Sustainable Futures
Plexuses and Microvita
Governance and Economy
Education in an Accelerating World
Earth Lovers Family
A Creative Playground Project
NHE Schools around the world
and more .....
Gurukula Network
Newsletter and Journal of Neohumanist Schools and Institutes

Gurukula Network is published by the Ananda Marga Gurukula Global Liaison Office

Two yearly issues, published November and May, serve as a means of communication for Neohumanist projects around the world.

It is the spirit of Gurukula Network to encourage a free sharing of ideas and to stimulate discussion on educational and global issues facing our world. All articles express the views of the author, and not necessarily those of AMGK.

Gurukula Network is open to any and all NHE related projects. Please send submissions to:
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VISION OF ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA

The Sanskrit word "Gurukula" (pronounced gurukul) has the following etymology: Gu: darkness; ru: dispeller; kula: an institution. Gurukula is an institution which helps students dispel the darkness of the mind and leads to total emancipation of the individual and society at large. Ananda Marga Gurukula is engaged in creating an international network of Neohumanist Schools and Institutes to hasten the advent of a society in which there is love, peace, understanding, inspiration, justice and health for all beings.

OBJECTIVES OF ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA

- To serve humanity with neohumanist spirit and to acquire knowledge for that purpose.
- To establish a strong base in Anandanagar and around the world in order to carry on the legacy of its founder for the benefit of future generations.
- To provide a sound and conducive environment for students for their physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual well-being.
- To promote ethical values in individuals and implement these values in the management of projects, schools and institutions.
- To establish and maintain schools and special academic institutions around the world as well as a cyber-university.
- To initiate teacher education programs to improve and upgrade the quality of education on all academic levels.
- To promote Tantra, Neohumanism and PROUT (Progressive Utilization Theory) as the foundation for building a universal society.
- To initiate intellectual dialogues and research for all-round renaissance of society.
- To facilitate the placement of volunteers across cultures to help build meaningful relationships and to support community and social change projects.
- To support the building of a global eco-village network (Master Units)
- To encourage the development of micro-enterprises for sustainability of social service projects.

Chancellor of Ananda Marga Gurukula
Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt., Kulapati

Shrii Prabhata Rainjan Sarkar inspired the establishment of Ananda Marga Schools in 1963 out of which grew an international network of schools and the Neohumanist Education system. In 1990 he founded the Ananda Marga Gurukula University. Ananda Marga Gurukula also serves as the Board of Education for Neohumanist Schools and Institutes around the world. These Neohumanist Schools and projects, some of which are featured in Gurukula Network, are managed by the Education Relief and Welfare Section and Women's Welfare Department of Ananda Marga.

NEOHUMANIST EDUCATION
Universal Love and Values
Holistic Development
Astaunga Yoga
Ecological and Social Consciousness
Academic, Practical and Personal Skills
Knowledge of Self and World Applied for Universal Welfare
Joyful Learning through the Arts
Culturally Sensitive Approach
Integrated Curriculum
Exemplary Role of the Educators
Human movement is movement towards ecological equipoise - towards the supreme synthesis. In the inner world, balance must be maintained as this leads to spiritual progress. Ecological order is not only for the earth but for the entire universe, and it must be maintained both within and without. The angular displacement of any celestial body may affect the human mind as well as the physical universe, so balance must be maintained between the internal and external spheres. In all aspects of human life this subtle balance must be maintained. This is ecological balance.

Shrii P.R. Sarkar
Middle Path Scenario for Asia’s Future: A Spiritual Perspective
by Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt.

Summary of the paper presented at an international conference entitled “Global Transitions and Asia 2060: Climate, Political-Economy, and Identity” in November 2010 at Tamkang University. The objective of the conference was to explore Asia’s alternative futures given current conditions on the planet.

Each age manages the world in its own way with a certain level of consciousness and a moral compass –creating good and bad precedents for the future. We are left with dark ages or golden periods of human history depending on the pathways that we follow. Reforms, Renaissance and Revolutions are not uncommon in human history. The future of Asia too will depend on how its residents choose to envision and act. Our wisdom will lie in improving our individual and collective capabilities of leading the change in all three realms-physical, mental and spiritual. We can choose to remain complacent or decide to be pro-active in creating a world order which serves the highest good of the largest number of people - rather the greatest good of one and all including all the other species.

While thinking of Asia and its future, I am reminded of Rudyard Kipling’s [born in Bombay in 1865] well-known remark in the Ballad of East and West (1889): “East is east and west is west and never the twain shall meet”. It is worth quoting the refrain which opens, and closes, the poem in full:

Oh, East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet, Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God’s great Judgment Seat; But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth, When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth!

This has been quoted as saying that ‘it is indisputable that geographic points of the compass will never meet in this life, but that when two strong men [or equals] meet, the accidents of birth, whether of nationality, race, or family, do not matter at all - the Asian and the European are equals’. [1]

Upanishads - the old Indian scriptures have always spoken of the unity of human race and cosmic-fraternity irrespective of geographical differences. Hararame Pita’ Gaorii Ma’ta’ svadesha bhuvanatrayam. In the words of Shrii P. R. Sarkar “Supreme Consciousness is our father, Cosmic Operative Principle is our mother and the universe is our home. This universe is our common patrimony and we must utilize it as members of a joint family. The exploited and unexploited potentialities of the world do not belong to any particular person, nation or state. We are to utilize all the mundane and supra-mundane wealth accepting the principles of Cosmic Inheritance.”[2] Hence, the sooner we can forge out mutually beneficial bilateral and multilateral alliances or even better, create an Asian Union based on equity for all and rule of law, the greater the chances of a bright future for all in Asia. This could be the greatest political and economic challenge of our times.

To simplify, I may start by saying that some of the key forces that are driving us towards different futures for Asia and the rest of the world include:

1) ‘peak-scenarios’ of running out of almost everything such as peak oil, peak food, etc[17 rare earth elements are depleting fast and we may face phosphate-famine in less than two decades];
2) cracks and fissures in the dominant world economic model that has thrived on “top-down trickle approach” ;
3) the “information-revolution” brought about by satellites and other technologies [fostering social-networking & raising expectations of the masses];
4) bio-technology & research on genetics; and 5) revolutionary innovations in green technology.

These and other developments and their ramifications can be viewed pessimistically or optimistically - as we choose. I am an optimist and believe in the Tantric notion that “What the cosmic mind has done to date will continue to be done by unit minds in slow and gradual steps.”[3] The power of the spirit lies beyond the vagaries of human mind and will ultimately lead us towards a brighter, abundant future. What has brought us good in life so far could again give us better and hopefully, the best in the future. However, no progress happens without clashes and cohesion and so a brighter future would also not happen without aggressive movements for renaissance and change, whether in Asia or elsewhere. The core issue of Asia’s social renaissance will be to establish and align with the Cosmic Ideal; place Dharma (universal welfare) as the guiding faculty behind knowledge; and, to act decisively to eliminate wide disparities prevalent in every walk of human life. If Asia ignores the call, its future too will fall short of fulfilling its limitless possibilities and it will also lose the opportunity to become an example or be a source of inspiration for others. The flag bearers of Asian renaissance will be those who go beyond rigidities in human thought and are able to embrace the unthinkable. The key lies in the quality of thought of Asian-Visionaries. Will they merely ditto the west? Will they merely dance to the tune of the traditions without reflecting on their cardinal worth? Will they mustere courage and utilize their own creativity in order to address its challenges rather relying on ‘packaged-futures’ from the occident? And, will they shake off the hesitation and forge out an unchartered path endowed with the wisdom of the past and the promises of the future?

The scientific achievements of the 20th century led primarily by the western world has brought us all closer in intimacy but the eastern mind set is still far from being in synchronicity with the western approach to life and beyond. We encounter two distinct deep-rooted psychologies in humans - nomadic and agrarian (rooted to land & river valleys). The former was a perfect solution for the times when
we had a little population and forests were abundant. Nomads walked lightly on the earth and kept the balance in nature. However, as the populations multiplied, nature became an externality that needed to be controlled and manipulated for the benefit of humans. The reformed ‘conquer the nature’ psychology finds its culmination in mass mobilization of human talent via large public or private multinational corporations. These corporations have no allegiance to any particular place and move out as soon as the local resources are exhausted. It has even reached to the point where we may be ready to abandon the earth and move on to other stars with the same human-centric mind set. Some of us on this earth are hard wired in to that psychology. On the other hand, old civilizations grew along river valleys. The primitive cultures in Asia had always learned to build their civilizations by sticking to their habitats and cultivating its resources while being mindful of the local inhabitants, their future generations and even the welfare of other species. Empires (manifestations of power!!) can be built with a ‘drive for conquest’ mind-set but the civilizations (manifestations of culture!!) can be built only with an inter-generational perspective & ‘preserve the mother nature psychology’. Today, Asia is on the verge of going to its roots and shaking off its over dependence on imported colonial solutions to its problems which rarely have solved its unique problems in the long run. The west has, no doubt, greatly contributed towards world development with its analytical approach which however has now reached its limits (due to its exploitative mentality) and must now be balanced by synthetic solutions (which would care also for future generations & all life forms). Asian mindset was traditionally agrarian and by necessity, oriented to keep harmony with its environment (fellow beings, animals, & other flora and fauna). Asia now stands at a crossroads and longs to rediscover and redefine its cultural roots with the help of modern technological insights. Perhaps it is time to blend the oriental sublimity and occidental dynamicty into hybrid pathways for the future of Asia as well as the rest of the world. What is hoped from Asia is that it will draw from its wisdom of thousands of years of civilization and guide the future where arts and sciences are used for “service, blessedness and peace” and that its entrepreneurs will further the interests of all stakeholders and not just the providers of capital or labor.

I see three pathways on the future spectrum of Asia but from the spiritual world view, the middle path is the most likely scenario to unfold in the next fifty years.

**First Scenario - “Tragedy of the Commons”**
Matter-centered, self-centered and dogma centered pathway [4]- that closes options for all of humanity and leads to mass extinction of species. It is partially already occurring and not far-fetched. It could get accelerated as the population increases and demands on the eco-system multiply while the resource-base depletes quickly. Matter (Capitalism and Communism) and Dogma (Religious Fundamentalism) Centered Pathway is where the entire potentiality of the society is directed in just mere existential issues and the matter or dogma-centered philosophies dominate the collective psyche. Affluence amidst poverty becomes the common scene. Disparities abound and accelerate. Life styles remain unsustainable. Community or social consciousness is almost non-existent. Individualism reigns. Selfishness pervades and corruption goes unchecked. Lack of moral values remains the greatest challenge for social-polity. Rigidities of the world views become a stumbling block to any move towards a total renaissance.

**Second Scenario - “Utopias of the Enlightened & the Wise”**
Enlightened Idealist Utopian pathway[5] - that dreams of some enlightened leadership to take over our planet and with some magic wand inspire people to change their life styles, motivate the entrepreneurs to follow a value based model of socio-economics and ultimately build a world of self-sustaining communities. This idealist or neohumanist utopia –we can call it the “Paradise of the Commons” or “Dharma Rajya –Rule of Righteousness” assumes that everyone’s needs are met with equanimity. Life styles are sustainable and all species are respected and cared for.

**Third Scenario - “The Middle Path: the only viable option for Asia”**
The Middle Path[6] is ridden with conflicts, tensions and delivers only an incremental progress. It is the most pragmatic scenario where the ‘ignorance’ in us will try to hold on to the easy path of ensuring its survival neglecting the interests of all others, including the other species unless forced by the circumstances (laws, politics, global tragedies etc). At the same time, the ‘enlightened’ in us will goad us to re-engineer our habitats respecting the laws of nature & interest of all species. In redesigning the systems for collective human survival, we may discover the next phase of ethical revolution - a core value system that will spearhead humanity’s future cultural evolution - from static to the sentient state. The middle path scenario might be a conflictual one which brings into focus the tension between good and bad; between benevolent and malevolent options; between empowerment and growth models; between rural and urban; between agriculture and industry; between labor and capital or technology; between affluence and scarcity; between neohumanist and self-centered philosophy. Discovering the balance between physical and the transcendental is the hallmark of the middle-path. The logic of the middle path is rooted in the Buddhist and Tantric perspectives which recognize that humans are endowed with the best of best (drive for moksa) and the worst of worst (instinct for selfish-pleasure-kama) in them and only by pursuing the middle path can we tame the evil in us and encourage the movement towards the ‘enlightened’ in us.[7] In some ways each one of us will always be different and unique; in other ways we are always similar and share our temperament & social conditioning with our subculture, religious affiliation or any group that we belong to or feel a close affinity to; and, in some ways we are all the same-universal-carrying the common human traits and evolutionary forces that shape humanity & its future, in general.

Within Asia, there are wide differences, diversities, disparities, commonalities & similarities. The ‘cultural creatives’ of Asia are likely to display hybrid [8] mind-sets : Conformist - sticking to age-old traditions; Mutative - continuing to catch up in order to keep pace with the western growth model; and Sentient scenarios - integrating the best of the western tradition with the best of the Asian traditions. What is most likely to evolve is some variant of the middle path which would recognize the unity amidst diversity; hope amidst chaos; optimism amidst hopelessness; potential for affluence for the entire humanity in a world run by the scare of insecurities and pandemic fears. The middle path will replace the old three R’s (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) with five new R’s viz. Reflective eco-friendly education; Redesign of Eco-friendly Habitats and Communities; Renewable Energy conversion to clean electricity; Regeneration of life forms via sequestering carbon and Recycling of all wastes - solid, liquid and gases. Cellenium’s HSP[9] & Sangkhlaburi Eco-Village Model [10] experience shows that it is feasible and can be a reality now.

Continued on Page 9
**Intercultural Sustainability Workshop**  
*Ljungskile, Sweden, June 18-19, 2011*

Under the auspices of Intercultural Sustainability Network and Swedish Academy of Sustainability, a workshop was held in Ljungskile and University West, located in Ed, Western Sweden in June.

Dr. Marcus Bussey and Dr. Dada Shambhushivananda were among the international participants which included scholars and action researchers from Africa, Latin America and Sweden.

Dr. Bussey led the Futures exercises while Dada shared spiritual exercises with participants. There was social-sculpturing, reflections on the state of the world and nature walks to identify voices from nature.

The Intercultural Sustainability Network is based on commonly agreed five principles:

1. Willingness towards collaborative learning with a universal perspective and becoming sensitive to "global story"
2. Engagement with "local stories"
3. Readiness to translate enlightened consciousness into "action projects"
4. Agreement to constantly reflect, learn from experiences and modify perspectives in order to align vision, actions and passions.
5. Develop competencies to nurture inter-cultural sustainabilities through most conducive forums such as study circles, university courses etc., irrespective of country, place, settings.

This international network builds upon horizontal structures and gives legitimacy to grass roots initiatives of Ananda Marga Gurukula. It embraces both formal and non-formal programs of different countries.

