a spiritually based education system. Community members later met with Dadaji to discuss the possibility of establishing a Neo-Humanist Education school in Boise.

## Hawaii



Dada Shambhushivananda pictured here with two nominees for the Nobel Peace Prize, for their work for peace with the children in Columbia.

### Neo Humanist Education Early Childhood Diploma Programme

The NHE Early Childhood Diploma Distance Learning Programme began this September 2001 with over 40 students.

Here are some comments from current students.

*"This Diploma Course is the greatest endeavour AM and NHE has made in a century. It's a concrete avenue finally to put all of our good experiences in Ananda Marga Education together for a collective overview of what we want to systematise. It even goes to a personal level of improving us as people who want to teach" Avt Ananda Cetana' Ac. - Russia*

*"The NHE course is helping me to rebuild myself. Now my new stones are much better than before, they are stronger. It gives me self-confidence. I feel great love for everybody and everything. I am more aware and expressive about my emotions which makes me mentally lighter, physically healthier. Thanks a lot to everybody who is preparing the course."*  
Surabhi - Turkey

*"I am glad that I decided to be one of the first participants of the programme. I am learning a lot from the modules. The most significant thing that happened to me while working with the modules is that I discovered so much about myself and about Baba's works. I feel that it is one of the best gifts I gave to myself. Furthermore, I have improved so much in terms of self-discipline (which the course requires a lot of) and gained knowledge in a variety of areas. This is only the beginning of the journey and there are more modules to come, but I must say I feel blessed to be a part of this great endeavour." Maya - Indonesia*

#### Course Overview

This course of study has been designed to develop the personal qualities of the teacher, give the teacher a solid base in educational theory and provide practical skills for teaching. The Programme features an action research approach to learning and the portfolio method of documenting one's competency.

This one year program is focused on Early Childhood Education for 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 course is intended for teachers with a local teaching diploma or persons who have a bachelor's degree in any liberal arts discipline or who have 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 certification in Early Childhood will be a prerequisite for taking the certification program in Primary Education and Administration, which will be offered in successive years.

The first three modules deal with the teacher's personal development on the spiritual, intellectual and creative levels. The rest of the twelve modules address theoretical and practical dimensions of teaching: Holistic Education, Child Development, Culturally Sensitive Pedagogy, Learning Theory, Curriculum and Teaching, Assessment, Social Context of Learning, Learning Environment, Administrative, Leadership and Communication Skills.

Some insight on the module on Self Development of the Teacher can be gained from the article in this newsletter on page 18 entitled *Some Reflections on Teacher Self Development*

**To request an application, you may contact AMGK at <amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>**

## Neo-Humanist Education Introductory Certificate Programme

The NHE Introductory Certificate Programme has been developed to provide a mini educational training opportunity to staff working in Neo-humanist schools around the world. This is in contrast to the Diploma Programme, which is a much more in depth program. It is our hope that this program will assist those who seek to improve their quality of professionalism, to expand existing understanding, and to establish a firmer foundation in early childhood Neo-Humanist Education. This Programme is comprised of a 100 page book of practical guidance and information in Early Childhood Education, and is available free of charge. The mini course comes with optional assignments which may be completed for introductory certification. The teacher would then be recognised as a certified NHE associate teacher.

Suggested time for completion of this program is 3 months.

The Course is divided into three sections. The first deals with the role of the teacher and their personal development of the teacher. The second section focuses on the child. Topics include: Fostering Spiritual Development, Facilitating Physical Well-Being, Nourishing Mental Growth and Enhancing Social Relationships. The third section deals with administration. This includes improving relationships with parents, evaluating staff, students and programs, and upholding professionalism.

A sample from this programme is included in this newsletter on page 24 under the title of *Importance of Play*.

**For further information or to receive a copy please contact: <nhe-intro@gurukul.edu>  
Please include information about the NHE school you are working in**

### *Quotes from Shrii PR Sarkar*

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

*"The teacher must bear in mind that whatever the ages of his students -- child, teenager, young adult, or older person -- all to him are but children of different ages, and he too is a child like them. Keeping himself aloof or always trying to put on a forced attitude will undermine mutual affection. In the absence of this mutual affection, free and open exchange of ideas will be simply impossible."*

*"The noblest form of social service is to educate the public and create a sense of consciousness in them. This sense of consciousness is to be inculcated in each and every human being. This is your duty. The goal of education is to elevate the all-round standard, and especially the intellectual standard. In addition, the elevation of the moral standard is extremely necessary in the sphere of education. This moral standard is deficient today. It is lacking in the present educational system also. You are to create a new social order. Therefore, you should first acquire more and more knowledge in different spheres of life and also you are to upgrade your morality. Along with your intellectual standard, if you have morality, then everybody will respect you. Try to acquire as much knowledge as possible through our own books. Education which leads to the acquisition of knowledge plus morality makes for a peaceful society."*

## Berlin Sector Education Training Camp Den Bosch, Holland, April 4-7 Report by Madhavi Merz

The Berlin sector education camp was hosted by the NHE Zonnelicht School in Den Bosch, Holland. It was attended by about 30 people. The teachers came from the 2 Dutch schools and from Italy, Finland, Romania, and England. Also 7 Didis from the various Berlin sector schools participated.

We began each day with songs from the Progressive School in New York, which created a sweet collective flow. After that on the first morning there was collective sharing of songs in



primary school; Yama-Niyama Story Telling by Madhavi Merz from Zonnelicht Hoorn; and a workshop on “Big I and small I” by Jadurani Koning, director of the Zonnelicht Den Bosh school and two drama workshops by Vishvashanti (Olle Brekke), director of the Copenhagen school of Drama.

The workshops were divided into workshops for everyone, and workshops for new and senior teachers. The first morning began with 2 parallel workshops, one on “Neo-Humanism and Neo-Humanist Education” by Didi Ananda Nirmala and one on “Creating a spiritual vibration in yourself for successful meditation with children”, by Didi Ananda Bhadra.

In the afternoon Didi Ananda Prama gave a workshop on Disaster Management or as she preferred to call it “Emergency Preparedness”. Disasters can take place anywhere and in any form, from a drought in Africa to a child crashing his tricycle into another at school. These very different situations will demand similar responses from us. Didi stressed that we cannot control what happens in the world, but we can control how we react. We are all programmed by our individual past

experiences. As a result each of us will deal with it differently. The workshop allowed us to look at our different reactions and the personal preparedness we need to train ourselves in. Not only do we need practical training such as first aid, but also physical, mental and spiritual training. The workshop ended with a first aid class.



different languages – Finnish, Romanian, Dutch, Italian and English, which reminded us all of the beautiful colours in the human garden of cultures. The second and third mornings we played games which allowed for social interaction, mixed with fun and laughter. It was a good way to start the day.

The seminar focussed on Yama-Niyama in the form of workshops on Creative Discipline by Meeta Lovage, head teacher from the London Sunrise



In the evening there was a workshop given by Jayashrii Tol on “Music in Art”. Participants first had to dance to a piece of music concentrating on rhythm and melody and noting their differences. Later we looked at different natural objects such as a leaf or sea shells and observed the different natural rhythms in these objects. From this we had to create a piece of music using colours and shapes. The next day in the morning sharing we expressed our “Music in Art” piece through sounds and movement. This is a nice exercise to do with children. The general conclusion of this exercise is that rhythm gives structure and melody is the feeling colouring our activities. As a teacher and in one's daily life we need these two aspects.

The drama workshops given by Vishvashanti set out to get our creativity going. Vishvashanti guided us through the different steps that lead to activating creativity within ourselves. There is a four step plan:

1. Relaxation through doing specific physical exercises. Relaxation is a pre-condition for creativity. These exercises also set out to disorientate the participants so that images of the self get broken down.
2. Concentration
3. Imagination
4. Execution



The execution involved breaking us up into small groups of 4 and engaging in story telling. In the last exercise we had to get down on all fours, side by side and pretend to be a park bench with people sitting on top of us. We were given the liberty to imagine the type of bench we were (solid, wooden, fancy, rugged, painted etc), the type of people who sat on us and the location of the bench (in a museum, funeral parlour, in the desert etc). We then had to create and act out a Yama-Niyama story that included all the ten principles. This was a challenge that we all, to our surprise managed to do with flying colours. This exercise extended our awareness beyond the self. And since then our whole concept of park benches has changed. It also gave us and especially the new teachers the awareness that creativity lies in everyone.

There was also a workshop on “Co-operative Games” for older children. It involved a variety of games from problem solving and creativity, to stimulating physical and mental alertness. Some games required more team spirit than others. And some of the games had a Yama-Niyama aspect.

The three days were a combination of learning, fun, sharing and creating a collective spirit. For next year we want to reserve the first day for new teachers and spend the next two days with the senior teachers and acaryas. The programme for the new teachers will be very practical. Some of the

new teachers are not ready to be exposed to classes on spiritual philosophy and meditation. They need to be brought gradually into the spiritual flow. With the senior teachers and Didis we want to concentrate on curriculum improvement and discussing the standards.



# Education Training Camp in Delhi Sector - Winter 2001

Report by Dada Priyaksranda



The Delhi Sector Winter Education Training Camp (ETC) was held at Ananda Nagar, at our global headquarters at Ananda Nagar for the first time, from December 15<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Out of 320 participants there were 110 LFTs and teachers. The 15 trainers shared their valuable thoughts on a variety of subjects viz, Rhymes, Recitations, Drawing, Creative Arts and Crafts, Creative Games, Education Philosophy, Child Psychology, Teaching English, Pre-maths, Improving memory, First Aid, School management and Administration, Being an effective teacher, Stu-vol and Spiritual classes. Every morning was marked by new PT and Parade led by

Ac. Pratyagatmanandaji who is certified in this aspect. Ac. Tattvedanandaji highlighted uniformity of our Meditaion class (morning circle) and how we can develop Stu-vol in our institutions. Creative games and arts taught by R.C.Samantaray from Bhuvaneshvar State Jawahar Bal Bhawan was quite interesting and liked by all. LFT Sukumar Nandi from our Vardhaman School charmed the participants with his new rhymes and rhythms in English, Hindi and Bengali languages. Such as:

Let us remember God  
He is our father  
He is our mother  
He is the Supreme Lord  
He is the generator  
He is the operator  
He is the destructor of all  
He is the purest  
He is the sweetest  
He is only our goal.



On the evening of the concluding day Ac. Tattvedanandaji prepared a beautiful Cultural Program at Rotunda presented by the Children of Ananda Nagar Schools. The auditorium was completely packed. The best attraction was a drama full of humors and laughter based on a story from P.R. Sarkar s short stories, title Greedy Khetan Das .

*"In the absence of rhythm, it is difficult to memorise. That is why since ancient times, for 15, 000 years, the common practice has been to bring every branch of knowledge within the scope of rhythm. Human beings do not easily forget rhythm. One may forget the content of knowledge, but not the rhythm."*

*Shrii PR Sarkar*

# Memory

## Notes from a class given by Ac Kashishvarananda Avt at the Delhi Sector ETC

Success of learning depends on memory. Some children cannot reply to even a single question, some can reply to one or two, some more. The teacher has to take necessary steps to make sure that the child remembers the most. Recalling of the past is memory eg. I saw a cow. The impression of the cow remains intact in the brain cells for some time and then slowly fades away. When by some effort I recollect it, it is called memory.

Memory has four factors: learning, retention, recall and recognition.

If teaching is effective then only can learning be effective. Suppose one learns their ABCs, then he/she should be able to retain it in their mind and at any time if he/she is able to recollect it and finally recognize it, then he/she is said to have good memory.

Conditions for memory:

1. Physiological
2. Physical
3. Mental

### 1. Physiological:

If your body is healthy, your senses function properly and your mind works accordingly. If your eyes are defective you cannot see properly. Learning depends on healthy functioning of your body and mind. So good memory depends on your physiological condition.

