



GURUKULA NETWORK

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

Issue 16 May 2003

Ananda Marga Gurukula

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*Taiwan
Gurukula
Academy
Students*

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 2003 issue**

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

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WEB PAGES

Ananda Marga Gurukula

www.gurukul.edu

Neo-Humanist Education

www.nhe.gurukul.edu

Teacher Resources

www.nhe.gurukul.edu/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.

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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 Education In-charge Ac. Priyakrsnananda Avt.

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



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

AMGK Web Pages

The AMGK web pages can be found at <www.gurukul.edu>. Well worth a look.

New! AMGK Web Pages - Taiwan

Ananda Marga Gurukula Taiwan has a new website at: <www.gurukula.org.tw>

NHE Web Pages

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

Distance Learning Programmes

The two distance learning programmes for NHE teachers are both progressing with many students. The 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 programme, with the option for certification as an NHE early childhood associate teacher. For more details see the description of Distance Learning Programmes at www.nhe.gurukul.edu/distancelearning or write to <amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>.

Standards Available

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

Volunteers for your Project

Mayadhiis'a from the Netherlands has taken on the co-ordination of the AMGK Volunteer Network which is advertised on <www.gurukul.edu>.

The ENCLOSED POSTER, that you can reproduce and post in your local colleges and other youth centres, advertises these volunteer opportunities.

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 ready:

- 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
- you are 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.

YES - Yoga Education in Schools

Yoga for Children

We are about to begin the layout work for this book. We would like to have more practical, tested, classroom examples of how to teach yoga, meditation and related topics to children and youth ages 6 and under, 7-11 and 12-18. The subject can include asanas, meditation, ethics, stories, parables, poetry, songs, philosophy, games, etc. Please send directly to Didi Anandarama anandarama@anandamarga.net

NHE CDs for Sale

There are several new CDs for sale for NHE. Please see details in this newsletter issue.

Another Music CD in Process

We are happy to announce that Jayashrii from Holland has agreed to record the songs for quiet time composed by Arun from the Progressive School of Long Island. Jayashrii is a graduating student of art therapy and her first CD was "Kiirtan of Enlightenment".

AMGK Conference Ananda Nagar January 6-11, 2004

We are delighted to invite you all to attend this Gurukula conference in Ananda Nagar with the theme "Neo-humanist Education for the 21st Century".

Our aim is to bring together students, teachers and educators from different corners of the world to share their experiences from their work and research in the field. What are the elements of Neo-humanist Education and what does its message imply for the present and the future?

Conference Programme:

Morning sessions:

- 1) Sharing of personal accounts and experiences from the early days of the start of Gurukula.
- 2) Presentations of latest knowledge in the field of education.

Afternoon sessions:

Every afternoon there will be parallel workshops in different micro-courses for which the participants can sign up. After implementing learned material, in the field, the participants will receive a certificate of completion.



Ananda Marga Gurukula Conference
"Neo-humanist Education for the 21st Century"
ANANDA NAGAR JANUARY 6-11, 2004

"We should remember that morality, spirituality and humanity, and a happy blending of occidental extroversial science and oriental introversial philosophy is the very foundation of our system of education. Unlike Rudyard Kipling who wrongly observed that "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet," Ananda Marga believes in one universal society with one ideology and one cosmic goal."

— Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar, (Ranchi, 1969)

Micro courses in:

"Creative Problem Solving" - by Acarya Cirasmita

"Neo-humanism in Practice"
by Acarya Vishvamitra

"Bio-psychology" - by Dr. Singh

"Neo-humanistic Management"
by Ac. Rainjitananda Av.

"Women's Economic Sustainability in Rural Areas" - by Av. Ananda Chandita Ac.

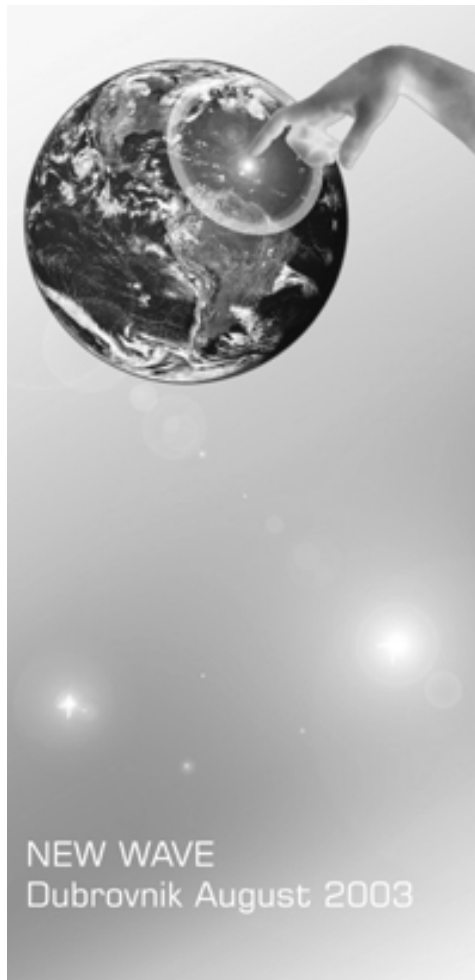
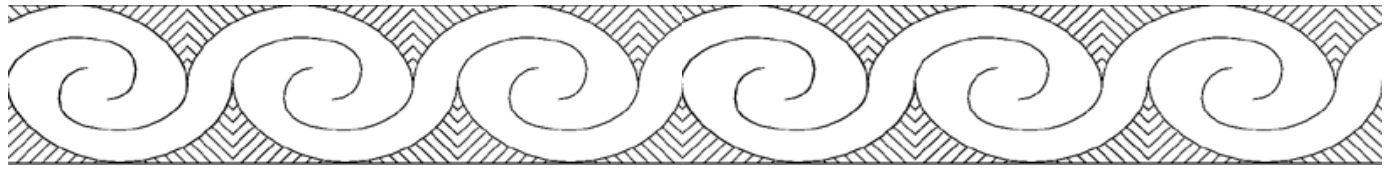
"Establishing a Progressive College"
by Dr. Kathleen Kesson

"Early Childhood Education"
by Rekha Gregory, M.A.

Evening sessions:

Sharing of good news from different sectors in form of audio, visual or performing arts.

This is a tentative programme still open for more contributions and suggestions. Send them to: <amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>. For latest updates, registration, directions, etc., please refer to the web site <www.gurukul.edu/conference> which will be regularly updated.



New Wave Vision of the Youth

Creating a Sustainable Existence
Demonstrating Solutions in Education,
Economy, Environment and Lifestyle
27th –30th August 2003,
Dubrovnik, Croatia

Education and Leadership Intensive 31st August –2nd September 2003

Co-led by adults and young persons, blending experience, knowledge, and support with inspiration, energy and enthusiasm.

In the evenings will be cultural, artistic and musical programmes and a Music Festival on August 30 on Lokrum Island and Prabhata Samgiita concert.

For registration and details please visit
the website

<www.newwavevision.org>

This International Gathering is a joint programme organised by young people from Dubrovnik and the Balkan region, in cooperation with experienced persons from around the world.

The gathering, held in a tranquil and picturesque setting, will be an opportunity to learn from each other of new ideas and practical models of sustainable development, and through discussion, attempt to find realistic answers to very real issues.

There will be daily parallel shareshops in the morning and afternoon on the main topics of Economy, Education, Environment, and Lifestyle,



AMGK at Ananda Nagar Acupuncture Institute of Ananda Nagar

Update by Ciiranjiva

This was my eighth trip to India to work at the Acupuncture Clinic, teach at the Acupuncture Institute and visit Ananda Nagar.

Having never done anything like this project in my life, there's a constant re-inventing that goes on. As things happen in this universe, they are always changing, with a life and a guided direction apart from what I may think. That's Grace. As the opportunity to do service involves paying close attention to what best to do next, you must watch very closely. This year saw the roof of our clinic needing immediate repair, and we were not financially ready for that again. I started to think of our future plans to become a Composite Medical Program, and after hearing myself say "when is the future getting here" I voted to make the move towards the composite program now. For those that do not know what this means, it is simply what Baba had in mind for the medical institutions that would be serving the community of Ananda Nagar. All forms of health care available under one roof, with all the different modalities being taught together. Each separate course gets enough of a view into the other forms of health care so that the patient can get the most benefit. This approach makes it possible for the caregiver to determine the best form of health care for each patient. Medicine where the patient comes first, not the ego of the caregiver - now that can be a challenge taking on the present medical attitudes. So with the support of the ABHA SEVA SADAN, Composite Charitable Hospital, and the Community Medical Service (CMS) the Free Community Acupuncture Clinic moved into the ground floor of the hospital. Timing is everything? or is Grace everything.



There was not only support like never before, we were also to add a new member to our staff. Dada Vishvabodhananda was posted to our medical unit, after three years of asking. Dada Vishvabodhananda was to set up the hospital's new pathology lab and to be the principal of the Acupuncture College, a challenge, like most postings. Dada Vishvabodhananda is a hard worker, with a clear picture of his duties, both in the lab and as a principle. The Acupuncture Institute was in need of a principal that had a strong drive with the administration, the staff of the facility and with the students must importantly.

Arriving about the 20th of January and staying for three weeks I experienced a team effort that I had never before felt in this project. I stayed in the hospital this time, eating my meals with the CMS staff and having open discussions about the future, as well as the day in and day out of running this project.

One of our new challenges is the first law passed in India on the practice and education of Acupuncture. It is a very complicated process to become an ac credited College anywhere, India being no exception. This year we will have about 13 graduating students, who will be completing their three years of the study of Acupuncture. These students are the most enthusiastic we have had. There is no better gift than to see learning, to see the brightness in the faces of these students as they put together all that they have learned in three years, and to see it all mix together as they

form a diagnosis and create a treatment plan for the patients of the clinic.



One aspect of this project is that we are taking students from our community who have had a very limited form of education available to them, from elementary school all the way through college. After many years of effort in Ananda Nagar we are seeing dreams come true.

Another piece of interesting timing was that while I was in India the number one trade magazine of Acupuncture called Acupuncture Today came out with a printing of the article that our writing team here in the USA put together. It is the February 2003 issue and is available to read on their web-site <www.acupuncturetoday.com>. Upon arriving at home I was greeted with a ton of very positive responses to the article, letters and requests to accompany me to India and to volunteer. Our next trip will be late November into December with a team of three other Acupuncturist who will teaching and working in the clinic also.

This year also saw a new team of professionals to consult and do all the layout and design for this project, new brochures, re-built web-site (www.acuindia.org), new Sister Clinic Posters and a new series of Power Point Presentations available on a CD.

I guess this is about teamwork. We are not alone, even when we feel that we are doing the work of our project alone. The same force that moves the stars moves even a blade of grass. I have started to feel His presence as I am driven to work harder and harder than ever before. I find myself tireless for the work, to the point where everything else in my life is in the way of doing just this; it's a real gift.

In closing I'd like to say that it has been the year of team work, without it you are still not alone. To be fulfilling our spiritual journey involves our personal practices and an equal amount of time doing Seva, and when those two get to be balanced their is nothing like it, nothing like I have ever experienced.



Computer Center

Computer Center at Ananda Nagar

The newly constructed Computer Center has been inaugurated at the Gurukul compound in Central Ananda Nagar. Ac. Rudradevananda Av. explained that the centre will have space for 10 computers and will be a facility for research and study. Arrangements are underway to have Internet access by the end of the year. The building is located near the Gurukula canteen and near the big pond that supplies water to several buildings nearby. The second and third floor, that will serve as space for a meditation room and study rooms, still need funds for completion.

AMGK Music College at Uma Nivas, India

By Iishiiká

For the last 4 months I have been working in Uma Nivas global headquarters of the women's section of Ananda Marga. Though slowly, Uma Nivas is developing in the middle of one of the poorest rural communities in India. At the moment there is a children's home, a girls' high school, 3 primary schools, several hostels and a medical unit. All these projects are helping the local people tremendously. The Music College was started a while ago, but until now the building only had a foundation.

