

GURUKULA NETWORK



Newsletter of the Global Neohumanist Education Network

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Entering a New Era



Expanding the Heart, Freeing the Mind, Serving for a Just and Sustainable World

Gurukula Network

Newsletter and Journal of Neohumanist Schools and Institutes

Gurukula Network is published by the
Global Liaison Office of the
Global Neohumanist Education Network

Two yearly issues, January and July, 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.

Gurukula Network is open to any and all NHE
related projects and faculties.

Please send submissions for consideration to:
<amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>

Editor
Arete Brim

Copy Editing
Scott Brim

Cover Design
Iris Heddes

E-Magazine
Michele Montenegro
<http://gurukul.edu/newsletter/issue58>

Printing and Mailing
Radha Gusain

Websites

Ananda Marga Gurukula
<<http://gurukul.edu>>

Neohumanist Education
<<http://neohumanisteducation.org>>

Global Association of Neohumanist Educators
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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 and Inclusive Approach
Integrated Curriculum
Exemplary Role of the Educators

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar inspired the establishment of the
global network of Neohumanist schools and institutions. In 1990
he founded Ananda Marga Gurukula as the Board of Education
for Neohumanist schools and institutes around the world.

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. The international network
of Neohumanist Schools and Institutes strives to hasten the
advent of a society in which there is love, peace, understanding,
inspiration, justice and health for all beings.

OBJECTIVES

To serve humanity with neohumanist spirit and to acquire knowledge for that purpose

- 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) and global headquarters at Anandanagar.
- To encourage the development of micro-enterprises for
sustainability of social service projects.

Chancellor

Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt., Kulapati <kulapati@gurukul.edu>

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

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*Cover Photo from Inauguration of
Bali Public School Campus*

SAVE THE DATES for 2025



Neohumanism in Action:

Inspiring Wisdom, Love and Courage in Education for a United Future



July 11-16, 2025, Bucharest, Romania

**35th Anniversary of
Ananda Marga Gurukula**

Ananda Marga Gurukula Global Conference Hosted by NEA Romania



Neohumanist Education

Ananda Marga Gurukula shall be celebrating its 35th anniversary with a global gathering in

Romania from July 11-16th, 2025

The theme of the conference is

Neohumanism in Action:

Inspiring Wisdom, Love and Courage in Education for a United Future

It aims to bring together thought leaders and experienced professionals in Neohumanist education with practitioners, researchers and peers in progressive approaches to education.

In times of growing polarization and division in the world, there is a great need to instill values and practices designed to consciously counteract such forces. Together we will be exploring the following questions:

- What are practical ways to develop spiritual wisdom that enhances **critical thinking, psychological resiliency and the construction of meaningfulness**?
- How can educators play a meaningful role in fostering **unity, love, and solidarity**, not only between diverse humans but also with the other beings we share the planet with?
- How to support the development of an inspiring vision that gives the courage for **active, engaged and empowered citizens**?
- How can we generate **new narratives** that lead us towards the next steps in the evolution of human consciousness beyond the anthropocene?

We invite all educators and neohumanist activists to join in sharing best practices, learning from experts and creating the pathway towards a more united future.

The event will coincide with the 30th anniversary of Gurukula Network which has been the leading voice and advocate of the neohumanist movement for the past three decades. The entire network of neohumanist institutions and projects will also showcase their contributions and visions for creating a new world.

Please stay tuned for further details and kindly reserve those dates on your calendar. Pre-registration shall be required for proper logistical planning and utilization of the gathering and will be announced when available.

If you wish to be part of the organizing team or wish to contribute in any way, please do not hesitate to write to us at: conference@gurukul.edu

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

We encourage you to actively participate in the conference by submitting proposals for presentations and workshops that share your experience, expertise or facilitate lively exchange.



Vanguards of a New World

By Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt.

We humans love to explore and expand our sphere of being. Space probes Voyager 1 and 2 were sent beyond the heliosphere into interstellar space in search for signs of life beyond our

solar system and to understand the universe in which we are living. When humanity comes together to expand its knowledge of our outer and inner worlds, such united efforts bring smiles on our faces and makes the entire human race proud.

Today, we have arrived at a critical juncture. On the one hand is outmoded thinking generating violence and wars for the preservation of religions, races, groups or nation states without concern for others. On the other hand, we have the possibility to build a humane society where the interests of all are protected and no creature is deprived of their right to exist and where the vision of leaders encompass the entire creation. When such leaders will come to the forefront and engage in building a world of tomorrow, a renaissance of true human values will emerge on this planet of ours.