### 2. Physical:

a) Intensity of stimulus: means very bright light, strong smell or heavy sound remains in our memory for a long time.

b) Period of stimulus: we remember the current events more. As time passes they fade from our memory.

c) Frequency of stimulus: If anything is repeated many times, it is retained in the mind for long a time.

d) Significant events: we remember cheerful and sorrowful events of our life for a long time. Death of some one very near remains in our memory for the whole life.

e) Interesting events: also are remembered for long time.

### 3. Mental:

a) Attention: If a child is attentive he/she will remember more for a longer time.

b) Intention: If you learn something with intention, you will remember it for long time.

c) Interest: Children learn quickly if we create interest in them.

### How to improve memory?

1. Learn with intention.
2. Develop strong thirst for knowledge.
3. Pay interest to what you like to learn.
4. Make images of what you like to learn.
5. Form association between your lesson and something you are familiar with.
6. Use rhyme and rhythm.
7. Don't cram, learn at intervals.
8. Recite the learned material to yourself.
9. Recollect what you have learned during rest and before you sleep.
10. Read the whole but study the parts.
11. Learn for future use/ teaching.
12. Learn by doing (practical).
13. Think of a person who has better memory.
14. Deep meditation or Dhyana.

# Mandala Art with Children (ages 6 and up)

By Didi Anandarama

Here in Istanbul we have been experimenting with Yoga and Art with different children groups in after school children centers. We do yoga in a circle with them. We do an extended creative form of Surya Namaskar, of one exercise following the other and flowing into the other for about 15-20 minutes. Surya Namaskar (Salutation to the sun) is the traditional combination of different yoga poses, starting and ending with the Namaskar Mudra. It is nice when it is done in a circle as everyone is forming a mandala. In the middle you can have a beauty spot of flowers, candle and other nature objects. We sing the 'Good Morning dear Earth' song and make fitting yoga poses to it; it becomes a bit creative. After the song we just continue with other exercises one after the other, some repeated a few times but without a pause or dead pose in-between. The exercises change from floor to standing. This exercise is especially liked by restless children who do not have much attention span with more 'slow and quiet' exercises. After that we do massage and have deep relaxation, meditation, story telling, dramatizing the story, discussion and question and answer session. After this we do mandala art with them.

The underlying philosophical idea of a mandala is that there is a nucleus, which is the focus of everything moving around it in different orbits. Everything arranged around the nucleus falls into place, and is organized and controlled in this way. Everything perfect or imperfect within the circumference of the mandala is maintained and absorbed. Seen from a wider perspective the mandala appears always perfectly beautiful and self-contained.

In these exercises we try to make art that is pleasing and beautiful and that we enjoy to display. The size should not be too big, so that it can be finished in each session.

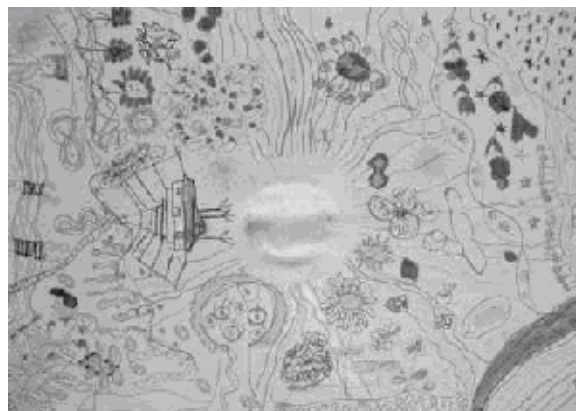
## Methods For 4 Types of Mandalas:

### 1. CREATING TOGETHER

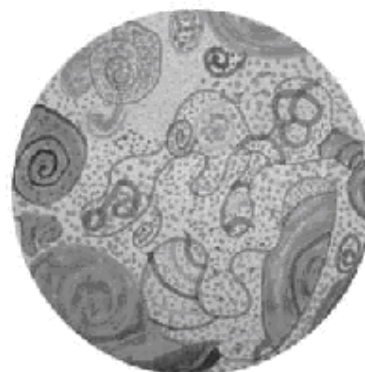
- Prepare a piece of paper with a golden circle in the center. Let the children draw with thin magic markers anything around it. Let 2-4 children work on one piece of paper. Rotate the paper so that children have to leave what they have been drawing and add to the other child's drawing. Encourage them to draw abstract as well. Tell them not to draw over each other's work but add in beauty and blend with what the other has done. The teacher takes part of the drawing.
- **Objective:** Children become aware to move from the concrete to the abstract and to blend with each other.
- **Finishing touch:** Adding golden 'emanation' coming from the center and touching the various drawings here and there. The teacher can do this.

### 2. ALL IN ONE MANDALA

- Prepare small circles, cut them out and give each child to draw with magic markers abstract forms and shapes, as they like, trying to make it as beautiful as they can. Give golden colour at the end to make it more beautiful.



*Creating Together Mandala*



*small circle for all in one mandala*

- Assemble and glue all circle drawings on a big piece of paper which has a golden center and random concentric circles drawn with a compass. 2-3 children with teacher use chalk, crayons or colour pencils to draw the space between the small individual circles.
- **Objective:** Children become aware that each individual has a place within the big mandala and all contribute to have one beautiful mandala. It does not matter if one's individual drawing is perfect or not. The teacher takes part and helps to ensure that the big mandala comes out well.

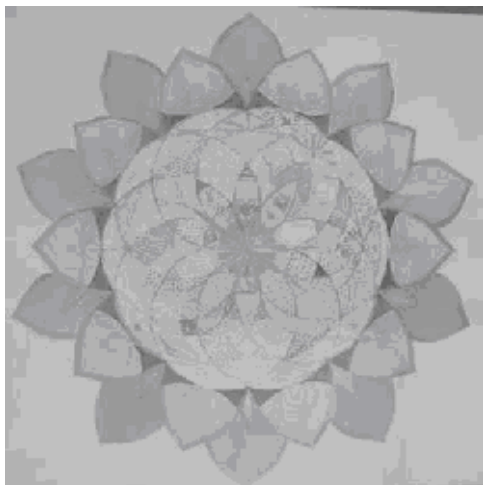


*All in One Mandala*

### 3. LOTUS MANDALA

- Divide a circle with a compass into geometric forms, paint a golden center. Have 2-4 children draw with magic markers abstract forms and shapes. Let them rotate the paper periodically. Children may keep to the geometric shapes or not as they like. Teacher takes part and helps to make it nice. Teacher can add petals in water colour and make a golden rim.

**Objective:** Children become aware of the interplay of order and freedom of expression within a mandala.



*Lotus Mandala*

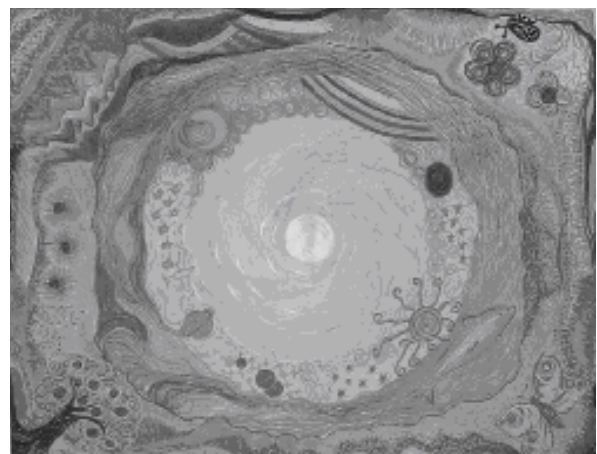
### 4. BRAHMACAKRA MANDALA

- Have the children practice to draw nature objects trees, plants, hills, mountains, water, sky and stars. Made a golden circle as center with concentric circles having a bit of golden glow. Make a demarcation for nature, water and sky with a pencil and have the children draw with crayons and colour pencils. Finally draw the space in the concentric circles spiraling to the golden center. Make sure that deep strong colours are at the edge of the paper and more pastel as coming near the golden center.
- **Objective:** Children become aware the concrete objects and abstract (space and the center mandala) are part of and centered around a big cosmic mandala.

Many variations can be done with these ideas. Here is a mandala of autumn leaves.



*Autumn Leaves Mandala*



*Brahmacakra Mandala*

# Some Reflections on Teacher Self-Development

by Supriya Rathwell

One of my first jobs as a teacher was teaching computing to 17-19 year olds at the Scottish College of Textiles. On my first day, I remember my head of department gave me some very sound advice which has remained with me over the years. It was simply that if your students know you are trying for them, they'll listen to you. Being inexperienced, and struggling to put together all the material needed for the new course I was teaching, I made so many mistakes, but I remember how much they forgave me, for I think they knew that I was trying my best for them. This memory came back to me recently as I watched one woman helping with community childcare at a conference I attended while in Australia. She was a mental health worker, not experienced with children, but really wanting to learn, and giving all her attention and energy to reading books to a group of children, who were 100% with her. If a teacher doesn't really want to be there fully in the classroom, or a childcare volunteer would rather be somewhere else, e.g. attending a conference, at the time, it is a sure recipe for failure. Our success as teachers depends much on our genuine love and sincerity.

Are good teachers just born or can they be made? It is always a delight to see parents and teachers who are just 'naturals', with that overflowing and abundant love of children which seems so effortless. Also it is wonderful to read the stories of successful, spirited and inspired teachers like Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Vasily Sukhomlinsky or teachers described in a book I recently read 'The Dreamkeepers: successful teachers of Afro-American children'. A key to teaching is the right relationship between adults and children. Metaphysical lecturer and teacher Louise Hay has described the essential role of the teacher in relation to children as to love them and help them to feel good about themselves. This requires great respect for the dignity of the child and seeing them as they really are, which is only possible without adult egocentricity. In this way the spirit of the child is liberated. We see this for example in a Montessori class in which the teacher is not the focus of the class; but instead the teacher and the

environment together assist the child to perfect her/himself through her/his own efforts. In contrast in my short experience as a supply teacher in several state secondary schools in England I saw some disastrous examples of child humiliation by egocentric teachers who had abused their authority and become 'tyrants'.

Joy in teaching requires a high level of personal integrity. Teachers need to work on their own self-development which has different aspects – physical, intellectual, ethical, emotional and spiritual. A teacher needs to go through an inner, spiritual preparation which is in fact the most difficult part of her/his training and, without which, you might say that the rest is useless. This preparation involves getting rid of pride and anger, cultivating humility and patience, learning to serve the child, removing preconceptions detrimental to the child's growth and having faith in her/him.

In Neo-humanist schools self-development is considered an essential part of teacher training. School principals or directresses who are acaryas have carried out an intensive training as renunciates which focuses on morality, service and sacrifice with transformation of self and society as the goal. Qualities of self-discipline, strong mental determination and justice are encouraged working from an understanding of the unity of existence which gives a universal love and respect for every form of life (Neo-humanism). Self-development must be a dynamic and continuous process – it requires a regular daily spiritual practice and self-analysis. The daily self-reflection of meditation gives the practitioner a deeply aesthetic and joyous experience. Our moral development involves becoming self aware, working with our emotions and psychological tendencies and learning to interact with others in a benevolent manner. All this work helps us to be able to form loving and joyous relationships with the adults and children around us.

One thing I have noted particularly about teachers who have worked, and are working, on their own self-development is their very strong minds. This

also comes about in people who have undergone struggle in their life. A child often senses this instantly and feels respect for that teacher. A parent of a child in the Verona Neo-humanist kindergarten described to me how as soon as her son met the Didi in charge he knew she was a person who could take care of him, and he gave her his complete trust. When we meet and develop a relationship with a child you can so often see the child curious and waiting to see what you have to offer them. They are so open and trusting so long as they have not experienced betrayal before, and even if they have, in time they still may give you a chance. The teacher's role is described in Neo-humanist education as that of guru, a realised teacher who can lead the student from darkness to light. The teacher needs to develop a wise and loving relationship with the child, seeing all their potential and guiding the child to bring out what is within them.