Didi Ananda Gayatrii is in charge of Music education in Uma Nivas and she is teaching classical Indian music and dance as well as Prabhata Samgiita to many women and girls. This Aesthetic Science of music and dance has reached the hearts of many. As well it has been able to create a broader base for the women involved in the music classes. Didi Ananda Gayatrii is doing a wonderful job in music education, but due to lack of a proper building she has not been able to teach the number of girls and women that she could be teaching. For this reason I was inspired to go to India and together with one woman from Turkey, Purna, have made a design and started building the Music College building. It has been a very interesting and inspiring experience and in many ways it has been connected with the education of people.



Music College Under Construction

working. We made 3 plans, each time improving the previous ones and adjusting them to local circumstances. The plan for the Music College is set up in phases.

In the first phase we are restoring and utilising the old foundation and building a more residential building with space for music education. A residential building is important so Didi Ananda Gayatrii can start living on the campus and start taking some hostel girls. In the next phase we will build more classrooms, an auditorium and more dormitories if needed. In this way we hope to create a sustainable building for the Music College.

While being in India this time we managed to build part of the residential building (including a classroom). The design of the building is not exactly according to local building styles, those of local mud houses and other massive concrete plastered buildings. Inspired by one British/Indian Architect (Laurie Baker) we decided to make a brick building (not plastered) and make hollow walls. Building like this means saving materials, brick, cement, steel etc. as well as creating a heat and sound insulating wall.

To do this we needed to educate the local people that were working for us.

It was quite unusual for the labourers to have two women telling them what to do, but once they started to trust that we actually knew what we were doing, things went smoothly. Next we had to teach them how to make the hollow walls, round windows, box windows, and jalties (brick windows) as the labourers never made anything like this before. So after some practice it turned out to



Music Class at the College

To begin with we had to educate ourselves and get a feeling for Indian building styles and ways of

become very nice and together we found new and better ways of realising our ideas for the building.

On both ends we had to learn things about communication, as we did not know much Bengali. Using our hands and feet and having a Didi translate for us, everything worked out surprisingly well. In the end we had about 18 people working for us, 6 mistries (the men that know how to lay bricks etc.), 6 kulies (the men helping the mistries, mixing the mortar etc.) and 6 rejas (the women that carry all the materials on their heads). All together it was very interesting to work with the local people, getting to know their lifestyles and on the job teaching them new things.

Education at Uma Nivas

While working on the Music College project, I also got a chance to learn something about the local high school and primary school. The Ananda Marga Girls High School, run by Didi Ananda Vratisha, was our home base while in Uma Nivas. The school has about 100 students from grades 7 to 10 and 7 teachers. In wintertime school starts at 11.00 and ends at 16.00 hours with a small break in between. In summer they start earlier because of the heat. The school is in the process of being registered by the government, which will mean a great increase of students up to 500. Right now the students take examination in another school; the results are nevertheless very good. The school also has a hostel with about 30 girls from ages 8 to 20. They are all very eager to learn and were very happy to have some western people around talking English with them.

During the day we spent most of our time in Saryu Mahato, the village where the Music College is being built. Next to the building site is an AM



Iishiika' and Purna at Work

primary school and hostel. When we were not on the building site we would be taking the hospitality of Didi Ananda Shudashiila and working inside on our building plans, calculating, doing meditation and most of all hiding from the sun. The school has about 50 children of which 34 are hostel children; the rest of the children are from the local villages. The school building is quite small and all children have classes in one small classroom. Most of the time there is only one teacher for all 50 children and

when Didi is free or a volunteer is around, then there is more time for the children. Nevertheless the children are very happy there. In our free time Purna and I would sometimes do some activities with the children like art, dance and singing. This was also very nice to do in contrast to all the material work of the building project.

All the Didis at Uma Nivas are trying hard to make the best of the situation, being in such a poor area. I am inspired by all the efforts they make and even more inspired to do more things for them. Help is needed to bring Uma Nivas to the standard they deserve. If you would like to help:

- Volunteers are needed for the construction of the music college
- Volunteers are needed for more building projects to improve both the high school and primary school
- Volunteers are needed for teaching in the High School and Primary school
- And last any donations for any of these projects are welcome!

For more information feel free to contact me
<iishiika@anandamarga.net>
or visit the "help us" page on the Gurukula website
<www.gurukul.edu>



Students Studying at the High School

Kulapati News



Talk in Bend ,Oregon, USA on "Inner and Outer Transformation" 45 students, professors and city residents attended.



Gurukula Workshop at Ananda Surichi Master Unit in Taiwan



With Chulalongkorn University Graduate Students, Bangkok. Kulapati gave a series of four lectures to the ethics class.



Kulapati leading Yoga and Meditation sessions at Amatyakul School in Bangkok.



An additional 16.5 rai of land have been acquired adjacent to the Vimalaya project for use as an educational project. The Vimalaya project is situated in Sangklaburi near the Birmese border.



Tree Planting in Malaysia

Ananda Marga Gurukula Academy Taipei, Taiwan

AMGK Academy classes for the year 2003 began in January and will continue through the end of the year. Courses offered are as follows:

Spiritual Science - Tantra

This course offers an introduction to Ananda Marga spiritual science

Neo-Humanist Education

This course is based on study of the book Discourses in Neohumanist Education

Basic Arts

In this course the students will create and appreciate the arts: painting, literature, music and dance

Nature-Expo

In this course the students will explore nature for the purpose of bringing inspiration into their teaching practice

Basic Asana

Practice of asanas for body, mind and spirit



Microvita Class



*Gurukula Staff in Taipei
Krpadevi, Vijnana, Snehalata, Iispita with Canakya,
and Kulapati, Dada Shambhushivananda*

Basic Study of Homeopathy

Basic concepts of theory and practice will be discussed

Introduction to Microvita

Idea and Practice

Introduction to PROUT

Introduction of theory and practice

History

Circle of Life, Earth Science, Human history, History of Taiwan

Teacher's Workshop

Self-discovery, leadership training and sharing of teaching experiences.

MICROVITA CAMP

A Microvita Camp was held on February 7 and 8 in the mountains. It was organized by Snehalata, Harimaya and Kamal Krsna and the classes were taught by Vijnana. The weekend programme included three lectures; one on Microvita and Cosmology, one on Gadharava, Vidyadhara and Siddha and the third on Microvita and Samskara. Activities included meditation by the river, artistic expression through music, writing and drawing, and sharing of each person's history.

Ananda Marga Gurukula Taiwan has a new website at: <<http://www.gurukula.org.tw>>

Education Training Camp December 2003, Ananda Nagar, India

By Didi Anandarama

“Neo-Humanist Education – Principles and Practices”

Over 200 principals and teachers attended the weeklong ETC at Ananda Nagar in December. The format and schedule of the camp was one of tight discipline, yet the atmosphere was wonderfully and spiritually vibrant with long sessions of Prabhata Samgiita songs and Kiirtan before collective meditations. The overall programme was well organised with available handouts on the discussed topics and delicious meals served at the Gurukula canteen.

After the inauguration programme there was an overview of the outstanding features of Neo-Humanist Education. It has become very clear over the years that the strength of our education lies in its philosophical foundation and Neo-humanistic principles. The role of the teacher as a life long spiritual aspirant striving for self-knowledge and service to humanity is another unique and outstanding aspect of our education. The methodology of teaching is thus infused with the intuitional vision of the teacher and at the same time it is flexibly adjusted to the local cultural setting.



Children Demonstrating Drama



Some aspects of the Internal Standards for Ananda Marga schools, which have been painstakingly worked on for several years by a good number of educators, were introduced by several speakers.

One highlight was a class on how to teach Astaunga Yoga to children. For children up to six years of age it can be introduced as “Yoga as Play”. This can include a variety of playful exercises as a future inspiration for practising Asanas. Children from 7-11 can be introduced to “Yoga as a Challenge” where they can practice several postures but without the breathing system and the usual prescribed number of postures. Children in this age are drawn to physical challenges and find satisfaction in the mastery of them. For the adolescents Astaunga Yoga is introduced as “Yoga as an Ideal.” Here the meaning and purpose of Yoga Asanas, Kaoshikii and Tandava and other practices are explained and introduced as an ideal practice for body, mind and consciousness. Along with Astaunga Yoga go philosophical concepts that can be introduced in the form of plays, discussions and essay writing according to the age of the children.

Several speakers elaborated on the wide topic of Discipline in depth. The question that came up was, how to implement play way methods and replace the traditional approaches and practices still prevailing in the local culture. Several participants were inspired to make fundamental changes and there seemed to be a shift happening to move away from using physical punishment.

One presentation was on notes taken during an ETC presented by Baba many years ago. These notes revealed an aspect of child development which we have been wondering about for a long

time - when to teach reading and writing to the child. (These notes are included in this issue of the newsletter)

There was a great need for practical methods rather than theory. The audience shared their own rhymes, songs and stories. Invited NGO representatives showed how to use creative play, song and drama as a teaching method in an environment where there is a lack of educational material and facilities. These workshops were very practical, used material from the local culture and were interactive, involving the participants and our Children's Home children who were more than ready to contribute.

There was a brief discussion on fundraising and how to be prepared for visiting volunteers. Several schools are welcoming volunteers to come and

help with teaching English, games, fundraising and other educational and useful subjects.

The general inspiration was to set up model schools in key areas that would best reflect Neo-humanistic practices. With this inspiration and as a result from this ETC an intensive two week Teacher Education for a group of around 30 principals from different areas will be held at Ananda Nagar on November 5-20 of this year. Experienced directors and head teachers from the classroom are welcome to share their knowledge and hands-on practices.

Another programme result was planning a 'Neo-humanist Education Conference' Jan 6-11, 2004 in Ananda Nagar with the objective of exchanging experiences, research and practical methods from Kindergarten to Secondary School and also from other faculties of Ananda Marga Gurukula.

Teacher Education Seminar "Developing a Model School" Nov. 5-20, 2003, Ananda Nagar

Objective

To train principals and teachers in the theory and practice of NHE with the aim of implementing the material within one year in schools that will serve as models in the areas of the participants.

Programme

Foundations of NHE
Child Development
Culturally Sensitive Pedagogy
Social Context of Learning
Learning Theories
Learning Environment
Curriculum and Teaching Syllabus
Early Childhood
Primary
Secondary
Assessment
Administration

Requirements for Attendance

- a. The participant is a principal or head teacher of a school, which he/she intends to develop into a model school over a one year period.
- b. Reading of the 'Internal Standards for Ananda Marga Schools'.
- c. Reading of the 'NHE Early Childhood Introductory Certificate Programme'

Bring photos, floor plan of school and premises, leaflet and relevant information and administration materials of the school.

Berlin Sector's Education Training Camp

May 2 – May 4, 2003

by Madhavi Merz



Artwork done by the teachers as part of the music workshop

This year's Berlin Sector Education Training Camp was attended largely by new teachers from Holland and other European countries. While the teachers attended their

workshops, a parallel programme was conducted for the managers from the various Ananda Marga schools in Berlin Sector who spent 3 days going through the Gurukula Standards for Neo-Humanist Education schools.

The ETC was held in the Zonnlicht Daycare, Den Bosch, Holland, which recently underwent a rigorous reconstruction resulting in a beautiful and very modern building. It provided breathing space and professionalism which helped to organise our minds. As one of the organisers, it made me realise the importance of having an appropriate physical environment with proper facilities as a centre of learning for teachers and educators. We sat in chairs and had proper equipment for the different presentations.

The workshops were very much focussed on getting the teachers to understand their own minds, especially from the level of spirituality, and through this process, enabling them to understand the minds of children. It was a great improvement over the previous year because it focussed on getting the teachers to experience the

ideas behind Neo-Humanist Education. Einstein is known to have said: "Experience is knowledge, the rest is information", which is actually similar to saying that you can best know a mango by tasting it.

Since we concentrated on one workshop at a time for the teachers, I managed to attend all the workshops and facilitate where necessary. In this way, the teachers needs were better met. The first class, on Neo-Humanism by Dada Pranakrishnananda set the tone for the other workshops. As we explored the aspect of love Dada asked us to evoke this feeling through a particular process.

We first learned that we possessed three different ways of thinking. Some people think through sound. Some people think in pictures. When they think or recollect something, a picture comes in their mind. And some people are emotional, i.e. when a thought arises in their mind an emotion is evoked. Most of us use all these three processes, but one will dominate. The teachers were asked to determine which of these three were dominant in them.