We human beings constitute a rare species. Our developed consciousness generates a great responsibility engaging us in the protection of the bio-sphere and in actions aimed at eliminating all types of suffering, providing an environment for the all-round flourishing of all beings.

Some people still cling to selfishness and prefer to bide in crude propensities. Although they, too, belong to our human family, existential blindness leads them to aim at influencing and goading the human race along the path of sense-gratification and artificial disparities, ignoring the beatitude of collective welfare. By perpetuating systems of selfishness and disparities in all spheres of human existence, leaders of such depraving propensities become the bane of humanity. We should become aware of those leaders and their thought processes, and ensure that they do not hold the reins of society at any level.

The first and the foremost criterion of a truly worthy leader is his or her ability to offer an uplifting vision drawn from a unifying ideology. Such deserving leaders will declare that Human Society is one and indivisible and all creatures are the progeny of One Universal Consciousness. However, no such benevolent leader has ever survived in the whirlpool of hatred, dogma and narrow sentiments. Hence, it is imperative that higher consciousness must be awakened in each and every human being from childhood onwards. It is our common duty to ensure such joyful development.

Human beings require a direction in life. The goal must be service and blessedness rather than merely self-aggrandizement. Education that leads to the acquisition of knowledge and cultivates a moral fervor makes for a peaceful society. The motto “Self-realization and Universal Welfare” can inspire human beings to live a life of true self-fulfillment and can make everyone proud.

Let the pages of human history be strewn with illuminating examples of every family, community, nation and the world at large. Let such persons be honored who have served and sacrificed for others; who have contributed to greater knowledge and wisdom; who have lived for higher ideals and not only for personal wealth and enjoyment.

The world requires new vanguards for tomorrow; persons whose thoughts are sublime, whose actions reflect their magnanimity of mind, and whose intuitional and intellectual abilities have been tested on the hard soil of reality. Leaders must be mature; i.e., they should be able to successfully handle structures and relationships. They must be humble; i.e., they should recognize the fragile nature of this manifested world and therefore exercise utmost caution and respect at all times. Finally, they must be intelligent and decisive—able to comprehend wisdom and act on difficult choices with a rational outlook; and be benevolent.

Hence, Neohumanist education is not a luxury or a pass-time. It is a historical imperative—the need of the hour. Neohumanist educators are incubators for birthing a new society.

The task of inculcating higher values and virtues is one of the noblest forms of social service. These values touch two spheres of life: inner and outer. For the cultivation of the inner dimension: purity (shaoca), contentment (santos’a), sincere effort (tapah), rational outlook (sva’dhaya) and devotion (iishvara pranidhana) serve as five pillars. Adherence to these bring about inner peace and joyfulness. For the cultivation of the outer dimension: benevolence (ahimsa), truthfulness (satya), justice & fairness (asteya), universal love (brahmacarya) and magnanimity (aparigraha). Adherence to these principles aids in generating and maintaining a harmonious, cordial society. Thus, while imparting knowledge, Neohumanist educators lay a great emphasis on these ten ethical pillars.

Building a humane society is a collaborative endeavour of youth and their elders. The elders share their tested knowledge and experiential wisdom while the young offer their imagination, dynamism, enthusiasm and spontaneity. This is how truly competent leadership is being created, developed and brought to fruition.



Neohumanism, Education, and Community Development

By Dr. Kathleen Kesson

*Another world is not only possible, **she is on her way.**
On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.
~ Arundhati Roy (2003)*

Schooling is one of the most important ways that a society reproduces itself. In the modern Western system that dominates the globe, education generally serves to inculcate contemporary ideas about progress, achievement, merit, and corporate culture, with little attention paid to how this has fostered consumer-dependent and environmentally destructive lifestyles. Neohumanist education proposes a different set of values grounded in a deepening of love and care for all human and non-human species, alternatives to consumer culture, radical human equality, the cultivation of spirituality, and a commitment to ecological awareness and environmental care. These values indicate a major shift in the prevailing educational paradigm. However, critical education scholars have long recognized the futility of shifting the educational paradigm without a concomitant shift in community values and social patterns.

Education has long been thought of as the key to upward social mobility, a way to leave behind the poverty and hardship of rural or communal life and join the rootless (usually urban) ranks of the employed (and too often, the unemployed). Indeed, the promise of education has always been the reward of a better life – more comfortable, more abundant, and more secure. Parents, understandably, encourage their children to get as much education as possible in order to spare them the privations of their own lives. Often, this results in a brain drain, with young people moving to cities, and villages and small communities left to wither.