**Learning the Art of Wholeness:**  
*Challenges for Education and Human Development*  
*Madras Institute of Development Studies, India*  
*July 2, 2011*

This workshop was held to discuss solutions to the educational crisis that is evident in all levels of education - from the primary to higher levels. A major part of the problem lies in our education lacking a soul dimension and the realization of wholeness; pedagogical methods lacking a relation of love, mutuality and care among partners and fellow travelers; and educational objectives lacking the goal of integral development of individuals and societies.

Dr. Ananta Kumar Giri gave the opening remarks and spoke on Learning the Art of Wholeness: Education and Human Development. Among the many speakers, Dr Marcus Bussey, spoke on Neohumanist Education and Building Sustainable Futures; Dada Shambhushivananda, spoke on Psycho-Spiritual Foundations for Holistic Education; Professor Asha Mukherjee, Visva Bharati and Shantiniketan spoke on Education for Wholeness.

**Meetings with Center for Environmental Education**  
*Ahmedabad, India*

Kulapati met with Mrs. Rajeswari Gorana from the Center for Environmental (Education (CEE) in Ahmedabad and and Dr. Kiran Chhokar from CEE Delhi Office) and Editor of Journal of Education for Sustainable Development. CEE offered to share their resources and publications on environmental education with NHE schools throughout India. CEE and AMGK are exploring collaborating on the development of an Inner and Outer Ecology program for schools. From kindergarten to university level these courses would be designed to lay a strong foundation of healthy human beings who are sensitive to our environment. Inner ecology would take the help of medical science, moral science and intuitional science while Outer Ecology would bring together all essential seminal ideas about our environment.
Plexuses and Microvita
By Henk de Weijer

This article will review the role of microvita inside plexuses, the physico-psychic centers of the human body and mind. The word ‘plexus’ is of Latin origin, meaning ‘interwoven’. Its Latin plural nominative and vocative are plexi, its plural genitive is plexorum, its dative plexis, and its plural accusative plexos. In order to avoid confusion, created by the Latin cases, I will use the word ‘plexus’ for singular and the English ‘plexuses’ for plural. As I wrote before, microvita are tiny little creative catalyzing agents. They build atoms of matter, biology and mind, while cooperating with the characteristics of subatomic particles and pure energy.

The smallest containers of information inside theses plexuses, the psychic molecules, are called ‘vrtiis’ in Sanskrit. In his discourses Shri P.R. Sarkar used different nouns to explain their nature: propensity, sensual desire, ectoplasmic occupation, psychic urge, mental propensity and tendency. These six nouns do give an idea about their nature, but are not really crystal clear about their power and intensity. However, he also used ‘epithymetic influence’. Epithymia is a Greek word, containing the root ‘thymos’, which is connected with the vital force of life, in the sense of “violence, sudden movement, excessive indulgence and rage.” Epithymia was understood as “the sin of longing for desires outside the will of God”.

Now two questions arise. The first is: what can be the origin of this almost violent drive to go against the will of God or, as it can also be understood, against the inner flow of evolution? A second, more practical question is, how can this drive be reversed? In order to discover the principles that influence the power of vrtiis, it will be helpful to investigate the system of plexuses as parts of the human body, as well as at the influence of positive and negative microvita.

Medical medicine describes plexuses as areas where nerves bifurcate and rejoin. The four most important of the approximately one hundred known plexuses are the cervical, brachial, lumbar and sacral plexus. The number of medical neuro-plexuses and their location seem to have hardly any direct connection with the metaphysical plexuses. It sounds more reasonable to assume that, if networks of neurons are connected to plexuses, it will be at their subltest extremities: dendrites and axons.

Although the idea of plexuses, or cakras, has its origin in traditional Indian medicine, European mystics were already familiar with them after the Middle Ages. A drawing of the cakras, made by Johann Gichtel, a student of Jacob Böhme, is an indication of this. (See Figure 1.) Gichtel (1638-1710) was born in Regensburg, Germany and lived in Amsterdam around the time of Spinoza (632-1777).

In the twentieth century Dr. Valerie Hunt, Dr. Candace Pert and Dr. Hiroshi Motoyama performed research on radiated energy from positions of the cakras. Presently Dr. Konstantin Korotkov and Krishna Madappa developed an EPC/GDV (ElectroPhotonic Capture/Gas Discharge Visualization) camera, which is able to measure altered states on consciousness and cakra energy. Their EPC method is based on the stimulation of photon and electron emissions from the surface of objects, whilst transmitting short electrical pulses. In this way activities of plexuses can be visualized. Kirlian photography is now followed by Aura video cameras. (See Figure 2)

Shri P.R. Sarkar places these plexuses inside a mandala. (See Figure 3.) Propensities can be expressed internally or externally through the vibrational activity of a cakra. Such vibrational activity causes hormones to be secreted inside the glands and as a result hormones are secreted. In turn these hormones connect with afferent neurons, which carry the created impulses to the central nervous system. The brain weighs this information and decide for one or more internal, external or combined reactions.

The position of the endocrine glands inside the human body has a direct relation with the cakras. How these glands are activated to release their hormones cannot yet be determined, but research of Dr. Candace Pert in the twentieth century has given a clear indication of their connection with the cakras.

All human beings have a bright and a dark side, which can be understood as a metaphor for the polarity of positive and negative microvita. The fundamental polarity of Energy and Consciousness is united with the polarity of positive and
negative microvita in chemical compounds, living beings and human beings in particular. “The upper plexus is the abode of positive microvita and is the approach of synthesis. The lower plexus is the abode of negative microvita.”9 (See Figure 4.) The upper plexus is Guru Cakra, which is the inner part of Sahasrára cakra. “Good propensities are enhanced by positive microvita and the bad propensities are also reduced by positive microvita. Bad propensities may be enhanced with negative microvita and diminished with positive microvita.”10 So, there is every reason to increase the number of positive microvita, but how to achieve that? Positive microvita can be attracted in five different ways: by the grace of Parama Puru’sa -the Supreme Consciousness- by concentrating the mind on Varábhaya Mudrá11, by doing more meditation, by doing kiirtana, -a psycho-spiritual dance- and by satsang -the company of good people.

Where do negative and positive microvita enter the body to find their abode and start functioning? Negative microvita “cannot move above the physico-psychic plexus and can move only downwards”12 (See Figure 4.) This can only mean they enter the body in the Vishuddha Cakra. The entrance position of positive microvita seems confusing. Shri P.R. Sarkar gave two hints. “Positive microvium starts its journey in the lunar plexus and moves both ways...”13, but also: “ From below the left ear to the lower point of the right ear is the sidereal plexus -- the Naks’atra Mandala. Generally positive microvita come in contact with the human body through this plexus...”14 The first hint points at the lunar plexus (sixth cakra) and the second one lets them enter in the sidereal plexus (fifth cakra). But, if the pictures of the two statements are superimposed it can be concluded that positive microvita enter in the area of the nose.15

All propensities inside the cakras are either guided by negative or positive microvita. The influence of negative microvita is towards physicality and a decrease in expressed consciousness, while positive microvita have a catalyzing influence towards subtlety, towards an increase of expressed consciousness. Let me give one example. Mamata”-affection- is a propensity found in the Ana’ha’ta Cakra. When Mamata” is guided by negative microvita it can expressed, both inwardly and outwardly, as attachment to a person, to knowledge or physical possession. If positive microvita are the incentive for action, each person or object will be seen in Universal context.

The activation of cakras by microvita knows two extremes. The first is a large deficiency of both positive and negative microvita. In such a situation all lower chakras suffer too and this forms a big danger for physical, mental and spiritual health.

The second is a fully expressed influence of positive and negative microvita. All positive and negative characteristics have developed to maximum levels. What will guide a decision for action in such a person? This extreme seems rare and theoretical.

Between these extremes also intermediate situations exist. A first one is known by a deficient expression of positive microvita and an intensive activation by negative microvita. The overall theme of Ana’ha’ta Cakra, for example, is then directed towards crudity and can be described as “Self-interest and crude reality serve as motivating factors.”

A second intermediate is a relatively high expressed influence of positive microvita and a deficient influence of negative, subtle microvita. Such a cakra shows insufficient contact with the reality of life and, since higher cakras guide the lower ones, also all lower cakras suffer from this imbalance.
A third situation is a relatively high expressed influence of positive microvita and a deficit influence of negative, subtle microvita. Positive qualities are mixed with negative qualities. Life means a struggle!

The full expression of positive microvita and sufficient influence of negative microvita is the fourth one. Don’t forget that no chemical compounds and cells can function without the involvement of crude and subtle, negative microvita. Here the theme of Ana‘ha‘ta Cakra cakra is “Recognizing Universal Love and Oneness in all living beings, objects and events.”

All actions in one’s life are guided by the activity of negative and/or positive microvita. Even scientific testing is influenced by it, especially if subtle objects are researched. To conclude one example.

Me, (Masaru Emoto,):
“The water crystal photography is a very simple method and anyone can do this experiment, but I heard it is very difficult to duplicate my work. I wonder why this is.”

Dr. Motoyama:
“I think it is because your heart is pure. Other researchers are just trying to criticize other people’s research or they want more fame or something. So they don’t have pure hearts.”

I wish you a pure heart.

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14. P.R. Sarkar - Microvitum in a Nutshell p129
15. see figure …)

SUSTAINABLE FUTURES  Continued from Page 9

Moving Towards Asian Integration

Asian Integration is fraught with numerous obstacles:

a) Divergent political & national interests & lack of trust;
b) Wide economic disparities & potentialities;
c) Various religious belief systems, languages & cultural histories;
d) Geographical separateness;
d) Lack of unifying Asian sentiment among the people of Asia.

All these obstacles could be overcome over a period of time if we:

first, take steps to adopt local socio-economic programs which would ensure that purchasing power of the common people is enhanced consistently through a ‘bottom-up’ approach ;
second, strengthen universal cardinal human values irrespective of different belief systems or religious sentiments;
third, emphasize reflective education, benevolent use of arts, science and technology, eco-friendly life styles & fostering Cosmic Ideals;
fourth, adopt national policy and put systems in place in order to establish regional self-sufficiency, as a priority ; minimize dependence on non-renewable resources of the planet, learn to manage the carbon-cycle and take decisive steps to recycle all wastes-solids, liquids and gases.
fifth, foster regional commerce, allow free movement of persons and goods and further regional cooperation and exchange, science, technology and arts.

And, as parity develops among all socio-economic zones within the region, take steps towards the formation of an Economic Asian Union where there is unobstructed movement of ideas, people, goods and services and there is a common universal currency.

The political Asian Union, like European Union could then succeed the stable Economic Asian Union. Hopefully, the Asian Union will be a prelude to the Earth Union with a World Government supported by self-reliant decentralized economic zones. The most important ingredient to foster peace, harmony and prosperity in Asia lies with the passion, devotion and dedication of Asian visionaries. If present leadership fails, the new generation will take up the challenge and build a new world with wisdom-based policies.

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5.Paradise of the Commons has been alluded historically in Shri Keśa'nā's notion of Mahabharata and Canakya's Golden period of Gupta Dynasty and mythologically in the notions of Rama-Rajya and Garden of Eden.
10. Sangkhlaburi, www.neohumanistfoundation.org
Yoga Educators Conference
Bali, Indonesia
By Dada Shankarsana’nanda

The 5th Yoga Educators Conference (YEC) of AMAYE (Ananda Marga Association of Yoga Educators) was successfully conducted in the beautiful mountain area of Kintamani in Bali, Indonesia. 85 participants from all over the world enjoyed a very inspiring and well-executed program.

The objectives of the YEC are to educate and upgrade Ananda Marga yoga teachers and create a platform to bring Rajadhiraja (RDR) Yoga to all.

The conference started off with a workshop on Yin Yoga by sister Chrys Soenaris from Singapore. Yin Yoga is a complementary yoga to RDR that prepares the body for long meditation sessions. To enjoy long meditation the body must be free from pains and discomforts and Yin Yoga helps in this regard.

On the second day Caroline Yip, a physiotherapist from Malaysia, conducted two sessions about anatomy of asana, core stability and alignment. A selection of basic asanas were analyzed from an anatomical point of view. This very practical and educative workshop was much appreciated by the participating yoga teachers.

Day three all belonged to Dada Dharmavedananda who taught practical aspects of naturopathy. The whys and hows of mudpack, steam bath, hipbath, spinal bath, sunbath and enema were explained and demonstrated. Again, a very practical and educative workshop.

On the last day two sessions related to naturopathy where conducted. The first one was by Dr. Marta Antunes from Portugal. Dr. Antunes is educated as an allopathic medical doctor and is known as a pioneer in Portugal in a practice that combines allopathy (conventional medical science) and medical yogic science. She called her lecture: “Yoga Therapy - Be your own doctor”, and explained the science of Yoga and Naturopathy supplemented with case studies. Dr. Antunes’ workshop became so popular that an extra session was arranged for her on the last day where she continued to present her case studies.

The conference ended with a workshop by Dada Mitrabuddhyananda on Ayurvedic remedies. Since his young days Dada had an interest in Ayurveda and how to use natural remedies. This ancient art is today much forgotten, but Dada’s workshop taught us how to use some common herbs and plants such as basil, turmeric, cumin seed, cinnamon, cardamom, aloe vera, neem, black pepper, lemon, mint and more. So simple and yet so effective!
The Prama Institute has expanded its programs in Yoga Detox and is now building a new Health and Wellness Center that will sponsor residential programs for longer term detoxification and other health issues. This program with a staff of three holistic health specialists and an MD consultant will be under the direction of Ramesh Bjones, who has completed training with Dada Dharmavedananda at the Ananda Marga Health Center in Cebu Philippines.

The Yoga Detox program offers a holistic form of physical detox with graduated fasting with juice and vegetable broth, steam and mud baths, colonics, creative movement as well as mental detox through chanting (bhajans and kirtan), meditation (sitting, walking, eating). The first 12 day detox conducted at the PI by Ramesh Bjones and Dada Dharmavedananda with a diabetic resulted in him becoming insulin free on a low calorie vegetable diet and juice fasting for five days. He remains insulin free one month since initiating treatment.

Two recent Yoga of Silence workshops have produced wonderful life style changes in their participants, including 20 people having received personal instruction in meditation followed up with meditation classes to for those living locally. We also sponsored Ananda Marga Yoga Teacher training in July-August and are now planning for next summer’s training. Those interested in this sixth year of yoga teacher training at the Prama Institute, located in the mountains of western North Carolina, are encouraged to apply early.

The Prama Institute, under the direction of Ac. Vishvamitra, conducted two successful Yoga Life Style Internships with four interns in June and three in July. This internship includes morning and evening meditation and posture yoga, yoga philosophy and practice seminars twice a week, five hours of karma yoga daily, field trips and group/individual supervision and independent studies. Some receive college credits for courses arranged between the faculty of their colleges and the PI staff who have experience and credentials to support these studies. We continue to receive many referrals for this internship and plan to begin another internship for the second year in May of 2012.