We then did a visualisation exercise using our dominant factor. Through all this we realised that in teaching we need to take into full consideration how children think. If they think in sound and you give them only pictures, they cannot learn effectively.

We were then asked to think of a time in our life when we experienced a deep feeling of love. During the visualisation we were requested to make our picture of love brighter, or the sound louder, or the emotion stronger etc. The new teachers were thereby given a very practical tool to access a feeling of love within them.

In the next workshop by Yadurani and Madhavi, we then explored the needs of the children. We

concluded that only through an expanded mind based on spirituality can we as teachers understand the needs of children and guide them properly. The intellect can only give small bits of information. It is only able to see a small part of the whole. Intuition or spirituality however sees things from the whole. It is able to see the larger picture.

In the afternoon we gave a workshop on the mind to satisfy the intellect. Unlike previous years the teachers asked questions. As a follow up to Dada's class, we conducted two visualisation exercises. The teachers were asked to think first of a feeling that was unpleasant, then a feeling that was very pleasant. They were then requested to bring this positive feeling to the negative one and transform it. Many teachers experience their bad feeling being eaten or shrivelled up by the positive one. It was a good preparation for getting their minds ready for something deeper like mantra meditation, which makes use of sound, picture and feeling (devotion).



Children's Performance

The following day Didi Ananda Badra did a workshop on circle time, concentrating on how to conduct asanas and Quiet Time with the children.

After that, Jyotsna expanded the teachers' experience with sound from the previous day by giving a workshop on music. As an ethnomusicologist she gave us interesting information on how indigenous people created instrumental and vocal music using sounds from their natural environment. Of the 5 elements, sound is the subtlest and has a very powerful impact on our mind. She reminded us that we should use music for enhancing spiritual growth within ourselves as teachers and in the children. We did some sound experimentation using drums, singing (including Prabhata Samgiita) and ended the workshop by listening to five different types of music which each evoked a different emotion in us, ranging from worldly happy go lucky to devotional. As we listened we were asked to draw the music or emotion it evoked on paper. The outcome was very interesting. It made us much more aware of music and its impact. We can use it as a powerful tool in education and in our daily life.

During the ETC we used our first evening for sharing. We told special stories about our children and watched a video on Circle Time in one Italian school where they have made new songs to guide children in the process of meditation. The ETC ended with a musical highlight given by Jyotsna and the children from the Den Bosch school which was the result of her workshop on music for the children. The evening was well attended by the parents.

Upcoming ETCs

New York Sector ETC - June 28 -30, Ananda Kanan, Missouri, USA
For more information contact: <arati@anandamarga.net >

Suva Sector ETCs - planned for Adelaide and Brisbane, Australia
For more information contact Didi Ananda Shamita: <didias@attglobal.net>

Peace for a Troubled World: The Neo-Humanist Educational Agenda

By Marcus Bussey

If I were asked, What is the one thing that Neo-Humanist Education has to offer the world over any other educational process? I would say that it has the potential to build peace (the capacity to negotiate life with a minimum of conflict) into the consciousness of every child. For this to be more than a rhetorical assertion we need to explore the qualities and skills that a Neo-humanist education fosters in its children.

A successful Neo-Humanist Education balances the inner with the outer.

Every effort needs to be made in a Neo-humanist environment to make the processes of interaction explicit. From the earliest years this can be presented as a simple trio of Self: Other: Environment. I do this using a wheel divided into three parts. The self is Blue; the other is Yellow; and the Environment is green. Over the years the child is at school they develop this division in sophistication.

In their first years with this representation the child explores the following three assertions:

1. I am born to Learn
2. Others have the right to Learn
3. The environment supports my Learning

This process develops the language of reflection and also incorporates songs, drama, art, and service activity.

Learning and Peace

You might be asking, Well what has this to do with Peace? In Neo-humanism learning is not about simple acquisition of knowledge – it is about a relationship with Life. Living is learning and is built on awe and respect. Awe is inspired by wonder and always so captivates the Soul of

the child that they want to share; Awe engenders Respect as a direct result of a sense of connection and Reverence for Life.

A lesson is only learnt when we change the way we negotiate life. When the child is equipped to recognise this through being taught how to ask questions, observe, share, contemplate and enjoy their natural and social existence then we are on the road to building mechanisms for Peace.

Self

Peace begins in the Heart. An individual unable to self-analyse is destined to project fear, anger and hatred onto others. So the role of sadhana and supporting activities rooted in artistic and cultural awareness is essential. But it is not enough to teach these in isolation. The child must also be given the language to express who they are and reflect on their feelings and the impact they have on others and others have on them.

Furthermore the child also needs to have a number of strategies to implement when under stress and faced with strong emotions. These strategies need to be constantly reinforced and expanded. When violence occurs the response needs to be swift but not punitive. The whole situation needs to be explored and processed. Blame is not helpful even though there are times when children need to be removed from a teaching environment because they are at risk of causing harm to others.

Other

The child needs to be constantly reflected in the eyes of the other. This is how self image grows and identity fused to a sense of peace is the strongest foundation for success. Respect for

difference is built on a sense of the wonder at the diversity of life. Teachers can affirm all children for their uniqueness and in so doing alert the children to the processes of tolerance and multi-lateral expression in the group.

Fear of difference can be uprooted simply by affirming difference and creating situations in which children are exposed to new situations and cultures.

Environment

The child absorbs all his/her values from the environment – home, school and society are the three dimensions to this. Schools and teachers need to work closely with home and community to uproot intolerance and anti-social behaviour. Of course this is an ongoing struggle and each child is going to have unique experiences of the world – to help with this the child can get a handle on better ways to negotiate life by experiencing the world in miniature in the classroom. The teacher models peace and conflict resolution, the class as a group reflect regularly on the occurrences of violence in class, school yard or community.

Justice

One of the chief forces at work in the child is a need for order – to make sense of the world, to recognise pattern in human action, to place themselves in the universe, to map out the laws – personal, social, natural and cosmic – that underpin their reality. Central to this process is a relationship with authority that is healthy, interactive and just. Most children learn early the bitter lesson that “Life ain’t fair’.

The antidote to this is to provide, through consistent love and justice, a sense that though life deals everyone a different hand, that we as human beings are gifted with the ability to rise above injustice. It does not help a three year old to be told that the experiences we have this lifetime are the result of “Bad Karma.”

What does help is to be given the positive affirmation that they are loveable, that they are not the sum of their actions, that we know they can change, that we all can change and that we all make mistakes, that they do have a voice and that this voice is valued. We need to be relentlessly consistent in this. I hold as one of my key tenets in teaching, and in life in general, Baba’s comment that we need to develop a ‘loving stamina’. All justice must be underpinned with love.

Beyond Violence

Violence like Peace is a habitual response to the circumstances of living. One is rooted in fear, the other in love; the one needs to control, the other to trust; one is ignorant and blind, the other enlightened and visionary; one is built on a broken heart, the other feels loved and safe (no matter what).

Peace does not deny the need for ksattriyā spirit, for the appropriate use of strong, even military action, to defend ourselves and others from violence and injustice. What it does require of us is deep love and compassion. As these are human qualities we can nurture them in our lives and our classrooms by being clear and living examples of Neo-humanists struggling to realise the ideals of a comprehensive spiritual ideology.

As Life and Ideology are two sides of one coin we need to be explicit in our values and teach the spiritual rationality that frees the mind from fear and ignorance. Simple clear language, the consistent application of an explicit value structure and a Loving Heart are the foundations that will enable Peace to take its place as the best way to successfully negotiate our troubled times.

Early Childhood (0-6) and Childhood (6-12) Literacy

Notes from an ETC class given by Shrii P.R. Sarkar

Notes taken by Tattvika Sudhamshu Prasad

Mother tongue plays an essential role for the mental development of the child. The children's psychic sentiments develop along with the language as their mind, body, brain, intellect; motor organs, sensory organs, glands and sub-glands develop. When imparting education we need to give importance to the knowledge of language. Besides the mother tongue the children can learn Sanskrit and the World language (at present English).

The body and mind of human beings develop in a systematic way and systematically one also gets acquainted with the mother tongue, with principles, methods and general knowledge of language. At age one the child learns the language. The physical and mental development of the child is influenced by the environment, heredity and samskaras.

From the age 0 -3 years the height, weight and the internal parts of the body develop quickly. The teeth, vocal chords and tongue become strong and the entire body grows fast. Between 3-6 the height, weight and internal parts of body develop less quickly than between 0-3 but in this period the body and internal parts become strong. During this period the brain of children develops from simple to more complex and the child's kosas or layers of mind are developing. Children are very curious; they want to learn more and more; their memory power is very strong. Whatever children gain during this period remains in their memory.

From the age of three the child learns many things from nature. For example, being in contact with birds, they learn that the crow is black, another bird is white or that the buffalo is black and the cow is white. The child can especially well distinguish contrasts. During the period of 3-6 their brains become strong and they want more and more knowledge. Their curiosity is keen. They want to depend on themselves and not on others. Parents

need to be aware of this period of assertion of their will. Froebel was known for his idea for children to have free self-expression.

The child's language develops in five stages:

1. Learning of words
2. Sentence making
3. Expression
4. Reading
5. Knowledge of script and writing

Learning of words:

The children learn words:

0-6 months - children cry and laugh, and make seemingly meaningless sounds, in this way they learn.

6-12 months - children learn words like, 'papa, baba, mama, lala, etc.'

1-2 years - children learn from the nearest environment, about 100 words.

3 years - children learn the names of things in the environment; especially what they daily use they learn. They learn by now about 250 words.

4 years - in this period they learn nouns, plural nouns, verbs and counting of numbers. They learn 800 words.

5 years - the child gets in contact with general things, colours, animals, birds, etc. They know about 1500 words.

6 years - the child learns more nouns, pronouns, conjunctions, tenses - future, past, continuous, present perfect etc. in contact with the environment. They learn more than 2500 words.

Between the ages of 6-12 their language has developed well. Their word power has developed through contact with many friends and the ongoing school education. Their word power is 2500 to 5000 words. Their words are 80% nouns and 20% verbs.

After the age of 9 - their knowledge develops from the environment and education. They can learn 5 new words a day of a second language from the dictionary.

Sentence making:

1 year - the child can make simple words, although the sounds are not clear at times

2 years - now the child can make 2- words sentences, such as "give me"

3 years - 3 or 4 word sentences

3 - 4 years and up to 4 years and 4 months - the child can make a complete sentence.

5 - 6 years- now the child can make any sentence with clear pronunciation; the vocal chords are developed.

From the age of five they can make sentences of 5 words, at age 9 they can make 6 to 9 word sentences.

After 9 whatever they learn they can memorise; whatever they come in contact with or in action with, they want to know. Geniuses can make longer sentences.

Oral Expression:

The child's first expression is distress and happiness in crying and laughing with no relation to language. At the completion of one year the child speaks in undeveloped sounds.

At the age of three their expression is still not so clear. After completion of three years the vocal chords are very clear. At this time whatever is happening in the family and the environment they want to know; their curiosity is strong; if they are not given knowledge they revolt. At ages of 4-5 they want to listen to many good and interesting stories. It is the duty of mother and teacher to provide them with good stories.

Between the ages of 6-12 their self-confidence develops, whatever they want to say, they say so with self-confidence. They can describe whatever they see, or whatever goes on. After 9 years children can talk logically, "why this?" etc. They can discuss with arguments and counter arguments. Whatever they learn they want to use also. They can give their own examples.

Reading:

Up to the age of 3 the child's sensory and motor organs can't function properly for reading. After that it will depend on their education how much they can read. If the mother exposes the child more to reading, the child will be able to read more.

Between 3-4 the child's mind is ready for reading. At that time if you will give them books, they want to see books more and more. Give them colourful books. The child can read 3-4 word sentences. Whatever they read, they should read aloud so that their vocal chords become strong.

At age of six the child can understand the meaning of the words, not before that. After nine their brain is strong enough for svadhyaya (spiritual wisdom reading). They can do self-study according to their will, taste or interest. The standard of language of the literature for self-study should be simple so they can understand it.

Writing:

By the age of 3 the children's glands and sub glands are strong enough and they want to write something; they tend to write on walls, floors, a slate etc.

