



# GURUKULA NETWORK

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

Issue 18 May 2004  
FULL EDITION

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*Kulapati of Ananda Marga Gurukula gave the Renaissance Universal speech at the DMS held in Fiesch, Switzerland. See page for details . Here pictured with participants on a trip to the glacier on Eggishorn Mountain.*

## **Gurukula Network**

Newsletter and Journal of  
Neo-Humanist Schools  
and 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 2004 issue**

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

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**Ananda Marga Gurukula**

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

**Neo-Humanist Education**

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

**Teacher Resources**

[www.nhe.gurukul.edu/resources.html](http://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. Priyaksnananda Avt.  
**WWD - Global Education In-charge** Avtk. Ananda Prajina Ac.



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

## **Ananda Marga Gurukula**

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

## **AMGK Taiwan**

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

## **CNS – Centers for Neohumanist Studies**

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## **Music College at Uma Nivas**

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

## **Acupunture Institute at Ananda Nagar**

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

## **Neo-Humanist Education**

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

## **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](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.nhe.gurukul.edu/distancelearning).

## **Standards Available**

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

## **Volunteers for Your Project**

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

## **New AMGK Publications**

An Ananda Marga dictionary compiled by Dada Premamayananda has been published under the guidance of AMGK Publications in Bangkok. The book has 160 pages and contains more than 1500 entries. Order at: [amdictionary@eudoramail.com](mailto:amdictionary@eudoramail.com). The cost is \$6 wholesale, and \$12 resale.

There are several new CDs and a Poster for sale. Powerpoint Resource n1 and DVD Resource n1 are a CD collection of powerpoints and videos useful for teacher training and introductory lectures on NHE. Please see details on the last page.

## **Available Soon**

Mita Chen (a reputed yoga instructor in Kuala Lumpur) and Carol Yip (a physical-therapist) are jointly producing a book on Yoga Warm Ups. It will be published by AMGK Publications in Malaysia soon.

## **Spanish Translations**

Didi Ananda Anuradha is coordinating the translation of NHE material into Spanish. Currently work is almost completed on translating the NHE Introductory Programme. If you have any other NHE material already translated, or if you are interested to help with this project either in translating or financial support, please contact Didi at: <[wisdom@racsa.co.cr](mailto:wisdom@racsa.co.cr)>

# **The First International Training in Neohumanist Sustainability**

**August, 2004**

**offered by Didi Ananda Prama  
at Sunrise Farm**

**Ananda Bharati Master Unit, Ireland**

Programs at the Sunrise Farm are designed to educate youth for health, happiness, sustainability and service, with neohumanism as the base for all activities, whether growing food, building or interacting with others. This first international training is geared at preparing young people for work as volunteers in Neohumanist projects around the world. Participants will be trained in:

- Sustainable development – including alternative technologies for building
- Yoga and meditation
- Health
- Neohumanism in practice – breaking down prejudices and learning communication skills
- Emergency first aid
- Skills needed for working in third world countries
- Bio-intensive organic vegetable growing
- Vegetarian cooking

Sunrise Farm has been in existence for 12 years, and is located in Ireland on 39 acres of rolling hillside, with 10 acres of pine trees. The pastures are grazed by the neighboring 60 horses. To date many work camps have taken place on the master unit. Volunteers have come and worked the gardens and helped with building. Work camps coming up this summer include building eco toilets (June), putting in a medicinal garden, building sandbag domes with Dada Krpasundarananda (August 5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>), followed by cord wood construction and tree plantation (September). Volunteers are expected from Finland, Denmark, Japan, Poland, Czech, France, Ireland and Germany.

For more details on the International Training please write to:  
Didi Ananda Prama <sunrisefarm@eircom.net>

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## **Research Project on the Layers of the Mind**

A three year research project on the development of the Layers of the Mind in children aged up to 6 is commencing in Berlin Sector among four schools, several of which have been in operation for many years. Participants are Yadhurani from the Holland School, Didi Ananda Bhadra from Sweden, Kusumita from Norway and Didi Ananda Nityabhakti from Denmark. They will share knowledge, observations and exchange teachers in efforts to document and present a practical theory of early child development based on the layers of the mind. Updates of their research efforts will be shared through Gurukula Network.

### ***Ananda Marga Gurukla in Fiesch***

*From April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2004 to May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2004, members of Ananda Marga Gurukula participated in the Global DMS held on the occasion of 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founder of Ananda Marga Gurukul's (Rev. Baba) visit to Switzerland. Kulapati (Chancellor, Dada Shambhushviananda, ) of Ananda Marga Gurukula was the Central Representative and gave two Presidential Speeches on that occasion. Following is a summary of his first speech delivered from the platform of Renaissance Universal on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004.*



## **The Predicament of Human Society and our Role**

We are holding this Dharma Maha Sammelen in Fiesch, Switzerland as a historical replay of one of the greatest events from the spiritual history of this planet. It was here that the founding President of Renaissance Universal revealed much significant information about the Alpine civilization and held Dharma Maha Cakra on His birthday for the first time. It is wonderful to see so many devoted spiritual aspirants assembled together from different parts of the globe sharing their devotion, commitment and solidarity for a Higher Purpose in Life. On behalf of Purodha Pramukha (the current spiritual head of Ananda Marga) and Central Committee of Ananda Marga Pracaraka Samgha, I convey my warmest salutation to all present here - many of whom have come from far-off lands. I also convey my warmest Namaskar to all those who had wished to come but were not able to come, and to those who are ceaselessly engaged in the task of building "One Universal Family" free from the lacunas of the past.

This brings me to my allotted theme: The Predicament of Human Society and our Role.

I believe, one of the greatest challenges of our times is; 'How to establish One Human Society free from the defects of the past' - a society, where we can live joyfully and spontaneously, free from the climate of fear or misuse of power, and where each and everyone can have the opportunity to nurture and express their innate potentialities for the good and welfare of all beings.

To date, the story of human civilization has been a tale of a play of instinctual urges and this has led us to a situation where we are divided by hatred and violence; poverty and pollution; dogma and superstitions; disparities and ignorance; and the like. Old habits, Customs and Traditions are usually carried over from one generation to another via our family, religious and educational systems and sociopolitical systems. A collective psychology sums up the trends of an age. Any significant change, therefore, needs to begin with a reflection on what is harmful and what is not? What devours us and what empowers us? What unites us and what tears us apart? A mere palatial change will not be enough today. We need a nuclear revolution i.e., an all-around renaissance in all the strata of life and the guiding principle has to be a new collective psychology based on Universal Love.

First and foremost, we must begin by realizing that 'cultural synthesis' is a reality today and in all parts of the world people from all beliefs and faiths are constantly mingling and inter-mingling. The human family must, therefore, become ready to integrate the best of all that is available in all the traditions of the world. In this task anything that carries the flag of "Conformism" without enlivening our connection with the Eternal Cosmic spirit is bound to fade into oblivion. Jews or Palestinians, Hindus or Muslims, Learned or

Illiterate, Rich or Poor- all are glorious manifestations of the Supreme Consciousness covered by an enamel of geo, socio and pseudo sentiments. The future belongs to the “Cosmic Sentiment” and in that alone lays the “win-win “solutions for all beings.

Second, we have seen an enormous use of brute force in human history. War is the blackest spot in our heritage and it is usually caused by certain vested interests for the benefit of the few. Whatever may have been the approach of our forefathers and ancestors, we need to rise above the use of weapons of massdestruction and replace them with a more dignified treatment of one-another. Violence breeds violence and negativity fuels negativity. Only a positive attitude can transform negative attitudes. No one can deny the need for security from our lower instinctual urges but the rule of ‘reason and love’ is a much stronger weapon. That is why; to be treated well and to treat others with dignity and respect should be the guiding principle in human affairs. The world’s socio-economic-political scenario must also be goaded in that direction. In this context, the ideas of PROUT and Neo-Humanism as propounded by Rev. Shrii P.R.Sarkar can be of immense value. They need to be researched, studied and applied.

Third, there is a lot that we have discovered about ourselves and the world around us and there is a still more to be discovered and brought into use for collective good. Our talented sisters and brothers of the human family will surely be able to contribute. But, what is urgently required is the creation of a proper socio-economic and political environment where the best in humans can be brought out rather than the worst. Again, Neo-humanism can be a great help in this regard.

An organization or an institution may, at any time, be invaded by a tendency that is dangerous to it. That does not mean that the organization or that institution is based on it. One of the greatest dangers in human affairs is “conditioned rigidities” (Dogma). Humans are very prone to this and can easily become “fanatics”, “Saviors”, or “chosen Ones”. This tendency enslaves the “free-spirit” and shackles the human mind to the worst forms of complexes. That is why the people who follow spiritual paths without the primary training or discipline of disengaging their pride (jealousy, avarice, arrogance, self-aggrandizement and the like), frequently encounter sorrow and frustration in the end.

Today, we need, without a doubt, a series of strong positive-institutions in the world to counteract the exploitative machinery of the vested interests. But in the ultimate analysis, it is not the institutions that can free us from the ills of the past but the living examples of enlightened ones; the “bodhi-sattvas” , the siddhas, the exemplary leaders. In a nutshell, we need the institution to nurture and create “God-Centered Leaders”. We can call these God-Centered persons ‘Sadvipras’ or spiritual revolutionaries, or just good people. They will need to possess essential qualities ( *guna-samahar*) which I describe below. In summary, they must be knowledgeable, wise and intelligent (*vidvata’buddhimata*); they must be moral and virtuous (*sa’dhuta’-saralata*); they must be inspirational; confident and commanding; and imbued with dynamicity, (*agragamita’and tejasvita* ).

**1. Knowledgeable ,wise and intelligent-** free from the serpentine noose of intellectual extravaganza; well-read; free thinking; pragmatic; not a mere blind follower of tradition; capable to tap both analytical and intuitional understandings; capable of amending mistakes (*to err is human*); able to formulate and reformulate visions, ideas, plans and programs; not averse to science and technology; visionary (far-sight, foresight and insight); rational; balanced and trained in a neo-humanist stance.

**2. Moral and Virtuous-** well established in yama-niyama, the ethical life-style. The ten moral principles as outlined in yogic scriptures can be traced to give rise to some essential cardinal virtues. For example, ahimsa gives rise to **benevolence**; satya to **truthfulness**; asteya to **justice**; brahmacharya to **love**; aparigraha to **magnanimity**; shaoca to **purity**; santos’a to **contentment**; tapah to **readiness to serve and sacrifice**;

svadhaya to **self-knowledge** and iishvara-Pranidhana to **devotion**. One who becomes established in yama-niyama is likely to become incorruptible; humble; self-restrained; disciplined and a strong supporter of neo-humanist initiatives and actions.

**3. Inspirational-** the attractive stamina, charm and charisma arise from a host of attitudes and ways of living, such as, sense of humor; being easily approachable; skilled in tact, diplomacy and the art of negotiation; friendly, modest; dependable; trustworthy; living a simple lifestyle; loyal; empathetic; possessing a sweet and smiling temperament; neat and cleanly dressed; loyal; free from apathy; maintaining an empowering and nurturing attitude; hardworking and incorrigibly optimistic. All these contribute towards increasing the **IQ (Inspirational Quotient)** of a **God-Centered leader**.

**4. Confident and Commanding-** assertive; decisive; able to guide people and control situations; firm; communicative and articulate; skilled in administrative skills that involve use of *sha'm, da'n, dand'a, bhed, chal, bala, kaoshala.*; able to keep confidentiality in the affairs of family and society; can bring persons of diverse psychologies together; always follows a policy of inclusion and is at peace with Inner Self.

**5. Dynamic-** can take others forward; has “do or die” spirit; fearless; courageous; free from dogma and complexes; hard working; keeps minimum gap between thought word and action (*karma-yogii*); sentimentally attached to ideals (*is'ta* and *adarsha*); can transmute negativity in to positivity and are willing to lead for the sake of a higher purpose.

Human civilization progresses through clashes and cohesions and the stronger tend to dominate the scene until they are replaced by still stronger ones. The strength of the leaders of an age stems from the supportive collective psychology. In the present phase of our social evolution we are facing a vacuum of God Centered psychology. I believe it is one of the foremost responsibilities of each one of us to think deeply as to how we can collectively bring together teachers who can create a new generation of God-Centered leaders out of our children and grand children. This can be called a ‘Sadvipra’ making mission. When the tradition of ‘evolved teachers’ is established, we will have laid the foundations of a universal society based on love. The path of love is the path of interdependence, mutual understanding, cheerfulness, liveliness and joyfulness. Love would have no reason to exist if our happiness did not depend on everything around us and if our happiness could exist on its own. This concept is the rationale for the foundation of Ananda Marga Gurukul, so let us encourage and assist one another in the realization of this task.