The Prama Institute is having a successful fifth year with continuing growth of its own programs and rentals to like-minded groups in the field of yoga, health and the arts.

We continue to have many repeat rentals, including Inner Peace’s five hundred hour certification program in yoga therapy conducted in November/December and January/February each year. This yoga therapy program features internationally known specialist in Ayurvedic yoga therapy, Mark Halpern, director of the College of Ayurveda in California and Amy Weintraub’s well known yoga therapy program for those suffering from depression.

Numerous other yoga studios and alternative health groups repeat each year with rave reviews about the Prama Institute, including the friendly staff and gourmet vegetarian food and its great ambience for spiritual retreats. The networking with other yoga and health groups has resulted in many shared initiatives and greater interests in the yoga life style mission of the Prama Institute’s Center of Neohumanist Studies (CNS).

We are looking forward to a year of growth with the opening of our new Health and Wellness Center on a five acre plot that provides the opportunity for expanded health programs and staff to begin our residential nutrition and detox program. The south facing meadow that the center sits on also provides a fertile area for large scale organic gardening to provide the needed vegetables and fruits for the center and the opportunity for “students”, program recipients, to experience producing some of their own food.

Continued from page 10 Yoga Conference

The 5th YEC concluded in high spirits. The first global YEC outside Sweden was a great success. Next year’s conference will be back to the Sweden Training Center, and all yoga enthusiasts are encouraged to join these annual events. Hope to see you all for next year’s conference, July 18-22, 2012.
Governance and Economy: On Occupy Wall Street and Future Options by Ac. Dhanjoo N. Ghista

This article is offered in support of the people occupying the financial districts in many cities, to voice their repressed unmet needs and their disillusionment with the corporatized capitalist democratic system. Let us remind ourselves that this land does not belong to corporations and political parties. Rather, in the words of our ancestors in the US, This land is your land, this land is my land. From California to the New York island. From the red wood forest to the gulf stream waters. This land was made for you and me.

Analysis of the Current crisis of Governance and Economy

Today, we are facing intensive economic crisis, with massive unemployment and the inability of countries to look after the basic living needs (let alone social and economic security) of their citizens. The reason is that we have never had genuine democracy, and instead governance by political parties (supported by capitalist corporations) who have their own agendas which have little to do with public welfare.

It is the obligation of the government to fulfill the basic living needs of the people. These needs include equitable access to education and healthcare. Take the United States, for example. Not everyone has access to healthcare and a means of livelihood; a big percentage of the population has no access to healthcare, because they cannot afford privatized health insurance governmental policy under pressure from these insurance companies.

Not only that, but capitalist political parties also give free rein to capitalism minded institutions (banks, pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies) that are solely for profiteering at the expense of the people. Why have banks been allowed to be enterprising, to dupe clients to buy house mortgages that they could not afford, and to also be allowed to gamble with their clients’ savings?

Another aspect of corporate capitalism is to make money at any cost, and this is why so many weapons-making corporations profit by wars, at the expense of the people of the war-torn countries. It is the general opinion that the war crisis has been caused by pressure from these weapons making and distributing corporations.

Now in the US, the big manufacturing corporations have shifted their manufacturing to South-East Asian countries (like China), to take advantage of the cheap labor. Thus, US exports have dwindled. Also, big corporations manage to pay very little income tax, and this is yet another reason for the US being in debt.

How can we expect democracy to provide stable governance and stable economy? Political system and economy are inter-linked, and this is why it is more appropriate to use the term political economy since economy by itself has no basis. So, the current economic crisis is verily a crisis of political economy.

In corporate capitalist economy, the financial elite and the elite corporations constitute a separate class who control the government and their policies, for their own profiteering. They are responsible for all these maneuverings.

When some of these capitalistic financial systems started to fail (due to their corrupt practices) and fold, they had the political clout to be bailed out; their managers could hence continue to have exorbitant salaries and bonuses at the expense of their employees. The actions of the U.S. government and the European Union government in 2009, to bail out the culprit corporations, are testimonies to how the political elite allowed the financial elite to manage the system to its benefit. This created a massive political problem, which was hushed up by the governmental bail-outs in the US and European Union’s nations. This bail-out saved these financial systems from the public opinion that the financial elite had violated all principles of fiduciary, social and moral responsibility in seeking their own personal gain at the expense of society as a whole.

So now in the last year or so, this has created a massive political and social crisis, which is truly a systemic crisis, compared to which the crisis of the financial institutions can be regarded as trivial. The question now in people’s minds is why was the political system not capable of fixing the crisis and holding the perpetrators responsible for it? Alternatively, if the financial crisis did involve criminality on the part of the elite corporations, how could the political system not have created laws to render such actions criminal?

There is hence now a crisis of confidence in the financial system and a crisis of confidence in the political system, which is why people are protesting around Wall Street, the symbol of the capitalist democratic system.

Solution for the Governance and Economy crisis and the Occupy Wall Street movement

The Occupy Wall Street movement symbolises the pent up frustration of the people who could no longer endure and sustain the unfair socio-economic-political policies and injustices meted out by the political parties acting in cohorts with their sponsors the capitalist corporations solely interested in profiteering with not an iota of humanism. This ongoing suppression of peoples’ rights to fair living is due to the political parties regimes and the unfair linkages between the political and economic elites. So then what is the solution?

There are two domains of solution: 1. Economic solution, and 2. Political or Governance solution.

Economic Solution based on Progressive Utilization Theory (PROUT)

By way of an economic solution, let us enunciate some of the tenets of a new Cooperative Economics model, based on the socio-economic and political philosophy called Prout (Progressive Utilization Theory), propounded by the sage Prabhat R. Sarkar (Refs 1, 2 and 3).

- The first tenet is the common patrimony of the natural resources of this planet. This, for instance, means that private companies should not be allowed to patent plants with medicinal value.
- The second tenet is that the minimal necessities of living need to be guaranteed through 100% employment and minimal wage.

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The Official Declaration of the
Occupation of Wall Street on October 5

As we gather together in solidarity to express a feeling of mass injustice, we must not lose sight of what brought us together. We write so that all people who feel wronged by the corporate forces of the world can know that we are your allies.

As one people, united, we acknowledge the reality: that the future of the human race requires the cooperation of its members; that our system must protect our rights, and upon corruption of that system, it is up to the individuals to protect their own rights, and those of their neighbors; that a democratic government derives its just power from the people, but corporations do not seek consent to extract wealth from the people and the Earth; and that no true democracy is attainable when the process is determined by economic power.

We come to you at a time when corporations, which place profit over people, self-interest over justice, and oppression over equality, run our governments. We have peaceably assembled here, as is our right, to let these facts be known.

They have taken our houses through an illegal foreclosure process, despite not having the original mortgage. They have taken bailouts from taxpayers with impunity, and continue to give the Executives exorbitant bonuses. They have perpetuated inequality and discrimination in the workplace based on age, the color of one's skin, sex, gender identity and sexual orientation.

They have poisoned the food supply through negligence, and undermined the farming system through monopolization. They have profited off of the torture, confinement, and cruel treatment of countless animals, and actively hide these practices.

They have held students hostage with tens of thousands of dollars of debt on education, which is itself a human right. They have consistently outsourced labor and used that outsourcing as leverage to cut workers' healthcare and pay. They have influenced the courts to achieve the same rights as people, with none of the culpability or responsibility.

They have spent millions of dollars on legal teams that look for ways to get them out of contracts in regards to health insurance. They have sold our privacy as a commodity. They have used the military and police force to prevent freedom of the press.

They have deliberately declined to recall faulty products endangering lives in pursuit of profit. They determine economic policy, despite the catastrophic failures their policies have produced and continue to produce.

They have donated large sums of money to politicians, who are responsible for regulating them. They continue to block alternate forms of energy to keep us dependent on oil.

They continue to block generic forms of medicine that could save people's lives or provide relief in order to protect investments that have already turned a substantial profit. They have purposely covered up oil spills, accidents, faulty bookkeeping, and inactive ingredients in pursuit of profit.

They purposefully keep people misinformed and fearful through their control of the media. They have accepted private contracts to murder prisoners even when presented with serious doubts about their guilt.

They have perpetuated colonialism at home and abroad. They have participated in the torture and murder of innocent civilians overseas. They continue to create weapons of mass destruction in order to receive government contracts.

To the people of the world, We, the New York City General Assembly occupying Wall Street in Liberty Square, urge you to assert your power. Exercise your right to peaceably assemble; occupy public space; create a process to address the problems we face, and generate solutions accessible to everyone.

To all communities that take action and form groups in the spirit of direct democracy, we offer support, documentation, and all of the resources at our disposal. Join us and make your voices heard!
-Thirdly, as mentioned earlier in the economic model, both production and distribution should be organised through cooperatively managed corporations.

-The fourth principle is that there should be emphasis on improving and utilizing the skills and expertise of the local people. Hence, local people should be given the first opportunity for employment in the local economic enterprises.

-The fifth principle is that development of indigenous industries and business enterprises should be encouraged in the development of the community and region. Hence, locally produced commodities should be primarily used by the community people, to enable them to improve the standards of their agricultural and industrial products. In other words, regionalisation should precede globalization.

-The sixth principle is that multi-faceted rural development should be undertaken, so as to enable people of all professions to practice their professions, and have fulfilling employment in their rural communities. Rural development, through agro-industrial and hi-tech industrial development, will prevent urban congestion and unemployment. In this regard, it is recommended that rural universities be set up, with the charter of social transformation and agro-industrial development. In the US, this Go-Rural movement will motivate rural migration of production industries, and turn around the phenomenon of the so-called multi-national corporations taking their production abroad to take advantage of cheaper labor and thereby cause unemployment at home.

This decentralised economy constitutes the basis of a model civilian democratic system (to replace the exploitative capitalist corporate pseudo-democratic system), in the form of Economic Democracy, propounded by the sage Prabhat R. Sarkar (Refs 1, 2, 3).

**Economic Democracy**

In the book Socio-Economic Democracy and World Government (Ref 2), a governance solution is offered, in the form of a neo civilian democratic system (CDPS) based on cooperative economics. The Economic Democracy system (ECDS) implies democracy based on equitable distribution of economic assets through Prout. This ECDS first of all requires a grass roots mind set and psychology change from ‘capitalism for personal wealth making’ to a more ‘spiritual psychology of collective welfare promotion’. This mind-set change in society needs to be promoted through education, from primary to secondary to tertiary education. Then in such a transformed spiritual society, our Economic Democracy will be (i) based on the above delineated six tenets of Prout and the six principles of decentralised economy, and (ii) implemented at the grass-roots level, in the what can be termed as functionally sustainable communities (FSCs) , as defined and designed in Refs 2 and 4.

This Civilian Democratic Political System (CDPS) would be structured such that the local governments and legislatures would be composed of elected members of the people-centred professional associations, such as the lawyers’ association, farmers’ association, doctors’ association, teachers’ association. These associations would elect their most socially oriented competent members to serve on the legislature and government, thereby ensuring that the government policies address people’s needs and welfare. These associations should verily represent the people and their needs, and the most competent members of these associations would serve on the government, thereby ensuring people’s welfare based policies. Thus this Civilian Democratic Political system would not need and involve political parties, and would represent people’s (or civilian) democracy. We will thereby have democracy sans political parties.

This Economic Democratic governance system and its Cooperative Economic system (Prout) need to be first established at the grassroots level, in the form of sustainable communities with the theme of all for one and one for all. So then, what constitutes a sustainable community?

**Functionally Sustainable Communities**

A functionally sustainable community (FSC) is defined to comprise of several cities with a large rural hinterland, together providing economic sustainability to the community. In the developing and emerging countries, sustainable development for cities and towns would be concerned with developing adequate standards of living, based on the provision of community services and environmental quality, maintenance of trade linkages with their rural hinterland, and measures of social justice. On the other hand, sustainable development in the rural hinterland would have to deal with the means of generating revenue (by supplying their produces to the cities and other neighboring FSCs), so as to support their community services (such as healthcare, public transport, education, water supply, sanitation, electrical power) and sustain small businesses (Ref 4).

In rural areas, there also needs to be professional opportunities and adequate level of education to service industries, so as to avoid migration to cities. The problems that FSC(s) need to address are: (i) Economic: financial capacity to afford community services, low affordability to pay for community services because of poverty, and encouragement to the private sector by way of facilitating their operations (export and import, etc); (ii) Social: growth of slums in cities because of rural-to-urban migration, poor public transport, provision of safe drinking water, low level of entertainment facilities (like parks) to enhance the quality-of-life, and exploitation of migrant labor from rural areas.

The solutions for these urban-rural compounding problems are: (i) determination of appropriate size of FSC(s), such that there is adequate rural hinterland size to cater to the needs of cities and thereby gather revenue for their own sustainability; (ii) adroit distribution of population in the rural areas, comprising of the revenue generating sector (about 40%), community service sector (about 40%), and small business and financial (cooperative banking) sector (about 20%), such that the revenue brought into the rural towns by the revenue-generating sector is adequate to afford community services and sustain the small-business sector; (iii) adequate industrial development and a competent services sector in cities, so as to provide adequate community services and quality-of-life to the city dwellers; (iv) civilian economic democracy, such that community sectors’ representatives in the Legislature have responsibility to cater to the needs of their respective sectors.

This civilian Economic Democratic system along with the Prout Cooperative Economic system, will provide to the people socio-economic security and a fulfilling life, which they have not known before. This joint Civilian Socio-Economic-Political Democratic System can, in years to

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Can Prout Transform Universities?
By Sohail Inayatullah

A decade back, in a book titled, The University in Transformation, we - Jennifer Gidley, president of the world futures studies federation and myself - identified four drivers creating new futures of the university. These drivers were globalization, virtualization, democratization and multicultural-neohumanist pedagogy. In this essay, I ask: are these drivers still relevant, active? The essay concludes with recommendations for Prout policy on the futures and politics of the university.

GLOBALIZATION OF EDUCATION

The first driver identified was globalization. While in its current neo-liberal form it is focused solely on the free movement of goods and services there are many types of globalization. Indeed Sarkar’s Prout is a type of globalization as are the utopian sentiments of the ecological “Gaian” movement. However, for universities, globalization has expressed itself as resistance by states to continue to subsidize education. More and more students are expected to pay full fees and universities have been asked to cut back to core areas.

This has meant a mindset shift from considering education less as an investment and more as a cost. Specifically it has meant categorizing parts of education as an export (in Australia for example, for both Brisbane and Melbourne, education is the largest export, surpassing tourism) and aspects as an expense. In the USA, Europe and Australia, the curriculum areas that are export based seeking to bring in students from the Asia-Pacific, particularly India) tend to be in the real-world areas of engineering, business, information technologies and vocational skill development. These have grown (especially when they are linked to migration policy) while other areas of knowledge philosophy and even languages, have been subjected to immediate market forces and cutbacks and thus have declined. The overall reason of education - as a civilizing force, as the right to dissent against conventional paradigms, as part of humanity’s treasure and as a long term investment in children - has been put aside for shorter term market concerns. In the last ten years, this trend, and the drivers, creating it, have not in any way subsided.