A strong mind takes time to cultivate, it depends partly on experience and maturity. Our interaction with children depends much on our expectations too. If we expect that a child can do kiirtan and meditation then they probably will. Similarly if you expect a child to disobey you, or climb the wall, s/he probably will do that too! I have seen many nursery teachers struggling with discipline in a class because of a lack of strength of mind. Sometimes teachers let children do anything they like because they are unsure of themselves and are not clear what behaviour they want to allow and what not. If the child senses you are clear on limits they do not have problems; otherwise they are confused and have to continually test. Also many parents get into difficulties with a child demanding attention because they have not decided what they as adults can and cannot do. For example an adult can talk happily to a 'chatterbox' child for as long as s/he likes but once you are tired, even if the child is not, you can stop being so responsive, then the child will adjust and find something else to do. Similarly if you are reading stories or playing games, do so for as long as you are happy and available; don't carry on if you are tired and becoming irritated as the child will get confused messages and often behave badly. Keep your relationship easy, straightforward and clear with simple give and

take. The child won't really mind if you read them two books instead of four!

If we feel anger about something a child is doing it is likely that the child is mirroring some belief or pattern within us, which needs to be let go of. Children tend to pick up on our sensitive spots which we have not yet dealt with. Self examination, patience and introspection allow us to repair our sense of self and feel a 'new kind of love' for the children in our care.

Returning to this idea of 'wanting to be there' in our work, I remember the last time I saw Baba, my spiritual guru, before he died. I was a local full time volunteer (LFT) and was asked to go to India for reporting. However the week before I had just arrived in Italy after two years in Iceland and I didn't feel ready for yet another journey. During my stay in India my mind was not concentrated and when I went to see Baba at his house, often he would have already gone out and returned early so I could not see him. It was not until the last day when I had to fly back to Europe that my desire to see Baba became very intense. That day it was raining and he did not come out at the usual time. Eventually everyone had gone away thinking that he would not come out, and my friend had already left for the airport. My plane was going to leave, but I waited and waited, I had to stay just in case he came. Then at last he came out into the garden with an umbrella. He was in a very good mood, smiling and laughing and as I watched I felt so much love for him. He smiled at me and those moments were so precious. It is truly our desire which calls the beloved.

The more we can go within and 'forget ourselves', the more we can give to others and the greater is our joy. Another word for spiritual practice in Tantric philosophy is 'sadhana' which means struggle or effort. Our internal self-reflection or meditation is a method for entering into the deepest part of our being. The mind turns inward towards its true infinite nature or self. This is what makes for the integrity of a person. It is our continuous effort of 'trying', trying to improve ourselves and serve others which makes us successful as people and as teachers. For this I think my first head of department had got something right!

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## Yama- Niyama Stories

Notes from a Workshop given at the Berlin Sector ETC

By Madhavi Merz

Morality is the base of human existence. On this base we can build our spiritual life and move to our spiritual goal and full human potential. As Shrii P. R. Sarkar said: *“Remember when this moralism, on which human existence is based, leads a person to the fullest expression of their finer human qualities, then alone is its practical value properly realised.”* By instilling moral principles in our children we help them to increase their happiness and feeling of positivity. It makes their mind strong and balanced and allows them to spread happiness to others. This morality learned at a young age will awaken idealism in puberty. These moral principles, yama-niyama, are the principles of harmonious living. They effect our attitudes, language, behaviour and relationships.

### The ten moral principles are:

*Yama: non-harming, benevolent truth, non-stealing, simple living, universal love.*

*Niyama: physical and mental cleanliness, contentment, service, spiritual study, meditation.*

As we practise them, we develop virtues along the way. For example, non-harming leads to kindness, compassion, helpfulness. Benevolent truth leads to integrity, moral courage, decisiveness.

Story telling is an important part of moral education. Using colourful language and imagery stories can support the child's longing for limitlessness, heroic acts, etc and give illustrations of self sacrifice, compassion, forgiveness. etc.

Below P.R Sarkar clearly outlines which elements we should consider and use in story telling.

*“In every sentence of children's literature there should be a wonderful attractive power” – which is “a crystalline simplicity and openheartedness.”*

Further he states that the author of children's stories has to explain how life should be lived with *“purity and straightforwardness.”* And because the child mind is

filled with *“fanciful imagery,”* the writer needs to *“soar into the sky of imagination with outstretched wings.”* The child's thirst for *“the distant, and the earnest zeal to know the unknown must be fulfilled by drawing pictures of magical lands and relating to colourful fairy tales...Real and unreal is not so important here. What is more important is to carry the child's mind along in the current of joy, and in the process to acquaint the child with the world in a easy manner. The prince of the mind with his wings outspread in the azure sky soars to the kingdom of the old witch beyond the worlds of the moon and the sun, and tying his Pegasus to the golden branches of the pearl tree, proceeds in quest of the sleeping princess in the soundless, sleeping palace.”* The prince in his quest further *“seeks to establish himself in the world like a hero.”*

P.R Sarkar says that children crave for such imagery. He says: *“picture after picture, colour after colour must accompany the words”*

Further he states: *“For those who are a little older, that is boys and girls in their teens farces and satires are quite suitable.”* However for the very young *“simplicity will be the guiding principle.”*

It is important to have an understanding of where the child is at on a psychic level. We need to look at the different phases of development and moral-emotional needs of children. We also need to understand the human mind. It is always looking to rebalance itself. Our mind will look for people and situations to rebalance whatever it is we are lacking. It is possible that children who have only learned to be good and nice will feel attracted to mean characters in stories. They want to know what the other polarity is and explore it. One very sensitive girl who had not learned to deal with her own sensitivity was fascinated with horror stories. Therefore by guiding children to do what is good and noble we need to also expose them to what is bad and evil in the form of stories. We should not just tell them stories about saintly figures but also show the dark side of the human mind. Being presented with the polarities the child will have a clearer understanding of what morality is. Of course we should tell stories that fit the child's ability to understand. This can be quite different for a 2 –4 year old and a 4 – 6 year old.

## Stages of Psychic Development

**2 – 4 years:** At this stage the child is ego-centric, and has few or no rules. If they see something they will take it. Emotions are basic like anger, sorrow, fear and very dynamic, fluctuating between pain and pleasure. Thoughts, emotions, desires are all body processes and expressed. The conscious mind is easily excited and activated by sensory stimuli. The child is still learning self-control. Quarrels at this stage are usually about toys and other objects. Sharing and socialising are valuable learning tools.

**Stories** should be simple and need to engage the senses and movement. Add a little drama for the tension, and magic especially when the child gets to 4 years. Humour is important. No demons, evil dragons but stories with humans interacting with humans or with the natural world like stones, plants, animals etc. All objects are infused with human feelings and emotions. Nothing is impossible at this animistic age. The language can be rhythmic, musical, and playful to impress the child.

**4 – 6 years:** This stage features a new growth spurt. Ego-centricity begins to fade. Fantasy reaches its peak. The child has more self control, social awareness and starts to develop feelings of empathy and love. The child has a big urge to help others, but also develops some meanness and might start to hurt others verbally. They discover the power of language, are fascinated by magic words and bad words etc. and as they acquire more control over language they gain access into the psychic area. Children of this age are fascinated by the concept “good and evil.” Tendencies such as stealing arise. Basic emotions give way to more complex emotions.

**Stories** should be simple (fairy) tales, with strong emotional content, much imagery depicting the struggle between good and evil. It is important that stories have a good ending.

**7 – 9 years:** The child sees itself as a separate entity and his/her social self-awareness is fully functional. They are moving from concrete to

abstract thinking. The child starts to develop inner space, own feeling world and becomes more centred. Their predominant characteristic is courage. As the social orientation increases, they start to feel a sense of duty and obligation to others. The child feels reverence for parents and teacher (authority). Their words are sacred. The child begins to experience complex emotions and develops tendencies such as being cunning etc. but also forgiveness, compassion etc. They are able to understand moral concepts and want to learn and practise these for themselves. They are concerned about good/evil, human suffering etc. The child thinks in terms of reward and punishment. This is an important period for moral cultivation. They have a need for stories that clarify human qualities and propensities. Noble qualities such as forgiveness, self sacrifice but also negative tendencies like pride, and cruelty. etc. can be depicted in the stories.

**Stories** for this stage include fables and legends (stories of saints) and complex fairy tales. Also stories of heroic acts, depicting courage. Fables depict the consequences of our human tendencies which are depicted in the behaviour of animals. Legends show the noble sides of human beings. The complex (fairy) tales should be filled with colourful language full of imagery. At this age children think in images, so that any stories told will leave a deep impression.

**9 – 10 years:** At this stage children experience a loss of contact with the spiritual self. This creates a feeling of duality between “I” and the “world”. Feeling of separateness results in loneliness and fear for the world. The child loses the feeling of being in paradise. The mind becomes sharp and critical. The world that appeared good and whole and the adults the child has admired lose their credibility and appear stupid. The child feels caught in the small self and becomes conscious of the darker side of human existence. They start to feel ashamed of parents, of itself etc. Feeling of “I want to die” can set in. The joy and lightness of being from the earlier period of childhood make way for other feelings.

*Continued on page 23*

# Small I and Big I

*Notes from a Workshop led by Yadurani at the Berlin Sector ETC, April 2002*

First I would like to explain why I want to talk on this subject. I am always inspired to learn more about the ideas that the founder of Neo-humanism, Shrii P.R. Sarkar, gave on the mind. This is because I could always apply to reality, what I have learned or heard in lectures, and it gave me a better understanding of children's development. I would like to talk about:

- 1) The role of the teacher
- 2) What is your small I? (Layers of the mind)  
    What is your big I?
- 3) Overcoming limitations (sadhana, service, sacrifice)  
( Didi later spoke about the 3 stages in spiritual development).

## The Role of the Teacher

It is very important for a teacher to be a good example of everything we do. If we are unstable or chaotic, you can sense that in the children. To balance yourself out and to keep yourself under control is most important. Usually when we are not in good shape we need our energy for ourselves and we have not so much to give to the children. So it is very important to take care of our physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. If we lead a balanced life, then we can be an example and do our work well with the children. We have to become aware of the special role that we have and take that role very seriously. Children, parents and society have an expectation from teachers that we are guiding the new generation!

Because children are clinging on to our mind, if they are near us they are very much influenced by our thoughts and actions. If we want our children to be great, responsible and service-minded, we have to develop those qualities in ourselves first. (I would like to ask somebody to describe an experience regarding their awareness of being an example for the children). While working with the children, we have to see the opportunities to grow ourselves and for the children to grow. Our method is usually applied

throughout the day when we use our intuition and see what the children need.

The base of our curriculum is Moral Development. When a child knows her/himself and what s/he can offer to others s/he becomes self confident and develops inner strength. So how to do this? We know that we have to be an example, that we have to take a leading role as a teacher! We have to understand our own mind and become aware of our limitations. Our small I is limited but our Big I is limitless.

## What is your small I? What is your big I?

Human beings develop themselves on different layers of their mind between the years 0-6.

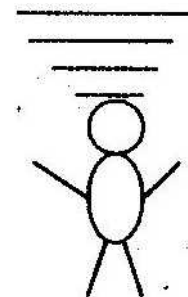
It is a process like the unfolding of a flower.

The different layers of the mind are:.

- Physical
- Sensorial
- Intellectual
- Creative
- Intuitive
- Spiritual

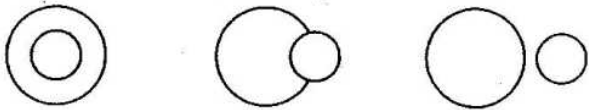
People have different levels of existing. The amount of their awareness of the levels differs from person to person.

So what is our small I?  
What is our big I?



In this universe there is an awareness that we are a part of what is called the cosmic consciousness or Cosmic mind. That awareness makes everything grow and function: trees, plants, animals, human beings, spring, autumn, summer. There is a whole movement taking place that is coming from a certain awareness, from a certain mind, and we are part of it. We have a unit mind and we are part of a cosmic mind. In the same way a child is a part of our mind. When s/he is born s/he is a part even

physically of the mind of the mother and s/he is slowly moving out.