In conclusion, we should always remember to make our social life part of spiritual life and not vice versa. The social life in any incarnation is a small subset of our long spiritual journey. If we become conscious of this fact many of the problems of the human ego will fizzle out. Spirituality is universal and fosters unity in diversity. This was the secret of Shrii Shrii Ananda Murtiji’s success in bringing together persons of diverse backgrounds so that they thread together like a garland of incomparably beautiful flowers. He also gave a formula ‘D’ is ‘D’, and ‘E’ is ‘C’, which means Discouraging points of Disunity and Encouraging points of Commonality.

We also sometimes seem to forget the essence of service. Service is a unilateral affair and not a mutual transaction. So, if we begin to build our life based on service we will find ourselves in the zone free from competition and conflicting ego.

Aristotle once said, ‘all knowledge is for action and action is for friendship’. We can take it further and say ‘all knowledge and actions are for self transcendence – for expressing our love for Supreme Consciousness in all its forms.

# AMGK at Ananda Nagar



## Acupuncture College



*Paula Brown, volunteer acupuncturist from Bellingham Washington, Charles Martley (Ciiranjjiiva), Director of clinic and institute, Dada Vishvabodhananda our principal, and some of the second and first year students pictured with donated supplies.*

There have been a number of volunteers from the US since January who are teaching our acupuncture students. Both our teachers and students are learning much from them and are very happy. The volunteers are also enjoying their time.

## Music College at Uma Nivas

Purna and Ishiika have resumed the construction of the Music College at Uma Nivas which they had started last year. Thanks to all those who contributed. The second wing of the building is nearing its completion. They are hoping to finish

the boundary wall and interior finishings as the next phase.

There was a visiting high school student from USA passing by during this period, learning some Prabhat Samgiit dance. Others are invited!







**Meeting with a group of people who wish to establish a Neohumanist School in Belgium. Dada Shambhushivananda gave a power point presentation on NHE.**

## Kulapati's Tour

In the last 6 months, Dada Shambhushivananda's travels have taken him to Asia and Europe where he visited Thailand, Bali, Norway and Sweden.



**Partaking in the Right Livelihood Awards for 2003 Ceremony in Stockholm in the Swedish parliament.**



**Discussion on PROUT in Thailand held at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok Feb 26, 2004**

**Kulapati pointing towards the site for AMGK University in Adhi Mandala, Bali.**



**Students are being introduced to the Center for Neohumanist Studies that has started its operation in Ydrefors, Sweden with classes on yoga, prabhat samgeet and English language. Kulapati gave a talk on Yogic Life Style to over 50 students of the Secondary School in Vimmerby, Smoland which is about 30 kms away from Ydrefors.**



**Talk at the University of Bergen, Norway on PROUT: The Wisdom Path**



**Talk in Stavanger, Norway on Inner Ecology**



*At Adhi Mandala in Sawan, Bali.*

## Ananda Marga Gurukula Bali, Indonesia

Dada Cidatmana is the Principal of Ananda Marga Gurukula Teachers Training College and Tantra Vidyapiitha based in Sawan, Bali.

Under the auspices of the International College of

Neohumanist Studies in Bali, Dr. Dada Cidatmana has so far conducted three "Self-Realization / Leadership" programs in cooperation with Green University of South Korea. Twenty six persons (9 brothers and 17 sisters) have so far undergone this training. Among the participants of these courses are social activists, teachers, labour union leaders and NGO members. Three weeks training sessions were held from November 2, 2003 to Feb 6th, 2004. The program included meditation and asanas practice, spiritual classes, socio-politico-economic classes, health and vegetarian food classes, cultural programs, hiking, gardening, swimming and more. The goal of the program is to generate society leaders.

About twenty yoga enthusiasts from Malaysia and Sister Kanika from Japan spent a few precious days in Bali to go deeper in yoga philosophy and to experience vegetarian yogic life-style. Dada Shambhushivananda, Dada Cidatmana and Sister Mita led the yoga and meditation sessions. Dada Cidatmana and Dada Shambhushivananda made other presentations on Yoga Philosophy and Neo-humanism as well. Twelve sisters got initiated from Didi Ananda Vishvamitra'.



*Nachiketa Ashram (a beautiful location) is currently the site of GK activities in Bali until other proper facilities are arranged.*

*The place has a panoramic view of mountains and a river flowing down the hill. Peaceful and ideal for spiritual activities.*

An immediate program has also been undertaken to build Gurukula Seminar Complex in Singaraja Master Unit until the facilities for Ananda Marga Gurukula University are prepared at Adhi Mandala. Yasyan Ananda Marga Gurukula of Bali has been registered with 9 members.



*A group from South Korea attending Tantra Vidyapiith, Bali for a Spiritual Life Style Training*



*Children from Adhi Mandala cultural group in Bali posing with Dr. Buddissi and Dada Shambhushivananda after a spell-bound performance.*



*Dada Cidatmana hosts the visiting Malaysian group to his Gurukula Training Ashram in Sawan.*

# Ananda Marga Gurukula Academy Taipei, Taiwan

## Teacher Training Camp for Kid's Yoga

Report by Ispita

A Teacher's Training Camp for Kid's Yoga was held from January 17-18, 2004 in Ping-Lin at the water conservation and mountainous area. The camp was attended by 13 people. The instructors, Arunima and Shakuntala are two well known experienced teachers for kid's yoga among margiis in Taiwan.

The temperatures in those two days were especially high for the winter, so we were warm both in body and spirit. Daytime classes were full of music, games and drama, which brought us back to being children again. The nighttime class was a demonstration on a quieter and calmer lesson for the children, and a guidance for deeper meditation.

In the last part of the program, we broke into two discussion groups to plan and demonstrate new lessons. The first demonstration had a more soft and sweet tone. The second was about an adventure in the forest. This experience really helped raise our confidence to become yoga teachers for children.

Arunima is planning a 2 years training course for us now. On March 27, we started the course with a teacher assistance program every Saturday afternoon.



# NHE Workshop and AMGK Meetings in Fiesch

Didi Anandarama gave a workshop on Neo-Humanist Education that was attended by many participants of the Fiesch DMS. News from NHE schools and projects from around the world was shared utilizing a power point presentation embellished by audience sharing. In addition, Didi gave an overview of the Philosophical Foundations and Principles of Neo-Humanist Education as based on the Philosophical Treatise of Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar, entitled “Our Philosophical Treatise”. An outline is included below:



## NHE-Neohumanist Education

Philosophical Foundations	NHE Principles
Oneness of Existence (ontology)	Universal Love
Knowledge (epistemology)	Knowing of Self and World
Cardinal Human Principles (ethics)	Universal Values
Cycle of Creation (metaphysics)	Individual Evolution
Expanded Idea of Mind (psychology)	Holistic development
Meditation (spiritual practices)	Astaunga Yoga

NHE pedagogy evolves out of these principles impacting on child development, learning theory and curriculum. More about this will be shared in future issues of Gurukula Network.

## AMGK Meetings

With the presence of Kulapati of Ananda Marga Gurukula, Dada Shambhushivananda, at the Fiesch DMS, several AMGK meetings were held with old and new participants from around the world. Many new endeavors are in the works and plans were shared. These included:

- Development of Centers for Neohumanist Studies (CNS) in Sweden, Holland, Croatia, Bali, Taiwan and USA
- a Neohumanist Training for volunteers of NHE projects, to be given by Didi Ananda Prama
- expansion of YES manual project into three books, spanning Kindergarten through High School and covering Yoga, Meditation and Values
- a new school in Manchester, England by Lavanya
- a new school in Portugal by Tulasi
- composition of NHE children’s songs by songwriter Rashmii in English, French and Spanish
- fundraising efforts coordinated by Ashok

# ETC at the Zonnelicht School s'Hertogenbosch, Netherlands

By Didi Anandarama

This ETC was attended by the staff of the two Ananda Marga WWD managed schools in the Netherlands, the Zonnelicht School in Hoorn and the Zonnelicht School s'Hertogenbosch, and was held in s'Hertogenbosch. The principal of the two schools is now Didi Ananda Raganuga who recently took over the charges from Didi Ananda Nirmala. The staff of the school is composed of over 30 persons including 9 student teachers who are doing their practical training here. Yadurani has been the Director for 19 years now, she is assisted by her husband, Vidyananda, who does the accounting and various management jobs. The school has presently over 100 children.



The first session of the ETC was a presentation on “The Spirit of Moving Together” recalling elements of emotional competence and life skills that are essential for each member to feel that they are part of the entire school community.



Another workshop was on “The Magic of Real Communication” how to be open and sensitive to each other as colleagues while working together. The teachers welcomed the exercises of being together and tuning into each other more. The spirit of moving together continued into the evening where two persons painted one painting together.

Another session was on meditation for the benefit of the teachers and one on “Circle Time” using the power point presentation “Quiet Time” which is on the CD, Gurukula Resources No. 1. (which will be available soon from AMGK Publications).

The session on story telling was unique in that one drummer in the circle was drumming keeping an atmosphere of suspense in between the teachers taking turns to enter the circle and tell their stories.

A significant session was on “Starting a Primary School” with five persons who have committed to meet regularly and start actively planning. At this session Didi Anandarama showed the power point presentations on the Philosophical Foundations and Principles of NHE. [CD, GK resources no.1]

Last but not least was a detailed discussion based on the many years of observation of children conducted by Yadurani on the development of the Early Childhood years.



# ETC at General Santos Mindanao, Philippines

By Amita, Amrta and Rainjita  
Davao Training Center

An Education Training Camp was held in AMSAI Atis Extension, Our WWD kindergarten of General Santos City, Mindanao, Philippines from 26 to 29 April 2004. About 25 people attended the program. The ETC served as an orientation to newly recruited AMSAI teachers and as a review of Neo-Humanist Education to the senior ones.



Our morning started with painca jainya, asanas class and morning meditation. Our asanas class included "How to teach Yoga to kids" by sister Amita. A wonderful story with asanas brought us to the space where we wanted to be a child again. The beautiful kiirtan music was led by sister Amrta. Both of them were from Davao Training Center

The first workshop was on Teaching Art by Didi Cidrupa. We learned to play with water colors, to Draw with crayons, and how to teach children to write the alphabet using drawing and story telling. Some interesting games and sharing made us feel very free and playful. At the end of the class we collectively drew a mandala with the theme of we are all one universal family.

Our special speaker, Mrs. Ciencia, a very senior kindergarten teacher with more than 30 years experience, taught from her first-hand experience how to care for children of different ages. It wasich was very interesting and important for us to understand children better. Fortunately she also joined all the classes and would add some ways and styles, some songs and dances in each of them. For instance how to do visualization with children: we would feel like we were actually flying on a blue balloon with her guidance. We were grateful to have her stay with us throughout the ETC. We really loved her class and hopefully she will give us another session on this subject in the future. Our supervisor, Mrs. Dolly, taught us about grading systems and lesson plans. Mrs. Rose gave us an idea on the relationship between teacher and parents.

Dada Mantrajapananda, the trainer of Davao training center, gave a talk about the layers of mind and how it connects with education. The latin word for education is "educere", meaning to "lead out". What should we lead out? Our potentialities. To do this we have to properly maintain the body through Vegetarian diet, ( it should be 80% alkaline and 20% acidic from sentient food), fasting, and inner and outer exercise. Dada gave a complete explanation of how to control the conscious mind through yama and niyama in a communicative way. He told us the benefits of meditation are to develop intuition and to increase the ability to think clearly. He explained how Neo- Humanist Education develops both hemispheres of the brain which will bring the highest achievement of humanity; the greatest scientific discoveries and the supra aesthetic sense. We were inspired to be more sincere and disciplined to do spiritual practices because we are going to teach these things to the children.

The story telling on vegetarianism, discussion and debate was led by sister Arunima, with a demonstration on how to cook "vegetarian chicken curry" by Ms Rashmii who cooks delicious food for us and who influenced and encouraged us to be vegetarians. We will remember to not eat our friends.

Last there was an introduction on Prabhat Sam'giita song and dance. Ms Rashmii showed us the beautiful dance. The children can learn to dance it or teachers may create new movements based on the meaning. It is better for children to dance it rather than imitating the latest hit song, as Prabhat Sam'giita has sweet and deep meaning for spiritual development of the child. We closed the program with a visit to one of the most famous schools and the beach nearby.



The most important part of this ETC was our spiritual practices. Our program was filled with blissful vibrations of kiirtan and meditation, from 5 am. till evening. We did asanas morning and evening, practiced kaoshikii, and ate delicious vegetarian food. The teachers were very enthusiastic since this was the first time for them to have a clear explanation and practice on the inner spirit of Neo-Humanist education. The feedback from evaluation was very positive. Everyone said that they very much like meditation, kiirtan, vegetarian food and all the classes that were given. Thank you for the support from Margiis and volunteers, Aditi, Jinieza, Rana, and Asha. By Baba's grace and blessing we had many experiences and gained a lot of energy from the practices. We are ready to teach our future children the best education, Neohumanist Education for their liberation.