These trends are likely to continue. However, what is likely to change is the direction of the exports. With the rise of Chindia, (China plus India) we can easily imagine a future where Chinese and Indian students stay at home, learning from local outposts of western universities and Chindia’s own rapidly improving educational institutions (China is likely to in the near future overtake the U.S. for number of patents filed). Over a period of twenty years we can even imagine Western students migrating to the Asia-Pacific for higher education (and not only for language learning or culture). While this may seem difficult to imagine now, if we go back twenty years, it would have been difficult to imagine the colossal economic rise of China (for the first time having more millionaires than Europe) and certain segments of India (now having eight billionaires in the top 100). While equity remains a critical issue, especially in India, education for Chindia remains an investment. Not a cost. Education for Asia is first.

VIRTUALIZATION

The second trend we identified was the virtualization of education. With fewer funds available for bricks and mortar and the logic of increasing students, universities and Ministries of education (with India, Indonesia, Turkey, China and other Asian nations leading the way) have focused on using the Web to deliver education. While the savings are high and outreach stunning, what has hampered the success of distance delivery has been the mindset of university administrators and academics as they still remain committed to the expert driven feudal model. By this I mean there is an unquestioning dominator hierarchical system with the orders coming down from the Minister to the Vice-chancellor to the Dean to the Professor to the lecturer to the student. While functional hierarchy leads to efficiency, dominator hierarchy leads to the death of innovation; each generation copies blindly from the last. Academics are the experts seeing others as unable to provide solutions to problems.

That said, new applications indeed,” an app for everything” is the new analogy for the futures of instruction - are changing the nature of pedagogy and with exponential technological advancement we can easily see the virtual becoming more like face-to-face. And costs will continue to go down. Innovation will continue to find ways for academics and students to become more comfortable in future virtualized classrooms. Indeed, the founder of the Khan Academy, a one person virtual “university” has delivered over 46 million lectures in the past few years foundational challenging the traditional notion of the university. Over the long term the current distinctions between virtual and real will disappear and we, particularly digital and genomic natives, will become comfortable with different types of reality. The important shift will be from merely more technology in the class room (technology as the silver bullet) and classrooms created by technology to digital pedagogy, wherein students, teachers, “apps” and university leaders make the difference. Students, particularly, digital natives, will more and more be seen as critical stakeholders.
DEMOCRATIZATION PEER TO PEER

The third trend we identified was the democratization of education. By this we meant enhanced student participation as well as a general flattening of the university. Over the last ten years, this has come about but not in the ways we expected. The peer to peer web platform has been the greatest flattening process from wikipedia to wikileaks to ratemyprofessor.com; even the cynical must admit the world has changed. I remember well one foresight workshop I ran recently in Singapore for Raffles Institution with forty 14 year olds. All used wikipedia, and over 50% claimed to have contributed content to wikipedia. A few, one or two had heard of Encyclopedia Britannica. Most had heard of the United Kingdom. They understood the latest technologies and social movements and in one scenario they imagined using social movements and nano-technologies to create environmental sustainability in the Ganges by 2040, a clean, green, socially innovative India! In the ideal peer to peer world, it is the user who adds value, not the producer (the university dean or professor, as in the traditional hierarchical university).

However, and this is crucial, democratization while partially recreating who creates knowledge has not empowered students or academics in formal university or high school settings.

Indeed, the opposite has occurred.

First, there has been a backlash against increased power of those below; a desire to return to the good old days of authority and domination. Second, as universities have adopted the neo-liberal globalization model, creating profits or merely surviving has meant retiring expensive professors and hiring the far cheaper younger PhDs. And, critically, the hiring has not been full-time but causal instructors. Experimental courses (new web courses, in particular) especially futures studies, gender studies, peace studies, consciousness studies, for example, have gotten up by paying academics near volunteer wages. For those at the bottom pay scale, the problem becomes that of loyalty not just to the particular university (why should I stay loyal when I am paid peanuts) but to the university model of education itself; that is, why should I not globalize myself and receive the benefits of globalization. In this regard, we can anticipate as loyalty breaks down, far more innovation in the tertiary sector new academic run cooperative universities and alternative universities (with either particular ideological leanings or broader missions or Gurukul which combines both). Along with some able to innovate, there will be many who will prefer and rightly so, if not wisely so - a politics of grievance in and to the university itself. As cutbacks continue, we can anticipate a far more challenging labor environment.

Returning from globalization to the good old days where education was solely about national development and nationalistic strong national regulation - is unlikely - but this does not necessarily mean retreating on the dignity of the academic and the nobility of the academic profession; alternative futures are possible. For elite professors, the walls of the university and particular university branding will be far less important. In terms of phases, we can see a movement from lower run causal academic to a portfolio academic approach (being linked to a number of universities) and finally to a model wherein the professor becomes a brand unto him or herself.

WAYS OF KNOWING KNOWLEDGE ON THE EDGES

Our fourth driver or trend was multiculturalism generally and neohumanist education in particular becoming an acceptable part of pedagogy. There is no easy way to measure this but certainly the rise of the web with multiple languages and platforms has created more spaces than traditional hierarchies of knowledge. The rise of Chindia (China foreign reserves recently hit 3.2 trillion dollar reserves, for example) as well is slowly changing the game as the West as an economic centre is undergoing relative decline. With economic rise will come cultural change. Already China has set up hundreds of Confucius centres throughout the world (the goal is to establish 1000 by 2020). Indian culture as well is being exported to the West with Yoga for example becoming a 15 billion dollar industry in the USA.

Multiculturalism and neohumanism have infiltrated the university through the broader sustainability agenda. This has been a focus on solving global problems such as climate change through trans-disciplinary approaches to knowledge management. Non-western, indigenous and “Gaian” ways of knowing have not been marginal to these concerns but central to finding solutions to greed and overconsumption – the problem of cultural and economic obesity.

But far more impressive has been technology itself as a way of mediating reality. While diverse ways of knowing continue to blossom, it is technology as a way of knowing that has been the disruptive, if not transformative, factor. With at least six billion mobile phones now in global circulation and more and more phones becoming smart, pedagogy will keep on jumping the boundaries of the real into the differently real. However, in the short run, universities and high schools are still not using smart phones as ways to make pedagogy far more interactive. Fact checking can be done via google. The role of the professor becomes that of inner motivator, mentor and facilitator enabling students not providing them with more data.
THE DISRUPTION

As always, leaving behind factory models of learning and teaching will be crucial as we move to a more 24/7 virtualized and globalized world. Focusing on ensuring equity and life-wide and life-long learning for those academics who do not become brands unto themselves or have portfolio careers will be critical.

And: if national accreditation does break down or become porous certainly the trillion dollar education industry will be ripe for major creative destruction. It will not be google or facebook that will become the new Nalanda, Nanjing, Al-Azhar, Al Karaouine, Bologna, or Oxford, but someone will create the new platform for the pedagogies of the future. Is it wiser to nation-states to hold on to national accreditation or regionalize as with the EU or attempt to create something truly novel and lead the world and create an institutional jump? Or?

PROUT POLICY AND STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

For Prout, the focus, I argue, needs to be on:

1. Helping lower level causal academics keep their dignity through negotiating better wages and conditions.

2. Helping all academics globalize in the sense of helping break the feudal expert knowledge and university structure and narrative. This means wisely embracing parts of economic globalization without allowing the true reason of the university - to dissent, to continue to carry the culture treasures of humanity and to stay focused on past and future generations - to be lost. This means moving ahead while not losing sight of the mission of the university.

3. Challenging attempts to retain national university regulatory structures or focus the university on national development. Prout is focused on human, spiritual and ecological development and not on the narrow dimensions of the nation-state. Regulations should help universities become more ecological, more neohumanist, more global, not less.

4. Working with vipran academics to integrate other aspects of their personalities; this includes a focus on the body (exercise, diet, yoga, for example), a focus on the economy (not being dependent on the state for income but developing entrepreneurial skills, creating value), a focus on social justice (challenging oppressive structures) and a service orientation (particularly serving the needs of students). This is crucial as vipran approaches to reality while strong at theory disown the economy and thus intellectuals remain at the mercy of others, be it the State or the Corporate sector.

5. Overtime, Prout needs to develop academic cooperatives and working to create new university structures that are planetary, neohumanist and inclusive of many ways of knowing the world. Cooperation is not easy for academics, however, as the current university structure rewards individual excellence not community excellence. Cooperation is a learned behavior requiring enhancing ones emotional intelligence, and is challenging as the current university structure favors the intellect, not the heart.

In conclusion, developing universities and academics with strong intellects and open hearts that learn from doing, from engaging with all types of communities can become the value added of Prout to the futures of the university. Globalization is tearing apart the traditional university, as is virtualization and democratization. While some will miss the good old days of the protected campus subsidized by the state with deep hierarchical structures along with the neck tie to bifurcate the mind from the heart - others will see this as a chance to innovate and create new universities. These new universities, to succeed, will need to balance the practicalities of wealth generation with social justice with service to community with ideas that inspire. Prout can help in this process of creating the new university for the new future.

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As we part company, we would indeed be echoing the benevolence of the supreme neohumanist Prabhat R. Sarkar, that Everyone live in harmony and peace; everyone can have unbarred opportunity for all-round development and for contributing to mutual welfare. No one be neglected and threatened, be left starving and without shelter, be left ill and uncared-for, be tormented and made dysfunctional. All can move together in unison, to the pinnacle of human existence and cosmic desideratum. This article is dedicated to usher in such a neo-humanistic global order and era!

References:
Building a Solidarity Economy based on Ethics and Ecology
7-9 July 2011, Caracas, Venezuela

Economy, ecology, community health, indigenous rights, cooperatives, women's rights, and spiritual wisdom were presented by nationally and internationally recognized authorities at the "Building a Solidarity Economy based on Ethics and Ecology" conference in downtown Caracas. Approximately 400 people attended the three-day conference on July 7-9, 2011 organized by the Prout Research Institute of Venezuela.

Twenty-nine speakers presented, representing 15 progressive non-government organizations, a government-owned bank, two large cooperatives, and four university professors. All the speakers expressed that they were very inspired by the conference.

The speakers spoke in panels on the following topics.
Panel 1: "Solidarity Economy in Latin America: Lessons and Possibilities from Venezuela, Brazil and Cuba".
Panel 2: "Consciousness, leadership and will: preserving our environment"
Panel 3: "Cooperatives: Diagnosis and Solutions in Building Economic Democracy"
Panel 4: "Ethics for Personal and Social Transformation"

The proceedings of the conference, the video report, and all the audio recordings and transcripts for each of the speakers can be found at: http://priven.org/global-conference-2011

Before the conference a total of 1,400 large, full color Prout posters were hung in the cities of Caracas, Guarenas, Guatire, Merida, Maracay and Barquisimeto, and viewed by thousands of people.

Over a thousand people stopped to see the Prout "thought exhibition" in front of the auditorium which had 10 banners with clear text and beautiful images that illustrated the following subjects: Introduction to Prout, Prout's Economic Democracy, Prout Cooperatives, Prout and Ecology, Neohumanism, Spiritual Practices of Prout, Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, Prout Research Institute, Centro Madre Master Unit, and the Neohumanist Kindergarten.

One of the most popular speakers was Claudio Nascimento, activist and popular educator, cabinet member of President Lula da Silva, member of the National Secretariat for Solidarity Economy of President Dilma Rousseff. He is now writing a book for activists throughout Brazil and has requested us to contribute one chapter about Prout.

The media campaign for the conference resulted in articles published in ten different newspapers. Two television interviews were done, on TELESUR for 30 minutes which is broadcast in all the countries of Latin America, and on Venezuelan National Television VTV for 15 minutes. Five radio stations interviewed the Venezuelan Prout Institute: Radio Nacional de Venezuela (twice for one hour each), Radio Fe y Alegria (1 hour), Radio de Ateneo (10 min.) and Barquisimeto community radio (20 min.) An electronic newsletter for all of Latin America, Prensa Cooperativa, wrote about the conference, and five progressive webpages wrote about it. www.economiasolidaria.org, www.gestionparticipativa.coop, www.cecosesola.blogspot.com, www.fundacionlatortuga.org, www.animanaturalis.org/home/ve.

The Spanish version of the morning presentations was broadcast live on www.seres.com.uy and www.somosseres.com.

At the end of the closing ceremony and final concert, all the participants and speakers danced to a very inspiring kirtan.
In June, two Neohumanist educators from distant corners of the world were among the 230 participants from 51 different countries that gathered together at the Futures of Education Conference in Florence Italy. The conference’s aim was to promote the sharing of good practice and transnational cooperation in the field of the application of innovative education and training strategies, methodologies and solutions.

Didi Ananda Devapriya from Romania, Andressa Ayres Pelanda, from Brazil, presented their papers on Neohumanist Education in the “Innovative Teaching and Learning Methodologies” category. Though they had not consulted with each other previously - the papers were very complementary, each reinforcing the others message from a different angle, and were equally well receive by the audience.

Much of the emphasis in the conference was on different types of emergent IT technology available for modern classrooms. The Neohumanist representatives brought in a different perspective, highlighting the need for educating children for holistic balance, especially in light of the increasing speed and accompanying stress of the modern world. Andressa’s paper studied the results of applying the Circle of Love curriculum within a public school in Brazil, while Didi’s paper made an argument for deliberately including curriculum to train introversion skills, not only the more typical focus on extroversion skills in exploring and mastering the world through language, maths, sciences, physical ed, etc. The conference provided an opportunity to present Neohumanist Education to the academic community and many new contacts were made, offering possibilities for future collaborations and joint projects.

Andressa Ayres Pelanda paper, which she co-authored with Liana P. dos Santos, was published in the last issue of Gurukula Network and in this issue we are happy to share Didi Ananda Devapriya’s paper.

Educating Balance in an Accelerating World

By Avtk. Ananda Devapriya Ac.

Introduction
The very landscape of childhood has been radically altered since those of us now involved in early childhood education were children. Contemporary adults may treasure fond childhood memories of acting out elaborate imaginary adventures with friends outside, playing on swings, riding tricycles, baking cookies, and picking juicy strawberries. Our early childhood world was decorated with bright finger paint, play-dough snakes, wooden blocks, baby-dolls, balls and board games. The natural attraction to role-play and practice for adult life took the form of sneaking into our parent’s closets to try on ties or high heeled shoes. By contrast, while many of these play opportunities still exist, the modern European toddler may already have her own MP3 player and other technological devices, and often spends hours in front of computers and televisions. Many young children imitate adults by playing with pretend cell-phones and laptops. Children, in their innate eagerness to learn, are attracted by new technology and their flexible and absorbent minds master it quickly and easily. They have access to a far greater volume of information at a far earlier age.