If we want to understand the mind of the child: that they are a part of a bigger mind; we also have to understand that we are a part of a bigger mind. We are that bigger mind. We need to understand that the universe is mine because it is a level of my existence (just another level). In the same way as the child is in our mind, we can feel that we are in the mind of the cosmic awareness and grow to the point of understanding that we **are** that awareness.

I will take care of that universe because it is my own. We grow from taking care of ourselves (20 yrs of age), of our family (22 yrs of age), of our society and of our universe

### Overcoming limitations

A child has to overcome many obstacles while s/he is growing up. In the same way we have to overcome difficulties in our role of being a teacher. We have to extend ourselves to leading a group, giving attention to individual growth, guiding parents, developing ideas about what is good for the children, and so thinking also what is good for human beings. How can they develop all their potential in all the levels of their existence?: physical, sensorial, intellectual, creative, intuitional, spiritual.

I would like to speak especially about this. At a certain point a child becomes aware of their intuition and spirituality, between the ages of 5 and 6. It is important to develop our own intuition and spirituality to be able to guide the children in becoming aware of their intuition and spirituality. So we have to develop a deeper understanding! To develop this deeper understanding we have to do:

Meditation	What brings sadhana?
Service	What brings service?
Sacrifice	What brings sacrifice?

Welfare for yourself, and welfare for others have to become one!

### Continued from Page 21 Yama-Niyama Stories

**Stories** can include myths like Edda, which depicts the fight between the world of the gods and the underworld. The world of the gods is representative for all that is good and whole. The underworld stands for the static and avidya forces. As the story is told the child undergoes an inner fight between these two forces. The stories need a hero with supernatural powers.

**11 – 12 years:** The child feels deep love for the natural world. The child is moving into puberty and abstraction. There is an awareness of death. The child longs for adventure, danger and excitement. They can be prepared for complexities of human life through telling myths from different cultures, creation stories, which deal with gods and goddesses. Stories in the context of discovering the world and the difficulties the hero encounters are also good. Other suggestions are: the life of Buddha, St Frances etc.

We can of course invent our own stories, but we can also make use of the vast amount of existing literature and stories. The existing fairy tales and myths which have been passed on from generations to generations are deeply symbolic. The rich tapestry of imageries they contain are food for the soul. The deeper layers of the mind are moved and touched by the images given. They deal with the noble and shadow side of human nature in a way that the child can comprehend. These tales are filled with drama and tension as the heroes undergo difficult life tests and trials, and are met with rewards etc. The child is exposed to human emotions such as pity, rejection, loss. By listening the child undergoes the tribulations of the hero and learns to develop courage and trust that good will triumph over evil.

P. R Sarkar also wrote a number of children stories, like *“The Golden Lotus of the Blue Sea.”* The language of his stories is very descriptive and the stories are filled with wise messages.

The book begins: *“It was the same blue sea which is made of dreams and surrounded by memories .....And further: .....he (Tarun) was wondering if he could drink all the water in a single gulp, like the sage of Augustya. If he could, it would be easier for him to catch a glimpse of the vast mysteries under the sea.”*

Reading this fosters the feeling of the mystery of life and deepens ones longing to know the unfathomable.

*The following is an excerpt from the distance learning programme NHE Introductory Certificate Programme for Early Childhood. This is from the section on Child Development. At the end a sample teacher's assignment is included.*

## IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

When supporting the development of the whole child, the teacher remembers the importance of play for enabling children to realise their fullest potential. Most educational theorists, agree that play is crucial to early childhood development. Many studies have indicated a close relationship between play behaviour and academic achievement. It is the instrument through which the child learns best.

The founder of Neo-humanist education, Shrii P. R. Sarkar states:

"The thirst for knowledge in children can be awakened through the medium of play, and through this alone children may be taught. Children also naturally like fantasies and stories. They may also be initiated into the primary lessons of meditation or how to practice universalism in their lives. Love of play and stories are liked equally by a child, and so should be used to the fullest advantage."

All children are imaginative and have tremendous creative potential. They need opportunities to develop and express these capacities. Creative play serves many purposes for children in their cognitive, social, physical, spiritual, and emotional development by providing a wide variety of activities that encourage spontaneous expression and expand the children's imagination. As Shrii Sarkar emphasised.

"The child's mind is filled with fanciful imagery, and so the (teachers) will also have to soar in the sky of imagination with outstretched wings...what is more important is to carry the child's mind along in the current of joy and in the process to acquaint the child with the world in an easy and simple manner."

Through play, the child learns self-confidence and independence. In play situations the child does not have to be concerned with conformity and there is relief from constantly having to meet the

expectations of others. It can prove to be a delightful escape from the wearisome frustrations in life. Opportunities to play freely are vital to healthy mental development.

The following are only a few of the skills and concepts children acquire through play:

- Increased vocabulary and communications
- Listening skills
- Extended attention span capabilities
- Observation and discrimination
- Respect for the environment
- Understanding cause and effect
- Curiosity
- Social development
- Small and large muscle co-ordination
- Math concepts
- Decision-making abilities
- Role-playing
- Self awareness
- Visual discrimination
- Release of positive and negative feelings
- Reading readiness
- Interrelationships of creation
- Appreciation of art and aesthetics
- Creative thinking
- Writing
- Empathy and caring
- Sensory awareness
- Creative thinking and reason
- Hypothesising and experimentation
- Safety awareness
- Sharing, co-operation, and responsibility

Play is the medium through which the child reflects, practices, and internalises ideas that have been observed. Through trial and error, the child experiments with new social skills in a myriad of play experiences. There exists countless occasions to explore new approaches, act independently, and observe interactions with others and the environment. Children spend hours perfecting their abilities, expressing the full range of feelings, positive and negative.

Play affords children a chance to master the elements by controlling and manipulating the environment.

This quite naturally fosters physical sensori-motor development. Thematic fantasy play and socio-drama also stimulate use of language and social knowledge.

Recognising these dynamic elements of play, teachers incorporate play opportunities into lessons through dramatisations, puppets, drawing, music, movement, clay, and other artistic expressions rather than simply presenting information through writing, memorisation, and repetition. New experiences are set up that will encourage the child through imaginative play to discover, experiment, and to encourage their inborn thirst for knowledge. While teachers frequently join the children's play as a partner or facilitator, too much teacher directed verbal instruction can stifle individual creativity and make the learning environment inherently boring. The best utilisation of the teacher in facilitating play situations is to offer suggestions to sustain or extend it.

Play takes many shapes and forms from active to quiet, spontaneous to planned, inside to outside, solitary and with friends. Through careful observation of the students' play, teachers assess their holistic development and readiness for new learning opportunities.

Teachers promote creativity and enhance play opportunities by providing space, time, and materials for children to create and recreate their individual works-in-progress, their own dramas, and their unique solutions to problems. Children are allowed to try ideas even when we know they may not work. Respect and consideration are given more to the process of creativity than the product. Drawing richly on the expression of the imagination, play is the lifeblood of the child.

### **SAMPLE CERTIFICATION ASSIGNMENT**

List 3 ways in which teachers can encourage creativity in play. Describe what you would say to a parent who says, "Don't they do anything but play around here?" Describe how play enhances the child's physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual development.

*The following notes are from two talks on Neo-Humanist Education given recently by Marcus Bussey in Australia*

### **In Pursuit of Ananda: Teaching and Bliss**

It is not often we find the ideas of teaching and bliss linked. This is sad because it greatly impoverishes the educational experience. To teach well is to share the

bliss at the core of our beings with others. Neo-humanist teachers are mining this bliss everyday they are in the classroom. It is both object and inspiration behind their teaching, and not surprisingly, children can't get enough!

Neo-humanist teachers have a sacred duty. They must live life in its entirety. Under capitalism teaching has been reduced to work, a bureaucratic, submissive and heart-breaking profession. It is a transaction in which knowledge is used as currency and the student is a bank in which information is accrued over time.

Neo-humanist teachers step outside of this narrow job description. They lead the class with their hearts in their hands. The sense of conflict that arises when teaching becomes work dissipates as the teacher finds life is full and teaching is an expression and sharing of that fullness.

Bliss intensifies as it is shared. Teaching being the ultimate act of sharing is a source of ever increasing bliss!

### **Developing Culture in the Classroom**

The teacher is the cultural dynamic within the class. To be so she needs to be active in her own cultural journey – it is not the products of this journey that matter so much as the enthusiasm and passion which it brings to a life lived vibrantly and unselfconsciously. Inferiority is washed away in such a climate of productive engagement. Risk taking is part of the whole process and all this the children see and are attracted to. They then get involved and this in turn creates creative energy and amplifies the cultural dynamic further.

Culture has no borders other than those imposed by prejudice. When life becomes a celebration of the works of our hands and hearts then confidence abounds and meaning emerges from all the aspects of work undertaken in the classroom.

If the teacher brings to the class their own fears or impotence this is what they teach to the children. If the teacher sees teaching as work then they should choose another profession. Teaching is both a mission and a creative act. The classroom is a cultural laboratory and each day is a fresh experiment in pathways to wholeness.

All human activity is cultural, thus mathematics and language need to be treated with the same enthusiasm and spontaneity as less 'academic' subjects. The results will be equally engaging for children.

## Two Cooperative Games Shared by Madhavi Merz

### Sound and Hiding Game: (2 –4 years)

Sit in a circle. Choose 2 children, give them each a little bell. Let them hide in the room somewhere. They walk to their hiding place together (holding hands) very silently, and WITHOUT making the least noise with their bell. As they hide, the rest of the children who are sitting in the circle close their eyes. When the 2 children are out of view the rest of the group sings:

“Good morning children, how do you do?  
John and Larry where are you?”

In Dutch the song has another meaning and goes like this:

“Een, twee, drie, vier, vijf, zes, zeven, waar zijn  
John and Larry nou gebleven?”

Which means: 1, 2,3,4,5,6,7, where are John and Larry?

The 2 children come out of their place of hiding and sound the bells. This is a very simple game but very popular with our 2 – 4 year olds.

### Ball Game: “Earth, Water, Air and Fire” (primary school age)

This game requires speed of mind and the children can practice their knowledge of animals.

#### Playing method:

The children stand in a circle with hands by their side or behind their back. One player (A) who is going to throw the ball stands in the middle of the circle. He or she looks at one of the children (B) and calls out one element eg. “earth “. The ball is thrown to child B who hears “earth” being called out. Child B catches the ball and immediately names an animal that is associated with that element. Eg. Elephant for “earth”. If the ball is not caught or if child B is too late or fails to mention the name of the animal then he has to stand in the circle and throw the ball.

If the child in the center of the circle calls out "fire", there is no such animal, so child B must stand perfectly still and not attempt to answer or catch the ball. If the child makes an attempt to catch it, or catches it, then this child has to "pay"

by standing in a particular position, eg. a yogic posture, or standing on one leg, etc. The position is decided by the thrower. The game continues and the ball is thrown to other children. The child with the penalty has to remain in this posture and can only be relieved if someone gives the right answer in the next ball throw. For example the thrower throws the ball to another child and calls out "air" and that child catches the ball and says "pigeon", then the child with the penalty is relieved and can stand in circle like the rest of the children.

#### Important rules:

- the ball can be thrown to any of the children standing in the circle except the one who has been given a payment.
- the names of the animals can only be used once.
- the player in the middle decides the form of payment
- the name of a specific animal has to be given, eg. not “fish” for water, but “goldfish” or “shark” or “dolphin”.

Have loads of fun!!

*Madhavi is compiling a book of cooperative games. If you would like to contact her about receiving a copy, please write to her at <Merz@hetnet.nl>*



***Madhavi and children during Carnival***

# Creative Discipline

## Notes from Workshop given at Berlin Sector ETC

by Meeta Loveage

Discipline is a very important part of character building. The ten moral principals of Neo-Humanistic Education provide the teacher with a clear set of guidelines to follow and provide the students with a standard of behaviour. Social interaction in the classroom is the real way that the student learns this aspect of Neo-Humanistic Education and the teacher therefore has to be prepared to deal with situations as they arise. Therefore discipline needs to be creative. There are some simple guidelines which a teacher should be constantly reviewing, particularly when they become aware of a problem in the classroom which they don't know how to cope with. Managing behaviour is often the most demanding role a teacher has to play.