By the ages 4-5 they can write alphabetical words and numbers. They can identify words and count. They can write after seeing or listening one word at a time but not complete sentences. Also at this age they are able to learn and write the script such as abc.

At the age of six they are ready to write complete sentences, then read it and write whatever they are asked. Whatever they see and read they can express in writing. In writing they use language with system and care and compose good sentences. At age 7 -8 they can write letters to their relatives. At 9 they can describe anything that happened that they came in contact with.

General Child Development

During the childhood period of 6-12 the development of the children's body is less than during the period of 0-6. At age of nine the length and weight is most developed. From the ages of 9-12 the development of body is slower but it gains in strength. For that reason between 6-9 one must take care to keep their bodies healthy with a balanced diet. If children are thin and weak during this period then that will affect their bodies till their death. Between the ages of 6-12 the weight of the brain is developing speedily and so is the mental development. Children take interest in all things of the manifested world and collective play. They want to be happy, smart and disciplined. They think, " why I came in this world" daily. They want direction from their parents and teachers.

Nama mantra (simple meditation) is not given before the age of 5. After the age of 12 Iis'ta mantra (personalised mantra) can be given.

Tolerance Versus Transformation in Multicultural Education: a deeper look at equal opportunities

By Margaret Rathwell

Our common aim in equal opportunities is to achieve more equal relations between different groups (nationalities, races, religions, genders, special needs, sexual orientation). How we approach multicultural education as teachers, however, depends upon our own understanding of the causes and solutions to racism and other forms of oppression. There are in fact two quite different schools of thought: one is tolerance and the other is transformation. The tolerance approach is typically teaching about different cultures and celebrating heroes and holidays, and is often seen as something added on to the curriculum. The transformation approach in contrast is radical. It argues for the structural change of schools and the curriculum to help children and teachers be critically aware of bias and activists for social justice.

In the book 'Beyond Heroes and Holidays: A Practical Guide to K-12 Anti-Racist, Multicultural Education and Staff Development', Sonia Nieto describes a progressive model of levels of multicultural education support. At the **tolerance** level differences are endured but not embraced and the ultimate goal is assimilation in language and culture. The next level is that of **acceptance** where differences are acknowledged and their importance is neither denied nor belittled. Then follows **respect** where there is admiration and high esteem for diversity. These are the most common levels which we can perhaps identify in the schools where we teach or which we know.

The most evolved level of multicultural education, however, is that of **affirmation, solidarity and critique** where differences are embraced and accepted as vehicles for learning. At this level we recognise that the basic values of different groups in society are often diametrically opposed. Conflict is inevitable and it is part of learning. In the transformation approach both we as teachers and the children we teach need to be aware of our own cultural conditioning in order

to understand the differences of others. What does it mean to be of a particular race, or gender or class and how are we privileged or disadvantaged according to these social characteristics? This involves us in learning, reflecting, and questioning about any obstacles which block the goal of equal opportunities.

Early Years Multicultural Education

How can we use this deeper model of equal opportunities in early years education? Montessori's teachings show us that because of their delicate absorbent minds in the stage of formation, children below 6 years of age need special help in recognising and challenging bias rather than internalising it. A small child notes differences like skin colour, gender or social situation in others, but doesn't by her/himself view them in a negative way. Yet even a three year old child may show signs of racism depending on how parents and other adults or children have introduced prejudices, or what images the child has received from television, advertising or comics. The small child absorbs and models the example of those around her/him and by the age of five has formed a basic moral outlook which will stay with them in later life. Hence these years are crucial. Below I will consider some goals of the transformation approach and examples of how we work towards reaching these desirable outcomes for children.

Taking pride in who they are

Every child needs to be seen as an individual and treated as such. If a child's self-esteem is low, the teacher needs to heal any emotional damage through care, attention and the support and promotion of a positive self-image. We want each child to have a strong, confident and healthy sense of self. One tool for nurturing each child's construction of a knowledgeable self-concept and group identity is persona dolls. These are large dolls with special personalities or stories that stay with that doll, used in circle times or at other

special times to help raise awareness of, and solve, particular problems. The dolls used reflect the social diversity of the class. Dr. Glenda McNaughton used persona dolls on a one to one basis with children in an Australian community to help explore and combat the poor self-image of Aboriginal and Vietnamese children. In this study we can see how a Vietnamese origin girl originally rejected the doll like herself, and identified herself with the rich white Australian girl doll. Only after time was she able to identify herself with the Vietnamese doll. Similarly only after a period of time telling stories to make the Aboriginal culture attractive did the children stop rejecting the Aboriginal doll.

Respect for others

As well as developing a strong identity, children need to develop empathy and positive attitudes towards people different from themselves. A child's natural acceptance of others may be harmed by negative discrimination from other children or adults, and the teacher's role is to reverse these negative influences. We can gather materials that contradict racial and cultural stereotypes, create opportunities to make comparisons between stereotyped images and real images and make comments that contradict statements of bias. The Montessori teacher can make and carefully use her own geography materials, starting with the parent and child photographs, to give positive images of other races. Nowadays there are many books we can choose which give the message of respect for other cultures. Some of my favourites are *Amazing Grace*, *Grace and Family*, *Rata pata scata fata*, *Masai and I*. We want children to develop the ability to interact comfortably and empathetically with people from different backgrounds who have different perspectives and to be able to solve problems co-operatively and creatively. Learning other languages and co-operative games of communication and empathy are bridges to building respect for others.

Learning to be critical thinkers and recognising bias and injustice

Through our careful example and by offering the children practice in thinking and problem solving, we can help them learn to be critical

about different forms of discrimination. Teachers need to watch carefully for bias in the environment that children encounter and listen to their comments. We can take advantage of teachable moments in the day-to-day life in the classroom. Also we can create opportunities for solving moral dilemmas. For example we might ask: What would you do if you heard some children say to a child 'You can't play because you're black', or What would you do if your friend was called 'Paki' by another child? We can draw children's attention to the 'haves' and 'have-nots' in the wider community and the world. Does everyone have a good house, enough to eat, a car etc.? What is unfair? Would it be better to change it?

Pre-school children today can be very negatively influenced by television images and advertising and as early as possible it is helpful to raise their awareness of media messages. As Montessori pointed out, children cannot clearly distinguish between reality and fiction in the first period of their development (0-6 years). Images of violence can be dangerous if children conclude that aggression is a natural way to solve problems. Teachers can guide children in sorting out what they see in programmes and advertising. We can ask them whether the images they see in the media are true to their experience or not.

From young age children are lured with commercial toys and free McDonald's type gifts and they need help to see what is truly valuable and what is junk. They can be introduced to criticising exploitation such as child labour through examples of products they are bought, such as trainer shoes, footballs or Barbie dolls. Brand names and 'pseudo-culture' music, films and television designed only for profit, are a means of psychic exploitation. Older children can be made aware of dominator paternalistic worldviews and the exchange between north and south of giving money, food and shelter with one hand and then taking away much more with the other hand. Also through discussion of stories and the values they exemplify, teachers can help children acquire cardinal human values and become aware of how prejudices, segregation,

discrimination and exploitation contradict these values.

Activism against injustice directed against them or others

We want to cultivate each child's ability to stand up for her/himself and for others and act in the face of bias and injustice. Clearly this should be appropriate to the age of the child. For example, a 2-3 year old child needs to learn acceptable ways to express their feelings when they want something or when others hurt them. However we can expect 4 year olds to be able to use simple conflict resolution techniques to deal with incidents of teasing or rejection of their own or other's identity. Older children could be actively involved in cancelling out racial graffiti or writing to the council to do this. Pre-school children can benefit from seeing their family members or teachers taking action to protest bias and change injustice in the community. The goal is to empower children so that they will act when they experience an injustice directed against themselves or others. Action may be individual or in co-operation with others. A simple lesson a nursery teacher can teach children is to call on friends when faced with an unfair situation such as bullying.

The children's book *'The Streets are Free'* is a good example of children's activism which I have used with 3-6 year old children. It is based on the true story of the children of the barrio of san José de la Urbina in Caracas who had to play in the streets because they had no other place to play. Through protesting to the city authorities and organising themselves, with the help of a community leader and their parents, the children were able to create a playground.

Some years ago children and parents in our Verona nursery held a demonstration and march through the streets of the city with banners protesting against children-directed advertising on television. The children absorb much from their involvement in such an action, for example in preparing banners, posters etc. Events such as these can make a deep impression on children.

Conclusion

Our commitment to equal opportunities rests on our desire to make the world a better place. If we accept the transformation approach, we see multicultural education as a dynamic process and a life-long task. What we do in the classroom before children are 5 is important; it needs our continuous examination and reevaluation. The goals of transformative multicultural education discussed above are closely related and build on each other. For children to feel proud about who they are, they need to develop ways to respond to prejudice and discrimination and exploitation directed against themselves. For children to develop respect for others they need ways to contradict prejudice and discrimination and exploitation they see directed at others. Louise Derman-Sparks, in 'Beyond Heroes and Holidays' writes: "Through activism activities children learn that injustice is not overcome by magic or by wishes, but that people make it happen and that each one of them can make it happen". Maybe when these children involved in activism grow up they will appreciate readily these words of Martin D. Niemoller:

'Then they came'

In Germany, they came first for the communists, and I didn't speak up because I was not a communist. Then, they came for the Jews and I didn't speak up because I was not a Jew. Then, they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up for them because I was not a trade unionist. Then, they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up for them because I was a Protestant. Then, they came for me and by that time, no one was left to speak up.

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Starting a Kindergarten in Thailand

By Didi Ananda Kaomudii

Last issue featured the older children of Baan Unrak in Thailand. In this article, we see how a kindergarten was developed for the young children.

Didi Ananda Anuraga walks out of the kindergarten with eight youngsters following her. She's smiling at the children as she pulls the motor scooter stand out of the mud and wheels it through a puddle. The children are pleading and lining up. They want a ride home.

Her eyes twinkle in amusement as three squeeze onto the seat behind, and another stands holding onto the handle bars in front. The ride is only 2 minutes down a quiet village lane which the children walk each day, but the thrill of the given privilege is understood by Didi. She rides into the home with a child between her long arms and an assortment of legs dangling behind, her golden hair and fair complexion shimmers in light contrast to that of the 55 dark-eyed Thai children she resides with. A woman of opposites, her delicate mind hovers above situations, reminding me of the buttercup fairies that lived inside children's books. Yet at other times, I see her feet firmly upon the ground, ever ready to involve herself in the tasks of the abandoned children's home, her sleeves rolled up high above the elbows. Her love of children and all that is small and helpless shows in the kind creases around her eyes. Many creatures come within the scope of her care; the plants and lizards, the pregnant cat and stray puppies that appear from time to time out of the jungle to take residence at Baan Unrak - the house of happiness. She has a tendency to focus her attention on the most introverted of the children who have been given to the home from disintegrating tribal families.

From the time of mounting the bike together, the children haven't stopped chattering to Didi about their day; what they have learnt during

kindergarten, and how they will fill their afternoon. Once inside the gates of the home, their parrot-like twittering mingles into the noises of laughter and squeals that echo around the courtyard. For it's the rainy season and the children's play space is along the ample balcony, covered by grass thatched eaves where small birds and mice are also busy making winter homes. From across the rain-drenched quadrangle, frogs join the twittering sounds. A delightful choir of Mother Nature's voice and her children's.

The small kindergarten is newly located inside rented rooms of a local guesthouse. As the number of youngsters in the children's home swelled, the need for their education became pressing. Due to boredom and overcrowding they were becoming

grizzly and demanding. Didi Ananda Anuraga, a Norwegian nun and volunteer in the home, recognised that these pre-schoolers needed their own special learning space. Given the financial constraints of the home, she began the school in a temporary location. The classroom space consists of just two rooms and a bathroom with a minimum of furniture or recourses. A few shelves, a threadbare carpet that barely covers the concrete floor, and a low table for the children's

working area. Outside on the veranda is the sandbox and a hose where the water source is found.

Having worked in schools across Europe and the richer quarters of Asia, my heart sank when Didi proudly opened the door to this latest endeavour. Humble beginnings, I mused as she rushed headlong into a monologue of the plans she had for improvement. Despite my reservations, she managed to engage my imagination in the potential of her vision. Didi outlined a beautiful school that was in the making, and this pre-school class was to be the foundations of an innovative education for the children of Baan Anrak home, and the local villagers.