Increased stress in early childhood
How has this affected the world of childhood? “According to the Alliance for Childhood and others, overscheduling, emphasis on academics in preschool, too much sedentary screen time, lack of safe place spaces, and violent TV/movie-based toys all threaten healthy playtime, putting play at risk…..Dr. David Elkind, noted child development expert, theorizes that a faster speed of life characterized by instant access to information via the Internet and to each other through cell phones has garnered a sense that people can do more, leading to booking more commitments for children. In addition, this acceleration of life has contributed to the idea that earlier is better leading to more academics for young children.”[1]

Just as this increased speed of modern technological life leads to increased levels of stress and stress-related disorders for adults, so it also leads to increased levels of stress, over-stimulation and overwhelm for young children. Research confirms an increase in experiences of stress and stress-related behavior in children. [2]. Challenging behaviors, such as defiance, aggressivity, lack of concentration and attention, impulsivity, uncontrollable behaviors, tantrums and more result when children surpass their threshold of stress tolerance and enter into a dysregulated state.

According to the “Stress Model”, developed by social worker/ therapist Bryan Post, all of these behaviors, for which other fields have developed medicalized labels and treatments such as “ADHD”, “ADD”, “Oppositional Defiant Disorder” etc, are linked to states of stress and affect dysregulation. [3] Thus, it is critically important for adults to understand their role in helping children to regulate. In addition, skills for self-regulation are important modern life-skills that are often completely neglected in most early-childhood care settings.
F. Allen Walker MD states “Many schools and teachers are not able to keep up with the different learning styles of students. Learning through imagination and creative curiosity (which I find inherent in kids with ADHD) is disappearing in many schools…. I feel everyone experiences symptoms of ADHD to varying degrees at some point during his or her life, and the current fast-paced culture seems to propagate the ADHD phenomenon.” [4]

Indeed, the rate of prescribing psycho-active drugs for ADHD is rising at alarming rates. When Terrance Woodworth, on behalf of the US Drug Enforcement Administration testified before Congress on the use of Ritalin, he presented the fact that between 1991 and 1999, US sales of methylphenidate and amphetamine had increased by nearly 500%. [5]

**Neohumanist Education: adapting to new life skills for modern children**

This leads to an important question - in what ways must educational approaches adapt to help children to successfully integrate in a high speed, information rich world? Lars Dencik, of Roskild University states “Changes in the life-conditions of children growing up today can be expected to take place continuously, in almost all spheres of life and at an accelerating pace.” He encourages further reflection on adapting educational practices suitably: “… education should serve the interests of the child by rendering the child competent to master the life challenges that not yesterday's, nor even today's, but future life conditions may pose. The children of today will undoubtedly meet different challenges from those we had as we grew up.”[6] Neohumanist education offers a holistic response, as it is designed to equip children with the flexible thinking, creative imagination, self-regulation skills, and sense of spiritual connection to the world and those around them that children need to effectively face the 21st century.

Neohumanist Education is an outgrowth of the philosophy of Neohumanism which was introduced by Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar in 1982. Sarkar (1921-1990) was a social activist, composer, educational innovator, and spiritual philosopher based in India. His life work centered on creating a rights-based society, not only for human beings but also for the entire ecological system. He worked for a caste-free, dogma-free, rational society, and focused on early childhood education as the critical period in which the human being’s basic world outlook is being shaped, and in which such a holistic paradigm is most easily nurtured.

As Neohumanist Education originated in India, it is an educational philosophy deeply rooted in a socio-cultural context that gives importance not only to external, material development, but also to the careful and systematic cultivation of a rich inner life. However, Neohumanist Education has not remained a culturally isolated phenomenon limited to India, rather it has flourished abroad, achieving a progressive blend of eastern subjective approach and western objective approach. P.R. Sarkar explains in detail these two aspects of our faculty of knowledge: “The subjectivated mind is the witnessing counterpart of the objectivated mind, and may get its objects both from the external physical world and the internal psychic world. Whenever an action of knowing takes place within the arena of the mind a portion of it plays the subjective role and another portion the objective role.” [7] Unlike other eastern philosophies that exclusively give importance to the cultivation of the subjective, interspersal powers of the mind, denying the material world as an illusion, Sarkar’s spiritual philosophy encourages embracing both in a practical and balanced way—nurturing awareness of one’s inner experience, but also developing an engaged attitude of service towards the relative world.

Daniel Goleman’s seminal work on Emotional Intelligence, has already challenged the existing educational paradigm that has traditionally emphasized academics, by positing that possessing certain skills such as good communication, self-control, zeal and self-motivation are more important indicators for success in life than IQ. [8] Neohumanist Education builds on this perspective, keeping in mind that the goal of education is not just to prepare children to become economically productive, responsible members of society, but rather to help them to construct values that are eventually able lead them towards the full realization of their human potential. According to the ancient wisdom tradition of yoga, there are three fundamental aspects of human nature that must be fully expressed to achieve lasting happiness and self-realization: Vistara - the passion for learning and discovery, including self-discovery, Seva - the sense of meaningfulness that comes from finding an altruistic way to contribute to the welfare of others, and Rasa - the sense of harmony, belonging and flow that comes from having an inner relationship to the Higher Self and connection to a greater whole. The clarity that comes from having a clear goal offers flexibility to Neohumanist Education practitioners around the world to adapt curriculum and methodology to fit local contexts in culturally appropriate ways. Another unique aspect of Neohumanist Education is the approach towards moral education. Rather than seeing values as something to be instilled from the outside, Neohumanist Education has a fundamentally positive view of the inherent goodness of every human being and seeks to awaken the intuitive voice of conscience and the practice of listening to one’s heart and applying critical thinking, rather than simply learning to obey external authority – or even commercial influences, especially when these influences can be driven by interests, prejudices or social injustice.

**Neohumanist Education in Practice**

The practical application of this philosophy in Neohumanist kindergartens around the world, is found in the integration of special “Quiet Time” moments during morning circle, in which small children learn to sense their breathing, to enjoy the magic of quietness. Simple guided imagery is used, as well as specific songs that are associated with these peaceful moments. The power of imagination is further developed by creative visualization exercises. As brief and deceptively
simple as these centering moments are, they provide an important opportunity to exercise the child’s ability to self-regulate and experience tranquility and love from within. Centering moments enhance concentration, and prepare the child for cognitive activities.

The art of positive thinking is also nurtured through the use of affirmations and empathetic communication. The teacher works not only to prepare an aesthetically pleasing environment, but also works to create an affirming, positive psychic atmosphere through the choice of songs, stories, and content that reflect values of love and connection. Sarkar’s view was “Real education leads to a pervasive sense of love and compassion for all creation”. [9]

Simplified versions of yoga exercises are also introduced in a creative, playful way. These sessions are followed by a self-massage, useful for helping the child to connect to and care for his own body, and concluded with a deep relaxation exercise incorporating guided imagery.

A study entitled “Yoga for children in the mirror of the science” at Leipzig University, Germany, demonstrated significant benefits from integrating a similar yoga program in a primary school setting. Children that received relaxation training “could stabilize on a higher level in the fields of the personality that are relevant for stress coping.”[10]

### The key role of the teacher’s personal example

The successful implementation of Neohumanist Education in the classroom, however depends not on specific methodologies as much as it depends on the teacher’s own conscious and holistic process of self-development. Only a regulated adult can soothe dysregulated children, and be creatively responsive to the child’s needs during behavioral crisis. It is important to respond, rather than to react – and this requires the subjective ability to observe one’s own stress and fear as children start to act out. It then requires the presence of mind that comes from regular practice, to self-regulate by breathing and shifting perspective from the behavior itself to what is driving the behavior. In fact, Heather Forbes and Bryan Post advocate the use of “time-in” rather than “time-out”, as children with challenging behaviors are actually communicating their need for assistance in returning to regulation by the empathetic intervention of a soothing adult figure. [11]

Research into mirror neurons has shown that the brain is neurologically hardwired for empathy. These “mirror neurons” reflect back an action we observe in someone else, making us mimic that action or have the impulse to do so.” Our natural tendency is to be empathetic and helpful, but this can get overshadowed by states of stress, fear and overwhelm. [12] This again underlines the need for both children and adults to learn specific stress management skills so that they can reconnect, both with themselves, and with others in order to achieve self regulation, and access to their higher and more subtle human qualities.

### Protecting childhood

Thomas Merton observed: “The modern child may in the beginning of his conscious life begin to show natural and spontaneous signs of spirituality. He may have imagination, originality, a simple and individual freshness of response to reality, and even a tendency to moments of thoughtful silence and absorption. But all these qualities are quickly destroyed by the fears, anxieties, and compulsions to conform which come at him from all directions. He becomes a yelling, brash, false little monster, brandishing a toy gun and dressed up like some character he has seen on television. His head is filled with inane slogans, songs, noises, explosions, statistics, brand names, menaces, rambldaries, and cliches. When he gets to school he learns to verbalize, to rationalize, to pose, to make faces like an advertisement, to need a car, and in short to go through life with an empty head, conforming to others like himself, in "togetherness". [13]

Similarly, Neohumanist Education rejects superficial, commercialized “pseudoculture”, and seeks to create a subtle atmosphere in which the inherent spirituality of the child can blossom. However, rather than completely condemning technological culture and scientific advances, Neohumanism chooses a balanced stance. It aims to equip children with the skills to successfully navigate this very prominent aspect of reality, and learn to use technological tools in beneficial ways.

The origin of the word kindergarten in German translates to “children’s garden”. This metaphor evokes the image of a garden of tender saplings that must be protected and cultivated with careful attention. Similarly, PR Sarkar states: "If one receives the fundamentals of education in the formative period of one's life, one will keep oneself all right in the teeth of the greatest trials and tribulations in life. A sapling that must be protected and cultivated with careful attention. Similarly, Neohumanist Education rejects superficial, commercialized “pseudoculture”, and seeks to create a subtle atmosphere in which the inherent spirituality of the child can blossom. However, rather than completely condemning technological culture and scientific advances, Neohumanism chooses a balanced stance. It aims to equip children with the skills to successfully navigate this very prominent aspect of reality, and learn to use technological tools in beneficial ways.

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**References**


[12] Ibid. p. 46


Sometimes, the time, the place and the people seem just right for something to happen... a ripening of ideas, environmental needs and willing personalities bring together a creative spark.

A week ago, in the Vientiane Sunshine School, Laos, children were sitting on the floor of the library, when the lunch bell sounded. They didn’t move from their places, but continued to discuss their work quietly, concentrating on their cutting and sticking. Volunteer teachers sat with them, helping to jigsaw the pictures into a poster.

They have been collaging their dream garden together.

After two years of on-going building projects during an expansion period, what remained of the yard were piles of rubble, swampy mosquito pools of stagnant water, and a couple of waterlogged trees valiantly standing on their spindly trunks.

What had happened over time was that the drainage problem had exacerbated as neighbours built bigger houses on raised concrete slabs, effectively pouring their run-off into the yard of the school.

The local decision was to concrete the yard, as everyone else surrounding had done, and make basket ball and tennis courts on a concrete platform playground.

Luckily, it was the hot season, and the discussion of need for shade convinced all involved that trees were most important!

Also, by some miraculous co-incidence, a family from Australia, who are experts in water solutions and permaculture were present at the time.

They set to work immediately to help design and create an effective drainage system. After a week of heavy machinery and digging, the school grounds were dry and able to be planted!

We started a garden project. Another volunteer from Australia had experience in collective decision making and inclusion of teachers and students in design. Together, a dream team of volunteers, administration, and teachers was formed to create a process that involved the children and staff straight away. We surfed the internet, looking for natural designs and sorted images ready for staff and children’s and parents’ meetings. Everyone was shown a power-point presentation of choices in playgrounds, different designs and constructions, and the importance of trees.
The children started drawing their own designs, which became part of the school collage display for an open house day, with parents invited. The display was mounted and set outside in a bamboo framed tunnel that was planted to sprout! In two months it will be a living tunnel, which the children helped to plant.

In the meantime, the children were asked how their class would reach the playground, and ideas were circulated of paths with stepping stones, mosaics, tunnels and bridges to be built from each classroom to their favourite place.

The children helped to map their paths, using brooms in the sand, this began some wonderful sand drawings, which still continue today.

They were able to show on a map of the school, where their path would go, and then, the building began...

Stepping stones were rolled, bricks laid, and mosaics planned in chalk. A mural wall has begun next to a classroom that has cement outside. The plan is to paint both the wall and concrete path!

The children’s dream drawings are coming to life, as more raw playground equipment appears at school, and they take ownership of it! Bamboo poles, tires, wooden blocks, piles of dirt and sand are delivered, the children help to create a new piece of equipment.

When things are broken, as we experiment with new ideas, the children are quick to try to fix it, or improvise a new game with what remains.

I have seen children pickup sticks (rule, sticks are only for drawing or construction) tie them together and make cubby huts where tea parties take place with the 10 year olds squatting in the sand.

A dozen bicycle tires have been used in a variety of ways, where children are learning patterns, paths, bouncing and jumping games. Friends are invited and balancing is another addition.

The garden is being planted with trees brought from home, and the children are asking for fruit and vegetable garden beds to plant and care for.

The feedback from teachers so far has been that the school is a safer place to play, that the children are happy, and they are getting involved as it evolves.

It is a community garden and playground in the making, and a wonderful place to play, thanks to a team of teachers, administration, children and volunteers.
Art in Class Five
Mombasa, Kenya
By Avt. Ananda Giitika Ac.

In defiance of material constraints common to East African schools, the Ananda Marga Academy of Kiembeni, Mombasa, has been offering art experiences to upper primary pupils of Class Five, a class having 54 children. Whereas in other upper classes, art takes place in an impromptu manner, e.g. the teacher giving an idea and the children sketching in their drawing exercise books, in Class Five a volunteer art teacher named Sima pre-plans each class. Throughout the year, the pupils in Class Five have access to materials—rare in East African schools!—such as scissors, different types of papers, crayons, temperas, charcoal for drawing, glue, glitter and clay. Due to Sima’s work, new art ideas have been generated and taken up by other teachers, especially in the lower primary. There is also a budding interest in art growing in other Ananda Marga schools in the slum areas of Nairobi.