Human existence is trifarious. That is, it has three strata -- physical, psychic and spiritual. None of these strata should be neglected. Although the psychic stratum is more important than the physical stratum, even so the physical stratum cannot be ignored. Likewise, the spiritual stratum is more important than the psychic stratum, but the psychic stratum must not be neglected on that account. Cultivation of the psychic stratum also is essential. The mentality of those who do not practise spirituality, but only look after their physical and psychic development, will become crude. Those who are concerned only about their physical development and spiritual elevation but do not work for their mental progress will gradually become psychically inert. The collective intellectual progress of the society will be checked forever. If people do not make an effort to develop physically, the society as a whole will suffer for the lack of strong, healthy men and women. Since that is not desirable at all, there should be equal emphasis to develop in every stratum of life, and there should be a perfect balance in the three strata.

Proper attention should be paid to the physical, psychic and spiritual development of small boys and girls. Just as they sit and study to develop their intellectual capabilities, they should also sit to do their spiritual practices with their parents. That is the way they will develop their spiritual practices. They should take diiks'a' from an a'ca'rya when they grow up. They should practice the lessons of sa'dhana' -- japa, dhya'na, a'sana, pra'n'a'ya'ma, etc. -- along with their regular academic lessons. All that is necessary for their trifarious development, and it must be perfectly balanced. One should remember that the absence of a proper balance will harm not only the individuals, but also the society as a whole.

PR Sarkar



# Liberation of Intellect and Expansion of the Heart

Key note presentation given by Didi Anandarama at the School Connectivity Conference in Macedonia



The School Connectivity Conference in Macedonia was attended by 300 teachers and students from ten countries. The organisers of Christian Relief Services organisers invited Didi Anandarama as the key note presenter. The participants came from 93 schools from the USA and the South Eastern European countries such as Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Romania and Bulgaria. These schools work on a project called School Connectivity. The focus was the use of Information and Communication Technology in schools, exchanging information and linking with other schools and projects via the Internet.

Didi Anandarama gave a workshop on "The Art of Communication as a Global Citizen" which was attended by all participants in nine sessions. She also offered yoga sessions in the morning and evening which were attended by about 15 enthusiastic young people from Bulgaria, Macedonia and Serbia.

Here is a synopsis of the workshop

## THE ART OF COMMUNICATION AS A GLOBAL CITIZEN

### **Understanding what it means to be a global citizen**

What does it mean to be a global citizen?

Participants discussed and shared their images of a global citizen which crystallized in the following:

1. A global citizen has a clear philosophy of life, which is constituted of core values that are cross culturally accepted such as love, tolerance, freedom, truth, fairness, responsibility, unity, respect for life. People may also have their own beliefs and other values that constitute their philosophy of life and influence their goals, thoughts, attitudes and actions. One has to be aware and in alignment with universal values and principles in order to express oneself. A global citizen is thoughtful, informed and responsible and can act on the local, national and international level. This person is rooted in universal beliefs and values that are unifying cross-culturally while at the same time respecting differences in religious,

cultural, national and ethnic expressions and practices.

2. A global citizen has certain life skills that help him or her to be happy, successful and financially independent. Among these life skills, communication skills are essential and part of a lifelong learning. From the discussion it was evident that in order to communicate meaningfully one has to be firmly rooted in one's positive philosophy of life. A global citizen is clear about his or her personal guiding philosophy of life and can express, justify and defend orally and in writing his or her opinion. She/he can contribute to group discussions and creatively collaborate to solutions that bring about social change.

3. A global citizen is able to merge one's interest with the interest of the particular locality one is living in. Most fundamentally, a global citizen continuously works on independent inner development and



practices to expand the radius of his or her love to embrace the entire planet Earth as home and family through thought, word and deed.

### **ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

What are the essential communication skills a global citizen needs to have?

The most important communication skills for lifelong learning are listening, speaking, reading, researching and writing. If one constantly develops these skills one will be successful in one's studies, professional and social life. These skills prepare one to acquire knowledge when one needs to put that knowledge into use.

**Listening** – Active listening correctly understands the other's meaning. I face the person who is speaking, nod my head from time to time or do similar gestures to indicate that I am attentive. I am able to repeat what the speaker said, suspend judgment, and wait before responding. I clarify messages. Whatever the others say I try to hear what they observe, feel, need and request.

### **Communication is expressing and receiving messages**

We express ourselves through the four aspects:

- Observation - I do ...
- Feeling - I feel ...
- Need - I stand for ...
- Request - I would like you ...

We receive empathically in these four aspects:

- Observation - I see you do ...
- Feeling - I sense you feel ...
- Need - I know you need ...
- Request - I know you want ...

**Ask 'how' and 'what' questions** – these questions are open and draw out the other person, they ignite curiosity and discovery. They assist in the manifestation of the solution:

- How do you see this?
- How do you feel about this?
- What do you need/desire about this?
- What are you willing to do, not willing to do?

**Non-verbal expression** – I treat every element of myself reflecting some statement of what I want to say. I check if my body language and external appearance is congruent with the message I want to express. The more I am calm and centred in myself, the more I can perceive the nature of others and the feelings and sentiments underlying their expressions.

**Reading** – If I am reading information for comprehension with the purpose of transmitting it to others, I take notes. I practice to read fast and I

Ron Hyman from Rutgers reported in 1980 that there were 38 teacher questions for every one-student question in the typical American classroom.

Since powerful questioning determines the results of inquiry, we must equip students with questioning skills along with the supply of information access.

pull out important points by identifying main words and phrases. I concentrate on reading for ideas.

**Researching** – The secret to effective research with new electronic information sources is the use of powerful questioning strategies. In fact, questions may be one of the most powerful technologies invented by humans. Questions are the tools, which help us make up our minds, solve problems and make decisions.

Sequence of research: Questions – research plan – gathering info – sort – synthesize – evaluate – revise question – revise plan – gather again – sort – synthesize – evaluate – report.

Effective research results from formulating as many categories of related questions as possible to the main questions. "What do you suppose? Why do you suppose? How do you suppose?" – Students speculate, list suppositions, pose hypotheses and make predictions. This will be revised as information is gathered. This thought process helps to provide a basis for constructing their own answers and making their own meaning from the information they gathered.

**Writing** – Along with listening, inquiring, speaking, reading and searching on the Web, students need integrating writing skills that include summarizing, outlining, and expressing opinions. Writing needs regular practice. For example students can individually choose according to their interest from a list of given topics and find written material on it. In small groups of similar interest they share their findings and discuss for deeper comprehension. They practice summarizing by looking for main points in the material and re-writing them in their own sentences. For outlining students identify main ideas in the article and re-write these main ideas in their own words. They include a sentence supporting each of these main ideas. For expressing personal opinions, beliefs and values students identify main ideas and give their personal reaction to each of these ideas. Students write an essay freely consisting of summary, outline and personal reaction to the topic. **"Less is more."** Can we find truth hiding somewhere in the mountains of information? The best grade now goes to the report, which shows the most original thought and insight. Students who learn to distil and limit information to the most pertinent elements deserve the highest rewards.

## **INTERNAL SKILLS THAT AID IN POSITIVE COMMUNICATION**

**Empathy** – To sense the world from another person's point of view and feel the way they feel. Native American saying goes 'You only know a man when you have walked a mile in his moccasins'. It is stepping into another person's shoes to get a genuine shift of perspective. This incredibly effective framework can transform situations and can resolve all kinds of misunderstandings.

**Acceptance** – Unconditional positive regard, to be able to relate to people as they are, not as they should be or how one would like them to be. It is to be able to accept them with all their faults and failings.



**Integrity** – This means to be honest with oneself and others or to be one with what I think, say verbally or non-verbally and what I do. In short, 'Saying what one means and meaning what one says'. The universal agreement on two major causes of conflict cross culturally is that people who do not say what they mean and people who do not do what they say. The attitude of integrity will show in every external result of one's work and paves the way to excellence.

**Assumptions and Check in** - It is best not assuming what I am seeing is correct without checking in with the other person. It is important to check in first because maybe what I am seeing is not true at all, or only half true, or partially true or completely true, but I will not know until I check in.

**Managing feelings** – I observe, identify correctly, accept and integrate my emotions. I do not repress my emotions. When communicating I share and express emotions with restraint using my rational mind and will. I do not let my emotions sabotage my concentration and pursuit of my goals and ideals.

**Communication styles** – I am knowledgeable and aware of local cultural communication styles which maybe very different to what I am used to.

### Logical decision-making

I analyse the positive and negative sides of the information. If the positive is predominant I will accept it if it is conducive to the benefit and happiness of all beings. Then not only I will support it, but advocate for it, and I will devote myself wholeheartedly to its implementation.

This decision-making leads logically to the practical implementation of a worthwhile idea. It is value-based logic anchored in the principle of benevolence.

### APPLIED INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION SKILLS

**Conflict management** - If I have an issue with someone it is best if I clear it within 24 hours or 3 days, no longer than one week. Conflict that is not addressed directly immediately takes at least 30 hours to clean up because it gets bigger and bigger and there is more to clean up. And I am not to get anyone involved in unless I address it directly to the person, which is a sign of honouring and respecting. This means that I do not engage in gossiping, third partying, building alliances or working behind the scenes, which is the most disrespectful act that we can be involved in. One of the challenges in this time of history is to look at global models that are working and how can we begin to share what is working. How can we become creative problem solvers? One way is to bring forward at least three creative solutions to anything that I see is not working.

**Inquiry** – In schools most of the questioning is from teachers rather than from the students. But the most important questions are those asked by students as they try to make sense out of data and information. Schools need to shift from teaching to learning which calls for independent thinking, exploration, invention and intuitive navigation through the available information.

Smart questions are essential technology for those who venture on to the Information Highway. With strong questioning skills, one can cut past the junk of information and search for insights. The

stronger the questioning is the more effective is the learning.

**Why** do things happen the way they do? - This question requires analysis of cause-and-effect and the relationship between variables. It leads naturally to problem solving (the 'How' question) or to decision-making (the 'Which is best?' question). Why does the sun rise each day? Why does the rain fall? Why do some people throw garbage out into nature? Why do some people steal? Why do some people treat their children badly? Why can't I ask more questions in school?

**How** could things be made better? - This question is the basis for problem solving and synthesis. 'How?'- Questions pull and change things around until a new, better version emerges. How can I improve myself? 'How?' is the inventor's favourite question. How is the question, which enables the climber to reach the Himalayan summit. 'How' are the revolutionary's passion and the hero's faith?

The human spirits cross-culturally wants to contribute, wants to help and wants to be respected. In every collective project I show up with my contributions, talents, experiences and willingness to participate. I do the best job I possibly can. I am committed to excellence not perfection.

- Perfection does not tolerate mistakes.
- Excellence learns from mistakes and goes to a higher standard of effectiveness.

**Which** do I select? - This question requires thoughtful decision-making - a reasoned choice based upon clearly stated criteria and evidence. 'Which?' determines the values, profession I choose and which hobbies I pick for myself? Faced with a moral dilemma I ask 'Which path will I follow?' Confronted by serious indecision I will ask which path will be to everyone's benefit.

The thought process behind asking the right questions helps to provide a basis for constructing their own answers and making their own meaning from the information they gathered.

**Continued on Page 32**

# Neo-Humanist Education at the New Day School Portland, Oregon, USA

By Jyotidhara



The New Day School has worked hard to create an early childhood center which not only provides quality care for young children but also imparts the philosophy and values of Neo-Humanism, the practice of universalism, and brings a spiritual foundation to young children. The New Day School was started in 1978 and we are a non-profit school. We currently enroll children ages 2 to 5 years old. We are open year round and we have three classrooms with a maximum capacity of 45 children, which we will fill in the near future. We have a sliding scale tuition fee based on income, serving a wide range of families in the southeast Portland area. We also take children on government aid programs which makes us an accessible program for many people. People in the community are attracted to our school because of its progressive outlook and our families tend to be radical and socially conscious. Our school is part of a sustainable building conference where people from the community came to help build a sanctuary made out of cob (straw, clay and water ) on our property. We are fortunate to have an amazing and expansive outdoor play space which is a great highlight of our school. In this space we have beautiful organic gardens tended by our beloved gardener, who always involves the children in gardening projects year round. We offer regular community opportunities such as yoga and meditation classes, monthly kiirtan nights, and craft evenings. In this article I would like to share what we believe to be the key aspects of our program which enables us to bring the essence of Neo-Humanism and spiritual awakening to children.

## Neo-Humanism and the Curriculum

The foundation for these children and who they will become is being laid here. How they learn, see the world, feel about the world, their values, and personality is being formed during these early years. Knowing this we have deeply embraced the principles of Neo-Humanism and made this the focal point of our curriculum. We chose the ten principles of Yama and Niyama as the guiding themes in our curriculum year. Overlaying this is an experience of the circle of love, or brahmacakra, and of course this is all brought in accord with the seasons.

The children need to experience the seasonal rhythm of the year because they are so closely connected to the spiritual elements in nature.