Paralleling this urbanization have been the promises of international development – top down approaches to alleviating poverty in rural areas. The Green Revolution of the last century, for example, undertook to feed an increasing world population based on the latest academic science of agriculture. Short term crop yields were improved with applications of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and genetically modified seeds, but this had a number of unforeseen consequences: the poisoning of soil and water, the loss of genetic diversity in crops, increased resistance to herbicides and pesticides, the increasing debt load of rural farmers and the displacement of them from their productive land. The failures of the Green Revolution, not to mention continuing widespread hunger and food insecurity, are widely recognized now by farmers, policy makers, and soil scientists, and a vibrant new movement of regenerative agriculture, devoted to the organic

restoration of soil, air, and water is bubbling up across the world.

Agriculture is only the most obvious aspect of society that has been affected by misguided forms of development and the corporate domination of the planet. Communities are in crisis, indicated by skyrocketing rates of mental illness, drug abuse, gun violence, and other indicators of community dissolution. The systemic changes needed encompass all sectors of society in addition to food sovereignty: governance, criminal justice, arts and culture, health and well-being, finance, manufacturing, information systems, energy, and importantly—education. Like the murmuration of starlings, moving in harmony with a singleness of purpose, social movements dedicated to the transformation to a more peaceful, just, and sustainable world are working to effect the necessary transitions in these areas.

For Neohumanism to take firm root in the soil of Planet Earth, education and community need to be seamlessly connected in a new paradigm of development. I have long been a fan of the idea of “localization” – a concept attributed to the work of Helena Norberg-Hodge, author of the book *Ancient Futures*, which documented the social, economic, and ecological impacts of development in Ladakh starting in the 1970’s. Localization brings attention to the root causes of the multiple crises we face globally, and advocates grassroots policies that revitalize and restore communities. Central to the localization movement is a rejection of the western monocultural education model in favor of more vibrant, experience-based learning that is rooted in the local community. I believe that if we are to realize Shrii P.R. Sarkar’s vision of building a genuinely just and sustainable global society, localization is an important guide to implement *Sama Samaj Tattva*, or the *principle of social equality*. Neohumanist educators need to “think locally” to build a strong foundation for universalism.

The Community School Movement

The movement for community schools is taking root in many places, both in modern industrialized settings and in rural or tribal areas. Community schools are seen as an essential component of a transition from one way of life to another, and a lever by which to facilitate the deep system changes required to create and sustain a clean environment, a healthy economy, strong schools, and a vibrant and just social life. In order for their true value to be realized, virtually every aspect of schooling needs to be reconsidered: how schools are organized and for what

purposes, what is taught, and how youth might become more actively engaged in the lives of their communities. There is no “cookie cutter” vision of a community school based on the idea of localization, as locales are nothing if not diverse, but there are some shared principles.

- Development should foster a resilient place-based culture with a focus on an economy that meets the needs of all of its inhabitants, cultivates strong connections to the natural world, and produces much of what it needs as close to the source of consumption as possible.
- There is wisdom in communities, such as traditional ecological knowledge, that comes from long inhabitation of a particular place, and education and development needs to build on this knowledge, not discard it.
- Learning across the age spectrum should be grounded in hands-on experiences that are designed to address the specific needs and values of the community.
- Solutions to local problems should be sought through inquiry-based, democratic problem solving.
- All of the members of a community need to be involved with the development of the youth.
- Schools need to be “community hubs” - places of learning for young and old, resource centers, spaces for creativity and invention, places for young people to congregate and plan projects, opportunities to connect young people with mentors in the community who can teach the skills necessary for the transition to a more just and sustainable society (foresters, farmers, artists and artisans, inventors, cooks, builders, activists, etc.).

In my forthcoming book, *Becoming One with the World: A Guide to Neohumanist Education*, many chapters deal with the imperative to create closer connections between education and communities. Some of the research-based practices that empower individuals and communities include the following.

Identity and Community

Though the ultimate aim of a Neohumanist education is to foster a universal outlook, an identification with all of humanity as well as with non-human others, the groundwork for such a “trans-egoic” orientation starts closer to home. Teachers work with young children to develop a sense of their personal history, and their memories are activated to recall important incidents in their lives. They are encouraged to listen to the stories of their parents, grandparents or other caregivers, which are then shared in classrooms, along with “family artifacts” that enhance the stories. Artifacts can include special foods, clothing, photographs, crafts, or other unique items.