During Term One, Sima likes the pupils to hone in on basic skills. It may seem surprising, but pupils at this age, especially those transferring from other schools, do not know how to cut, glue and use colours. Some have never painted before. On the other hand, Sima finds that many children have exceptional expressive ability, and once she allows them the freedom and materials, they take off. Here are examples of some good activities for middle primary children without much prior art experience. These are based on the exploration of themes of natural resources and tourism in the Coastal areas of Kenya and Tanzania:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art Projects</th>
<th>Skills and Artistic Expression Exercised</th>
<th>Challenges and Outcomes</th>
<th>Related Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design a Hotel—use of simple origami to fold the hotel, and design using coloured pencils. The inside of the hotel is also designed.</td>
<td>Following directions in paper folding; use of imagination in designing the hotel; use of colour to enhance design.</td>
<td>Focus in following directions; difficulty in getting perspective when making furniture for the hotel. Outcomes: Appreciation for the differences in ideas among the pupils, and satisfaction in the achievement of one’s own design.</td>
<td>Exploring the concept of tourism. Nowadays, tourists come from the same country as well as overseas. Imagining countries, clothing, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a mask—using paper plates and pre-cut shapes.</td>
<td>Cutting; pasting; tying.</td>
<td>It can be challenging if the children lack experience with basic skills. The fun of trying on a mask.</td>
<td>Use of masks in dramas; carved masks in traditional Africa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make an underwater seascape (or waterfall). Paint an underwater background; stick pre-cut tropical fish (from shiny papers), finish with seaweeds, starfish, etc</td>
<td>Use of watercolor paints and brushes, exploring the effects of different strokes in painting. Exercise in balance and design in sticking fishes. Finishing with one’s own ideas.</td>
<td>The challenge of not overdoing the painting and the same with the finishing. Many children have to learn ‘when to stop.’ While waiting for the paint to dry, children can trace and cut out more fishes. Outcome, the seascapes can be laminated and used for greeting cards.</td>
<td>Imagining an underwater world. Talking about types of fish in the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weave a paper mat --Paper strips are cut after colouring with crayons then woven into black paper matting.</td>
<td>Folding and cutting the black paper matting by following directions. Planning a design to colour then cutting strips. Weaving.</td>
<td>For some children, all the activities may present a challenge, and the teacher may require assistants. The outcome is rewarding.</td>
<td>Learning about rug and carpet making. Seeing pictures or examples of Swahili carpets/Persian rugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a Tree and Lion picture. Trees of the Savannah are drawn in pencil in the background and the Lion in the foreground, and then the picture is highlighted with crayons in hues of green, blue and yellow.</td>
<td>Following instructions for drawing the lion, and suggestions for drawing the Acacia trees. Use of crayons and colour.</td>
<td>Eye-hand coordination in drawing a detailed lion. Outcomes include enjoyment of the final design.</td>
<td>Enhancing knowledge of wildlife and the Savannah in East Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a Paper Mache vase, to be painted in another class. A recycled cardboard toilet paper tube fitted with a base is used. African motifs may be used in the final painting of the vase.</td>
<td>The skills in using flour based paste and newsprint strips for paper mache. Painting skills.</td>
<td>Paper mache can be challenging. Although with guidance, the pupils ‘get into it.’ Cleaning up also needs to be organized.</td>
<td>Expanding the children’s knowledge about traditional African pottery and motifs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Term 2, there can be a change in focus to include an appreciation of one’s self, talents, ideas and abilities. The overall theme might be “Who am I?” Activities might include:

- Trace one’s hand, and use it for making any picture one likes
- Learn how to draw a face – the basic proportions of the face – and then draw one’s desk mate (or teacher!)
- Design one’s own fish in crayon, and draw sections in the fish, and paint over in three colours. Make a school of class fish on the bulletin board
- Make a butterfly book—the shape of a butterfly-- writing one’s own ‘butterfly story’ inside
- Block printing one’s name.
- Express oneself with montage, letting the outcome reflect one’s views, and tell the class.
- Use clay to express one’s feelings
- Cut out geometrical shapes and design one’s dream home.

Taking Charge of Art Materials

One challenge that needs to be faced before embarking on a dynamic art programme in an East African school is the potential of losing materials. A set of scissors for a classroom, for example, can represent a major investment for many schools. Although there is a cultural value in honesty, there is also the prevalence of ‘borrowing.’ In fact, in the Kiswahili language, the word borrow is phrased as “help me with .. (your pencil), and the person who doesn’t help is considered rude. Therefore, during art class, some pupils often snitch materials such as scissors, rubbers, colored pencils, and so on without a second thought.

It is therefore incumbent to make arrangements to safeguard the materials. Sima assisted our school in devising systems to make sure that materials were returned to their boxes. A simple count before and after the class, involving pupils in collecting and counting, and appropriate storage and rewards for good class behaviour made it possible to train the Class Fives to return all the supplies, which were then kept in the office. Other teachers have followed the same system; as a result that art with varied materials has been made possible for more children.

Developing an Aesthetic Sense

Children appreciate the opportunity to be creative, and studies show that it makes a difference in their academic performance. General knowledge is greatly enhanced, but we believe the most essential motive for starting an art programme at school is the great sense of satisfaction it gives to the pupils and the development of their aesthetic sense, a regeneration of the great African value of beauty and art.
It's Friday morning early October and the weather has taken a dramatic turn for the worse. Yesterday we enjoyed a beautiful, warm clear fall day and today we are surprised by a cold snap. There is even snow sprinkled like powdered sugar on the tops of the low hills across the lake. At the farm a dozen preschoolers say goodbye to their mothers, fathers, nannies, grandparents, and younger siblings, ready to embark on the day's journey into the woods accompanied by their two teachers, Tatjana and me. It's cold and it's wet but no one is bothered, least of all the kids as we are all dressed appropriately for the weather, many layers and waterproof hiking boots, rain pants and jackets. As we wait for the last child to arrive, the children clamber into the basket swing hanging from the tree outside our farm house playroom and spin around as fast as they dare. So begins a typical Friday at Sunshine, a multi-lingual, Neohumanist preschool run by Tatjana Popov in a community on the lake of Zurich, Switzerland.

I say good morning to Farmer Hoffmann and we exchange pleasantries about the sudden change in the weather. He shakes his head commenting on his preference for a more gradual slide into winter as he readies his four-year-old grandson Rohan for his morning adventure in the forest with us.

Rohan is a typical Sunshine student in that he hails from a multicultural and multilingual family. Rohan, his three siblings, his Swiss mother and Mexican father live together with Swiss Grandparents on the family farm about 30 minutes outside of Zurich. Rohan speaks, Spanish with his father and Swiss German with his mother, grandparents and local community. His parents communicate with each other in English and Rohan now, at the ripe age of four, is furthering his exposure to the English language through participation in our forest playgroup.

I greet Rohan with a hearty “Good Morning,” and he answers eagerly in English. Rohan's good nature and easy confidence are noteworthy. And why not be self-assured, as we are about to embark on a journey into his woods. At just four years old, he knows the better part of his Grandfather's forest like the back of his tiny little hand. In many ways better than I. Last week while returning to the farm after an exciting morning in the forest, Rohan explained to me the way to Samiklaus' house (the Swiss Santa Claus) the accuracy of which is enthusiastically confirmed by his mother later that afternoon. Rohan is a fortunate child indeed. Since birth he has been cultivating a sense of place and a personal relationship to the natural world with all the benefits it brings.

Switzerland and the development of the Forest Kindergarten

Switzerland’s landscape is undeniably gorgeous and the Swiss have a deep respect for and intimacy with the natural world which has captured my imagination completely. “It’s as if the whole country is one big national park!” I exclaim to my friends and family back home in Boston, Massachusetts. No wonder I have made it my home for the past twelve years. The whole country boasts a network of well-maintained walking paths, “Wanderwegs” through field and forest, traversing public and private land alike. Cog railroads and gondolas make slopes at higher altitudes accessible to all and the hills are peppered with small huts for weary hikers to overnight in. Access to nature is superb.

Utterly inspired by this way of life and with two young children of my own, I dived head first into the world of nature pedagogy as imagined by the Swiss - a pedagogy that was developed first in Germany and Scandinavia, where as early as 1950s, the first forest Kindergartens or “Waldkindergartens” were taking shape. Now forest kindergartens and preschool programs are popping up like wild mushrooms all over Switzerland and the influence of this movement is reaching across the world.

Nowhere is this approach more needed than in the US where parents and educators struggle to counter the negative effects of a generation out of touch with the natural world. In his influential book, Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder, author Richard Louv asserts that contact with nature is essential to healthy childhood development. He explains that studies are beginning to demonstrate that time spent in nature has measurable positive influence on children. From countering childhood obesity to managing stress and ADD, to increasing creativity and fostering leadership skills, children are benefitting greatly from the great outdoors.

Louv goes on to illuminate other no-less-important gifts of nature, “... that moment when you were three or four and went out into the backyard and crawled out into the leaves and found a rock and turned it over and found that you were not alone in the universe ... that moment of wonder is the source of all spiritual growth.”
Holistic Early Childhood Education in the Great Outdoors

Inspired by the synergies between the European “Walldkindergarten” model and our Neohumanist curriculum we began our Earth Lovers nature playgroup last fall with just four children. One short year later, our expanding circle of love has grown to include some fifteen children, three teachers, a host of local animals and untold species of trees, flowers and insects not to mention the fire, the rain, the wind and the earth itself. We plan to start a second group in the spring.

On a typical morning we slowly take leave of our everyday world. We mark the beginning of the journey by singing good morning to the sheep on the farm and venture down the small private road lined with fruit trees and grape vines. A reflection of the changing seasons, each day is different. What's new today? Any new wildflowers to pick, blossoming apple trees, ripe plums or juicy grapes to reach for? For us, a trip to the forest is not a destination but an endlessly variable journey. Our circuitous paths offer many possibilities and perspectives. How different our special places seem as we arrive in winter or summer, from the North or South, via the swampy field or the overgrown path. Our forest is a multifaceted world with varying landscapes within. And like “The Hundred Acre Wood” of A.A. Milne's children's classic Winnie the Pooh, there are special places within that give the place its magic and meaning.

There is a unity to the forest – a healthy wholeness – a world rich and varied and delicately in balance. This beautiful outer landscape exemplifies the unity-in-diversity and the emergent quality of nature in harmony. It becomes a mirror of the healthy inner landscape we aim to cultivate in our young charges as well as in ourselves. Together we experience this healthy wholeness with the wholeness of our own beings. Our bodies, minds, emotions, imagination and our spirits are all active, engaged, and challenged in an integrated manner. Our senses are alive and we are present to ourselves, each other and to the day. Our days are like an improvisational dance. The self-directed inquiry of the children gently supported and facilitated by us teachers and orchestrated ultimately by Mother Nature herself.

A short stroll through the seasons illustrates our process and puts the year in focus:

**Spring**

Young bodies flourish in the great outdoors which offers fresh air, large unencumbered spaces for experiencing the joy of free movement and endless opportunities for sensory exploration and developing physical skills.

One wet spring morning two children run through an enormous puddle in the field with joyful abandon.

Later a group of preschoolers negotiate a slippery hillside. In this single activity children are not only developing their gross motor skills but their cognitive and social skills as together they attempt to devise a successful way up the hill.

A trip to the pond reveals a fascinating handful of slimy gelatinous frog eggs. We vow to return later to look for tadpoles and young frogs.

**Summer**

The lush overgrowth and colorful flowers offered by the summer months inspires rich ongoing imaginative play and a refining of the aesthetic sense.

Intrepid adventurers make their way through the overgrowth of the jungle path and later learn the basics of building a campfire. Self confidence and self reliance are fostered as children encounter the elements with a sense of humility and respect.

Picking wildflowers is a daily occupation and the children create some impressive bouquets ... usually gifts for mom or dad.

With sticks, and stones, and leaves and moss, the children build fairy houses of various designs throughout the forest. We visit them regularly and much dramatic play ensures. Minna finds an old knobby stick and is transformed into a unicorn princess.
Fall
The myriad changes of the autumn season bring out the observer in all of us teaching us the arts of stillness and attention. Like a band of little squirrels the children gather walnuts on the farm and make decorations from the colorful leaves, seed pods and nuts further developing their fine motor skill and sense of beauty.

As we gather round the pond, the entire group remains silent and still. With open eyes and ears we scan the reeds for signs of life, a croaking frog, a dragon fly, perhaps even a fish.

Tatjana and Lino study a ripening ear of corn. In the coming weeks we may watch the farmer harvesting his crop.

Winter
During the cold winter the forest sleeps peacefully under a blanket of snow and our attention turns towards each other and the warmth of our human connections and community. In the distance Samiklaus chats with the locals on horseback. He is coming our way! Samiklaus pays us a surprise visit in the forest. Together we warm ourselves by the fire and share hot tea and roasted apples.

We at Sunshine are clearly so blessed! We have every advantage and do live in a kind of paradise. I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude as I look back on our first year in the forest. But what about those less fortunate than we - those teachers and children living and working in areas where access to nature is limited, where fear, real danger and lack of resources not to mention cultural antipathies are very real obstacles preventing kids from experiencing the outdoors. How do we inspire others to make the most of what they have? We might begin by simply coming into deeper dialogue with one another and sharing ideas about how, in our area, we are finding ways to bring children into direct contact with the natural world. Please feel free to contact us via our web site at www.sunshine-kids.ch or at jane_greis@yahoo.com. I look forward to a rich exchange.

Telling Stories
Accra Ghana
By Didi Gayatri

To catch the attention of young children, sing with them before starting the story. We use gestures during the song so they will be more participative. To keep their concentration during the story, ask them to imitate the movements of some plant or animal, or even stars, water or wind, which is related with that part of the story. If you want the child to imbibe the spirit of the story, learn it by heart and practice how you are going to tell it to them. Even if you do not speak their local language, they will understand the language of the heart. Even difficult topics can be understood through stories, such as geography, history, math, etc. Also students can learn good habits such as taking care of plants, loving the animals, and caring for younger brothers, etc, through imitation of the story characters.

As an example of an activity, the children were requested to copy the small girl of the “The Adventures of Jyoti” who was feeling a deep love for all inside of herself. It was my first experience with these children (from a poor village around Accra, Ghana). For the older ones, to keep their attention, you can ask some scientific questions during the story, so that they can be share their knowledge with others. The questions related with the moral values of the story should be done only at the end. Then children should be free to ponder about the story’s teachings and in no way should we censure their opinions. The teacher in a subtle way can lead them to understand the full meaning of the tale and its application in practical life.

Small children are very sensory learners, so utilize fully all potential resources related with fine arts that you can such as colorful pictures that they can appreciate, music, poetry, body language (impressive gestures, your facial expression and the way you move your body), changing the voice according with the text, etc – BE DRAMATIC! If you would like to write me about please contact jiivaprema2@yahoo.com.br
New Life at Anandanagar, India

A recent visitor to Anandanagar said: “One can feel the power of this sleeping beauty”. Anandanagar is slowly coming to new life as the existing projects are joined by new ones sprouting up.

Global Headquarters of Ananda Marga Gurukula Cakradhurii Building

Work has resumed on the Cakradhurii Building, the global headquarters of Ananda Marga Gurukula. The trees that were planted many years ago have grown up around the perimeter of this impressive structure. The outer circle is 70% complete and the first floor, 60% complete. Funds are needed and welcome for the remaining construction.

Ananda Marga Gurukula College of Education

An accredited Bachelor’s of Education program is underway at Anandanagar with the necessary legal applications already filed. Classes are scheduled to begin in June 2012. The program will be recognized by the UGC (University Grants Commission of India). It will be part of the existing Ananda Marga College, but will be housed in its own buildings. Construction of the campus has already begun.