*Here is an overview of our school year:*

### **SEPTEMBER Inner Light (Ishvara Pranidhana)**

We begin the year with getting to know each other and the classroom. Our first story introduces the mantra Baba Nam Kevalam and how it can be meaningful in our lives and help us feel that love is all there is. This year we also told the story of The Heart Crystal from the *Circle of Love* book. This story is about a little boy who discovers his own inner light. We begin our exploration of the circle of love with helping children understand and feel a connection with the greatness of a higher spirit.

### **OCTOBER Truthfulness (Satya)**

We celebrate a festival of light at this time of year as we are about to go into the darker season of the year. We chose to expand on the story of the Boy who cried Wolf to bring this theme of truthfulness. We also include stories about autumn and the seeds going to sleep.

### **NOVEMBER Happy-Hearted or Mental Contentment (Santosa)**

We tell stories celebrating the harvest season and one which embodies happy-heartedness is the story of Stone Soup. We have an annual Harvest Festival Fundraiser which the whole school gets involved in every year.

### **DECEMBER Sharing or Non-Stealing (Asteya)**

During this month we begin exploring the element of light and we have a winter celebration where we recognize the many cultures which celebrate light at this time. Mother Holle is a Grimms fairy tale which we adapted to highlight this theme of sharing.

### **JANUARY Helping Hands (Tapa)**

A wonderful story about giving is The Rain of Stars adapted from the Grimms tale Star Money. The doll who played this role in our puppet story made several appearances to our classroom to praise all the children who showed helping hands each day. She has become known as the Rain of Stars fairy.

### **FEBRUARY Cleanliness (Shaoca)**

The story of The Well and the Flame brought this idea to the children. The goddess of the holy well and the sacred flame visits two children who help to clean up the house of a very old man and keep a fire burning in his hearth and they end up cleaning the holy well which had been covered in garbage. The goddess comes back again to offer her wisdom. This wisdom was deeply taken in by one girl who played the goddess in our dramatization. She said this very beautifully to the children, Inside each one of you is a holy well and this is what you must keep clean, for it is full of love and joy. And inside you is also a sacred flame which burns from deep inside your heart. It was a very inspiring moment.

### **MARCH Simple Living (Aparigraha)**

The Fisherman and His Wife is a great story to express this theme. And is a good way to introduce the water element with children

### **APRIL Kind Deeds or Non-Harming (Ahimsa)**

There are two stories we use to express this theme. One is The Queen Bee a Grimms fairy tale we adapted and a favorite story of mine is Hope for the Flowers. Both stories begin our exploration of the earth element beginning with plants and insects.

### **MAY Nature Study (Svadyaya)**

As we continue to explore the natural world of animals and people we will share stories of elevated beings also.

### **JUNE Circle of Love (Brahmacarya)**

And finally the children will hear our culminating story of The Circle of Love.

The children will embrace this philosophy when it is brought to them by teachers who embody it in themselves, within their own life, through personal integrity, strength of character, and spiritual striving. Our teachers have these qualities and as a staff we continue to work towards this. Didi Anandakrsnapriya, our director, will be leading a discussion of the Ananda Marga philosophy during staff meetings.



## Classroom Environment and Materials

To create a Neo-Humanist program we must first create an environment which is conducive to elevating children's minds into the higher kosas. We do this through the aesthetic science, by making the classrooms beautiful. They are warm and inviting with soft colors on the walls, flowers, an inspiring nature table (puja table), and beautiful artwork. This beauty helps to awaken the higher and more subtle layers of mind. We understand that being away from home at such a young age is hard for any child so we try to make our classrooms feel like an extension of the home. In each classroom there are practical life materials, sensorial materials, puzzles, and art areas.

Each room is full of creative play materials which are so important because they give the children opportunity to let their imaginations take flight. Creative materials may consist of:

- *cotton gauze cloths in each color of the rainbow (1 x 1 yard)*
- *large wooden clips (held together by rubber bands for clipping on to chair backs and such)*
- *fairy tales (1 wide knitted wool bands about 1 yards long)*
- *bean bags*
- *capas*
- *decorated crowns sewn together from felt pieces*
- *wooden blocks*

The children transform these simple materials into endless creations. I am still amazed that the children have never grown tired of these things which they have been using all year. And still everyday these are the first things they look for at playtime, always discovering new ways to use them and are never bored. This is a wonderful skill to acquire at this young age the ability to transform with your mind, at will, creative thinking.

## Encouraging Healthy Play

For the young child, their work is play. Healthy play is so important for their development, in learning to be a part of a community (social skills) and learning to master their body and mind through a myriad of activities which stimulate all of their senses. We bring all this to them in an artistic way through music, art, movement, accessing the imagination, because this is where the young child lives.

Creative and healthy play is the keystone of our program. In child development, according to Froebel and Piaget, 3 to 5 years old is the peak for imaginative creative play. It signifies the stage of pictorial thinking

which needs to be acknowledged and worked with before accelerating into the next phase of more awake, intellectual thinking. This imaginative play teaches them to work with and learn in their environment. I am happy to say that our children's play is alive and full of creativity. As teachers we work very hard to foster this in our classrooms by providing the time, space, and materials and by modeling and guiding the children in this way.

During play I see the children design elaborate forts which they transform into different worlds and I watch as their inner worlds grow and grow. I see a fort turn into a house for two children, when a third wants to play the first two say its only big enough for two. It is then decided that she will be the neighbor and then they are happily playing together again. Finding solutions through play strengthens social skills and the development of emotional intelligence (tolerance, empathy, flexibility, kindness). A group of children working together stacking blocks to create a boat displays cooperation, artistic vision, and physical skill. They need play to assimilate their experiences and make them their own. This play must arise from within the child. The experiences we give children are sources for their play, enriching their inner life which stimulates their play. Play gives opportunity for self-expression and self-direction and strengthens self-confidence and self-esteem.

*"The child's mind is superlatively inclined towards play. So the thirst for knowledge has to be awakened through the medium of games. The child's mind is also partial to tales and stories. Through the medium of stories he may easily be taught the history and geography of various countries. With these methods he may be initiated into sddhana or the practice of universal kindredship. Children love games and stories equally, so both must be utilised to the fullest advantage." PR Sarkar*

## **Importance of Rhythm and Repetition for Young Children**

Rhythm and repetition are so important for young children. The balance between movement and stillness, expansion and contraction, breathing out and breathing in must be very carefully orchestrated throughout the day. The rhythm of the day follows our natural breathing rhythm which is very healthy for children's growth and development. We see it time and time again, rhythm provides security, where they are safe and free to learn and grow.

We have established a daily rhythm where the child is led through the day with music and verse. Children live in a state of openness receptive to all their surroundings in the dream consciousness of whole hearted participation, in the higher layers of mind, as empathetic beings and music creates a flow which they can be led into. They always know what is coming, can get excited about learning because they feel confident and therefore want to participate. Using music to guide the children through the day awakens the higher kosas and speaks to the spiritual nature of children. The weekly rhythm is established by having certain activities repeated every week on the same day. Activities may include watercolor painting, bread making, walks, cleaning, polishing, music, dance, games, or arts and crafts. Practical life skills like polishing wood are a great way to develop their sensory and motor skills. It is important for the children to live into activities more than once, to develop their habit life. We also have different projects related to the seasons and story themes as well as having visitors come and share their talents. We have festivals where families and school get together each year to celebrate the season and this connects the children to the yearly rhythm, their own growth, and the world around them. This is what makes our school a community.



## Circle Time

Circle Time has always been an important time in Neo-Humanist schools and it is a very special time here too. We sing the Circle of Love song as we enter the circle room which is filled with beautiful murals painted by Didi Chidrupa. After singing good morning to every one, we sing a short song and begin our yoga together with soft meditative music. Our yoga is led through a story which changes with the seasons and stories. Then we sing a song about the love inside which turns into a kiirtan and we close our eyes to feel the love in our hearts. This lasts for a short time but the children are

getting so much better at stilling their body and taking time to feel all the love inside. One child sweetly said during circle, "My body is so warm with all the love inside my heart and my heart is so big!" They often want to share what they love, "I love everyone in my class or I love the trees and worms".

After we have all come together in our circle of love we are ready to begin our circle work. We know young children are beings of will. They love to do. We use imitation, rhythm, repetition, and sensory nourishment to guide this will-nature into self-control and toward a habit of self-direction. This is what the young child needs to master. In our circle time, the children move through verse and song as we give them an abundance of experiences and activities. Here they can experience the power of language through movement, music, verse, and games.

When we choose a circle play we repeat it for several weeks depending on the childrens interest and engagement. We started this year off with Orchard Circle Play, a play related to the autumn season. When we began the children all watched, then they followed me and joined in, soon they all knew the words, songs, and actions, and joyfully delighted in it each day. I often hear them singing these songs throughout the day. I will give you a glimpse of how this play begins:

The sun is shining. The sky is blue. Lets go to the orchard, you come along too But we discover our pony needs a new horseshoe. We sing a song about this. Then we meet the blacksmith who fits a new shoe and we sing another song. The children love to sing and dance to this part, *a rickety tickety tickety tack*. Then we get on our ponies and ride to the orchard singing as we go, *galloping, galloping, here we go, off to the orchard don't be slow*. We arrive at the orchard and sing another song. Then we gallop home to clean our apples as we discover the secret of the seeds inside:

My red rosy apple has a secret midst unseen,  
You'd see if you could slip inside, five tiny rooms so neat and clean.  
And in each room are hiding, two seeds so shining bright.  
Asleep they are and dreaming of lovely warm sunlight.  
And some days they are dreaming of many things to be.  
How one day they'll be hanging upon a beautiful tree.



The circles are filled with gesture to enliven the children's imagination and allow them to live into the story. The value of these circles is in the balance of singing and speaking, active and still, loud and quiet, and in large body movements and fine motor skills. The movement gives them an opportunity to breathe out so that they are able to focus during the more concentrated parts of the circle. Polarity is important and can be experienced in many ways during the circle: in tempo (fast/slow), in direction (forward/backward, left/right), in motion (still/moving, start/stop), in mood (serious, sad, dreamy, quiet, humorous, or playful), or in gravity (walking/skipping/jumping). This balance is in tune with their breathing in (contraction) and breathing out (expansion). In this way it encourages healthy development. Circle time helps children learn to move in their bodies and mastering this now will facilitate healthy thinking capacity later on. Singing and moving in the circles nurtures the natural heartfelt participation in nature and the seasons. Through music, verse, gesture, and movement the circle comes alive and connects us to the natural world and the spiritual essence which weaves through it. They naturally flow into these movements therefore eliminating a great deal of discipline. The children gain a deep satisfaction when they master these circles with full participation.

## Storytelling

We need to bring these values to children in a way which they can understand and make their own. There are many ways this is being done and one important means is through storytelling.

We carefully choose stories which embody these values. An incredible amount of work goes into bringing these stories to children. First, and most importantly, these stories must be told, not read. The teller must deeply take in these stories, find stories which they connect with and make them their own. When we tell a story it is a meditation because we carry the higher purpose behind these stories and hold this task as sacred. Children are very subtle beings and they can feel when it is told this way and they will respond with this same reverence.

The teller must create a mood of reverence to invite the children to enter into higher realms with us. In doing this, stories will raise the children's level of consciousness into the higher kosas, into the levels of the creative and intuitive mind. Children live in pictures and stories give them the stimulus to create their own inner pictures, expanding their inner life which awakens the spiritual self. Because the children's minds are so engaged in the story this allows their bodies to relax, their breathing slows down, their jaws drop open, and their eyes fix on the images of the story. This helps them learn to still their bodies and prepares them for meditation. This is a powerful experience for the children and myself. Hearing these stories will also sharpen the power of concentration needed for meditation.

The teller must be conscious of every movement they make because the children are taking it all in, they are very perceptive. If we are calm, taking moments to breathe deep they will do this also. Children will follow our lead in how we move into higher realms of consciousness. Storytime is different from other parts of their day and they will feel this. Ritual helps create this, a song can be used to open and close the circle. We invite the fire fairies as we light the candle and begin, Once upon a time

Because these stories carry important values it will not be enough to hear them only once. In today's world they are bombarded with so much stimulus that they can't possibly take it all in. Hearing these stories repeated brings great comfort, creating inner stability, and confidence necessary for a strong sense of self. These stories are told several times, then they are told with puppet dolls, which we make out of colored wool and felt, and then the children dramatize the story in different ways. In this way these stories go very deep into the child's being.

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# **Learning Through Play**

## **Play Based Early Childhood Programs from the River School in Australia**

### **The Importance of Play**

In Kindy and Pre-School we have play-based programs. We encourage socio-dramatic or event-based play, where children play out scenarios, as if they are real, such as a doctor's surgery, a shop or a forest. They use information from their own experiences, other children, as well teachers.

Because they choose and direct the games themselves, they have ownership of them and so are fully involved and highly motivated, which gives optimum opportunities for learning. In the context of their 'games,' children are enthusiastic and happy to follow through ideas, solve problems, use materials, draw, write signs, make props and research information, because it is meaningful to them, rather than imposed by someone else.