- **Planning:** The first measure is to properly plan your programme of learning so that unnecessary boredom is avoided. Children who are engaged in a task are content and fulfilled.
- **Affection and respect:** The relationship between the teacher and the students needs to be one of affection. This will come about through the teacher respecting each and every child, no matter how problematic. If teachers see themselves as learning, they will have more respect for the children as learners. You have to assess what is the child's ability to understand how to be good. They may have problems in coming up to your standards. The job of the teacher is to help all the children in their care, however difficult and if you reach out to the ones you find hardest, the other children will feel the reassurance that everyone gets what they need, even in difficult situations.
- **Flowing with the child:** Rather than confront a child and bend them to your will you can very often distract them from disruptive activities. So if a little child is steaming along, pretending to be a train and knocking over another child, the teacher can good-naturedly become a train too and guide the child as part of their game showing how the train can move more carefully through the room. Children are in a very imaginative world and readily accept your participation in it, giving them guidance. Children also need to

learn how their actions effect others in ways that they can relate to, and teachers can refer to situations they share with each child when they need to remind them about unkind behaviour.

- **Positive guidance:** It is important to see the best. "Long ago a philosopher called Goethe said, If you treat an individual as if he were what he ought to be and could be, he will become what he ought to be and could. Try to talk in the positive, rather than in a negative when correcting children. "Don't throw the sand" can be "Keep the sand in the box", or "Don't run" can be "Please keep walking." This tone gives encouragement rather than scolding. Think how many times a day you have to interact in this way.
- **Praise and encouragement:** Acknowledging the good you see is always appreciated. Think of someone you respect. When they give you praise how do you feel? Children feel good and fulfilled when their teacher praises them. "You worked hard this morning" or "You are very kind". Smiles and gentle tones to a child lets them know you notice them.
- **4 step method:** If it becomes necessary to deal with unacceptable behaviour in the classroom then always use this sequence. 1) explaining kindly 2) reminding 3) warning of consequences 4) carrying out threat
- **Creative measure:** Time out is generally enough for a child to calm down. If they can make up to the other child with a kind deed, or carry out a task which counteracts the unacceptable one this will be beneficial. If they are humble enough to say "sorry" then generally they will interact more considerably afterwards. Children can talk through the incident with the teacher or with each other. How much this is appropriate will depend on the ages of the children. There is a format which can be followed and more details can be found in the book "Teach me to Fly" by Didi Anandanivdita, The name of the chapter is 'Teacher as a Counselor' on page 96.
- **Set the example yourself:** If you are angry and don't feel calm then it is important to recognize this and give yourself the opportunity to get the situation into perspective. Repeat your magic words quite a few times. Teachers may need to have support of other staff members.



*Circle Time Outside*

The name Zonnelicht means “sun light”. The name sounds very poetic in Dutch. The school is housed in a tiny yellow and blue wooden building surrounded by towering houses. There preschoolers from 2 – 4 years come every morning to play, learn and discover. Most of them are brought to school riding on the back of their mommy’s bicycle. When they are lucky dad will bring them to school. The school is situated in Hoorn , a small, windy but historic town in the north of Holland, close to Amsterdam. Hoorn is historic because the famous East Indian Company first set sail from its shores for the Spice Islands in Indonesia. It seems ironic that the first Neo-humanist school should be founded in the very town where Dutch colonial power was born.

The school was started in 1986 by Didi Ananda Suprabha and myself not in its present building but in a rented house made possible by the money earned from teaching yoga classes. Six very young children who were living in my neighborhood attended the school. Three times a week I took them by train into town to the school there. It was however not very practical to continue having the school there so a year later the school was moved to my own house. From there the school quickly grew to 24 children. A few years later we received a donation of 4000 dollars from a foundation and were able to buy proper toys and furniture. This gave us more status in the eyes of the new parents. The school remained in my house for about 5 years. It was a challenging and difficult time giving no clear separation between my private life and work. Within this period of time I was very much engaged in curriculum making and

## Zonnelicht-Hoorn a sunbeam on a cloudy day by Madhavi Merz

*Zonnelicht-Hoorn is managed by the Women's Welfare Department of Ananda Marga*

improvement. I made badly needed songs, stories, drama and games. It was a very creative time in that sense. The classroom in my house was small but somehow the children adjusted to this lack of physical space by engaging in fantasy play, which almost always brought harmony within the group. Mental contentment was very much present. Some parents would comment and say that their child had learned to play with simple things such as a feather or imaginary bug in the palm of their hands. I guess that one of the ways this was achieved was through one of our visualization games. After quiet time we used to pass an imaginary “present” around. This could be a candle, a flower, a star etc. The idea behind this was to teach the art of giving and receiving. This activity needs to be done with cupped hand by the giver and receiver. I would encourage the children to be gentle and careful, less their present would break or disappear. It isn’t an easy exercise for pre-schoolers to do especially in the beginning. But practice makes perfect. Below is a little poem on this particular activity composed by Didi Ananda Gaorii, who once came for a short visit.

*“ From hand to tiny hand  
They share  
A mind flower  
Taking care  
To pass it with gentleness  
Lest its pastel petals  
Should evaporate  
Into the playful air. “*

The year 1992 was a historic event for our school. With a bank loan we bought a wooden building which was renovated and painted by the parents. This was a great time of unity and collective effort. Even the grandparents came to help. It was also made possible by Sundara, a margii architect who dealt with the technical and

financial part of the transaction. Throughout the years of struggle one slowly learns to trust the power that takes care and sends the right people at the right time.

The school has gone through many phases. Last year it extended its hours and services to include after school care for primary school children. There has been an increase in the number of children fluctuating between 40 to over 50 children. The pre-schoolers are divided into 3 different groups. Most of them come twice a week for 6 hours in total. This is more or less the system in Holland.

With the pre-schoolers we start the day with “big circle time” which involves singing, dancing, movement, yoga and drama, ending in kiirtan and quiet time. The school has a small garden and playground. The kids spend a part of the morning outside, either in the playground or by going for a walk. We end the day with creativity, a game or story telling.

Our toys and learning materials are mainly wooden or made from natural materials. We avoid plastic and as such the school visually breathes a feeling of warmth. Through the senses, the natural material brings the children more in touch with the different qualities of objects, thus enriching their feeling world. It also helps to establish a positive relationship with the material world and indirectly lets the child know that life is filled with diversity. In the whole learning process we try to engage the heart, body and mind of the child. In our curriculum, we include concrete experience as much as possible. By experiencing the children will “know.” As the child is experiencing we engage the child's mind in describing the feeling as well as the qualities of the object. It is like knowing a mango by tasting it and describing it. When for example the children are learning

about insects or snails the experience of a living specimen has a big impact on them. Hearing the bees buzz, or touching the snail and observing its movement is a thrilling experience. They can also overcome their fear or disgust for a spider or snail by touching it. This way they can establish a positive relation with these creatures. Concrete experience sets the tone and from here we can move into the world of imagination and finally abstraction.

Our school has 5 teachers and 3 trainees. Two of them were kindergarten and primary school teachers. Having taught somewhere else these teachers and others before them have often expressed how they enjoy working in the Neo-humanist way with not only the children but the parents. Twice a month there is teachers' training and education. We try to combine theory with practice.

Sometimes teachers from the local preschools or kindergarten will come to visit our school during open day. They are very curious about

our method. In Holland there is a wide variety of alternative schools. The Montessorri and Waldorf schools are well established. For instance there are at least 80 Waldorf schools here. There is therefore a bright future for establishing Neo-humanist primary schools. We need to



Summer Festival with Parents and Flowers

soon move into this field and extend ourselves to nurture more young minds into the principles of Neo-humanism. This will need to go hand in hand with a sound teachers education program.

The strength of our school can be found in the circle time activities, especially songs, movement, drama and story telling, most of which were our own creation since not much existed in the Dutch language.

## Here are two co-operative games I would like to share with you:

### Sound and Hiding Game: (2 –4 years)

Sit in a circle. Choose 2 children, give them each a little bell. Let them hide in the room somewhere. They walk to their hiding place together (holding hands) very silently, and WITHOUT making the least noise with their bell. As they hide, the rest of the children who are sitting in the circle close their eyes. When the 2 children are out of view the rest of the group sings:

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This game requires speed of mind and the children can practice their knowledge of animals.

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by standing in a particular position, eg. a yogic posture, or standing on one leg, etc. The position is decided by the thrower. The game continues and the ball is thrown to other children. The child with the penalty has to remain in this posture and can only be relieved if someone gives the right answer in the next ball throw. For example the thrower throws the ball to another child and calls out "air" and that child catches the ball and says "pigeon", then the child with the penalty is relieved and can stand in circle like the rest of the children.

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Have loads of fun!!



*Madhavi and Children during Carnival*

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**Quiet Time Yoga Club, USA**  
*in an inner city school*  
**By Linda Baker**

This year I have been piloting a Quiet Time program as an after school yoga club in the inner city school where I work in New Haven, CT, USA. The children in my yoga club were primarily children at risk in the fourth and fifth grade. There were two girls whose mother was in my eighth grade class in 1989, and she got pregnant that year. Her former boyfriend sexually molested one or both of her children when they were five and six. They are now in the fourth grade. Another girl has a mother who is a drug addict and lives in a house with four of her cousins and an aunt who is very angry that she needs to take care of her. I have another student in the class whose mother died last year of diabetes, drug addiction and aids. She lives between her father and aunts house. Many times in the last two years I have had to do interventions because her mother slowly died and became blind and was rushed to the hospital because of emergency. She took care of her mother when she was 6-9 years old; cooking her dinner, giving her insulin shots etc. I have another two students who were abused and abandoned and now are adopted and are diagnosed with learning disabilities and attachment disorders. These are just some examples. I did have a few “model “ children from intact families.

I taught the class afterschool twice a week. Some children attended both classes, some only one. Some children left for a few weeks to attend another training and came back. Sometimes when other afterschool clubs were cancelled, children would be added. I never really knew exactly who was coming. I had around 15 children. Ideally, I would definitely top the class at 12 and want consistency of attendance. But non-of us work in ideal situations, so this is not always possible. I also was unable to use my regular room sometimes because of construction and had to use the library with other clubs going on. It was an interesting tantra. The first thing I wanted to do was create a safe and positive environment. We did the class on the stage of the



*photo from Sunrise School in Finland*

auditorium and I played Paul Winter consort music. The children each had a small mat to do the exercises on.

The first couple of classes we did very simple stretching/yoga exercises. I used the Children’s Book of Yoga by T. Lubu as the basis and added a few positions from other books. I would always start with mountain poise and go back to that poise in between exercises that were done standing up. I would always go to half lotus when we were sitting down. It was very important to teach continuing breathing. Breathing was most important at the beginning of an exercise, during and at the end. These children don’t breathe slowly. I started with a framework and built slightly harder positions into the framework. It is very important to keep the framework consistent. This worked very well with the yoga

positions. At the end I would do corpse pose and then at first I had the children tighten and relax all parts of their body. I moved to just concentrating and relaxing each part later. In the beginning, the children responded the most to physical directions. Mental directions were more difficult.

In the beginning classes I took guided imagery from the M. Garth series of children meditation books. I didn't do the initial part but just used the story starters and then asked the children to finish the story in their imagination. The children loved this. I then realized that just doing my meditation before the class for a few minutes and then taking the format from the books and creating my own story starter worked better. Afterwards we would share what we imagined. I always asked the children to be with people in the story who loved them and places that were beautiful. The children's stories were amazing. The little girl who lived with her harsh aunt who states to her face that she doesn't want them, imagined stories about angels who brought her to the good souls in heaven and she merged with them. The children loved this part. I switched to the students breaking up in pairs and sharing with each other. I would end the session reading with them a simple shorter story book that had a moral or interesting topic for discussion; I would have them write in "Yoga Journals" later on and then have them share their writings. I would give them a choice of writing what they imagined or a story starter from the book we read.