Didi Ananda Anuraga observed the necessity of starting a school in an area where education is the key to a child's future. Those few teenagers who pass the National Thai exams with high marks may warrant a college scholarship and dream of relocation and employment in city based companies. There are few job opportunities in the area of the home, as most of the children were belonging to the different tribes who lived within the jungle. Those not enrolled into higher education will do as the previous generations of the area - make a meagre living selling foodstuffs or tending animals, continuing family structures in an area on the Thai Burma border where daily subsistence is the challenge of most parents. Sadly, I saw the old traditions crumbling before our eyes, as in the market place and throughout the village televisions are a focal point. The advertisements display a world where fast cars, fancy clothes and glamorous lives can be lived by some miraculous turn in fate. The illusion painted daily upon the screen may remove the sting of poverty for a moment, but does little to assist the children to seek out solutions to the current social and economic crises which they will soon face as young adults.

While discussing the situation with Didi the conclusion was quickly reached. In this environment, Neo-Humanistic Education can enlighten the children to use their minds in a new way. The education of Thailand is not preparing them to think beyond their immediate environment of family and financial concerns. The wider potential of the local area is not being discovered nor is the inner wealth of its inhabitants. Didi's vision was clear. To bring change to the minds of the children in the home, and once evidenced, extend this education out to



the local people's community. We brainstormed together the problems of training the teachers, the necessity for classroom materials, and wondered how the school could proceed. We decided to tackle the area of classroom management and use Montessori style practical life materials, to break new ground with the teachers. In Thailand, as in most of Southeast Asia, teachers are trained only in the chalk and talk methods. To allow the children freedom through creative expression is unknown and even threatening for them. We felt that creating a Montessori environment could work as a stepping stone to expanding their teaching practices.

Next time Didi Ananda Anuraga started up the motor scooter, it was with me on the back. We'd drawn up a shopping list of simple items; sponges, pegs, rubber bands, rice and beans, cotton wool, flannels, plastic and rattan trays, local stones, wooden spoons and a mirror. We were about to train the teachers in practical life activities for the four and five year olds.

By late afternoon we were ready and assembled in the classroom, the teachers around the table, looking curiously at the plastic shopping bags brimming with household items.

Teaching is easy, I began to explain to them. Just make a pattern, a ritual with the children of the things that you know how to do. First, simplify the task and as they gain the skill, make a challenge for them. I showed the teachers the example of spooning dry rice from one bowl into another, then developing co-ordination by lifting beans with tweezers and finally allowing the child the chance to fill pitchers with water and pour without spilling a drop. There was a sceptical silence in the room. "But the children will make a



mess on the floor!" One teacher exclaimed laughingly after a few minutes of practice with the water tray. "Of course, she was right," I mused. Unless the teachers illustrate the concentration needed to do these simple tasks, the children will jump from one tray to the next, mix the items and leave a mess of beans and sand for the teacher to sweep from under the table.

Didi Ananda Anuraga immediately recognised the problem. It was one thing for me to give workshops to the teachers about Neo-Humanist concepts in education, but without classroom training these new ideas would not be implemented. The teachers needed training in classroom management. In order to grasp these ideas, they needed to see an example. Didi took that task on, and for the following weeks she arrived in the kindergarten in time for morning circle and remained for the hours of Montessori practical life.

Within a few days she was seeing the results and the teachers were excitedly asking for more ideas and materials as the week passed. At the end of that time there was a marked difference in the kindergarten. The children who had been viewing the environment as another indoor playground, were beginning to recognise the different spaces that were in rudimentary design. The home corner started to take shape, albeit it being only a round table with a wooden tea set upon it, and a cloth overhanging to give the impression of a roof. The children saw it as a 'home' for entertaining guests, and the dress up box was put to use for the hosts. Shuddha particularly was excited. She sat the children down in a circle for make believe afternoon tea insisting that they drink from the tiny teacups and pass the biscuits.

The days passed and I was asked for more materials to control. The children were now using the tray system and perfecting each task with a rapid speed which required an equal pace of progress from the equipment. As their control with water grew, we were able to introduce sponge and dye painting. With the trays, sewing and actual food preparation came within the grasp of small nimble fingers. The chalk drawings grew from the confines of the small slate boards and began to spill across the concrete veranda. The



children's confidence and imaginations were developing. And to the teachers' surprise as their horizons broadened, so too there was a marked improvement in their behaviour. They were learning responsibility and aptitude in their work.

Within the two weeks of my visit, Didi was showing that through observation of each child's behaviour, and deep reflection upon their character, she was able to find the matching response that would guide, rather than repress the child's expression. The teachers watched as a noisy impetuous child quieted down and became absorbed in artistic activities. A child who was previously of the bullying type requested that books be read, and would sit contentedly in the circle listening and asking relevant questions. During snack the teachers job was simply to supervise the cleanup and preparation, as the children organised the plates and equal distribution of biscuits.

By the end of the day, eight excited children formed a line, bade the teachers goodbye and in an orderly fashion taking bags and extra clothes, they filed outside to return home.

The foundations had been set. The room exuded an order and simple charm that had been previously lacking. Within a short time, Didi had imparted to the local teachers that something more was expected from the pre-school, and that their abilities would develop in time, with the children's education. The school is becoming a training ground, not only for the children, but a place where teachers can dismantle old concepts of learning, and create an environment of discovery based on warmth, humour and nurturing trust. A place for children to grow.

Mountainous Monterrey!

Jardin de Ninos
Buenaventuranza
Santa Catarina,
Monterrey, Mexico

by Didi Ananda
Nirupama



The kindergarten in Monterrey, Mexico was started 20 years ago in a location other than the present one. So far, no one remembers where the exact place was. In the surrounding area there are about 6 kindergartens that run privately. Despite the competition, the popularity of our kindergarten is increasing positively. Every school day, I see not less than two parents coming for enrolment and we have about the same number on the waiting list as are presently enrolled; such is the potential of the school here in Santa Catarina, Monterrey.

Late morning gives a magnificent view of the mountainous Monterrey, just at the back of the school. That's when the sky is dark blue and the sun is its fullest. It's an exhilarating scene indeed! One could just wonder and watch the mountains at day time and stars at night by the rooftop when there is no rain. At times, I watch the clouds climbing down the mountain from the other side, to the sunny side. It is like when you gently pour hot water from the top of a cone-shaped object, where the vapour just runs down to the ground; it's magical!

Monday morning starts with the children dressed in white, with a red chequered apron on top. This is the state uniform and it is required that it be worn particularly on this day of the week. A flag ceremony is performed with all the children and teachers where they sing the national anthem and salute the flag. One boy holds the Mexican flag with 6 more children chosen to form a squad.



Most children who attend the school have proper housing and clothes with basic facilities such as light, water and cooking gas. At present there are 83 children in the school, which is divided into three classes, first (age 4), second (age 5) and third (age 6). There are 5 teachers and one bookkeeper and a cleaner. Above the school (second floor) is the LFT PWSA Training Centre which at the moment serves as a residence as well. It has its own private stairs and bathroom and three rooms.

The school had suffered much crisis in the past mainly with administration and finances, to the extent that we almost lost everything. So many unpleasant things happened in the past that affected the movement of the present school set-up. One was that due to lack of funds, the school building and equipment was not properly maintained and slowly fell to ruin. We lost many children in the school and the reputation was not favourable for a while.



But last year something miraculous happened when Didi Ananda Usa took initiative to repair the building and make the much needed changes. Now the school really looks new again and fresh and spacious. Not a trace of 20 years of neglect is visible in Calle Hueman. Didi appointed Sushila, a young local margii as Director. She volunteered to lead and willingly took the Directorship with Didi's guidance. It has just been a few months since she took over and established her team of staff members together with some young mothers. Didi put tremendous effort to bring the school into a good repair and with her financial help as well as other Didis & some Margiis, she bought materials, tools for making chairs and tables and other furniture and tiles for the floor. One young man, a 20-year-old carpenter, volunteered to make the chairs, tables, and shelves and comes every day to the school to work. He has as an assistant, a 13 years old boy who was sent to the school for his therapy, and has to do concrete physical work. It needs a good team of workers and a whole hearted spirit to bring the infrastructure of the project up once again, and with the present team, eventually the ideal Neo-Humanist school of Mexico will take shape.

There is a big future for the kindergarten in Monterrey. The administration is in full swing making many positive changes with staffing and training in NHE. The biggest challenge now is for the new people to adopt the new system of education. There is a strong Christian influence in this country, and the government is not supportive and is intolerant of ideals other than Christianity. Meditation and Yoga are something that we want to include in the daily routine for the children. I understand that there is a huge task ahead of us, but we just want to let you all know that we will go for it, without any hesitation or doubt. Right now the teachers and director are working hard trying to learn and apply the system slowly.



One day, one little girl asked me where do I live? I said upstairs, and she asked from where did I climb up, as the cemented stairs were just removed from the building and a new unfinished set was placed behind the school. There is a plan to expand the school by adding three more rooms, as well as start another session of the school in the afternoon for more kids, as the demand is really high. We have extended the classes to 1pm, making it a 4 hour program; before it was just three hours. We are trying hard to do some fund-raising to support the expansion as well as in general to take care of the school

with the aim of making it a Neo-Humanist School of Ananda Marga.

Starting a Kindergarten "YOGA-GAN", Israel

By Radhika

Original version printed in "Arghya", the WWD Qhaira newsletter

How did the idea to open a kindergarten start?

Several months before returning to Israel from a two year trip around the world, I started to think how it would be possible to start an alternative kindergarten. I envisioned a school in which children could experience wide and diverse freedom of action and a variety of ways of self-expression. Children would be treated with respect and given more attention and love than most kindergartens I encountered during my work and observation.

It was clear to me that I wanted to combine my two loves - children and an alternative way of life. But I didn't know how or where to do this, nor where the finances would come from. Several months after coming back to Israel, I found Ananda Marga through my sister Amrta. Group meditation was held in her house, and there I met for the first time Didi Ananda Rainjana. It didn't take a long time after that to discover and connect to Neo - Humanist Education. I was happy to find that my own ideas about education were fitting exactly into the Neo-humanist system of education, so I started to read and prepare myself.

How to open a kindergarten with no funds?

At the A.M. conference, two years ago, we expressed the idea of opening a kindergarten, and the response was fast. Didi Ananda Rainjana came and helped us every step of the way to guide us, and remind us that miracles do happen! It is now the second year that "Yoga-Gan" is running. It is quite hard to believe, since this project opened with extremely low resources and no experience in managing a kindergarten. But what we had - we had in abundance: a strong will to contribute to changing the society, a clear idea of what kind of education we wanted to



*The children learn about fire and paint it
(there is fire in the pot)*

provide for the children, good co-operation between the founders, a strong belief that it was going to happen and a lot of love for the children.

It took many months to find a suitable house and a landlord that would agree to rent his place for a kindergarten, and during this time, Didi Ananda Rainjana, Amrta and I got ready for the opening day. This process involved studying Neo-Humanist Education and collecting equipment for the kindergarten. One day, for example, we found a ladder for children to climb on, thrown out at the garbage site. The next day, at the same place we found a tin of green colour paint, clearly to paint the ladder. Immediately we "planted" the ladder in the yard. Friends donated books and toys. We took from carpet shops samples of carpets that they didn't need, stitched them together and ended up with colourful carpets. We found a frame that someone had thrown away and created from it a "flannel board". We found wood beams and built a chest and a bench for the children. We purchased second hand furniture and games at a low price from kindergartens that didn't need them any more, and this is how we started.

We looked for children in any place possible using a minimal budget, and with the help of Baba's love, we started the first year with 8 children, and ended it with 12 children. During the first year we learned a lot from the children, from our experience and from the Diploma Programme in Neo - Humanist Education, that the three of us enrolled in. The second year started and we were more experienced, so it was easier. We started to use the "Circle of Love" curriculum and the study program became richer.

What are the main values to implement in the kindergarten?