### **How Children Learn From Play**

Learning maths, reading and writing is a gradual process. This process begins well before first grade at home, at Kindy, at Pre-School, through children's own natural curiosity about the world around them. Children lay essential foundations for future learning through many natural and enjoyable activities such as drawing, writing messages, counting how many seats in the car, building and measuring wood to make a fence for animals, drawing and cutting out money for the cash register, drawing a movie on a 'T.V.screen,' writing a birthday card for the dolls' party or reading the menu in a café.

### **From Play Shop to Real Shop**

An excellent example of the power of play was the Pre-Schoolers' recent Market Day. All of their prior play of shops, banks, factories and restaurants gave them genuine experience, enthusiasm and confidence to set up the real thing. They turned their play into a beautiful event that earned \$400 towards their special projects, helping them achieve a real-life goal. Having played for two years, these children are accomplished players who have become self-motivated, independent learners. They are used to using their own ideas and having them respected.

### **Building on a Solid Base**

This play needs to continue into Year 1, so there is no gap or slowdown in their learning or their self-confidence. In a new, more challenging space, their knowledge and experiences will continue to expand. They can play out this new information in their games, making it relevant and real for them; therefore absorbing and remembering it. Gradually as children mature, their play and the way they learn will change and become more abstract in its practice. We can continue to use their interests by using project approach learning in upper grades, so that their learning focuses on individual or group projects that have relevance and importance in the real world.

### **Spiritual Aspects of Play**

Play is an experiencing and testing ground for the different virtues, which are important in character and spiritual development (for example, respect, kindness, service, compassion, harmony, tolerance etc.)

Through action and reaction, children learn how their behaviour affects others (positively and negatively) and gives them an opportunity (perhaps through conflict) to change their behaviour for the betterment of the play situation. It helps them learn and understand appropriate behaviour.

Being fully immersed in their play, they are very naturally and totally 'in the moment.'

Children develop their imagination through play, as they manifest their ideas into their (imaginary) reality. The ability to imagine or visualise ideas and concepts and to make them realities, is an integral part of the spiritual meditation process. Through the practice of play this imagination becomes a fluid activity.

### **Skills for Life**

Of course, literacy and numeracy are not the only things we want our children to learn. Through play, stories, music and the classroom themes they learn about the natural world, people, history, society and so much more. They also need life skills to be able to successfully participate happily in our world. Here are some of the skills they learn through play:

#### **Social / Emotional**

- . Sharing
- . Co-operating
- . Negotiating
- . Problem solving
- . Listening to others and sharing ideas (leader/follower)
- . Developing a sense of fairness
- . Developing independence
- . Taking turns
- . Using manners
- . Having empathy for others
- . Expressing and controlling emotions
- . Conflict resolution
- . Learning to wait (delayed gratification)
- . Self-confidence
- . Independence
- . Building relationships/friends
- . Take risks in non-threatening contexts
- . A healthy sense of self and others
- . Responsibility

#### **Intellectual**

- . Thinking
- . Decision-making
- . Imagining
- . Creating, designing, constructing
- . Making choices
- . Role playing

- . Organising
- . Concentrating
- . Predicting
- . Recalling
- . Language skills (talking, singing, communicating)
- . Numeracy skills (counting, measuring, estimating)
- . Literacy skills (expressing ideas - drawing, invented writing, writing, reading, books)
- . Listening skills
- . Questioning
- . Problem solving
- Love of learning

#### **Physical**

- . Manipulating a variety of tools for real purposes (stapler, hole punch, tape, glue etc.)
- . Drawing, painting, writing, threading, cutting, sewing, hammering, pouring
- . Keyboarding
- . Squeezing, kneading, moulding
- . Dancing / moving creatively
- . Balancing, walking, running, jumping, galloping, rolling, spinning, swinging, sliding, rocking
- . Throwing, catching, kicking
- . Spatial awareness
- . Awareness of health and safety

Play is the fundamental medium for young children's learning. It is a natural activity for them through which they make meaning of the world around them. Play facilitates all development - social, emotional, intellectual and physical. It involves pleasure, enjoyment, free choices, spontaneity and active engagement. Through play children feel empowered as learners and they develop a sense of mastery over their world. Since play is intrinsically motivated, concentration is sustained and children are actively engaged in developing essential understandings and dispositions for lifelong learning.



## **A RAY OF HOPE**

### ***How our Neo-Humanist Preschool came into being in Caracas, Venezuela***

**By Didi Ananda Amegha**

Education is one of the main ingredients in bringing about a society which will encompass the well-being of all, humans, animals, plants and even inanimate matter. It is also one of the items few leaders of society are giving sufficient importance. They rather invest money in things such as defense and industry or in things which will show immediate results, so they can get credit for it.

In Venezuela this happened for many years with the result that on an external level the country was growing in prosperity, but due to lack of education and healthcare, the level of poverty, malnutrition and analphabetism has been increasing.

For me, children, and as such their education, has always been an inspiration and a priority. In 1986, when I first visited our Ananda Marga School in Madison, Wisconsin in the United States, I got a real glimpse of what education ought to be: a joyful experience for

all involved, children, teachers, parents, the community. In this school it was happening and creativity was at its top. Environmental education was a natural part of their curriculum, so was art and music, and the thirst for academic knowledge was awakened by arousing curiosity in the child's mind in a very gentle and playful way. Most important, the director and through her example, the teachers, were demonstrating qualities such as joy, service mindedness, understanding, and the spirit of cooperation was always present. Inspired by this unique example, I always kept in mind that whenever I would get a chance I would start a model school in whatever country I would be working.

Coming to Caracas and seeing the great need for education, I immediately was interested in starting a preschool, since early childhood education is where one can have most impact on creating long lasting positive habits in a person. But Caracas is an extremely expensive city and it is not easy to find a suitable building for a school at a low cost. Still I continued collecting educational materials with the hope that at some point I would find the right building. In the meantime I continued to work in our Ananda Marga store where we sell goods from India to support our service projects. To our big surprise in July of last year the preschool which was located in front of our store, moved to another location and the building had a "For Rent" sign on it. Without thinking twice we went to see the building and shortly after that decided to rent it. The situation looked ideal, the building had housed a school for many years, it didn't look too difficult to get the necessary permits, plus the building had already bathrooms fit for the children.

Nevertheless, when we started to remodel the building, the work needed was a lot more than we had expected. The walls were humid, the roof leaked, the rooms needed to be made bigger, the colors were not our taste and there was no playground equipment, nor was there any stove, refrigerator or any other kitchen utensils. And we still needed to get all the furniture.





The school year starts in September. Some of our friends and employees worked during the week and on all the weekends for a very low salary to fix all the small and bigger problems which emerged. They knocked down walls, repaired others and painted them, repaired the electrical installation, revised the water system. In all this took about two months. The school was finally ready. In the meantime, I got information about three preschools which had closed and we were able to buy enough chairs, tables, shelves, etc. to accommodate about 80 children. The next obstacle to overcome was to find qualified

teachers who would be idealistic enough to start a school from zero and also wouldn't charge a very high salary.

Well, believe it or not, Nora, one of our members from Puerto Ordaz had just finished her degree as a preschool teacher and was ready to come and work with us. And she didn't want any salary, she really wanted to do this as a service. She rented out her own house to cover her expenses with the income.

The next step: How to get the children?

We wrote up a nice leaflet and distributed it in the nearby supermarket. Some people called and came to visit, but when they saw there were no children, yet, they didn't want to be the first.

Our first student was Orestes, the second Ricardo. But Ricardo they withdrew after the first week, because there hadn't been any increase in the enrollment. That left us again with only one child. After talking to different people we realized that the people who really wanted preschool education for their children had enrolled them a long time ago, already. Besides that the economic situation of the country had become so bad that many parents decided to keep their children at home with grandma or any other relative.

Then we started thinking of taking some children free of charge as a social service project with the hope that this would then also attract some paying children. Well, the paying children are still not there, my volunteer teacher had to move back to Puerto Ordaz, but now we have 35 children from a very poor neighborhood called El Helicoide. We have two excellent qualified teachers and 4 helpers and the school is growing. Hopefully by May or June, when the new enrollments are starting, we will also get many paying children.

To get this school on its feet has been a huge struggle, but the results are visible and very positive. The children are happy, the teachers are happy and the parents want to participate. We got a playground donated and a refrigerator and people are showing interest in the school.

We teach values such as respect, non-harming and caring for others and the planet; we introduce simple relaxation and visualisation exercises and offer a very good academic education. We also give the children a healthy, balanced vegetarian diet. And most certainly this little Center will become a ray of hope for Caracas, for Venezuela and for the world.



# **Festivals from Davao , Maharlika, Philippines**

## **By Avtk. Ananda Shubhra, PWSA, Manila Sector**

### **ANANDA MELA, Dec, 12, 2003**

Just as every school in Maharlika was busy for their Christmas celebration program, our schools in Davao City was also busy preparing for the Ananda Mela which was held last Dec. 12, 2003 In Davao City, there are seven kindergarten schools run by Ananda Marga plus two other schools outside Davao City. Digos School is one hour away from Davao and the Gensan School, which is three hours away. Every year, our schools celebrate Ananda Mela and this year all (except Gensan school due to the distance and financial difficulty) participated in the program.

The venue was a large hired gymnasium to accommodate all the children and the parents plus guests. So on the sunny day of Dec. 12, as early as 7 in the morning parents and organizers already crowded our Ananda Marga compound running here and there, arranging and putting the last touches of their respective floats, some parents also were busy adjusting the colorful costumes of their children in the parade. At 8 in the morning everybody was already ready with a motorcade in the city. Our three police escorts on their big motorcycles were ahead of the floats and alerted the public with their loud siren. Each participating school had its own elaborately decorated and colorful floats, displaying prominently the different AMSAI schools banner. When we overtook one of the passenger jeepney in the city, one boy from the jeepney, shouted proudly that he also studied in AMSAI before. After the motorcade we all proceeded to the gymnasium.

The theme of the program was “Mundong Payapa, Handog sa Bata” (A peaceful World, Our Legacy to Children). There were about 180 children from different schools plus their

parents and guests. Though Maharlika is in financial crisis, you can see how the parents prepared for this event by supporting and buying the colorful costumes of their children.

It was whole day affair with different programs. The activities included a competition on folk dance for both parents and children, children's and parents chorus, children's declamation, poem, and art competition. The parents also dressed up themselves in different folk costumes during their dance performance. We never discovered the talents of our teachers until they sang, and danced with the parents. Although the weather was hot and everybody was sweating, no one complained.

The children were all excited and performed confidently. Many children who competed for the declamation and poems impressed the judges for the well-prepared and well-delivered pieces. Most of the participants cried and laugh while delivering their pieces like real actors.

The teachers and the parents spent much time preparing their songs and dances. The cooperation of the parents plus the hard work of the teachers and supervisors contributed to the success of the affair. It was an exhausting affair but at the end of the program everybody was satisfied with the result and everybody had smiles on their faces. All schools went home with trophies and other prizes, which were collected, from sympathizers and donors. The ice cream man also was satisfied with his sales that day, it was a hot day so not only the children but also the parents frequented his stall.

## **SPORTS FEST**

### **Davao City**

### **FEB. 29,2004**

This year the sports fest was held in a hired spacious ground of Holy Cross School in Davao City. By His divine intervention the weather also cooperated. It was downcast that day so all the participants were relieved, as it was not too hot on the ground.



The day before the activity the teachers and some parents helped in decorating and preparing the school ground. All seven schools in Davao City participated with around 125 enthusiastic children and their parents. Almost all the schools in Davao City are under Baba's Foundation Incorporated (BFI) Management in coordination with the new AMSAI principal, the new DS (L) Didi Cidrupa. The BFI staff is allotted different duties during the program and different committees were formed to ensure the success of the program.

The program started at 8 in the morning with the lighting of a torch, a ground parade and flag raising of the national flag followed by the different school flags. The main attraction of the program was the performance of the calisthenics by each school. Each school has different costumes with different attractive colors for the calisthenics. In the morning a kaoshikii competition was also held for the children as well as the parents. The judges have difficulty deciding the winners as most of the parents performed kaoshikii well. Some parents complained that the kaoshikii was too short; they wanted it longer.

Lunch break was potluck and everybody enjoyed and spread all over the sports ground for lunch, socialization and interaction by parents and a quick rest.

Afternoon activities were different game competition for the children like Ball Race, Kadang-kadang (the children will walk with coconut husk as their "slipper" with a rope attached to the husk to control the coconut "slipper"), duck walk and Tug of War. For adult category, Tie a straw, Ball race, Longest line, Alsa Familya, and Tug of War was competed.

Although the organizers were almost losing their patience explaining the rules and showing samples to the little and sometimes inattentive participants, still the show went on enlivened by the cheering audience and the loudest voices coming from the parents. The children and the parents as well as the guests all enjoyed the program.

In between the games the emcee announces the winner of raffle draw. It was a fund raising activity. The ticket costs 5 pesos (1 \$ to 56 pesos), and the lucky winner takes home a picture frame, colorful pegs, a tumbler, torches etc. but all are excited with the prizes although the prizes are inexpensive.