I then switched the format of the imagery/meditation to beginning with the story starter, which became the same every week and then after we would sit up and sing a simple song. I used some of Arun's songs and we would sing the words and then "love is all there is" and then "Baba Nam Kevelam". We sang the song in English and then sung "love is all there is" in Spanish the next week and then in French and actually Korean. We always ended with "Baba Nam Kevelam". This multicultural approach took the pressure off of the Sanskrit. They imagined, and then I would have them

sing "love is all there is, Baba Nam Kevelam" whisper it, mouth it, and then say it inside. I used extensions of the Yoga journals at the end of the meditation or drawing or painting and then talking or writing about it.

This created a much different reaction than I expected. Some of the at risk children became very disturbed. They really had difficulty and would start thinking of very disturbing and sad and upsetting thoughts.

I realized how powerful even this simple meditation was for them. I changed the format to start with the Story starter and end up in a boat on the water filled with flowers. They would send the flowers out on the water along with their worries and then their good thoughts also, which left their minds clear. Then we would start "love is all there is". I didn't use Baba Nam Kevelam until the second round of classes. I found fewer problems when I used "love is all there is" and Baba Nam Kevelam together. The children found this easier. The difference I found was afterward. When they meditated, even though it was a little harder for them, they were so much calmer and concentrated afterwards.

The main things I learned from this experience is that children at risk or with long-term violence, abuse and trauma in their lives have a more delicate mind. They are craving love and affection, but are impeded in their functioning and learning from the imprint of their harsh lives. Great care has to be made to very gently introduce them to these powerful tools that we take for granted. They need to be taught to be in touch with that place of infinite love and build on that first before opening their minds and souls to vast world of sadhana. I also had to be very careful about my own surrender, ideation and connection. I had to be willing to stop if things weren't going well and listen to what was going on with them. Sometimes it was too much for them and I had to rethink and back track.

*Continued on Page 34*



*Rock Climbing*

## A Visit to the River School During the Australian Summer Holidays - By Supriya Rathwell

*The River School is managed by the ERAWS Department of Ananda Marga*

It was a special experience for me to visit the paradise of the Maleny Master Unit with its lush vegetation, sunshine and rain, river creek, and noisy daily concerto of

crickets, cicadas and kookabooras, and discover the River School in January, so far away from a European winter. Usually the rest of the world hears so little of Australia. I'd amusedly noted how no one ever remembers who is the Australian prime minister as I read Bill Bryson's 'Down Under' before my trip! But here I discovered an active, easy-going friendly community and some very elevated souls bringing forward Baba's vision of Neo-humanist education. The school is now in its 8<sup>th</sup> year and has over 100 students from kindergarten to grade 7. The location of the school on the 50 acres of the MU which is also home to three families is significant, for Master Units are a model for society in all respects: agriculture, energy, industry, education, economy, ecology and spiritual development. MU's are a means for showing Shrii PR Sarkar's programmes in action, they are the prototypes of PROUT communities of the future and a promise for survival in difficult times to come.

As this was the main holiday of the year there was a great working atmosphere of building and

maintenance, laying new road surfaces, teachers cleaning and preparing classrooms, sorting through newly arrived books and materials, welcoming new school applicants etc. I was struck by the enormous task of maintenance, just now eased by the arrival of Dharmamitra who will assist principal, Dada Ratnadevananda this year. The presence of an acarya as principal sets the whole tone of the school. Dada is well respected in the surrounding Maleny community as both an intellectual and a spiritualist expounding the philosophy of Neo-Humanism. His devotional flow is clearly an inspiration to parents, teachers and children. Prabha's energy, as school administrator, also flows everywhere as she oversees all that goes on with joy and love and keeps a real team spirit in the school.

So how is the River School fighting materialistic and violent trends in our present society and presenting Neo-humanistic values as an alternative? How does the school teach the Neo-humanistic principles of universalism, recognising each entity of the cosmos – not just humans but also animals, plants and inanimate beings – are all manifestations of the infinite consciousness? One of the obvious ways this is being done is with regard to ecology. The school puts a lot of effort into operating on ecological principles with regard to recycling of waste,

composting, growing of fruit and vegetables. The recent planting of fruit trees following permaculture principals under the guidance of a local expert is a good example of this. The Master Unit also has its good examples of 3 cows supplying organic milk, yogurt and fresh cheese and solar panels in use for some power needs. Environmental education is being taught to the children evidenced by the variety of ecological projects throughout the year, both theoretical and practical.



*Planting fruit trees for edible landscape permaculture garden*

The school buildings seem environmentally friendly and aesthetic. The classrooms look attractive and orderly with displays, nature and interest tables and a good variety of educational materials which are well cared for. The school office is well-organised and notice boards are well kept with information of yoga and meditation courses, vegetarian cooking and health courses in the community. The school has been successful in obtaining grants for various purchases from different sources such as the Maleny Credit Union's Community Grants Scheme, and the Gaming tax fund. There is some lack of space evident in the school now as classes have grown, particularly for the oldest class 'Big Family'. The primary school also lacks a large hall for whole school activities. Plans for extension of the school building have been made and submitted and are currently awaiting approval. The teachers are enthusiastic about this new building and one of the planned uses will be for group yoga classes with space for children to use individual mats. Some clear strengths of the school are lots of outdoor activity, events which challenge the children, application of learning to practical life, arts teaching, parent participation and involvement of the school with the local community. During the year there are two school camps, one in tents on the school grounds, the other on an island. There are also regular events such as 'Wet n' Wild' day when a water slide is constructed on the grassy hill next to the school, the non-competitive 'Olympics' when the children challenge their own best times at various sports, and outdoor projects such as raft building. Stuvol activities and projects encouraging independence are encouraged. Recently the children busked in the town high street to raise money for their 'dream cubby' (playhouse) project (inspired by Reggio Emilia style projects instigated and designed by the children).

The school is run in such a way that all administrative tasks and other duties are done by others so that teachers are free to just teach.



*Non-competitive sports day*

On the days I spoke with the kindergarten and pre-school teachers and the 'Little Family' teacher I was very impressed by their friendliness and enthusiasm. The staff I met showed their real desire to work together well and in the interests of the children. The natural love of children is one of the main criteria on which teachers are chosen. Care is given to the true appreciation of each child. This is reflected in the end of year ceremony where each child receives a beautiful personal all-round report (with their photo on the cover) which describes their skills and achievements, plus an appreciation message read out by their teacher. Each member of the staff, including Prabha and Dada also receive their 'Certificate of Appreciation' messages which touch everyone's hearts. The final grade teacher is noted for her care and concern over the move of her children to the next school. Even while they were just visiting their high school and arranged into groups with other children for orienting activities, she intervened to rearrange her children in those groups as she knew them so well and how they worked best.

One of the ways, but not the only way, in which we try to convey to the child that they are not just their bodies and minds, but divine beings is through the teaching of a spiritual practice. We give the children an experience of the infinite consciousness through mediation and visualisations. This part of the curriculum is called 'Inner Me' at the River School and includes visualisation, yoga, relaxation and meditation activities. Each Monday morning the whole school, begins the week with a collective meeting, devotional songs, kiirtan and meditation. This is a special occasion and blessings are offered to the school and its members, and particular messages conveyed. Often parents stay and join in this too enjoying the uplifting vibration.

Most of the teachers are not familiar with kiirtan and AM meditation but just as a class teacher

may need to depend on an outside teacher for music or dance or games, support for meditation and yoga teaching can also be used. This has generally been provided by Dada and Kamala coming into different classrooms at different times to lead meditation and visualisations and stories. Individual teachers with their own philosophical backgrounds use a variety of introspective techniques which work for them. One teacher uses a visualisation in which children feel the 'love colours' inside their hearts that day. Another uses virtues where closing their eyes the children bring light to their eyes, ears, feet etc. encouraging them to feel love and do service in the world. If a teacher is not confident in teaching meditation and yoga help can be provided on an individual class basis. This needs to be negotiated with each teacher.

The teaching of morality, cardinal human values, is also a special part of the NHE curriculum. At the moment this is included and assessed as 'Personal and social development'. Staff who are not familiar with yama and niyama can be trained in this and given reading materials and resources to use. The knowledge and practice of yama and niyama is important both for how we operate as teachers as well as for our ability to teach it to the children. Respect for the dignity of each child is only possible without adult egocentricity and this requires us all as teachers to work on our own spiritual and ethical self-development. This is a continuous process just as we need to continually improve our intellectual and creative skills.

Meditation and yoga and morality teaching and teacher self-development can be addressed by local training sessions in NHE, ETC's and the NHE Diploma and NHE Introductory courses now being offered by Gurukul. NHE didactic support is available and our resources are increasing. How can we continually expand our schools according to Neo-humanist ideals? I think it helps if NHE teachers are in close contact with the rest of the worldwide NHE community for example via the NHE-Forum and Gurukula Network magazine. The River School is an important model NHE school and we are all enriched by news of events there (thank you Kamala!). With thanks to everyone I met there.

### *Continued from Page 31* *Quiet Time Yoga Club*

The last class I asked for their suggestions about how to make it better. They gave many, but "more, more, and more" was the theme. I was touched by how they grabbed my hand or gathered round or put their head on my shoulder during the times I read them stories; how eager they were to help me read the story, even those who could barely read; how much they wanted to succeed; how they helped each other. I was awed by how giving and loving they were through the pain, conflict, sadness and anger that also was a part of them. I was honoured and moved by their love and courage.

Some new books I discovered

- ❖ Books by Lori Lite which are simple meditations
- ❖ Books by Helen Berger which have beautiful illustrations
- ❖ Nora's Stars by Satomi Ichikawa
- ❖ The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush by Tommie dePaola
- ❖ The River that Gave Gifts by Margo Humphrey
- ❖ Just Dream by Chris van Allsburg
- ❖ Miss Rumphuis by Barbara Cooney

*For a detailed outline of this Quiet Time Program, please visit*

*<[www.gurukul/nhe/resources.html](http://www.gurukul/nhe/resources.html)> and look in the Meditation section. You may also write directly to Linda Baker at <[vish2vish@aol.com](mailto:vish2vish@aol.com)>*





## Yoga Gan.

**Karmiel, Israel**

**By Didi Ananda Rainjana**

*Yoga Gan is managed by the Women's Welfare Department of Ananda Marga*

Yoga Gan was born last September by Grace and the effort of Radhika, Amrta and myself. "Gan" means kindergarten in Hebrew. At the end of June we rented a two-story house with a garden. Since our budget was small, we had to be very creative and inventive. After painting the house, we built some simple furniture, collected many different kind of toys and story book, and got other materials donated. We made mobiles and other things for the children to play with, and what was still missing, we bought.

The three of us worked from morning to night for two months. There were so many things to plan and do and it was so incredibly beautiful to see the kindergarten materialising day after day and becoming ready for the 1st of

September.

Now there are 12 children from one year and half to three years. Though this might sound like a small number, I can say that at the moment it is enough for us for this first year. This is our first kindergarten and we are learning a lot. The three of us are participating in the NHE education course to enlarge our knowledge and understanding.

From the very beginning there has been a very good response from the children and their parents. It was amazing, at the first parents meeting, to see one by one the parents expressing how much their children have changed and become more happy and open, more expressive and confident. They really love to come to the school and don't want to miss it even during holiday time. They were talking about their children singing happily Baba Nam Kevalam at home and telling them about half bath and the use of water.

With the passing of time, Yoga Gan has become quite popular in Karmiel and neighbourhood, and people are talking very positively about it. Gradually the families got more and more involved with the kindergarten and two mothers participated in our yoga course and learned their personal meditation.