Dr. Andal Dharani from Australia has joined the board to help develop the program of the new college. Professor Dinkar Dixit recently made a visit to the new college and offered his assistance as well.

Medicinal Plants Research Center

A Medicinal Plants Research Center has been newly started at Uttar, Anandanagar.

Music College

The Music College for Women at Anandanagar is housed in a beautiful structure designed and built by Didi Aradhana. It has gained the name “hawa-mahal” which means (airy mansion) as it is so airy and the cross ventilation is excellent. Didi Ananda Gayatrii is in charge of the College and also runs a Children’s Home. The children from the home attend art and singing classes every weekend at the College.
Ananda Marga Primary School
Ananda Nagar, India
By Dada Gurudattananda

Ananda Nagar is located in a tribal dominated area of Purulia district of West Bengal State, in the eastern part of India. Ananda Marga School, Central Ananda Nagar, was started in the year 1963 in a thatched house with a vision to bring educational consciousness and development among the local impoverished people. Over the last 48 years of dedicated service by the Sannyasis (monks) and LFT teachers, this institution has greatly improved the quality of life among the villagers. Dada Gurudattananda, the present Principal, has been serving in this school for last 22 years. At present the school has 250 students enrolled from grades K-IV. Apart from local villages, some students from other states and 40 boys from our children’s home also get education from this school. Subsequently 34 schools were started by Ananda Marga in other villages surrounding Ananda Nagar to serve the children from those areas who cannot come to central Ananda Nagar easily.

The school is situated in a complete natural and picturesque setting in the countryside, far away from the bustle of city life, giving the children a conducive environment for being close to nature. Apart from regular subjects Stuvol (Student Volunteers) training and Vratacarii Camps are regularly held in this school for character building, developing service spirit, and developing volunteer and leadership qualities among the students. Art and music workshops are conducted to develop their aesthetic qualities. Cultural functions and excursions add to increasing and expressing the inner potentialities of the children and widening their imagination.

Neohumanism is the base of our curriculum. The Ecological Garden (PASAKA) near the school serves as a practical learning centre for the children. The annual magazine ‘Aruna alok’ of the school carries poems, arts, stories of our children and articles from teachers. It gives ample inspiration for their budding talents to express their creativity. Meditation is a regular feature in our school bringing holistic vision and oneness among the children.

This school has served as a beacon of light and has brought great change in the lives of the local people. The children that have graduated from our school have attained great success in their lives and are serving the society in various capacities as engineers, medical doctors, professors and research scholars in India and abroad.

Ananda Marga School
Kulu, India

The Ananda Marga School in Kulu has 94 students and goes up to 10th grade. Kulapati conducted a teacher’s training for 16 teachers August 10-12th. The training emphasized Neohumanism and the AMGK Standards for NHE schools, utilizing group discussions to facilitate learning, which was new for the teachers. Dr. Pathik gave a class on how to introduce environmental education to children, based on first hand instruction he had received from Shrii P. R. Sarkar. He emphasized the importance of practical knowledge of farming as well as flora as fauna and the importance of teaching being alive with hands on learning.
Ananda Marga School
Burdwan, India

Burdwan is one of the oldest and educationally advanced towns of West Bengal. Our school, established in a humble way in 1967 in an old temple, today runs in our own building with over 500 students from grades K-IV. Because of its high standard of academic achievement and performance, well educated families send their children to our school. The present teacher-in-charge, Sukumar, is a very dedicated and creative educator who always strives to improve the quality of the teaching standard in the school.

Apart from the excellent academic record, the school is successfully providing a congenial environment where children learn moral values, leadership qualities, service spirit etc. Aesthetic and cultural development is an integral part of the curriculum. Annual sports and cultural programs always draw huge number of viewers. Students from our school always participate in the district level programs and stand out for their praiseworthy performance.

In the beginning of each academic session, teachers organize a ‘Freshers’ Welcome Program where the new comers are given a warm welcome with cultural events. It is a very interesting and inspiring program for the students and their parents as well. A very innovative quiz competition program is organized for the parents where they learn about Neohumanism, Ananda Marga and the founder of NHE, Shrii P. R. Sarkar.

Teachers and students together care for the flower garden in the court yard of the school. The teachers regularly organize nature trips and excursions for the students and the guardians, where the children get to learn a lot about mother earth and nature. Teacher-guardian relations plays an important role in development of the school here.

A children’s home is attached to the school where parentless children get scope to feel a part of the school family. They get love and care of all.

Our school is known in the town for the dedicated service of the teachers, their neohumanist outlook and spiritual values. Morning meditation is a special attraction for the entire school.

Students graduating from our school have placed high in the society and are serving in various capacities. Dr. Shubhanshu Cakraborty, once a student of our school, is a reputed surgeon now in the locality. He sends his children to our school too. He is known for his kind-heartedness and service quality. Thus our school has been creating service minded and dedicated citizens who care for others and work for collective wellbeing.

Ananda Marga School
Chennai, India

The Ananda Marga School in Chennai has about 150 children and goes up to grade 7. Didi Ananda Pradyota is the principal.

ERAWS School Mumbai
(on right) Up to 7th grade – primary.
Adruta Children’s Home
Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India

Dr. Aditya Mohanty, professor of philosophy at Utkal University, Orissa and his graduate students, founded RAWA Academy and established several children’s homes collectively called Adruta Children’s Home, providing homes for a total of 400 children. Besides the children’s home at Bhubaneswar which is exclusively devoted to the cause of girl children in distress, there are other units of Adruta Children Home at Rayagada, Balangir, Angul, Puri, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Dhenkanal and Mayurbhanj.

Adruta Children’s Home was established to give a home to unclaimed, deserted and parentless children in Odisha. About 44% of the population of Odisha live below the poverty line. About 36% of the populace are illiterate and the per capita annual income is a meager $178.06. The plight of a girl child is still worse, since parents, at large, consider a girl child as a liability. The illiteracy rate of the females in Odisha is staggering 55.69%. But even these shocking statistics do not adequately describe the dismal state of affair of the girl children who are orphaned, deserted and unclaimed.

Adruta came into being in 1998 with the induction of Purnima, who has, in the meantime, grown into the stature of a national artiste in Odissi Dance. Since then, Adruta has grown into a model home drawing the attention of the people in the locality. There has been no looking back even though there have been intermittent constraints and handicaps due to the absence of regular inflow of funds from governmental and non-governmental agencies. Generous help of like-minded people and organisations, dedication and commitment of the cadres, and lots of Grace have helped the organisation to live through thirteen eventful years with success and satisfaction. Nitai Dhall and Hemant Basudev are providing assistance to put the institution on the path to sustainability.

Adruta Children’s Home was awarded the Memento of recognition by Dept. of Women and Child Welfare, Govt. of Odisha in the year 2005-06. The organisation received the Excellency Award-2006 on 29th August, 2006, at New Delhi, in the field of social action.

The ongoing activities of the Children’s Home are monitored by Dr. Sagarika Mishra, Superintendent and Miss Supriti Mohanty, Secretary, backed by a band of committed volunteers who work as caretakers, cooks, etc. Together they provide a Neohumanist daily lifestyle for the children. In addition to attending school for academic learning, the children receive home instruction in yoga and meditation, values, the arts, sports and vocational training.

Regular sessions in Yoga and Meditation early in the morning and evening, help the children keep themselves physically fit, mentally afresh and spiritually elevated.

Spiritual stories and talks are organized every Sunday to infuse the sense of cardinal values like love, mutuality, tolerance, service and sacrifice in the mind of the children so that they grow into efficient as well as ideal persons in future.

Painting helps a child to gain self-esteem and confidence. It provides an excellent source of personal relaxation and psychic therapy. It allows them to associate creativity with every aspect of life, not merely on the canvas. While painting they cultivate aesthetic awareness of the beauty of nature.

Music helps the children in pain management, and to ward off depression, promote movement, ease muscle tension, and etc. Special classes in Vocal and Instrumental music are held for the children of Adruta home.

Training in Classical and folk dance is given to the residents of Adruta as it provides physical agility, strength and endurance to the children.

For more details, you may visit their website at:
http://adrutachildrenhome.org/website/photo-gallery.htm
We are very excited about the construction of the Children’s Ecological Garden,” Nitya Prema Morales said, while presenting the general design and business plan of the projected mini ecosystem. The park’s lay out, which shows a cluster of shade trees around a pavilion, adheres to the principles of Progressive Utilization. It will showcase water conservation and organic farming, with a vegetable garden, and medicinal as well as ornamental plants.

When completed, the 50-square meter park will serve not only as playground and learning environment to the already existing AMSAI pre-school, the Sunflower Learning Center, but also as a fitting testament to the tireless effort of Nitya Prema’s brother, accomplished realist painter and educator, Dada Rameshananda.

The Sunflower Learning Center is a 45-square meter, 4-storey building located in a middle class housing community called BPThAI or Bahayan Pag-asa Taguig Homeowners Association, Inc., in Taguig City, Metro Manila, Maharlika. Aside from functioning as a pre-school, Sunflower also maintains feeding programs at the BPThAI Multi-purpose Center, as well as occasional taekwando and art classes.

Since it first opened in 2007, four annual batches of nursery, kindergarten and prep students have already graduated from the school. Children from middle and lower income families are taught English, Math, Science and Filipino subjects as well as Art, Dance, Drama, Ecology, Music, and Sports in the school’s neohumanist curriculum.

Didi Ananda Shubhra, of the Women’s Welfare Department, said that “the Library on Wheels which Dada Ramesh started is very helpful to the children in the community. Gathering children to do drawing and painting is also another project that keeps them out of the streets.”

The Sunflower Learning Center was started as the CHILD Project, or Children’s Home for Inspired Life Development, and was designed to serve eight barangays (or administrative districts) in Taguig City and neighboring Pasig City. Construction of the school building was made possible from the proceeds of the paintings of Dada Rameshananda, with the generous support of Mr. Pierre Boyde, an AMURT volunteer.

The first and second floors are used as the classrooms, where two to three-hour classes are held from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The third floor is an open space area where clay sculptures and art works of the children are on display together with some other paintings. The area is also used by members of Ananda Marga of the Pasig City district for Saturday night group meditations. The fourth floor serves as the accommodation for the School Superintendent.

Although he was a Fine Arts graduate, Dada Ramesh also pursued Early Childhood Education at the Philippine Normal University. He was inspired by Shrii P.R. Sarkar who exhorted his workers to continually establish nursery schools to encourage the innate potentials of children to blossom. Dada Ramesh then dedicated his life to working with children in hardship situations in both Maharlika and South America.

Dada first worked as a Children’s Home superintendent in Caloocan City, Metro Manila, from 1979 to 1985. He looked after 12 children coming from very poor families or were rescued from living in the streets. During this period, he also started 6 schools on government-loaned and AMURT-acquired properties. The AMURT schools are still running today.
In 1988 Dada was relocated to Brazil and started a school in Ceilandia, Brazilia capital city. In 1995 he moved to Lima, Peru where he worked with children from the notorious Piranita street gangs to provide them with food, medical care as well as street education, hope and inspiration for a better life. During this time he also founded the Prabhat Public Children’s Library in Lima. Both of these projects are ongoing.

Dada Ramesh also served as program coordinator of Renaissance Artists and Writers Association (RAWA) in Brazil, Peru and Maharlika. Some of Dada’s commissioned murals are found in Platanvej, Copenhagen, Denmark; Angra de Heroismo Terceira, Azores, Portugal; Sao Paolo, Brazil; Verona, Italy; Mainz, Germany; and Tijlala, Calcutta, India. Painted in the realist style, his works are expressions of the joys of the heart and the innocence of children, the beauty of nature and the quest for spiritual transformation.

The proposed Children’s Ecological Garden at Sunflower is only the latest of the energetic Dada’s projects. At the 2010 Ananda Marga regional conference held in Ananda Kuranga, Nagcarlan, Laguna, Dada Ramesh was able to present the proposal of his mini ecopark to fellow dadas, margis and supporters. Unfortunately, by some strange twist of fate, Dada suddenly died of a stroke several weeks later.

It was definitely a tremendous loss, both to the many families whose lives he had touched, but also to the Seva Dharma Mission which Dada so fervently served. But, as Dada Sumitananda, said, “we can continue to honor the example which Dada Rameshananda set.

NAIROBI SECTOR
Lotus Children Home and Lotus Nursery School, Accra Ghana
Didi Gayatrii has written and illustrated a children’s book - Story of Creation - that can be adjusted according to the age. She would also like to publish some of her Neohumanist stories for children. If you can help her publish her stories or if you are interested in the Story of Creation, please contact Didi at her email:jiivaprema2@yahoo.com.br

Ruai School, Nairobi, Kenya
Didi Vimocana is coordinating sponsorship and distribution of art materials for the needy lady-managed school projects in Nairobi region. If you can help, please write to her at: didivimocana@gmail.com They need crayons, paint, brushes, paper, pencils, color pencils, scissors, glue, toys, flash cards, BOOKS, any Clothes, any recycling materials which can be used for art class or school activities, any educational materials, camera, color papers and any play materials

NEW YORK SECTOR
PSOLI – Progressive School of Long Island, New York, USA
Welcoming speech delivered by Jarred Schwartz, student council president, to elementary students moving up to middle school...

Fellow students, I am here as ambassador of the middle school to introduce you to your new learning environment. For over 25 years, the philosophy of this school has affected hundreds of graduates. I am standing here with great pride, knowing that a few more will join the hundreds in this school’s beautiful attempt at making the world One.

Though the philosophy remains the same, your life as a middle schooler will be quite different, filled with friends and teachers who will become like your second family as the middle school building becomes your new home. Like a home, everyone has a part and everyone contributes to the house of PSOLI. However, in this house we call the PSOLI middle school, there live bright, eager and young students... you! Although you may be young, you will grow older and smarter every day. That fact inspires a greater amount of time spent on a higher difficulty of work, whether it be in the PSOLI house, or your own homes.

Even though there is more work, this work isn't a punishment, rather it's another challenge to prove to your new educators that you are ready for the responsibility. The middle school lifestyle gives me, Eric, and all the faculty members a great amount of pride, but never forget that modesty is the key to friendship and achievement. Never forget the philosophy that lives within you, even if you are not returning next year. Looking at all the graduates of the school's past, the ones who succeeded in life are only those who have learned the true meaning of Baba Nam Kevalam.

So go on to the middle school as I did two years ago, with ambition and a drive to achieve, for not only the betterment of yourself, but the betterment of this community, this family we call the Progressive School of Long Island. Your abilities will create a new standard for the students yet to come. As you enter the middle school in September, remember that you are entering a peaceful world, a “Tiny Green Island” if you will. This island is the island of hope and love for all things, and I am here to say, “Welcome to the PSOLI middle school.”
New Developments at the Ananda Marga River School

by Dada Gunamuktananda

From humble beginnings, with 23 students in 1995, and numerous expansions over the years, the latest being $2 million worth of new buildings (through government grants) last year, the Ananda Marga River School, set on 25 acres of rainforest land with a creek running through it, currently has over 200 children: 150 in the main school, ranging from Preparatory to Year 7 (5 to 12 year olds), and 50 in our new Early Childhood Centre, encompassing Pre-Kindy and Kindergarten.