The program ended around five in the afternoon with awarding of prizes and closing ceremony and program evaluation (only for the

BFI staff and teachers). Everybody was exhausted but happy.

## **AMSAI, Las Pinas February LOVE MONTH**

In Manila, our school in Las Pinas celebrated February LOVE MONTH last February 8, 2004 by organizing a MR. and MS. VALENTINE as a fund raising activity. Didi Karunamayii (posted in NY who is passing in the sector for her visa application) together with Didi Hema, Manila DS (L) and teacher Bhavanii organized the program.

The program's theme was "Lets us Love and Unite for a Better World". The program started at three in the afternoon so that the parents of our 17 children and guests assembled at the town's Multi Purpose Hall before three in the afternoon. The program started with a parade around town for almost one hour and back to the Multi Purpose Hall. All the children and the parents were excited, as this was the first time that a program like this was organized. And the children were also excited with their costumes.

Before the program started the organizers distributed AMSAI leaflets to the parents and guests. The program lasted for 4 hours including the parade. The highlight of the program was the presentation of the children's talents and the coronation of the MR. and MS. VALENTINE and the runner-ups who were all given trophies that was donated by parents and donors.

The boys danced to the tune of Prabhat Samghit, Raktim Kishalay in their soldier outfit to the delight of the guests, and the girls danced Tiny Green Island in their colorful Sari dress.

A delicious native delicacies was served in between the program which was prepared by the parents. With the outcome of the program, the organizers and parents are all inspired to do similar program next year. With the money

that was raised, the parents decided to buy 2 wall fans and school supplies.

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### ***Continued from Page 19*** ***Liberation of Intellect and Expansion of the Heart***

**Presentation** – Before making a presentation learn as much as you can about your audience. This will guide you in selecting the language, illustrations and the technical or non-technical methods of presentation. Explore how to present the material of information with regard to aesthetic style, viewing regimes and the needs and expectations of the audience. Use ICT to structure, refine and present information and ideas in different forms and styles. Make the giving information to groups fun and memorable.

**Leading a Discussion** – Discussions in groups are good learning processes involving everyone in planning and activities. Some ground rules for leading a discussion:

- Make sure everyone is informed about the topic and prepared.
- Know your purpose. Is the goal to arrive at a decision or merely to brainstorm possible ideas?
- Opinions should always be supported with evidence.
- Leaders only ask well thought out questions; they do not answer them. All good questions always lead to more spontaneous interpretative questions.
- Whenever possible and appropriate, use techniques like mapping to provide a conceptual, visual structure to the ideas you're hearing. Let people see you writing their thoughts and ideas on the map.

### **Cooperation and Teamwork**

Students who are engaged in their work are energized by four goals - success, curiosity,



originality, and satisfying relationships. Students who are engaged exhibit three characteristics: (1) they are attracted to their work, (2) they persist in their work despite challenges and obstacles, and (3) they take visible delight in accomplishing their work.

Teachers can ask themselves:

1. Under what conditions are students most likely to feel that they can be successful?
2. When are students most likely to become curious?
3. How can we help students satisfy their natural drive toward self-expression?
4. How can we motivate students to learn by using their natural desire to create and foster good peer relationships?

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[www.teacherswithoutborders.com](http://www.teacherswithoutborders.com)

[www.galileo.org](http://www.galileo.org)

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## Dear Dialogue

*The following excerpt is from a discussion on NHE-Forum*

### Question:

Do you have any advice on how to develop staff with no previous knowledge of meditation or NHE in implementing NHE philosophy and principles?

### Answer provided by Arun:

Perhaps you can focus on those aspects of NHE that do not conflict with the religious beliefs of your teachers, such as:

- 1) use of true cultural expressions (as opposed to pseudo-culture)
- 2) cardinal moral principles
- 3) service
- 4) academic progress
- 5) yoga postures

At PSOLI, (Progressive School of Long Island) we have four main steps for bringing teachers into NHE:

- 1) careful pre-screening that includes a writing sample on topics that will expose bias, interviewing, open discussion of NHE principles and origin, demo lesson
- 2) use of a comprehensive handbook that every new teacher is required to study before teaching; each section has a philosophy statement and a methods statement so that a teacher doing a math lesson or correcting a child's behavior must first study the philosophy and practice of that area
- 3) pairing of teachers: every new teacher is paired with a more experienced teacher who has a proven understanding of Neo-Humanism; this system requires focus and success with your first teacher, once one teacher has become alert and sympathetic to NHE, then they can create the same in others
- 4) ongoing training we conduct this every Wednesday for one hour, led by an NHE professional.

*Arun is working to complete their school handbook for others to share. It will encompass 20 years of learning at Progressive School. For more information, contact Arun at: <eric@psoli.com>*

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# Global NHE News

## New York Sector

### Guatemala

#### **Bello Despertar Ananda Marga, By LFT Ana'di**

Founded in 1989, Bello Despertar (Beautiful Awakening) continues to be one of our strongest schools in Central America. The school teaches pre-schoolers in a district of the capital known as Limonada, one of the poorest slums in Guatemala. While economic disparity and harsh reality lurks outside the school doors, Baba Nam Kevalam (Love is all there is) is being sung within them.

The school day starts and ends with meditation as the children are told to imagine themselves in a magical forest. When “namaskar” is given to the students, you can expect a chorus of cheerful “namaskars” right back. Rosita, who has been with Bello Despertar since its start, teaches the older kids upstairs.

Rosita is the hard working force, which has guided the school for so many years. At the school’s start, she was the only teacher. That was when the school was attended by 15 students. Now, there are 100 and they are divided up into two classes. Rosita along with Brenda, who teaches the younger students, are the only two teachers at the school. Together, they create a playful and enjoyable learning environment for the kids.

Every Friday morning, the entire school heads to the park where they partake in a circle of love. Games are played, songs are sung, and collectively they all transport themselves to that magical forest within. Last week I went with a guitar to sing some songs for the children. They learned a song for meditation, a song for a morning greeting, and a song about a river flowing into the sea.

Dada Lokamitranda has been helping out in the school as well, painting murals and giving loving



support while local margii, Yuktatman is always around to provide for the schools needs.

Bello Despertar Ananda Marga is a very important institution for the community. There are not many schools around that area, so Bello Despertar serves as a beacon of light. Limonada is considered one of the most neglected areas of the city. To have a place where parents can bring their children to be cared for and given a good education is truly a blessing. Bello Despertar is a beautiful awakening for these children and expects to be for a long time to come.

### USA

#### **Denver, Colorado By Mahajyoti**

Morning Star PreSchool has just renewed its national accreditation with the National Association for Education of the Young Child based in Washington D.C. This past year has been very interesting for all of us since we have been attracting a large population of challenged children whom we have identified with Sensory Integration Dysfunction. The staff have all been receiving training and educating ourselves about SID and utilizing various techniques that help the brain and nervous system to generate more accurate sensory messages about the environment and social relationships. Symptoms of children with SID can vary considerably from child to child. They can withdraw from loud sounds, light touch, certain visual and olfactory stimuli. They may hit children who come close to them even without physical contact. They may perceive a gentle touch as an aggressive punch. Their voices may be very loud. Fine motor work may be challenging and applied with very heavy strokes. Sometimes

there may be articulation and speech problems. They may have difficulty organizing the way the body moves through space, i.e., knocking over people and furniture, spilling, falling out of chairs. We have been successful in obtaining support for these families through community therapists. 25% of our student population is struggling with SID. In every family one parent has become aware that they too have struggled with SID throughout their lives. Each member of our community continues to bloom and grow as we embrace this new challenge.

## Manila Sector



### Sangkhlaburi, Thailand

Neo Humanist Foundation in Thailand bought another 30 rai land (about five hectares) in Sangkhlaburi on February 19th, 2004. This new Master Unit "Ananda Ra'ga" will host the children's home, farm and a spiritual retreat centre. The new place is located in a most scenic spot of Sangkhlaburi with a view of a beautiful lake and mountain ranges. It is just a few minutes walk from the Sunshine Primary School project and the old Children's Home complex. A joyous ceremony including the laying of the Foundation Stone was done on Feb 19th evening in the presence of all members of the Baan Unrak Community. Dada Shambhushivananda conducted the ceremony in the presence of Didi Ananda Devamala and Didi Ananda Anuraga. The shifting of the children's home from the old

facility will provide more space for the School Project. Didi Ananda Anuraga is currently the director of the School Project.



*Children of Sunshine Pre-school of Sangkhlaburi enjoying a delicious cake after a cooking class at our bakery.*

The school has both a kindergarten and primary currently up to grade 4. In May grade 5 will be added. So far grade one has 12 students, grade 3 and 4 each have 4 students and the kindergarten has 15. At the end of April an ETC is planned with Didi Ananda Gaorii and Didi Ananda Devanistha and other professionals from the community.

### Bangkok

Sudeva continues to make progress towards the establishment of Neo-humanist kindergarten in Bangkok.

### Vimalaya

Twin Gurukula Cottages are almost nearing completion at the Gurukula Project in Vimalaya. Effort is also being made to purchase the adjacent 14 rai land that will give Gurukula Vocational School Project a direct access to the side road.

### Bali, Indonesia

Efforts are under way to establish a Junior high school in Denpasar as a continuation of Pom Pom school. The Tajakulah school was officially inaugurated in December, 2003.

## Suva Sector

### Melany, Australia Ananda Marga River School

The school year ended in December with amazing high energy! Children put on an splendid group of performances and there was an excellent graduation afternoon, culminating with beautiful speeches and thank you's from graduating year 7 students, who had lovely things to say about their experience in the school. Narada Muni put together a great end-of-year video for the parents and students that included many of the many high points of the year, and it was shown and sold to an appreciative audience.

A true high point was the spectacular play organised by the year 3/4 class. They were working on their chosen theme which was helping injured wildlife and found out that the local WILVO group (that helps injured animals) had lost funding for their telephone service. After an experience of "The Council of All Beings" the children wrote their own play called the Council of the Animals. With the help of talented parents, they designed masks, costumes, music and songs, a huge backdrop, extensive advertising around town, programs and more, to put on a professional presentation on the school's front veranda. A few hundred people attended the two shows and you should have seen the faces of the WILVO people when a bunch of ten-year old children handed them a check for \$800 for their telephone service! It was so touching!

The Pre-school class (4 and 5 year olds) also decided they wanted to buy hollow log nesting homes to help native wildlife in their play area (as part of their extensive study of "homes.") They organised a "Market Day" (actually afternoon) where they had stalls to sell the many things they had made over the month--wrapping paper, cards, jewellery, artwork, used clothing and toys, seedlings, plants, veggies and delicious treats at their special "cafe." Parents had a lovely afternoon, the children had a wonderful time (since they had been playing "shop" all year) and they raised over \$400 which more than paid for their nesting boxes.

The year 7 class participated in state-wide academic testing, and once again, came out above average in every subject area, with two of the students topping the state in maths.

In February we began our tenth year. We have waiting lists for all of our seven classrooms and great enthusiasm. Partially with proceeds from "Joyful Things" CD, we were able to hire a specialist music teacher to go into each of the primary classrooms, twice a week. This is going fabulously and the children are having great fun learning Kodale method--its great to see how fast they progress.

At the beginning of the year, a large extension was completed on our preschool/kindy building. It doubles the size of the space, and now with the extensive shaded veranda, the huge sandpit sparkling with white sand and edged with a wooden play house, and the newly flattened grassy play area, the whole place looks nearly like a holiday resort! (just as all schools probably should!)

We have been working hard to bring play-based learning to our early education classrooms, from 3 year olds to year 1 and even year 2. This is a truly fascinating process, as we are allowing a full hour in each classroom for imaginative play, where the children push toy shelves around and drape sheets to make forest caves, overturn desks and use old computers to make rocket ships to fly to the moon, set up banks, museums, vet offices, castles and everything else under the sun, to act out the world they are learning about. Teachers carefully observe, document and participate in this play, to extend and build on the children's interests. It is giving me a whole new vision of what Baba means by "learning through play."

To develop service in the school, each class chose a project for the term including corresponding with the AM school in Albania, adopting endangered orang-utans, participating in the Walk for Want and painting a mural for the senior citizen's centre.

## Berlin Sector

**Zonnelicht School**  
**Den Bosch, Holland**  
**By Sadhana**

The school is going well. About 150 children are enrolled in the school. In addition, adults and children from outside are attending courses in the school. For example, dance, piano, acrobatics, drama, gardening, yoga for children together with parents, aikido, homeopathic first aid, first aid for children, massage for children, phases of development of children between 0-6 years, creative writing, foot reflexology, vegetarian cooking, and lectures on topics such as: Who am I?, Meditation and Spirituality, Vaccinations-Dangerous or Protecting?, The Effect of Food on Our Body.

The children in the dance classes will give a performance on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June for an old peoples home and others. The money raised will go towards a school project.