To end this I would like to share with you some expressions from the children:

- Offer's mother is talking to him about the importance of being a family, and Offer says " yes, we are a family, but we have a bigger family, Yoga Gan family".
- Agi wakes up in the morning and says " hurry up Mom, I want to go to Madhu "; Madhu is the kindergarten guard, our white sweet dog that children love very much. She is an important participant of our school.

- Adva's parents asked her " what are you doing in Yoga Gan?" She replied " love ".



# NEO HUMANIST EDUCATION IN EAST AFRICA

## Interview with Didi Ananda Aparajita

by Didi Ananda Gītika

### Introduction

The objective of creating Neo Humanist schools in East Africa has received a lot of impetus in the past two years due to the social necessity for schools for poor students and also to the fact that several Ananda Marga social workers have focused on this objective very deeply. The following are the major schools that have progressed during the period:

- Kangemi, Nairobi: High School. Located in a large low-income area of Nairobi, it has been built up—literally to a second-story building with well-constructed classrooms—and professionally as a well-regarded school. This year, Form III was started, and the school has two streams. High School principal: Dada Vratadhirananda.
- Kangemi Primary and four other schools in Nairobi, Kenya. They have benefited by the stability and hard work of Dada Rameshananda. He has concentrated on construction, self-sufficiency and teacher training to improve the educational standard of each school.
- Mombasa, Kenya: Ananda Marga Academy—Primary section. I took over as Head teacher in August 2001. Presently, there are 380 students, 17 teachers, and fairly good facilities. I am working on fundraising for an outdoor covered theater and child-centered playground. We are planning for a secondary school on an extension of the property.
- Tanzania: Dada Satyaananda has recently completed the construction of a nursery-kindergarten school in a rural area.

The following is an interview with Didi Ananda Aparajita, who is presently posted to Nairobi. The interview looks to the challenges and rewards of working in low-income metropolitan areas of East Africa.

#### **When did you arrive in East Africa?**

I came to work in Nairobi in December, 2000—about one year and four months ago.

#### **How do you feel about working in Kenya?**

I feel there is a lot of potential for Neo-Humanist Education in East Africa, and that inspires me a lot.

#### **What exactly leads you to believe that Neo-Humanist Education has a future here?**

When I arrived, I was given the responsibility for managing 6 schools in Nairobi, and through my experiences, I discovered there is a huge interest in education in Kenya. Although the political situation is relatively peaceful, there is also much uncertainty on how to develop the country. People feel education is the main way, so there are lots of discussions in the media, in seminars, etc. about how to improve the education system. It is also a fact that here there is scope for opening educational institutions at all levels, from nursery to college. Some schools are government-assisted, but many are private as ours are.

#### **Is there free education in Kenya?**

Recently the President—partly to promote his party in this election year—promised free education to all Kenyan children, not only free but compulsory. Parents can go to jail if they don't send their children to school. In line with that government dictum, all government-sponsored schools have been ordered to stop charging any academic or activity fees. But the reality is that there is not even half the infrastructure necessary. School buildings are lacking, and the government schools are not well enough funded to maintain them.

As a result, parents are caught in the agonizing position of having to send their children, but not finding any vacancies in public schools. They certainly don't have any money for the high priced private schools. One article I read said there are more than 3 million children who don't go to school.

#### **How do you finance your six schools?**

Each school's situation is different. The biggest school in the low middle class area called Huruma—that presently has 420 students—is relatively self-sufficient. Although not all parents manage to pay fees, the others pay the equivalent of \$5 a month.

#### **Just out of curiosity, what is the average income of that area?**

Most Kenyans work in the “informal sector” which means they are self employed, mainly doing commerce. They make around \$25 to \$50 a month.

**And your other schools? What is the situation?**

My smaller schools—about 5 in number—each has about between 40 and 80 students, from nursery to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and in those schools, about 40% of parents are not able to pay anything. I have found donors for all the very basic supplies such as paper, chalk, pencils, and teachers' textbooks. I found personal sponsors for some of the children. Teachers work hard although salaries are low. Somehow we keep going!

**Considering all the obstacles, what inspires you about these schools?**

It inspires me to see happy children, especially when I go to my big school, and all come running shouting "Didi, Didi". Whenever a visitor comes, they enjoy singing or presenting a drama. For most people in the developed world, it is unimaginable to see such happy faces and high spirits amidst abject poverty.

**What are the Neo-humanistic strategies that you use?**

First of all, it is the personal example that is very important. I try to inspire my 17 teachers to practice morality and be open-minded. I find it important to emphasize their strong points and to let them feel secure in themselves. An important aspect of Neo-Humanist Education is to arouse curiosity in the children, and another is to let them express their creativity. Therefore, I try to awaken curiosity and creativity in the teachers!

**That is interesting! How do you do that?**

Through exchanges and seminars, we have been working on developing these qualities. There has been a lot of improvement. And in the largest of my schools, our head teacher learned meditation and she has worked closely with the Ananda Marga community for the past 15 years. She is a strong and stable influence on the other teachers.

**As you are working with low-income children, what do you feel would be the impact of your approaches on the Kenyan system in general?**

The Huruma school is known in a wide area. The reputation is very good, because the academic standard is high. Children from other schools in the area transfer to our school due to good performance of our pupils. In this way, we are becoming known, and people ask about our educational ideals and methods.

**If you had one wish for the schools, what would it be?**

Like for the children, let the schools survive and flourish! I also want to create an aesthetic environment. It is a very big challenge because it is not a strong priority in people's scale of values here, and because we have to use a lot of creativity to improve things on our shoestring budget. And yet, I feel it will greatly enhance the learning and awareness.

*Dolls for your school*

## Dolls from Peru

By Didi Ananda Muktiavrata

I have been working in Peru for a little more than a year now. The economy in all of South America is a disaster. This hits Peru especially hard as it was already poor before the current wave of difficulties came. It is estimated that 90% of the population of Peru is unemployed or underemployed. People's biggest problem here is that they have no way to support their families.



In order to help at least a little, we are starting a doll making project which will employ women. We will give a woman materials. She will make dolls in her own home. Then we'll sell the dolls and pay the woman a wage for each doll she makes. I started the project before Christmas and we are trying to sell the first batch of 10 beautiful dolls here in Lima. The dolls of the first batch are based on the pattern of Steiner dolls and are about 30 cm. They are soft and cuddly and very well made. Each doll is individually made with love and dressed differently. The first ones were Caucasian and dark brown skinned. Now we are working on making Orientals and medium browned skinned dolls also. We can also make dolls larger or smaller than 30 cm.

We are looking for markets big or small outside of South America - crafts stores, schools or friends. If you would like to purchase the dolls or help find markets, please write to:

**Didi Ananda Muktiavrata: <didiamv@ec-red.com>**



# NHE Learning Centre

## Fgura, Malta

managed by Ananda Marga Women's Welfare Department of Malta

The NHE Learning Centre is an after school program for children with difficulties in learning. It was set up by Kamala last year, who is now the Director and Teacher. She is assisted by Anandamayii. There are currently 10 children participating in the program.

"What I hear I forget, What I see I remember, What I do I understand." With these words in mind, Anandamaya came to the Fgura NHE Learning Centre, eager to find out in what way she can apply certain techniques from the psychology course she's taking at the university. Combining her enthusiasm with the knowledge she is gaining from her studies, she immediately found that there's a vast field where her services are greatly in demand.

A couple of weeks before, in October 2000, Kamala, for the past years teaching English in an area secondary school for boys, started giving extra support classes to a small number of boys with learning difficulties. For a long time she had been feeling frustrated at the fact that a relatively high number of students at her school were practically illiterate, with no motivation to learn, due to a number of reasons. To mention one: this school is for boys who do not pass the eleven plus exam, even after a second try, and by this time they are already labelled as failures. Another reason is that there are an average of 28 boys in each class, with a good number of them having learning difficulties, making it impossible for the teacher during a three-quarter of an hour lesson to cater for the needs of all. The stigma associated with an abundance of social problems in this southern area of Malta also casts a lot of shadows over the probability of these children ever "making it" academically.

From these boys Kamala chose one by one, those who seemed to be struggling most, and they started attending the Fgura NHE Learning Centre twice a week in the evenings. They come willingly and are happy that someone is giving them extra attention and cares about their special needs. One thing they have in common is that they have never passed an English exam. When they first started their handwriting was barely legible, and they wouldn't dare read aloud. Now, after three months, their face shines with newly found self-esteem. Kamala feels that they have already made a considerable amount of progress with



regards to basic literacy skills, and is looking forward to helping them develop their full potential.

The emphasis is on participation, experiential learning and on-going discovery. Never before have these students enjoyed learning so much. It is hoped that slowly the number of students is increased, because the level of illiteracy in the area is rather high.

Anandamaya comments about her experience:

*....My involvement with the learning centre was not an intentional one. As part of my psychology degree that I am at present reading for, I had to prepare an assignment which required that I teach 'something' to 'somebody'. The choice of the subject matter was open because the aim of this exercise was not the subject matter in itself but rather the ability to integrate theory and practice. On repeated occasions I had heard Kamala talk about her concerns as regards to her students at school, and therefore, I thought that this would be a good occasion to introduce current teaching practices to Kamala with the hope that new teaching techniques could help her in her teaching activity.*

*I was not to understand the gravity of the situation until I actually witnessed Kamala conducting an English lesson with her pupils. Perhaps, the biggest impression was to see a twelve year old student who was still struggling to write his name and his address. I came to understand that equal opportunities for education do not exist in Malta. Kamala's students have for some reason not managed to integrate themselves in our educational system, the result of which is that these students have been moving from one year to the next without having the most basic skills for reading and writing. ... This school has brought to light that something has to be done to help these students. What started as a simple academic exercise for me resulted in the awareness of the gravity of the situation. I hope that the learning centre at Fgura is only a start to a bigger project; a project that in its small or big ways will help at giving equal opportunities for education to our young in Malta.*

# Global News

## Georgetown Sector

### Porto Allegro, Brazil

By Didi Ananda Vandana

The work here, by Lord's Grace, is going on very well. During the holidays we renovated one of our kindergartens and by now all of them are quite well maintained and well equipped. We substituted some of our staff as well and I am sure that we are able to grow with their inputs. We have many children on the waiting list, which shows that Neo-Humanist Education is being appreciated a lot.

Our Director, Anandamayii moved to Spain recently and we now have a new Director, who comes with 10 years of experience as an Educational Institute director. She is very inspired about the school and said that this school is everything she ever dreamt about as an ideal school.

At the same time we started the construction of the 5th to 8th grade. It is a double store building, with 4 big classrooms, 1 library, 1 science laboratory, 1 computer room, 1 administration room and 1 orientation room, and few bathrooms. It is quite a big project and we need a lot of funding. The parents are meeting already to organize some fundraising programs. Everybody is happy with the idea that by next year we will have already 5th and 6th grade. The most inspired ones are the 4th grade classroom.

With many new teachers in the primary school as well in the kindergarten we are going to restart the studies about philosophical aspects as well pedagogical aspects. We have made a year long plan of seminars and study circles. The Standards made by AMGK are helping us clarify many aspects.

Our adolescents program with the medicinal herbs restarted in April. We selected already 12 of the adolescents. This year one educator and one biologist is going to work with them. We want to make many recycled products with them, creating more ecological awareness. Our medicinal garden is very beautiful and full of herbs. We are working on a reproduction house.

The therapy center is growing. We are having around 20 volunteers coming on a regular base and giving free



treatment to the community. This year we are attending from Monday to Saturday, giving around 250 treatments per month. They are also helping in selling our products like syrup, tinctures, oils, soups, pillows etc. They are very inspired and tell that it changed their life. Its very beautiful to see how they are engaged and how the poor people get benefits from alternative treatments. We are holding vegetarian dinners. Last time exactly 100 people came and the children of the schools did some presentation on yoga , songs and theater. We are also starting to give seminars to the people interested, as many visitors are coming and show a lot of interest. We started this year also a regular yoga class. So besides a social service project, our project is becoming a Pracar center.