The school is governed by a Board of Directors, with a Management Committee overseeing the daily administration. A Parent Committee plans and organises parent and community events such as café nights and morning teas.

We currently have around 40 staff: five in administration, eight in the Early Childhood Centre, a teacher and two assistants in Prep, eight teachers and four teacher aids for Years 1-7, a learning support teacher (our new learning support centre is appropriately called the Empowerment Centre), an art teacher, a music teacher, an eco-studies teacher, and eight other support staff for carpentry, grounds, cleaning and driving our three school buses.

The school is registered as an independent school with the Queensland state government and is affiliated with Independent Schools Queensland.

This year has been a year of consolidation at the River School. We moved into our new classrooms and administrative block, as well as a beautiful library/music room, tuckshop, new play areas, vegetable gardens and fruit trees, and a large gym/performance space. The grounds are also in the process of being landscaped and a team of local artists have been painting murals on walls, and even steps.

All water heating is from solar panels, drinking water is from rainwater collected in tanks, other water is pumped up from the creek, and waste water is processed through sand filtration on site.

Our new tuckshop serves organic, locally grown, sentient food to the children in the form of delicious concoctions such as sushi, spinach and feta triangles, falafel rolls, pizza, strawberries and yoghurt, and energy logs. The tuckshop was also recently showcased at the Sunshine Coast Real Food Festival, the proceeds going towards helping financially-challenged parents send their kids to school.

Children learn the state government curriculum as well as meditation, yoga and ethics, art, music, drama, video-making, indigenous studies and eco-studies. It is a holistic approach, the emphasis on play-based learning for younger children and active learning (themes and projects) for older children. Child-to-child programs (kids teaching kids) is also a big part of the learning method. So the best in academics is taught in an atmosphere of creativity, the arts and play. Classrooms are equipped with interactive white boards, iPads, iMacs and laptops.

Over and above the academic curriculum, our prime focus is on meditation, yoga and ethics. Apart from the spiritual and moral essence of our day-to-day teaching, this takes on a three-tiered approach at the River School: first, a weekly all-school Morning Circle with songs, virtues, announcements and awards, ending with collective kirtan and meditation; second, each class has a dedicated meditation and yoga session every week; and third, each class has 15 minutes of Quiet Time a day. We give a term meditation award for collective class effort, and we are about to implement our Super Meditators program by forming a weekly special meditation task force of the most sincere and enthusiastic meditators from each class, who will perform 20-30 minutes meditation at a time.

Children get quality class time in music and have the option of additional private lessons in strings, guitar, piano and marimbas. They put their talent to good use by giving regular performances and recording CDs such as Joyful Things. A group of children recently busked on the main street of Maleny to raise over $700 for the Romania kindergarten renovation. This is a good example of the service emphasis.
at the school, which manifests in various ways to help students and parents in need, the local community and our global village.

The standard of art at the school is quite exceptional, with the children regularly winning awards at local and Sunshine Coast exhibitions. The school also does well in regional sports, especially track and field, swimming and soccer. Our annual River School Olympics combines athletics with a great day out for children, parents and teachers. Environmental care and awareness is nurtured as an inherent component of Neohumanism. In addition to ecological class projects, children have ample opportunity to discover the joys of the rainforest setting during lunch breaks and swim in the creek during the summer months. We are currently organising our annual River School Spring Festival, with an indigenous opening ceremony, class stalls, tuckshop café live music, book stall, healing space, dance space, film festival, art exhibition and competition, sports and games.

Here are a couple of recent comments about the school, this one from a parent:
I love our school. I love our school so much I want to be a teacher so I never have to leave it.
It has a heart that beats on its own, the most amazingly devoted and incredible teachers and a spiritual philosophy that is hard to dispute. It's blissful!

and this one from our music teacher:
I am more and more thankful for working in such a beautiful community I feel supported and nourished by something that the River School offers that is not necessarily tangible but is very much alive and rich; there is a deeper level of substance and truth that hovers over the place and infuses everything. I feel touched by this and the more I work here, the more I recognise it.

HONG KONG SECTOR

News from Taiwan

Yoga in Schools – Peace in the World
In Taiwan several of our yoga teachers are inspired by the slogan: Yoga in Schools – Peace in the World. With this vision we have been running Children’s Yoga programs for many years: we offer training for teachers; parent/children yoga activities (PC Yoga); Yoga Touch for children with developmental difficulties and special needs; a program for parents who want to teach simple yoga in classrooms (we call this program Peacemamas); and Challenge Yoga for handicapped people. In each area consistency and hard work are paying off.

Teacher Training
After the summer of 2011, more than 40 people followed the teacher training program. Several of these join the service programs to develop their skills further. Our course is a fifteen hour program, usually divided over several weeks. The course includes: kids yoga in a collective setting, one to one (Yoga Therapy), quiet time exercises, Yama & Niyama, Yoga Stories, and yoga for bigger children.

Parent-Child Yoga
The PC-Yoga activities are held on monthly basis in three cities in Taiwan and continue to attract many interested people. In Taipei, where the program has been running non-stop for more than six years, we always attract 30 to 50 people. These workshops are free of charge and consist of two sections: one where children have to do the poses independently and a second section where the parents help the children and get massage. The natural peace and love in these programs is indescribable!

YogaTouch
The Education Department of the Western District of Taipei has organized 30 classes for children’s yoga in 9 different schools. They also purchased 300 books of YogaTouch for distribution to the public. This is just one example of the success of children’s yoga in special education settings. Many weekly special yoga classes are ongoing in Taipei, Taichung and other cities.

Peacemama
The Peacemama program consists of parents going to classrooms on a weekly basis and the teaching of chairyoga, breathing exercises, QTE and Stories focused on Yama and Niyama. We just completed a six months introductory training of Peace Mama, and many of the participants independently have contacted schools where they share this program with the children. Supriya does Peacemama programs in seven different schools and the teachers are so excited because their children are changing in a positive way!

Challenge Yoga
Caetanya has been running yoga programs for handicapped people for many years. In fact he has so many classes that it is very hard to get him on the phone. He travels all over the island of Taiwan and gives classes and inspires hundreds of handicapped people to develop meaningful and positive lives. In spite of his own physical challenges he is always supportive of NHE and yoga programs in schools! His activities have even attracted support from several Members of Parliament, who also attend his programs.

All this of course happens with a lot of selflessness from an education team who sometimes have to undergo financial or health difficulties to be able to continue to support these programs. Special mention goes to Tang Taminga, Dada Kaladha rananda and all members of the education board. With even more determination and commitment we can foresee that the future of NHE in Taiwan will be even brighter!
BERLIN SECTOR

Sunrise Kindergarten Finland
By Avtk. Anandakrpa Ac.

I came to Finland in September 2004 to manage Sunrise Kindergarten in Espoo, Finland. And I remember there were only 4 children. The kindergarten was on the brink of closing down. It had only one teacher who did almost everything there. During the first 4 ½ years, the school had a lot of ups and down, hardships and most especially lack of public support. We did not even have our own playground for our children where other kindergartens or neighbors will gladly accept us. It was in the year 2008 that the school slowly started to get more children and got better in all aspects. When the year 2009 ended we had 22 children.

During the course of these years, we have worked to improve the standard of our education by giving enjoyable programs to the children. We have emphasized the spiritual aspect of our education – yoga and meditation and our Neohumanistic curriculum. We do a lot of creative arts, dramatic plays, rhythm, songs, rhymes, stories and many more. Yama and Niyama and Yoga are taught in various ways such as stories or creative movements, pretend play, asanas poses, etc. Our children love yoga! They love dramatic plays. And most especially they like the food, many of them usually ask me what they are going to eat when they smell the food I am cooking in the school kitchen.

Our setting has a natural calmness, warmth and love. And the people who visit us also comment about this. They can easily see and feel that because our children are happy, smiling and friendly towards them. The children happily greet the visitors and are curious to talk with them, too.

For the last couple of years, whenever the social office inspector comes and visits us, she always praises the beautiful artwork of the children. The children’s artwork decorates the entire classroom. She even commented this spring when she visited and inspected us that the children in our kindergarten are luckier that the other children from other kindergartens because they eat freshly home-made cooked vegetarian food. She said that in Finland, it is a luxury for any kindergarten to order a healthy vegetarian meal from any food catering services. Normally, the other schools have their meal catered to them and they are non-vegetarian food.

At the moment, we have 26 children with 4 staff members. The capacity of the school is about 30 – 35 children. More children are listed to come before the end of this year and beginning next year.

In March 2011, we had an Open Day that lasted for one full day. The kindergarten was open for the public. There was a beautiful exhibition of the art work of the children. About 100 people came to see our school during the course of the day. It was a nice gathering for all of us teachers, parents and children together because we could talk, joke, laugh and spend time together without rushing to go home or any appointments. It was our day together. During that day, the teachers showed to the parents individually what the children have been doing during the school year. Other professionals from the community came to see our exhibition and they also expressed their appreciation for the work we teachers and children did. We had a vegetarian buffet in one room where visitors could eat freely.

Of course, for the last 2 years now, we have our own designated playground which we share cordially with one Montessori Kindergarten. We network with other kindergartens. We also attend the quarterly meetings of all the daycares in our locality.

Our kindergarten has become by itself an international school because many parents working for global companies in Finland are enrolling their children with us. And so we have a multicultural setting. Our children are coming from different countries and speaking different mother tongues. Wow! I say to myself. Our neohumanist school is truly like a garden with garlands of many different flowers. And this is what NHE is about, uniting humanity and the world in the spirit of neohumanism. And for all of this, all I can say is, it is all by Grace only.
KAHIRA SECTOR

Summer 2011 at

Smart Academy, Lebanon

Smart Academy in Bakaata, in the mountains of Lebanon was started by Radha Hussenieh as an afterschool center for teaching ACMAS, a Japanese system of mental arithmetic. She met Dada Krnasevananda and welcomed the addition of Yoga for children to the programme. Together they expanded the center and moved to a new location.

After one year of cooperation the community is now accepting yoga as a way of gentle exercises good for concentration and harmonizing of the child’s energies. Radha, assisted by her daughter Nancy offered to teach ACMAS and Yoga to other schools, libraries and children centers. They conducted successful summer camps in a few regions of Lebanon this summer.

At the SMART Academy (which stands for S-Service, M-Morality, A-Active habits, R-responsibility and T-trustworthiness) Didi Anandarama conducted workshops for children and adults in mandala art and on writing and illustrating their own original stories. It was hard work but wonderful books and mandalas were produced as the final result.

Teachers, parents and children got inspired by this new activity. Recognizing the literary value in the process of making a book, we have launched a national contest similar to the one in Croatia of children writing and illustration their own book. This contest is under the Farah el Maarifa NGO that was established to spread the ideals of Neohumanist Education. The contest has received the patronage of the Ministry of Education and posters will be sent out to libraries and primary schools. Smart Academy will give monthly workshops for children from different regions. The contest was announced by Radha and Didi Anandarama on national TV in an interview. The themes of the contest are: ‘Love and Care for Nature’, ‘Friendship’, ‘Be smart do your part’ and any other creative stories will be accepted.

Smart Academy is equipped with sufficient facilities to have small groups over for a weekend of workshops. A group of international students from the AUB (American University of Beirut) invited by Rami attended a weekend of yoga, meditation and workshops and enjoyed a hike into the nearby Cedar reserve. Another group from Syria joined by Lebanese spent the weekend in intensive meditation retreat. Rima remained a few days more to help finish a big mandala with the multiple intelligence symbols.

Nile River School, Egypt

The ancient River Nile silently flows through the desert of Egypt, feeding 80 million people before merging into the lotus delta of the Mediterranean Sea. In a small friendly village we joined efforts in the spirit of decentralizing good educational practices to the rural area and support the education of the children with kindergarten classes and after school activities. With the help of young people from the village we started by building a small hut where we keep our educational materials. There are more than 60 children eager to be part of our school project and a small team to run the school. We are aiming at designing and building the “Nile River School” with local participation, not only with the villagers but also with the youth and children. We invite you to be part of this project by your support from near and far, by volunteering and by visiting us. Thank you very much! The Nile River School team.
UPCOMING EVENTS and PUBLICATIONS

International Conference on Future Education
Utkal University, Bhuvneshwar, Orissa, India
February 22-24, 2012

Organized by the Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, Utkal University in association with Neohumanist Education Research Institute (NERI) Sweden

The purpose of the seminar is to provide an opportunity to scholars, thinkers & social activists working in the field of education to join together to deliberate on serious challenges facing humanity and to explore befitting responses for remoulding educational systems.

The seminar will look into different educational philosophical perspectives, new paradigms of education for science & technical education, different models of curricula & new age methodologies and explore themes like yoga in education, environmental education, inner ecology etc.

Speakers (by country) include:

Dr. Marcus Bussey (Australia)
Dr. Andal Dharani (Australia)
Avtk. Anandarama Ac. (Egypt)
Dr. Aditya Mohanty (India)
Dr. Anant Kumar Giri (India)
Dr. Asha Mukherjee (India)
Dr. S. K. Verma (India)
Mr. Henk de Weijer (Netherlands)
Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt. (Sweden)
Mrs. Bi Ma’ (Sweden)
Mr. Khun Krisada (Thailand)
Dr. Sid Jordan (USA)

For further information and to register please contact:

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NHE Publications
http://www.gurukul.edu/publications/

Rainbow ABC
http://www.rainbowabc.com

Ecology of Joy
www.caetanyananda.com

Wise Heart Books
http://wiseheartbooks.com/

To Colour a Warrior
http://sbpra.com/MattOppenheim
The Role of Youth

The nature of life is to change and to grow. Where there is no change, it is just like the condition of death. In all living structures, the young are resilient and open to change. If a limb of a child is broken, it heals quickly. If a child is mentally wounded, he or she soon recovers. When new ideas and technology come forward, it is the young minds that can grasp them. The old become fossilized. To move the old is an effort; for the old to adapt to change is difficult.

Our world needs a great change in order to move forward and progress. A new order, a new wave, will have to take the place of the old to remedy all the physical, social, intellectual and spiritual ills of the world. As the vanguard of this new movement, the youth are indispensable. It is the youth, and the youth only, who have the vigor to bring about the necessary change. It is the youth who have the resilience to change and adapt and implement the vision of a new society. Without this vision, without the youth, the world will continue in the morass of suffering, injustice and exploitation that is our present social condition. It is the youth of the world only who can help bring about the new world order and the vision of a new humanity.
Shri P. R. Sarkar

From Smart Academy, Lebanon

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