Living our life as Ananda Margiis allows us to manage the kindergarten with love and growth with the many guidelines we were given for moral and spiritual development. All that was needed was for us to live what we understood, with the children, and to keep on learning.

Three main points guide us: respect and love for all, co-operation and self responsibility. We address the children like we address our friends, at eye level. There is no coercion or forcing at the kindergarten and the children learn to accept and not hurt the environment, the others or themselves. We live with the children as a family without instilling any superiority or inferiority complex. We suggest options to the children instead of giving them orders; we use humour to solve difficulties. The children and teachers experience relaxing hours, smiles, dances, singing, and hugs. Activities and learning are guided by interest and curiosity, not by dry memorising.

How to implement the ideas in every day life?

The Neo-Humanistic system of education includes all the aspects of the child, on the physical, mental and spiritual levels.

Nutrition

Nutrition is a main component in the life of developing and growing children. The food served is healthy and vegetarian and the children eat food that is rich with minerals and vitamins,

that we cook every day. The children who at first refused to touch vegetables, love to eat them now and they got to love soya and tofu. We saw significant improvements in the physical function of some of the children; children who were too fat, due to excess consumption of sugar, got balanced, the health of an asthmatic child improved so much, and also there were changes in their mood and appetite. Mothers are surprised, and ask me for recipes, so that their children will eat at home as they eat in the kindergarten.

A Neo-Humanist Curriculum

We use the manual "Circle of Love", which has an elaborate, rich and interesting yearly program. It is designed for children a bit older than ours, so we changed it and moulded it to fit the children. Didi Ananda Rainjana, Amrta and I, work in co-operation to prepare the subjects. That makes my work easier in teaching the children. This co-operation is very needed. Didi and Amrta prepare the background before bringing the subject. They translate the stories and songs, prepare suggestions for activities like dancing, drama, relaxation, discussion, creativity work, and prepare posters for the theme board, so that I get a clear subject that I deliver to the children in an interesting way, accompanied with other songs, talks and activities.

The program is fascinating and made of 10 themes: God, ether, air, fire, water, earth (the 5 elements), plants, animals, people, saints (which leads to god again). The children are fascinated by the themes; their perception is becoming wider. When learning about ether-space, they look for the moon and the stars and understand that we live in infinite space. They understand the relation between planet earth and the sun, they understand that wind is air that is moving (don't forget they are 2-2 ½ years old), they understand that there is air between us, that we are united, they accept god as love and the force of life, and know that He is everywhere. It is wonderful to see their understandings. When I just read the program, I was afraid that the children would not be able to catch abstract concepts, but I tell you, it's amazing, it is so easy to deliver them the message, and they teach me

how to really understand, not just to know. They are wonderful teachers.

In addition to this rich program, we add themes like local holidays, seasons of the year, new baby born in the family, and more, according to life's dynamics.



As part of our animal program, the children learn, see and touch different animals.

Caring for Plants and Animals

We plant and take care of the plants in the garden, take care of "Madhu" our dog, and meet every week a different animal. This teaches the children to know plants and animals, to take proper care of them and share love with them. Children who were afraid of animals are now cuddling Madhu and happy to meet her when they come. They like to feed her and give her water. This is our way to express love and respect for plants and animals.

Daily Schedule

The schedule is most important for both children and staff. For the staff it allows them to work in a pre-arranged way, to plan how to put together different ideas in our life and express them as a natural part in the daily activity. For children, it is important to know what is coming next. It gives them a sense of security. Never the less, we are flexible and may prolong or shorten a certain

activity, by listening to the children needs. When there are several activity centres simultaneously, it helps the children to move freely, according to their interest and concentration level.

An Example of a Daily Schedule

Circle of Love:

Love, feeling of unity and asanas

When the children come in the morning, they have free movement between the various activity corners of the kindergarten, which are shaped to fit the height and comfort of the children. Then comes the time to start "Circle of Love", our morning meeting, to which I invite the children by singing or by guitar playing. They gather happily and can't wait to start. The meeting takes 20-30 minutes, which is a long time in comparison to other kindergartens. The level of concentration of "Yoga Gan" children is high, mainly because the activity is interesting and speaks to their body, mind and soul. I open by playing and singing Kiirtan on the guitar, and then bless every child saying "good morning". Each and everyone answers, and at the end, we all sing "Baba Nam Kevalam". We sing morning songs and then comes a part the children enjoy so much - asanas (yoga postures). We practice at least 5-6 positions, accompanied with songs or story. We massage ourselves and get closer to a circle of one big hug to sing: How good and pleasant to sit together, all brothers and sisters. Parents have told us that their child collects all the family members every evening, and guides them in a complete "Circle of Love" with all the songs and asanas. Other parents tell us that their children sing all the time, since they joined "Yoga Gan". No doubt the children are enjoying.

Breakfast - healthy nutrition, education to hygiene and taking care of the environment

At the end of "Circle of Love", we invite the children, by song, to wash hands and face and go to eat. The children run and love this "ceremony". We sing Kiirtan together before eating, and the children enjoy giving plates and spoons to each other - an expression of co-operation and caring for others. After breakfast, through a song, the children are invited to take part in cleaning the eating space, with small brooms and rags. In this

way they can be responsible for cleaning their environment.

Activities - developing physical, mental, emotional and spiritual abilities.

There are three kinds of activities every day:

- Creative - every day of the week we use different materials: clay, paint with wax, chalk, finger painting, gluing, dough, cutting...we combine the theme we learned that day in the creative work.
- Building - Lego, big or small cubes, puzzles, adjusting shapes, colours etc.
- Sensori-motor - dance, hoops, balance beam, drama, buttoning, zipping, ...

All this is important to develop the senses, co-ordination, motor organs, creativity, self-esteem, and more.

Free activity

According to the weather, the children are active for an hour, in the yard, or inside, doing what they like. At this time the staff stands aside and intervenes only at times of strong conflict. It is a time I enjoy very much, watching to see how they internalise the Neo-Humanist way. Many times I see children, who at this age are considered to be at their self-centred stage, happily help their friends or sing Kiirtan to dolls. It's a great time for personal talks, hugs and listening. One day I saw two children, still unable to speak, play: one was lying on the floor and the other helped him up, and then they switched, for several minutes. Every time they helped each other - they burst into laughter and enjoyment. From observing them I learned how rich and interesting their world is, and I learned not to talk much in their company, and not to overload the day, but to allow more space for the children to act and initiate by themselves.

Kiirtan and a story

We meet at the story corner, sing Kiirtan and tell a story. The stories are related to the theme we worked on that day, and they always carry social/spiritual value.

Lunch

After washing, we sing Kiirtan, bless the food and eat nutritious delicious food.

Noontime sleep

Before the children fall asleep, I sing then Kiirtan, and stay/hug every child. Parents appreciate the change in the sleeping habits of their children - they sleep better, continuously, and like to sleep while hugging their parents.

Waking up and departure

Every child wakes up, gets a hug, eat a fruit and a sandwich and says bye-bye and goes with his parent.

I am happy that I got connected to Neo-Humanism and to yoga. My learning is interesting and diverse. You can all guess there are also difficulties, fears and some light clashes, but the work together with Didi and Amrta support and push me forward very much. I am very happy that this is what I do, and I feel my progress in different aspects of my life. I am happy to take part in influencing the education of children who will lead the world, real soon. I feel my work is extremely important. I love to reach "Yoga Gan" in the morning, and in spite of the long hours, there is a lot of joy, satisfaction and love.

A last tip for closing - like in every thing you want to do -- determination and dedication. Anyone who would like to contact me, to get/give ideas and advice, I will be very happy: <radhika@actcom.co.il>

THE STORY OF THE NEO-HUMANIST SCHOOL OF LOME, TOGO

By Dada Jayakrsna Brc.

This story was written at the time the school was started last year. Since that time, the school has grown and now has eleven students.

I started missionary work in November, 2000 in Lome, Togo.

Before I started the school, I felt really lonely, anxious, miserable and worthless. I had no friends, no brothers, nor sisters, no cousins, nor niece, no nephews. I was all alone. Though at the time I gave asanas classes, English and philosophy classes, I did feel a strong unhappiness in my heart.

I quarrelled with myself all the time, for I did not want my life to be so cold and colourless. Oh, I can remember the early morning and late evening meditations I did, asking Baba (affectionate name for Supreme Consciousness) to put an end to my torments. I could bear my anguish no more. Anytime I saw children I felt like teaching them something.



Dada Jayakrsna with the first three students in the school

And then the idea came to look for funds to start a school. I sent requests to different people and places, without success. Finally Dada Daneshananda helped me to make a simple proposal and I was given a small grant from the Sectorial Office in Nairobi.

Then I started the school. I got all the things necessary to make the classroom fine. Next I started campaigning for the school in the neighbourhoods. Whenever I met people they often showed fears about our Yoga centre saying that “we fear your religion, and we don’t know if it has something to do with the school, and moreover you are using the temple building for the school, what if a spirit penetrates our children’s mind?”

Nevertheless, some of them promised to send their children. But they did not send them. First I was strong in my determination to start classes, come what may. Many Ananda Marga brothers and sisters discouraged me, and told me to wait for the coming year, as there was no positive response from the people. I did not take their advice. I campaigned for fourteen days more. After ten days I started losing hope. Even at the last day, no child came.

But one good morning an old man came with his daughter. She was called “Grandma” and the school could begin. I was so happy and joyful, that it cannot be described. After the old man left, I

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YOGA ADVENTURES WITH YOUNGER KIDS

YOGA FOR SPRING AND
SUMMER

By Mahjayoti

Elephant

Bend down with the palms of your hands on the floor. Legs are as straight as we can manage. We start the elephant walk by taking 4 steps forward. 4 Steps backward. Repeat "Forward" "Backward". Everyone counts with each step: 1...2...3...4... Very good for spatial awareness and knowing what is going on around us.

Fairies

All stand with palms together over the heart in Standing Namaskar. Then the arms extend straight ahead towards the horizon with fingers pointing away. Next we raise our fairy wings (palms still together) straight up and over our heads towards the sun. Finally we flap our wings very slowly up and down, raising our arms up and down, bringing the fingertips down our sides and again over the head. Fairies can flit around the room if you dare.



Sunflowers

(pictured below)

Squatting down, we are curling our head inwards toward our knees, wrapping our arms around the knees. We are tiny seeds lying deep down in the dark, brown soil.

Slowly our knees begin to straighten and our arms to rise up with the palms together in "Namaskar" over our heads -- as the warm sun and soft rains beckon us to rise, rise up.

We begin to slowly shoot up towards the clear blue sky and warm air. (Palms remain together). As we stand, our faces are smiling as we slowly unfold our petal-arms until they are in a "T" position with elbows slightly bent. (Palms facing up). All sunflowers are facing the teacher (or yoga leader). The teacher lifts his/her arms in a circle over head, fingers interlaced making a sun. The teacher walks to the left.... All sunflowers remain rooted in place but follow the movement of the sun by twisting their torsos and arms in the same direction. Then the sun-teacher walks to the right. All sunflowers follow the sun. Sun-teacher returns to the center. Then the sun goes down. As the Sun-Teacher



sits, symbolizing the setting of the sun, all flowers close their petals by bringing their arms and palms together over the head and close their eyes. This can be repeated.

Interactive Yoga Movement

Students can be divided into two groups. One group are fairies, the other are sunflowers. All fairies will flit to each flower, touching each flower on the head with their magic finger, spreading joy to each and every flower, making certain that every flower receives their gift. No one is left behind.

Dragonfly

Sit down with your legs pulled up. Heels on the floor. Put your fingers around your big toes. Lean backward just a little and stretch your legs in the air, making a "V" with your body. Keep in balance. (Can also be practiced with hands under the knee joints). We are flying!

Grasshopper

Lie on your tummy, place your hands on your back at the waist (or on the floor), palms down with the fingers pointing towards the feet. Keeping your feet together, bend your legs up towards the sky. Raise your head and chest off the floor.



Tree Variations

Stand straight and bring your right foot up, resting the big toe on the floor and heel against the standing trunk-ankle. (More experienced students may bring the foot up on the leg either above or below the knee). Bring palms together into "Namaskar" over the heart. Raise your "Namaskar" above your head, keeping the palms together. Reaching, reaching as far as they can go. Finally releasing and opening the "Namaskar", bringing the arms into a "V" position for the Cosmic Tree. Repeat again on the other trunk.