The school works together with the Montessori School and Steiner School and with the children's farm where the children go every week to take care of the animals and work in their own vegetable garden.

This month we will start to have our own school homeopath and the parents are very happy she can work for their children and themselves.

Every month parents work in the garden on a Saturday and bring their children. It is a good opportunity to meet each other in a different way and they like to contribute to the school. After the new school building is completed this summer, one classroom and creativity room of the old building will be renovated and also the garden will get a different look.

Vidyananda and Sadhana, manager and teacher at the school, attended Baba's birthday celebration in Fiesh which was very inspiring and beautiful. Thank you to all.

## Stockholm, Sweden



The Stockholm school was started by Didi Anandabhadra and it has the support of the Swedish Ministry of Education. It has three large classrooms an office room, reception area and kitchen. The school is so far small with 9 children. There are two employed teachers. It is a vegetarian /vegan(option) school.



## Georgetown Sector

Compiled by Dada Diipajinananda

### GUYANA

Dada Yogendra has purchased a house in Stewartville, near Georgetown, where he will continue his school on the ground floor and have the jagrti on the top floor. He is getting coverage for his pracar classes on the National TV which is creating a big demand in the city of Georgetown. The TV station records his program on yoga and healthy lifestyle and broadcasts it 3 times a week.

## **VENEZUELA**

Didi Ananada Amegha writes: ' Our school in Caracas has 33 children now. We have an excellent staff and are working on making this a very exciting place for the children, parents and teachers. The teachers are very open to the Neo-Humanistic ideas and to meditation. We got a donation for the playground materials and a refrigerator and are currently looking for sponsors for the children.

## **COLOMBIA**

In Barranquilla Dada Divyapremananda is expanding the jagrti due to the increasing numbers of people coming for the activities. The pre-school and primary school have a total of 120 students.

## **CHILE**

From Santiago Dada Moksananda writes: In November/December, in the new jagrti, we gave 2 months free yoga to 25 difficult children from the neighbor school, the local municipality paid our yoga teachers and provided mats and other equipment. The children's teachers noted an improvement in the children's behavior after they did the course.

## **ARGENTINA**

Tucuman: After a good relationship was established with the state governor Ananda Marga is now giving Biopsychology courses to teachers in many public schools. On Sundays there is a large family get-together where Prout and community issues are discussed.

## **PARAGUAY**

In Paraguay Ananda Marga has 3 jagrtis (including Baba's Quarters), 2 Master Units and 3 schools. This year in Capiata school we have 327 students and we have finished the construction of one more classroom in February completing the two floor school building. This classroom also serves as a meditation hall. We received a donation from abroad of around US\$4000 plus some local donation and we spent around US\$5000 for the construction, painting, canteen, etc. Now the school is beautiful, especially the new meditation hall, it's so nice and big, the children all like to meditate with me before the class. Now I

have a morning and afternoon meditation session for each grade. All are looking forward so much to their turn to meditate in the meditation hall.

In our Abosto school we have 44 children in kindergarden and preschool levels. The school received the best recommendation from the Municipal Government.

## **BRASIL**

In Brasil Ananda Marga has 15 schools ( most of which receive funding from the local government), 12 jagrtis (yoga and meditation centers), 3 Master Units and several projects with natural medicines, projects for youth and programs for the parents of our school children.

**São Paulo:** The Didi's school in **Jardim Peri** is now very stable after receiving government funding. The children receive classes in music, yoga and ballet. To broaden their experience of the world they go on regular outings to events such as circuses, and places of interest such as airports and fire stations. The Dada's school in **Guarapiranga** recently received praise from local government officials in the World Education Forum held in Sao Paulo regarding the standard of the education.

**Petrópolis:** A combined education training seminar was held for Belo Horizonte and Petropolis pre-schools . Topics of the training were yoga for children, Waldorf education, the play method of Vygotsky and revision of the teaching methods in the two pre-schools. The sharing of information and techniques was very valuable to all the participants.

**Porto Alegre:** Apart from maintaining the primary school, 5 pre-schools, the community healthcare project and the youth training in herbal medicines, new projects have begun with the financial help of the municipality. They include the construction of a small house for conducting music workshops for youth and a project for further education of the parents connected with our schools.

## Kahira Sector



*Children meditating at the Sunrise School in Albania on the coldest day of the year.*

### Albania

By Dada Vedaprajnananda

The Ananda Marga school in Albania is now in its fourth year of operation. During the month of February, Didi Ananda Uttama visited the school and gave a special seminar on Neo Humanist Education. Our request to the government for permission to add a first and second grade to the school is still pending but we will not be able to expand until next September. There are currently 100 children enrolled in the kindergarten classes and 20 elementary pupils, junior high students, and adults in after-school English classes.



*English Class*



On May 10 we held the Baba's Birthday Celebration at the Kindergarten. (photo above) 100 children attended the celebration, as did several Dadas and Didis who were in Tirana for their sectorial RDS. Didi Anandarama was among the Didis visiting, and had this further news to share about the school:

“We went on a bus to the city outskirts to visit the kindergarten that started four years ago after the war. The area once very difficult to live in, gradually improved by people constructing their houses and the roads getting paved. The hardships we could only imagine but not really notice, especially when we saw about 100 delighted children assembled in the three rooms of the kindergarten. There are two shifts and the three teachers teach both shifts. The children looked healthy, happy and eager to learn. The rooms being small, the education method is mostly teacher directed though fun and enjoyable as we could see from the performance of the children. The children were very skilled in reciting and memorizing even many English words. The teachers are happy with the management of the school and proudly tell about the good reputation of the school and that children come even from far.

The great hopes of all are to be able to procure a suitable piece of land for the construction of permanent facilities for kindergarten and primary school. By the wonderful work that is unfolding here, this would be certainly the most desirable step for further development of this project.



## Malta, The Sunrise Center (CentruTbexbix) By Kamala

The thought of introducing Neo-Humanistic Education in Malta had been for some years gradually maturing into a probability. About four years ago Didi Ananda Tapomaya, working in Malta at that time, and a number of enthusiasts, were determined to find a place for a "learning centre". Seeing that property prices in the Cospicua area were the lowest, we put an advert in the papers about our intention to buy property there. Cospicua, being one of the lowest income areas of Malta, with the highest rates of illiteracy, unemployment and other social ills, has for the last few years become a focal point for a number of service-minded groups intent on helping to eradicate or at least reduce these problems, and this was another reason to support our choice of location. We were contacted by an agent who showed us a number of houses. There was a house which we thought was suitable, and which price was within our means and we decided to take it. A day before we were supposed to sign the contract, the owner phoned to say that she had changed her mind, and the reason was because the local parish priest had advised against selling to us, because "Ananda Marga is not welcome in Cospicua". This was a big let down for us, and I remember going to the parish priest with Didi asking for an explanation. Of course this didn't get us anywhere, and we had to go over our plans and decide whether to continue looking for a place to start the project there. The result was that our determination increased. In a couple of weeks' time, by what seems still today like a miracle, we came across another house in the same town in the south of Malta, which was bigger than the one we had seen before, and at a price much lower. The owner had already signed a preliminary contract with someone else, but when he heard about our project, he scrapped the previous agreement and agreed to sell to us. In three months we managed to collect the money, and on the contract the owner even donated 10% of the price back to us. It was incredible.

But this was only the beginning of a big drama. Whoever saw the house as it was when we bought

it, thought we were crazy to think we could turn it into a place decent enough to host any project! It had been over 15 years since the house was last inhabited, and before that it had been a small slum, with a number of families occupying a room each. When the last resident left, the house became the local dump, everybody literally dumping their unwanted things there. We found ourselves with a large 10 roomed house, a three-room basement, a central courtyard with well and a roof, literally all full of rubbish.

To clean the house was not an easy task. The house is situated in a narrow street, and leading to the street are seventy steps, a purely pedestrian area, characteristic of this town. So we would meet every Saturday, Didi and us, carry sackfuls of throwaways along the street, down the steps, and into the skip. Little by little we found ourselves looking at the walls and ceiling, and we started to have a clear idea of the state of the structure. There was no doubt that there was hard work ahead, and a good amount of liri to raise, but the task was still daunting. Slowly some money started to come in, and repair work commenced on the ceilings. Most of the beams had to be replaced, and this was probably the biggest task. Using a crane was out of the question, and it wasn't easy to find workers who would accept to carry the heavy wooden beams and material along the streets and into the house. The work was done with the help of a couple of margii brothers who volunteered



their shoulders and backs, and this way we saved some money too.



From then on the work continued, not without a few setbacks. Repairs on the structure are now complete, and the drainage system was replaced, as well as the water system. Volunteers are scraping the paint off the walls. Probably the stone will be treated and left in its natural state. Every time after some work has been done, some of us form a working team to remove the rubble, filling sacks ready to throw into the skip, or continue with the paint stripping. A few days ago, while I was returning home from the house it dawned on me that finally the house is breathing again. So much clutter was removed, about twenty skiploads. Old rusty iron beams were removed to make way for strong new wooden ones, the walls have all been stripped of their old coats uncovering the bare stone, and now with the new drainage system, the floor is also breathing fresh oxygen. I feel there was a load of energy which had been trapped for a long time, and is now released. I feel the pomegranate tree in the central courtyard is celebrating..

There is still work to be done, but compared to what has been done already, we're positive it won't take long to start the first phase of our project. Didi Ananda Rainjana is now supervising the work, and she is determined to have the project initiated in the near future.

The place is named CENTRU TBEXBIX (*Sunrise Centre*) To have a full-time school doesn't seem yet feasible, but we can still work on our aim to provide a centre of education, support and networking for women, adolescent girls and children of low income, urban families in Cospicua. We have many ideas how to help the local community, with the resources now available to us. For example first in line is a family literacy programme as well as a reading club and English hour. Step by step we will turn the centre into an educational institution with an atmosphere of caring and support in which women and children will feel empowered to create new opportunities in their lives. Other activities or programmes will evolve according to the needs of the community. Concurrently we will introduce our vision of alternative Neo-Humanistic Education, which will create a need for a day-school in line with our principles. Hopefully this will happen soon.

## Nairobi Sector

### Ghana

Didi Ananda Shanta is preparing the ground for a proposed school and



teacher's training resource centre in Ghana. Didi Ananda Kaomudii is giving ETC June/July here which teachers from Ivory Coast can also attend. The beginning of this project started with the reopening of the Lotus nursery. After 4 years of inactivity our Lotus kindergarten has reopened to fresh and heart warming start. 12 children attend each day, filling the morning air with charts and rhymes. The new uniforms of red and white checks are neatly pressed as these preschoolers line up before their teacher. Already Didi can envisage the steady growth of the lotus kindergarten continuing to become registered kindergarten in the future, for the neighbors are seeing the value of their small children's exposure to neo-humanistic principles.

## Delhi Sector

### Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

The Ananda Marga Junior High School( Bari Jugauli, Lucknow) has over 350 students. This school is recognised in English medium by Uttar Pradesh Board of Secondary Education. Recently there was the Annual Culture Programme on 3rd March at the premises of the school. Mr. V.K. Deewan (I.A.S.) Chief Secretary of the UP was the chief guest and Mr. O.P. Srivastav Retired Dist. Judge presided over the function. Students performed a cultural programme on Prabhat Samgita, drama, folk dances, patriotic dances, Punjabi dance, etc.

## Hong Kong Sector

### Taiwan

A Teacher Training Camp for Kid's Yoga was held. See article on page 7 of this issue.

# Review/Overview of Two Books by Tobin Hart

By Marcus Bussey

*From Information to Transformation: Education for the Evolution of Consciousness,*

New York, Peter Lang Hart, T., (2001)

*The Secret Spiritual World of Children*

Maui, Hawaii, Inner ocean. Hart, T., (2003)

I have chosen to review these two books in a simple non-critical fashion so as to let the author's own words and ideas do most of the speaking. I found both books to be stimulating and affirming of my own experiments in the classroom and experiences both as a teacher and a child-adult. I particularly admire the author's grounding of his argument on research, and his wide ranging eclecticism with regards his readings and referencing.

There is much here that fits the neo-humanist approach to education: the insistence on depth in learning, the teacher-as learner/mentor, the roles of wonder and awe and the centrality of character and imagination, all resonate with our mission as defined by P.R.Sarkar. Hart leaves un-examined the problem of how we can create systems of learning that can manage and administer such a new approach to learning. Consciousness is the heart of it all and Hart, I assume, feels that the spirit will transform the

system when a critical mass of people engaged with it shift.

Tobin Hart is associate professor of psychology at the State University of West Georgia. In these two books he presents a holistic vision for education and a detailed account of children's spirituality. The two works complement one another as the first looks at the nature of 'knowing' while the second explores child-consciousness and links this with an expanded vision for education.