We are also giving classes on " Health for all" for the community members, where they learn how to identify medicinal herbs, discuss about food habits, learn how to make soap for lice, and cough syrup, candies for cough etc. It is a very integrated project, with the participation of children, adolescents, adults, poor and rich ones.

### Sao Paulo, Brazil

A fundraising tea party was held to benefit the AM school in Guarapiranga, Sao Paulo. The program included snacks, theater and music and the event raised US\$ 1,000.

## Hong Kong Sector

### Taiwan

Kulapati, Dada Shambhushivananda recently visited Taiwan, and gave over 36 lectures on AMGK and Neo-Humanist Education. These included one on Inner and Outer Ecology at the Buddhist Fo Guang University in Ilan, and one at the Catholic Providence University in Taiuchung. Regular meetings are being held by a core group of interested individuals, and Neo-Humanist Education classes have begun for a group of teachers.

## **Kahira Sector**

### **Istanbul, Turkey**

Didi Anandarama gave a storytelling workshop for teachers. There are 6 NHE Diploma Programme students in Turkey and all 6 were present, which was inspiring for all.



The children's yoga and mandala art classes are going well in two centers of a renown Children's foundation. Please see separate article in this issue of Gurukula Network for more details about mandala art.

Didi Anandarama was interviewed for a Turkish magazine and an article was published introducing holistic and Neo-Humanist Education.

## **Albania**

By Dada Vedaprajnanda



Recently we received a donation of books from a sympathizer in England. These books have enabled me and the teachers to give English lessons to the children in our kindergarten. This, coupled with the English songs we are teaching them, has enabled them to acquire quite a big vocabulary in a very short time. In the middle of April (by the time this newsletter is printed) the school will move into a new building which has more space and an outdoor play area. Depending on funding we will expand the enrollment in the near future. (presently 80 children attend the KG). As we are serving a community which is economically depressed (with unemployment rates reaching 80% in some areas), the parents only pay a token fee so we must fund the school through donations from sympathizers. We have just set up a special web site [www.albaniansunrise.com](http://www.albaniansunrise.com) which explains what we are doing and gives people a

chance to make online donations which will sponsor a child for six months, one year or two years. We hope that the new web site will help fill the gap between what the parents can give and what it takes to educate a child.

## **New York Sector**

### **Jamaica**

By Didi Ananda Ragamaya

The two Ananda Marga Schools here in Jamaica merged for a teachers training program in the Fall. It was a very fulfilling and lively two days. Teambuilding, sharing and learning about personal growth constituted the training. We also had stimulating discussions on how these lessons can be reflected in our daily life, as well as in the classroom. We enjoyed greater understanding of our Neo Humanism, and had some fun and games, a quiz and some drama in the process (and of course good vegetarian food). I found it a very positive experience and valued getting to know the teachers more personally.

This year I have been blessed with a full time volunteer, commonly known in Ananda Marga as an LFT . Arunima has come as a real gift and she has been a great help in the progress of our work here in Jamaica. Arunima has started teaching crafts to the kids and they absolutely adore her.

School resumed as normal this September and the teachers were full of fresh momentum and good spirit to start the new school year. Sadly though, with all the strife and warfare in the area, the school was temporarily closed. Thankfully, the situation is more stable now. Due to the closure of another nearby school we acquired a few more students so we have about 70 children now, which for us is positive, though there is need for more to fulfil our budget to pay the teachers if nothing else.

Recently we had a fundraising clothes party offering vegetarian food which went down well and we were able to make positive tracks on our school finances, which was much needed.

This year we welcomed our new Dada Paravidyananda and he is settling in well to his posting. The school (and margiis of course) was very happy for his arrival. His school has about 70-80 children.

Over the next year our goals for the school are: to find land to extend the school for older children. We also

want to expand the existing community projects i.e. skills training, clinic, recycling, thrift-store as well as install windows, doors and fix the roof. For this we welcome any support and input.

## **Nicaragua**

By Dada Visnupremananda

As of now the number of students enrolled are 115 all together for kindergarten and primary school. We have five teachers, all professionals, a Director, one Cashier, one security guard and one lady who cleans the school.

I started giving English classes last week to the primary because they need to learn the subjects and they wanted to learn English very much. Very few students or teachers know how to count numbers from one to ten in English or say the alphabet in English. I would like to give art classes also but art materials here are very expensive. Sister Tapasii from New York is trying her best to get donations from Pearl Paint store one of the big art suppliers there.

We have many plans in the works, like putting in a cemented pavement, a playground, a high wall and the office of the director. The office of the director is now under construction and little by little everything will be done

## **North Carolina, USA**

By Acarya Vishvamitra



The first stage of development is underway to design a Center for Neo-Humanist Studies (CNS) focusing on advanced studies of Neo-Humanism, Tantra, Prout and allied sciences. The creation of the CNS is the first step in developing a Neo-Humanist Institute that would serve humanity with a Neo-Humanist spirit and promote the acquisition of knowledge for that purpose. The first few years of development of the CNS would

involve the establishment of a center that provides workshops, seminars and conferences on site and in cyberspace as well as a website and publications to popularize the center and build participants.

Pending approval we would construct a Sectorial Gurukul office on the Ananda Girisuta MU that would consist of a 600 square foot structure that would provide an office, library and small sleeping quarters. The long range goal would be to establish a Neo-Humanist Institute to work in coordination with Proutist Universal and Renaissance Universal over the next decade to offer permanent courses and certificates for completion of course work. Resident and overnight facilities to be built on the MU would accommodate this programming.

The infrastructure (seminar center and construction program on the MU) and the margii community in Asheville is in place to support the development of the CNS. The CNS being linked to the AMGK will serve to bring awareness and support to the main global campus at Ananda Nagar.

## **Berlin Sector**

### **Switzerland**

By Tapasii

In the Fall I started an English playgroup for children 3-7 years old. First course was attended by 7 kids (in Switzerland it is a sort of standard to have 6 kids on 1 teacher if you're teaching foreign language). At the moment it is only once a week but with increased demand I will gradually offer more possibilities. I'm renting a space from a regular playgroup that takes place every morning. Therefore I organise my classes in the afternoon. In Switzerland children start kindergarten at age 5 and school at 7. For those that want something before there are variety of playgroups, and for working mothers there are nurseries. Awareness that children can learn well before going to school has grown amongst parents. I decided to utilise that momentum and offer English. At the first course children learned basic vocabulary. Our next session of 22 lessons will cover basic topics from the Circle of Love curriculum.

I think that playgroups are very good and easy way of infusing NHE ideas. They are ideal for all of you who want to start something but feel that a whole day kindergarten is too big step. It is also a good way to let other teachers come in contact with you.

# Manila Sector

## Indonesia

By Didi Ananda Shubhra'  
PWSA Manila Sector

In Indonesia there are three schools managed by the Women's Welfare Department of Ananda Marga; one in Medan and one in Jambi. Both schools are giving after school special class in English and Mandarin.

The **Medan** school is in a rented facility and has over 200 hundred students. Plans are underway to start a full time school and to have our own building. Didi Ananda Tapanistha with the help of others is now looking for land and a building to buy to accommodate the plan. Hopefully by June or July, by Lord's Grace, we will have our own building and land.

In **Jambi**, we are also planning to expand the school to run as a full time playgroup school. Didi Mainjula is now inquiring about the legal procedure for setting up a playgroup.

Another school in **Cirebon** is a full time school which was opened in the late 80's in a rented building. It was shifted to our own land and building in mid-90's. The school had four small rooms but only two rooms were being used. For a long while we were hoping to renovate the school and make it bigger. A recent donation of 900 US\$ has made these renovations possible, so now we have two bigger rooms. We were also able to purchase classroom materials. We did all the renovations during our school break in March this year.

On the first day of school after our school break the children came back to school surprised to see their classroom bigger and with more toys. Their cubbies were more colourful and had their names on them so even our youngest child now knows where to put her belongings when she comes to school. They are also getting used to seeing the spelling of their names which we wrote with colorful pens. The children also love our new sandbox and our new wooden blocks which we made ourselves from the wood bought from a second hand shop. Now the children are more happy to move freely in the classrooms where we made different

corners like dress up, language, manipulatives/math, art, and kitchen.

During the break we were busy preparing and making new materials and collecting materials from photo shop, tailors and furniture shops. For us it was fun trying our hands into drawing, coloring, cutting and painting our blocks and even hammering and sawing.

We are now looking into introducing some more creative ideas to our teachers to make the lessons more interesting for our children. During the school break we had a two day teachers training/workshop attended by all our three teachers, two parents and two guests and three Didis.. We all enjoyed the program and the lunch.



We also had a parents, teachers meeting where we got feedback from the parents and teachers. In May we plan to have a smorgasbord as a school fundraiser as agreed by the parents and teachers and also to propagate vegetarianism to the public. The parents will sell the tickets themselves and the children will perform during the program. The plan is also to have a regular teachers-parents meeting which is a good time to slowly introduce our system of education especially in

Indonesia where religion becomes a very important factor in choosing their children's schools.

Didi Diipti has recently been posted as DSL in the school, and is learning how to run and manage the school and also learning more about children's characteristics and behaviour individually and collectively.

We hope to continue to serve the community through Neo-Humanist idea of education and to open more schools in Indonesia.



## Suva Sector

### Australia - River School

By Kamala

(also see article in this issue of Gurukula Network)

The oldest children participated in a weeklong "challenge" camp with high-ropes course, survival games, camping etc. It went well. They raised all the money for it themselves. (car washes, bake sales, a raffle, etc.)

The "Toothrees" (year 2 and 3) did a class project of designing and building a "dream cubby" (playhouse) for the school. They came up with the idea, helped draw the plans, wrote the management committee for permission and placement, enlisted help from parents and community members and did busking in town along with a local small band accompanying them, and had an "op-shop" (second hand shop) to raise funds for the project. They were all very inspired about the whole thing!

## Nairobi Sector

### WEST AFRICA SCHOOLS

By Dada Daneshananda

#### Ivory Coast - Abidjan

The school here has been managed by margiis for years, but now Didi Ananda Lilamaya has arrived to take an active role. They have kindergarten and primary, 1st to 6<sup>th</sup> with close to 300 children,

#### Ghana - Accra

There is a school in the jagriti with about 65 students all kindergarteners.

#### Ejura

Connected with the training center we have two schools. One is on the master unit. The other is a kindergarten and primary school with 120 children.

#### Togo- Lome master unit

We have a new school started with great struggle and sacrifice by Dada Jayakrsna.

#### Cameroun - Doula

We have a school by Dada Parameshananda with 15 kindergarten children.

## Mauritius- La Flora

We have a nursery school with 36 children, run by teacher Varuna.

## SOUTH AFRICA SCHOOLS

### Orange Farm

We have a big school with close to 1000 children, including nursery and primary. supervised by Dada Lokatiitananda. There is a new Internet Technology center which will train some of the children in computer technology

### More about South Africa Schools

By Didi Ananda Japasiddha



Not much has changed with my schools since last reporting. I delayed this year's teacher's training program till May so that I can get things ready properly. This year a steep increase in food prices has put our schools in crisis so I have been dealing with that. The whole country is in crisis due to this. I am now working alone now. My Canadian volunteer for this year came only a short time and has already gone, but she arranged a huge donation of books and classroom materials of very good quality which has brought our resource center into reality. The things are absolutely beautiful and include tape recorders, really good building sets, things I never imagined. For me the trick is now figuring out who gets them. They are too nice to give to one school only so I made them part of the resource center, to be shared. I also have a whole roomful of useful things which have been locally donated for the schools and which I will distribute soon. Our office is getting much better organized so that work can go more smoothly. Some local volunteers have come forward, some coming to the project and some helping even from other cities. One retired school principal in Durban made some beautiful finished wood materials out of scrap masonite that he collected himself. Another woman took photos and started working on a website. Others helped in other ways.

# Neo-Humanist Education

Holistic Self Development, Values, Universal Love, Applied Learning



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