The Forest

(pictured on this page)

Children are standing in a circle. All arms are extended out to the sides with elbows bent. All palms are facing away from the body. They interconnect... palm to palm ...all the way around the circle. While standing all bring one foot up until it is resting on one knee. Hold the pose but not the breath for 8 counts. A simple song or rhyme can be repeated. Then all change trunks, keeping palms together and putting the other foot on the other knee.



Continued from page 32

The Story of the Neo-Humanist School of Lome, Togo

observed for some time and realised, through the girl, that Baba was everywhere. I was laughing and singing and jubilating in the classroom. The following day she came with her friend. She had just told her to come and have more fun with her new friend "Dada". Two weeks later another little girl, only two years old, came. She is affectionately called Papillon or Butterfly.

By doing physical training and moving outside the school compound with them, I understood the story of creation. I felt the loneliness and the anguish of God before creation and the need for creation, to entertain Himself and to give meaning to things.

I was like God and the little girls were the three Gunas of Prakrti. The first girl in the school was very slow and timid, like Tamoguna. The second girl was dynamic and courageous like Rajoguna.

And the third, the butterfly was very intelligent and subtle and beautiful, like Sattvaguna.

And with this triangle of the three little girls, creation started! And we got more students in the school.

This experience is a very good lesson for me, it has strengthened my faith and confidence in Baba, and made me know that in whatever situation I find myself or whatever task I am allotted, I should not shake with fear, because our faithful friend, Baba, is with us, and will always be with us to show us the path that will lead to victory.

There are many things to do to improve the school, but I do not fear the obstacles, rather we welcome them. We have already sprouted and we will grow and flourish. We know that we will always be with our Beloved, taking part in the divine game. We are happy to serve the Supreme.

Auction Fundraising Event at the Progressive School of Long Island, USA

The Progressive School of Long Island, in the USA, holds an auction each year as a fundraiser for the school. This school and community event is a collective effort of the students, teachers, staff and school community. The following outline of the event was provided by Eric Jacobson, the Director of the school.

Each of our fundraisers has a school theme so that parents attending can also get more in touch with our philosophy. The theme of our auction this year was Art. Every table has samples of framed paintings done by each of the students that parents can take home. The paintings are done in school, the framing is supplied by donation. Each class also offers a creative project to auction. Finally, a creative door prize that was made in school by all the students is offered by free raffle. This year it was a toy chest with every child's hand print. Anyone in attendance has an equal chance of winning it as a reward just for coming.

The meal admission price covers the meal and access to all other aspects of the auction. Seating is prearranged by table; food has been preordered including special meals for vegetarians. We charge about \$5-\$10 above our cost to each person for the meal and offer free admission to all teachers.

The Silent Auction

The Silent Auction, which is set up in the back, consists of items donated by local businesses that are attractively wrapped in themed groupings, such as a fitness package, a baby package, a Yankees package, etc. During the evening people can openly write their bids, the highest bid winning at the end of the night.

The Ticket Auction

Attendees can buy tickets for chances at items less expensive than those found at the Silent Auction. There are dozens of items with baskets attached. You can put as many tickets as you

want in the baskets that interest you. One winning ticket is drawn from the basket for each item sometime during the course of the evening.



Project of 3rd grade class

Entertainment

Teachers or parents can offer a little musical entertainment during the meal

Presentations and Speeches

Presentation and speeches can be made to show off the school's achievements and plans (usually after appetiser salad).

The Project Auction

Each of the creative class projects is auctioned off live (climax of the evening)

Sign up Table

A table is set up for parents to sign up to volunteer future events or committees

Promotions

School tee shirts, water bottles, etc. are sold at a special stand in the hall

Publicity

This is done strictly by volunteers and donations.

We use hand made invitations to publicise the auction, flyers distributed by volunteers to solicit business donations, a program with ads from sponsors, and of course lots of phone calls.

Our average profit is \$25,000 for a school population of 120. Next year our auction will be open to the public with the target of \$50,000 to help us buy our own building.



Project of 2nd grade class

Making a Mural

at the Kyoto, Japan NHE School
By Didi Ananda Kaomodii

The kindergarten door needed repainting, and I wanted to make it bright and welcoming for the 2 - 4 year olds that were arriving each morning. I thought about a mural, with sky and water, mountains, woods and grasslands, so that many varieties of animals and plants could be presented.

The children had favourite animals from the many picture books in the school, so we sat together and chose those best loved while I explained that they would soon be living on our schools' front door. The children immediately became fascinated, and enthusiastically decided on a large number of plants and animals.

Then I drew a rough plan of how the animals would fit into a simple landscape, with a lake in front of a horizon of trees and mountains and the smaller, fluffy mice and rabbits in the foreground snuggled in the corners of the doorframe. The books were taken to the nearest photocopy shop, and the illustrations were enlarged to a suitable size, in black and white (it's cheapest) then the children and I cut them out.

With some of the smaller more detailed animals, (frogs, butterflies, bees and dragonflies, tiny birds and flowers), I took some time to sit at my desk and paint in careful detail, using the original illustrations as a guide. It was easy work, to paint the colour over the black and white photocopies, and the result was very artistic!

When I had enough small animals completed and ready to stick onto the door, I began to paint the door itself, putting large blocks of main colours directly onto its surface and surrounding wooden frame. Blue was used for the lake and a lighter tone for the sky, a rough overlap of different deep green shades for the woodlands, and paler creams and moss colours for the grasses in the foreground. Then, while the paint was still wet (use house acrylic - a mixture of the school acrylics into base white) I quickly stuck all the photocopied cut outs of big flowers and animals into the wet painted



surface. (Acrylic house paint has strong binders which act better than glue!)

The door became immediately interesting. Even though the appliqué were those unpainted photocopies, the colourful background created a beautiful effect. Immediately I received admiring remarks from neighbours and parents arriving at the school.

Over the next weeks, everyone had a turn at filling in the colours on the animals and flowers. I would add details to the faces and bodies of some of the creatures, after the children had completed the main colouring. It became a fun activity for everyone, with mothers and teachers putting their hand to different animals and birds, and smiling after 20 minutes at the result! In this way the front door became a colourful display of everyone's attempts at painting.

The children added the final touches, by pasting the smaller hand painted animals directly onto the door. And it seems that the mural painting had a strong impact upon their memories, for 2 years later, a graduated student returned for a festival. He rushed to the door, pointed to one of the butterflies, and said "That one is mine, I put it there!"

Global NHE News



Suva Sector

Maleny, Australia

By Kamala

The Ananda Marga River School is going very well. We now have well over 100 kids (3 years old to 12), with waiting lists for practically every classroom. We had a very nice closing ceremony at the end of last year (December) which especially featured little family (grades one and two) doing the play from the end of the Circle of Love, with all the kids dressed up as parts of creation and one little boy playing God. Some of the parent musicians added some nice music to it as well.

Also near the end of last year we were delighted to receive the offer of two buildings donated to our school. These are wooden buildings that needed to be moved off site for other reasons, and they are great for us. One is a really large building, which will have two large classrooms, plus three smaller offices (admin, music and a staff meditation room), plus computer room, kitchen, bathrooms, plus wide verandas we are adding on. (This came on trucks in three parts amazingly, and was quite a job to move!) The remodelling is taking a few months, but it will soon be housing our "upper school" of grades 5 to 7, and give them a bit of separate space from the smaller kids. The other building is a smaller three-bedroom house which will be the jagriti for the master unit, and our principal, Dada Ratnadevananda will live there. We put it way high up on stilts so we can build a large meditation hall underneath, so now it is perched up on a bit of a hill, above the other school buildings, all white and heavenly-looking on its stilts (good as the spiritual centre for the school?)

Prabha and Dada are super-busy with expansion of number of kids, plus all this building work. But to ensure they don't get slack, when this is done, last week we were also delighted to receive a government grant of about \$US 15,000 for an extension to our pre-school and kindy!

We've also added some really cool sand play areas, which are very popular with the kids, especially one that has big boulders and palm trees in the middle and really looks adventurous. We started a new "electives" program which is once a month when the kids choose one subject to study all day long. One group went on a long exploration down our creek, another cooked all day (lunch for everyone), other groups did art, etc. The kids really enjoyed it.

Manila Sector

Bangkok, Thailand



A performance was given to yoga students of Amatyakul School by the children of Vimalaya and Sangkhlaburi and a special training session in the yoga exhibition was led by Didi Ananda Anuraga. Rajiv Malik of Hinduism Today witnessed the entire presentation with delight. Dr. Kitiawan and his wife, the Principal of Amatyakul School, were deeply touched also. A donation of 15 bags of rice and a monetary donation was given to the Boys and Girls Children Home. The program ended with a collective meditation by all the children present. Everyone was beaming with smiles and felt peaceful at the end. Mr. Norrapat, founder of Pasinee Kindergarten was impressed too with the great performance and teaching style of the Neo-humanist movement.

Georgetown Sector

Brazil

Sao Paulo

A painting contest in the Didi's school in **Peri Alto** attracted over 100 children. A donation of 100 kilos of food was received and 130 monthly food packages were distributed in a local slum area. Toys and food were distributed to 200 children. Milk is distributed 2 times a week to 90 families. The school received a donation of 20 chairs and 5 fans.

The school in **Guarapiranga (South Sao Paulo)** received funding from the local government enabling an increase of students from 35 to 65. A volunteer program to give help in school activities and improvements brought the participation of 30 parents and sympathisers. Group meditation is held in the Villa Mariana unit every Monday plus yoga and meditation for new people on Wednesdays. A special one day bazaar was held which raised R 1,000 for the two Sao Paulo schools.

Sorocaba

Renovations were done in the school to allow for an increase in attendance from 40 to 50 students.

Brasilia

Renovations were made to the Brasilia School which has met the local government requirements.

Petropolis

A school has been started in Petropolis. The school has now been granted funding from the municipality.

Asuncion, Paraguay By Dada Anirvan

The school is wonderful! Enrolments have increased to 39. We finished last year with only about 15. Parents are slowly becoming involved to help out in the maintenance costs and improve the grounds. We will draw a raffle before Easter. The first prize is a basketful of items the parents themselves brought, like noodles, toys, washing

powder, incense, etc. They have been selling the tickets for about one month and have raised the very impressive total of one hundred thousand guarani (almost US\$15!). According to the teacher the most urgent work necessary in the school was to improve our entrance path from the street. Since the school is in the middle of a slum, parents from outside the slum area are afraid or ashamed to send their children. Our back entrance has good access but is very muddy from underground humidity. It is overflowing with rubbish because actually the top two metres of soil is not soil at all but dumped rubbish from the neighbourhood. There is also a dangerous precipice right alongside the path. All these problems require a carefully planned solution. I have consulted three engineers. All gave different ideas but all agreed it will require significant work and cost. I have begun to bring donations of large rocks using the help of the margiis. I have about 10 to 15 tonnes and require 30-40 tonnes more. I spent about one hundred dollars on tubing and pebbles to solve the problem of the mud. The neighbours are helping. We should finish the tubing this week. The wall to retain the eroding precipice will take at least 1-2 months if I can get the stones. I will make a website with help from the margiis to help get local donations for the school from individual sponsors and small businesses. We can then use this material to present our case professionally to the government for funding for our teacher next year. I have found an excellent contact (during a radio interview) with a man who works for UNICEF. He helped start the Didis school in Abastos ten years ago and is very enthusiastic to help again. He has contacts with the minister of education. If we can get funding, and I'm confident we can, it will relieve the worst of the financial burden. Making small adjustments to an existing vacant unused room (the original classroom) we may also open another grade (children aged 5-6, now we have children aged 3-4). There is also the possibility of opening another shift in the morning.

Juiz de Fora

On the Ananda Kirtana Master Unit the new school building was completed under the direction

of Dada Hariprananda, with a capacity for 100 children.

Potosi, Boliva

In Potosi, construction work is going on for the jagrti school project.

Peru

The Rurapuk project - doll making co-operative is progressing well. Construction work was done in Didi's school.

Delhi Sector



Maharsta

AMPS Convent Arvi, Wardha, Maharsta was started in 1978 and has 350 children and 15 teachers. Volunteers are welcome to help.