What makes these works powerful is the sense of structure that underpins an integral vision of education and consciousness. Hart draws on a wide range of wisdom traditions to create a context for his argument that contemporary schooling is failing to fulfil its potential. "This is a land where education is too often stunningly mediocre and where the promise of education is often unfulfilled and thus betrays both students and teachers." (Hart 2001, p3)

In *From Information to Transformation* Hart offers a layered analysis of education which honours the depth of consciousness in its ambiguity and complexity. In doing so he draws on case studies, current psychological theory and western and eastern wisdom traditions. His aim is to offer insights into how to activate learning potential at all levels of his continuum.

Hart describes six levels of learning:

1. **Information** – the currency of learning. "Information serves as the fire around which we gather." (p7)
2. **Knowledge** – the construction of patterns from the information. "The process of developing knowledge exists in the dynamic interplay of the trinity of educational practice: teacher, student and subject." (p8)
3. **Intelligence** - the creation of knowledge and information. "Education for intelligence particularly involves refining the mind through critical and creative thinking, analytic critique and synthesis, and the cultivation of imagination." (p8-9)
4. **Understanding** – this requires a fundamental shift in the way we know. Hart notes that "understanding takes us beyond the power of intelligence to see the world through the eye of the heart." (p9) This is an empathic response. Learning becomes emotionally activated and participatory. "One of the most direct ways to

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experiment with understanding and empathy is through service, ranging from tutoring another student to using servant leadership as a model of administration.” (p10)

5. **Wisdom** – at this level we are concerned with learning that blends “an ethic of what is right, with insight about what is true.” (p10) Truth however is not a singular position but is layered, like learning itself, having objective and subjective dimensions and individual and socio-cultural contexts. “Wisdom serves to dynamically expand and integrate perspectives. It involves the capacity to listen and to translate the power of the intellect and the openness of the heart into appropriate form (action, attitude, etc.). Whereas the heart of understanding is universal, wisdom is able to bring this broad unconditionality to the particularities of a situation. For example, the wise response is not always “Just love”; it may be strategic, disruptive, confrontational.” (p11)
6. **Transformation** – “When education taps the current of transformation it takes us beyond the ‘facts’ and categories of our lives, the limits of social structure, the pull of cultural conditioning, and the box of self definition. In this way, we gain the capacity not only to gather the facts of our life, but also to transcend and transform them; this is where the deepest moments of education lead. In a moment, we are changed forever as we learn the magic of spelling or take in an idea that sets off a shock wave within us.” (p12) This transformation is a deep spiritual movement. It links up with joy and purpose as we identify with our world and take responsibility for it.

Transformation is the goal of true education. It is the moment when content links with purpose and joy to remake us. Education ceases to be about answers and shifts to become a process of becoming. In this way it “is a movement toward increasing wholeness that simultaneously pushes toward diversity or uniqueness, becoming more uniquely who we are, and toward unity and communion, recognizing how much we have in common with the universe.” (p12)

Hart is not describing a linear progression, though it would be easy to assume so. Each form of education is necessary for the whole

process of education to unfold. The full potential of his vision thus depends on all layers functioning simultaneously.

Hart places the teacher at the centre of this process but does not exclude the student, society and culture nor the subjects themselves. All are important. The teacher, however, is pivotal in the scheme as they need to re-engage with their own learning and joy, they need to be developing character and exploring their own inner nature. Furthermore they develop and sustain the complex array of relationships needed to sustain the educative process.

In his book *The Secret Spiritual World of Children* Hart develops his argument by focusing of children’s spirit. This work is based on a five year study of children’s experiences of spirituality. Hart develops a structure to describe different ways of experiencing expanded consciousness. In the first half of the book Hart describes and defines five ways of knowing.

1. **Listening for Wisdom:** This is the inner openness needed to hear with the heart. It is intuitive and non-rational. “Wisdom is a way of knowing and being that takes us beyond the limits of the small self, beyond the repository of our experience, and into the deep stream of consciousness. Children live immersed in and are part of this stream.” (p45)
2. **Wonder:** “Children especially have an inherent openness to mystery, wonder, and delight. They are natural mystics. What wonder does is help us see the sacred in the world...A few hours in the surf may feel like a few seconds when we are absorbed in the ‘eternal now’ as theologian Paul Tillich called it. The capacity for being lost in the moment – absorption – is a capacity that is natural for children and necessary for experiencing the mystical moment.” (p49)
3. **Between You and Me:** Here Hart is indebted to Martin Buber who stated “Spirit is not in the I but between the I and you. It is not like the blood that circulates in you, but like the air in which you breathe.” (p67) This is what Hart calls relational spirituality. This is “about communion, connection, community, and compassion.” (p68) Service and authenticity are the foundations for this relational spirituality. “We know the world differently

## Book Reviews

when we serve it. A teacher serves a child, a child serves a dove, and this becomes power and medicine that serves the heart of the world. This is a power that has no end – a cup overflowing.” (p73) Hart offers this advice, “Mostly, we teach by who we are and how we live. Our own development and that of our children are intertwined – we grow up together. And so the first question is, When and how do we live from our hearts? We support a child’s natural compassion when we live from our own.” (p75)

4. **Wondering:** Questions are motivating. And children, Hart asserts, are natural philosophers often engaged with the big questions. (p 91) Hart records that an interview with a fourteen year old about his early education brought up this observation: “Without deep responses [to my questions], I remember feeling like I was being taught to lie or at least to live on the surface.” (p95) Hart also recounts another interview in which a parent told of his son crying on the night before his ninth birthday because he was another year closer to death. “My birthday means I am another year closer to death, and it means you are, too. I know that there is such a thing as reincarnation, but I don’t want things to change.’ His dad didn’t have an answer. They held each other while they both cried. Children certainly do think about toys and getting in trouble at school, but they also ponder deeply the mysteries of being human – like death and love – and therefore their questions and concerns deserve our deepest respect and reverence.” (p100) Hart concludes that “Rigidity is anathema to spiritual practice. Children’s questions can help break this curse.” (p107)
5. **Seeing the Invisible:** In this section Hart outlines the multiple ways that children can experience the world beyond the narrow spectrum of the senses. “Much to our surprise as adults, children are often aware of this hidden world. My youngest daughter sees shapes and colours around people and objects. A boy tells us that an angel comforts him before he enters surgery. A young child says she remembers her ‘other family’ from when she ‘lived before.’ A boy falls unharmed from a three storey window and tells about being caught by ‘those guys dressed in gold.’” (p113) Hart agrees that these abilities are usually shut down or denied by adults who fail to acknowledge them.

The second part of this book looks at ways that adults can engage with this secret world of the child. Hart is at pains to make sure that we don’t degrade the experiences of children by making too much of them. Essentially they are there to remind us adults to wake up. (p153) Hart’s educational agenda is one of increasing depth in all our relationships both on the personal and impersonal levels of consciousness. In this way we begin to develop educational processes that shift learning from a simple information gathering activity and takes it on until it becomes a transformative process.

Hart argues that adults have often denied their own experiences and have shut down. The child within, and the children without give us permission to explore our depths. He offers a lucid, well documented journey into the potential of children’s spiritual lives to awaken us all to a deeper experience of life. He links this with education as he feels the current system is failing us all.

“Today’s typical downloading approach to education emphasizes filling up the child from the outside in rather than balancing the outside

with the inside. In such an approach, it is the inner life of the child – that place from which spirituality grows – that is cheated most of all.” (p213)

“I cannot express the depth of my amazement, love, and gratitude for the grace children give without trying. The secret spiritual world of children reminds us to listen for inner wisdom, find wonder in the day, see through the eye of the heart, live the big questions, and peer into the invisible.” (p271)

Hart concludes *From Information to Transformation* with this observation: “Throughout this book I have advocated an education of inner significances well as one of outer concerns. A curriculum of inner significance focuses on value, quality, virtue, resonance, and relevance, all of which tend to emerge from the inside out. It does not require that more information be added to the contemporary curriculum, but it invites us to the inside of the subject matter, the other and the Self. This is a curriculum where the largest questions sit alongside the smallest, and all are fair game.” (p171)

# Non-violent Communication

## A Language of Compassion:

by Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D.

Reviewed by Didi Ananda Ragamaya

An easy and benevolent book to read, Marshall Rosenberg has developed a simple and effective formula, that speaks from the heart in it's humanness and encourages it's reader to reflect on their own inherent beliefs and consequent reactions to different people and situations. The author takes us through a journey where he looks at what blocks healthy and compassionate communication challenging us to introspect and review our own lives, observing and understanding the labels we attach to ourselves and to others. He helps us identify our feelings when we see certain behaviours that stir up reactions in us and to take responsibility for them as opposed to blaming others or ignoring them altogether. From those feelings we can discover our unmet needs and we are guided in a practical way to acknowledge and express them fearlessly, making honest and reasonable requests, rather than avoiding them or expressing through anger and thus creating scope for potentially stronger reactions in the future and sabotaging our relationships.

Later in the book Rosenberg takes the process one step further and looks at the healing power of empathy, even when we are hurting, to be balanced and try to reflect how the other party could be feeling. Through such validation the author gives many touching examples of how he has effectively brought communities together, from inner city gangs and Rwandan village chieftains to schools and couples experiencing disharmony in their relationships. He has also demonstrated his own humanness during his journey in finding ways to integrate non-violent communication in his life, showing that he too has made mistakes and compassionately recognises them as part of the ongoing growing process. He emphasises sincerity and loving intention, no way surrendering to a dry mechanical format and language, but encourages meaningful, supportive and heartfelt expression through observation, identifying one's feelings and their underlying needs, expressing them and making reasonable requests (not demands) in fulfilling them as well as empathically connecting to others.

The book is well laid out and very reader-friendly it is appropriate for people from all walks of life who have to relate to themselves and to others. It is interlaced with simple day-to-day examples and saturated with plenty of love. I highly recommend this book for all who would dare to improve themselves and bring more peace on this earth.

*The man who does not have compassion, the man who does not shed tears at the miseries of others, is not a man but a stone. He cannot do any great work. Be happy with the happiness of others and troubled with the trouble of others. This alone is natural. Don't be unnatural. The effort to make everybody ones own culminates in love for the Lord i.e. devotion is love-for-God personified.*

*PR Sarkar*

## NHE CDs for Sale

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

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. On this computer CD, the manual is available as six PDF files which can be read directly from your computer or printed. The Circle of Love Songs are available as 307 MP3 music files.

Cost \$10 US plus shipping.

To obtain a copy, please write to:

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

### Joyful Things A Celebration of Children's Spiritual Songs by Kamala

This professional CD of songs that includes 70 of the children's voices from the Ananda Marga River School in Australia along with top musicians and some of the children's most favourite songs. A universal and uplifting collection, with all lyrics and chords included in the 12-page booklet. For details, please contact Kamala at <[innersong@ozemail.com.au](mailto:innersong@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.

### 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)>.

### Poster for Sale

This brightly coloured poster, made in Taiwan, is available for sale from Gurukula Academy of Taiwan. <[ihuad@ms48.hinet.net](mailto:ihuad@ms48.hinet.net)>



# New CDs from AMGK

*The following CDs are completed and are in the process of being reproduced for sale. They should be available by the time you receive this newsletter. The price has not been set yet, as we are still awaiting notice from the publisher. However, as always, prices will be kept affordable and adjustments in price will be made where need be. Prices will be posted on NHE-Forum as soon as production is completed.*



## PowerPoint Resource n. 1

a CD collection of PowerPoint presentations useful for teacher training and introductory lectures on NHE. The contents is as follows:

Neo-Humanist Education, Philosophy, Principles  
Pedagogy in four parts:  
NHE Philosophy  
NHE Principles  
NHE Teacher  
NHE Teaching Methods

Master Unit Cakranemii – The Nucleus of the Universe

Communication and Problem Solving

Communication with Children -- from the NHE  
Early Childhood Introductory Certificate  
Programme

Effective Leadership Skills

Foundations of NHE - Philosophical

Glimpses into NHE Schools - from around the world

Liberation of Intellect – Neo-Humanism

Open Space Meeting

Moving in Your Rhythm – Text from Writings of Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

NHE Quahira Sector

Our Philosophical Treatise – Discourse by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

Quiet Time

## DVD Resource n.1

a collection of short videos on the following topics:

Yoga acrobatics in Thailand  
Yoga with children in Italy  
Yoga and Massage with children in Italy  
Youth camp in Italy  
New Wave in Dubrovnik  
Joyful Things (River School, Australia)

### To Order:

Please send e-mail to:  
amgk.glo@gurukul.edu

### Suggested Website:

[www.mainlesson.com/showstoriesbytitle.php](http://www.mainlesson.com/showstoriesbytitle.php)

A wonderful site for fairy tales rich in moral teachings and imagination. It is a big site and may take a bit of time to appear.

# Neo-Humanist Education

Universal Love, Holistic Self Development, Values, Applied Learning



*Drawing By Didi Cidrupa*

"When the underlying spirit of humanism is extended to everything, animate and inanimate, in this universe, I have designated this as Neo-Humanism. This Neo-Humanism will elevate humanism to universalism, love for all created beings of this universe."

P.R. Sarkar

Gurukula Network  
146 Honness Lane  
Ithaca, New York 14850