Volunteer Opportunity, Orissa, India

Urgently wanted experienced Neo-humanist teacher to work as a volunteer to help set up a new school and train teachers in Kheonjor, Orissa, India for a minimum of three - six months, longer if possible. The school is situated in a rural town in a very beautiful area of Orissa. There are no good schools in the town, so our progressive education system will create a stir in the whole town. Simple food and lodging will be provided, but volunteers should arrange their own transportation to the project. Anyone interested should send a mail with their biodata to malati_uk@yahoo.co.uk.

Bhavnagar, Gujarat

Land has been acquired, and plans are underway for a WWD managed High School. Architectural drawings have been completed and a detailed action plan for the development of the project has been formulated. Thanks go to Kirit Dave and Dada Susmitananda for their support of this project.

Volunteer Needed to Direct a New School in Delhi

In the far outskirts of New Delhi Nari Abhudaya Women's Group is supporting the construction of a new kindergarten. Tishya is the project manager and regularly visits the construction which will serve around 150 children. The idea is that in the mornings children who can afford tuition will be coming to the school and in the afternoon the disadvantaged children for free. Not far from the construction site is a community overshade where the school is meanwhile already operating since many months. Two groups of 50 children are huddled close to each other shivering in the cold, sitting on the floor in front of a teacher and learning their abc and 1-2-3. Several are big but have not attended formal schooling. At noon time they receive a hot meal cooked in the room next to the shed. The hot meal is surely one thing that attracts the children to come in the first place. Tishya is checking the syllabus that the two employed teachers are teaching. The best children are selected and sent on scholarship to the public school. Three big boys just returning from school come and happily greet Tishya. They are proud to be going to school.

A volunteer is needed now to help to direct the school in our Neo-Humanist Education curriculum and train a local person who would then carry on the work. The time for volunteering would need to be at least one year. The volunteer will have room and board at the school and receive some allowance. The school building will be finished in about 3 months.

Kahira Sector

Tirana, Albania

By Ac. Vedaprajananda Avt.

Our kindergarten is operating well with 100 children enrolled. We were not able to open the primary school for this academic year, as was anticipated in the last newsletter, due to the complexity of getting permission from Albania's Ministry of Education. However, we are now in the process of filing the necessary documents and, if we are successful, will be able to open a first and second grade class in September.

Athens, Greece

By Didi Ananda Uttama

We've started a pre-school in Athens. Right now we have 6 children coming a few mornings a week. It's being held in the living room of one of the teachers and we're in the process of looking for a proper house for it. Both the teachers, Lavanya and Vimala, are taking the NHE introductory course.

New York Sector

Managua, Nicaragua

Centro Educativo Ananda Marga

By Dada Visnupremananda

Though Centro Educativo Ananda Marga was established less than two years ago, as a non-profit organisation, it has already helped 203 children to continue their pre-school and primary education. It currently has 90 children enrolled and still more are coming. There are 6 new teachers, 1 person for general cleaning and a night security guard employed. The school goes from Pre-school to Grade Five.

Centro Educativo Ananda Marga is located in the heart of Managua, the capital city of Nicaragua, in an area called Villa Reconciliacion. The name of the area speaks for itself, it is a poor area where the wounds of war-torn Nicaragua are trying to be healed by bringing together to the same community both the former Sandinista rebels and the military officers of the former government, in an attempt to build a new sense of human solidarity, where children will grow up forgetting

the ideological differences of their parents that caused so much suffering to the Nicaraguan people as a whole. The Centre is a non-religious, non-political educational facility that exists to help the poor children of Nicaragua to get education so they can aspire to a better future.

Our hope is that the school fees can cover all running expenses but as it is located in a poor neighbourhood, sometimes parents can not afford the fees. Therefore we have started a sponsorship program for the poorest ones. For details on this sponsorship program you may contact Dada at dada_12_2000@yahoo.com

Hong Kong Sector

Taiwan

Dr. Jitendra Singh, MD visited Taiwan during the month of November and lectured to various audiences throughout Taiwan on topics related to Bio-Psychology as well as Yoga and Health and our scientific system of meditation practice. Highlights of the lecture tour included five classes in Taipei jagrti and two in Tainan, two lectures in Taipei yoga schools, and several public lectures in Tainan, Kaohsiung, and Hualian which were all very well attended. filled with nearly one hundred university students attending. The lecture topics included Preventative Health, Mind and Cakras, Vrittis and Hormones, Science of Sadhana, and other Bio-Psychology topics related to yoga life style.

Nairobi Sector



Students from the Kangemi High School which was featured in the last issue of Gurukula Network

Book Review

Partnership Education in Action

Edited by Dierdre Bucciarelli and Sarah Pirtle

Available from Center for Partnership Studies cpsdel@aol.com or <http://www.great-ideas.org> Price \$15.00

Reviewed by Didi Anandarama

This is a practical resource book based on the partnership philosophy outlined by Riane Eisler in her book "Tomorrow's Children." Partnership education focuses on democratic, caring, non-racist, and gender-balanced ways in co-ordinated co-operation with others and nature. Several authors give valuable insights into Partnership education processes in the first part of the book. The middle part of the book contains many examples of activities and curricula of partnership practices. Many of these practices introduced have been field and time-tested in actual schools and classrooms and are appropriate for many grade levels and cross many disciplinary lines.

The last part of the book gives examples of partnership school culture and organisational structures that can be applied or adapted in your school and contains a variety of self-assessment tools that you can use in your classroom or school.

Sample of a Song Activity: The Cells Start

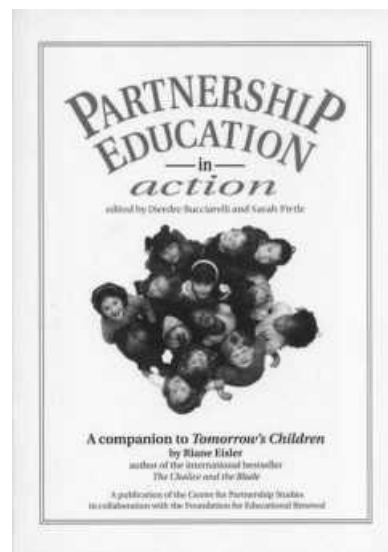
Moving: for grades 2nd through 6th. ; Evolution of earth is taught with a song and timeline. The tune is "The Ants Go Marching", song by Sarah Pirtle

The cells start moving one by one, hurrah, hurrah 2x
Lightning flashes on the sea, and simple cells start to be
And we all keep dancing under the sun. What's yet to come?

You can't fool a molecule, hurrah, hurrah 2x
We'll get genetic memory, and have more creativity.
And we all keep dancing under the sun. What's yet to come?

Jellyfish and worms come in, hurrah, hurrah
To get a backbone is our wish, so with a swish come the first fish.
And we all keep dancing under the sun. What's yet to come?

To leave the sea you know we oughta, hurrah, hurrah



Find a way to carry water, hurrah, hurrah
The ferns and moss in a chain, keep water in their own membrane
And we all keep dancing under the sun. What's yet to come?

Big and little start to soar, hurrah, hurrah
The insects and the dinosaur, hurrah, hurrah.
When the plants start to flower, the mammals can begin their hour.
And gonna make a change heroic, hurrah, hurrah

We'll bring about the Ecozoic, hurrah, hurrah
The earth is teaching how to mend. New life awakes in us again,
So we all keep dancing under the sun, cuz we're what's to come.

"Ecozoic Era" is a new term from Thomas Berry meaning that a new era has to be brought about after the present Cenozoic Era, which is causing species extinction and devastation of biodiversity.

Try These Web Based Resources

Teachers Without Borders <http://www.teacherswithoutborders.org/>

Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) program
<http://www.ghcc.msfc.nasa.gov/overview/education.html>

Jane Goodall's Roots and Shoots Programme <http://www.janegoodall.org/rs/>

New!
CD of Neo-Humanist Children's Songs:
Joyful Things
by Kamala

The children at the Ananda Marga River School in Maleny, Australia sing all the time. From all-school Morning Circle with over 100 children each Monday morning, to Quiet Time each day in the classrooms, the school is always full of music. Over nearly a decade we have gathered an amazing collection of Neo-Humanist children's songs - and we want to share them with

everyone. So we are producing a professional CD of songs that includes 70 of the children's voices, top musicians and some of our most favourite songs. They include many originals such as the title track Joyful Things (written by the Little Family class when they were studying the virtue, "Joy"), originals such as "Friends" by Dada Ratnadevananda, "Children of the Crystal River", "God Shining" (the Yama and Niyama Song) "Precious Child" by Kamala, and "Spread the Love Around" by Mukti Haigh, as well many rounds such as "Trees, Trees" and "The River is Flowing" and many other beautiful songs such as "I Walk in Peace", "Lift Our Hearts", and more !



This album has been a true school "community" project. On one day we set up a recording studio in one of the classrooms and recorded three of the classes singing their favourite songs (including the 4/5 year old pre-school kids!). We also had two small "choirs" of older children who came up to the recording studio that was temporarily set up at my house on the Master Unit (near the school). They each put in three hours recording the songs they had been practising. It was such a good experience for all the children to see how music is recorded, and the effort it takes to get it all right. Our school community also has a good number of professional musician parents, and even teachers, so we have a number of different adult singers and instrumentalists who donated their time to the album (including Dada Ratnadevananda, our school principal, playing tuba on the title track!)

The album is a fundraiser for the school. 100% of the income from the CDs sold by the school will go towards the school music program. Income from sales through the AM network around the world will (hopefully!) pay for recording and duplicating the album.

For details, please contact me on inrsong@ozemail.com.au. Discounts can be arranged for bulk album orders, and arrangements can be made to fit to the economic capacity of various sectors. The album should be ready for distribution by the end of May.

Fly Like Eagles
CD of Songs from Circle Time
By Manorainjana

This beautiful CD features 17 Neo-humanist songs sung by children of Manorainjana's elementary age classroom. If you are interested in obtaining a copy, please contact Manorainjana at: [<fitzbus@ozemail.com.au>](mailto:fitzbus@ozemail.com.au)



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



The Circle of Love was compiled in 1982 in Manila, Philippines by Didi Anandamitra with artwork by Didi Anandarama and Didi Rainjita. It has served as a manual for Early Childhood teachers around the world for the past 20 years, and has been translated into many languages. Didi Anandamitra collected these stories, activities and songs from Ananda Marga schools and other sources. A recording of the over 300 songs sung by Rukmini accompanied the manual.

By popular demand and thanks to Mahajyoti and Arun this CD version of the manual is now available. The original songs have been retrieved and converted to MP3 format thanks to Giridhara. Thanks also to Ainjali for composing new tunes to replace missing ones.

The manual is available as six PDF files which can be read directly from your computer or printed. To view these PDF files you will need Acrobat Reader Version 4.0 or later which can be downloaded for free.

The Circle of Love Songs are available as 307 MP3 music files which can be copied onto to your hard drive if desired. You will need MP3 player software for your computer, which can be downloaded for free, to be able to listen to these songs. Downloading instructions are included.

Cost \$10 US plus shipping.

To obtain a copy, please write to: <amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>

Circle of Love Songs
on Music CDs

The Circle of Love manual includes over 300 songs for children. Through the efforts of Giridhara, the original tapes have now been transferred to a set of four music CDs.

This set of four CDs is available for \$20 plus shipping

To obtain copies, please write to: <amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>.

Neo-Humanist Education

Universal Love, Holistic Self Development, Values, Applied Learning

"Just to show their sincerity of purpose, just to show that they are developed human beings, sometimes people speak of disarmament. They say there should be a check, a control over the manufacturing of deadly weapons. They express this idea vocally, but internally they plan for more and more deadly weapons, just to keep others enslaved. This is nothing but the worst type of brutality.

No doubt it would be good if humanitarian feelings would serve as a moral check in the competition of weapons, but human feelings cannot check the internal fighting now prevalent amongst human beings. For this purpose we should have a two-fold approach. For the purpose of training this turbulent mind, what is to be done? One must receive proper education -- not ordinary education, but Neo-Humanist Education. This will help human beings in training the mind. And at the same time spiritual practice should be performed to remold the old structure of the mind. This is what we require most."

Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar



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