Older children are taught to inquire into family (or tribe or clan) histories, to ask historical questions and to collect historical data, using various sources of

knowledge about the past (artifacts such as tools, quilts, craft items, personal letters, ancient maps, photographs, old newspapers, interviews, cookbooks, fashion magazines, portraits). They create “history museums” in their schools. Gradually they discover how the past differs from the present, how events in the past shape the present, and how technologies have changed the modern world. They learn how to collect and analyze data. They come to see themselves as *historical actors*—active participants in the making of the world—and with proper guidance, begin to walk the path towards universalism.

Democratic Living

Communities have become “devitalized” through corporate globalization, stripped of cultural meaning, their resources and labor extracted and exploited, languages discredited, and governance coopted. Regenerating communities requires the cultivation of democratic skills and practices, in order that communities be empowered to make their own decisions about development. It is not enough, however, for young people in a community to be taught the principles of democracy, they need to *experience* democracy. In a community school, students take active roles in local democracy: serving on boards and committees, sharing ideas in community meetings, participating in collective problem-solving. Their curriculum needs to foster the knowledge, skills and dispositions of democratic living (such as a sense of justice, recognition of equality, open-mindedness, and critical thinking).

Critical Place-based Learning

Given new awakenings to ecological limits, a sense of place is a vital intellectual asset for young people. The current generations are faced with the enormous task of rethinking the various aspects of modernity: how humans live and consume, what they produce, how they spend their time, what they value, and how they organize their societies. Understanding how their *place* has been shaped by the forces of nature, by political histories, and by economic decisions from afar can help them move forward in ways that have a positive impact on where they live.

A place-based education fosters ecological awareness of the interconnectedness between human and more-than-human species, increases young people’s knowledge of their environments, and includes practical knowledge and skills in subjects that support sustainability such as ecological architecture, appropriate scale energy technologies, permaculture, and agroforestry. Students spend time in their communities pursuing authentic investigations and engaging in real work (*not*, of course, exploitative child labor!), in a spirit of service and civic engagement.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Neohumanism values diverse cultural expressions. It also embodies a critical understanding of the ways in which the politics of colonialism, imperialism, racism, consumerism, and ethnocentricity have served to oppress people and destroy the unique cultural expressions of humanity. Culturally relevant pedagogy is a way of

teaching that works in multiple ways to affirm young people's identities and challenge prevailing injustices in school and society. It also recognizes that there are many "ways of knowing" and values the various expressive means by which children can demonstrate their learning.

Centering Ethics

The "new human" in Neohumanist education is a person who recognizes their entanglement in the larger ecosystem, and has given up the idea of the individual as "master and controller" of nature in favor of a relationship of kinship with and respect for the many inhabitants of the Earth. They have become "eco-centric" rather than "ego-centric." Recognizing the existential value of all creation requires a reorientation of our value systems and ethical behaviors. In Neohumanist education, the skills required for ethical decision-making are embedded in all the subjects of the curriculum.

Ethical conversations and problem-solving are extraordinarily complex. Our ethical decisions do need to be informed by reason and logic, but there is much to be learned from ancestral wisdom, traditional Indigenous knowledge, embodied knowing, intuition, etc. In these ways, the narrow, instrumental, human-centered model of rational thinking and problem-solving can be replaced by a Neohumanist model, one that incorporates the aesthetic, sensuous, and spiritual dimensions of human *knowing and being*.

We have the opportunity here and now to reorder our values and priorities, restructure our relations with the natural world, and create just and responsive systems of economics, ecology, education, and governance that support truly resilient communities that work for everyone. We can look backward to the status quo, a past of fossil fuels, unrestrained economic growth and the pollution that comes with it, corporate control, and conflict over scarce resources, or forward to a future of abundant renewable energy, food sovereignty, economic democracy, ecological sustainability, and new, human scale models of living, learning, and working. We can explore innovative ways of engaging communities in meeting the needs of the present and planning for the future. We can commit to making young people an essential part of this planning. We can decide that we wish for schools to be vibrant spaces where all young people want to be — spaces of equity, deep learning, relevance, empathy, relationship, belonging, sustainability, and joy. Another world really *is* possible.

-Norberg-Hodge, H. (1991/2016). *Ancient Futures*. Local Futures.

-*The Community Schools Blueprint*, a report written for the State of Vermont by Dr. Kesson, can be accessed at <https://www.vtlff.org/community-schools>

-For more information about the relationship between the cultivation of a Prout society and education, see "The Synergy of Prout, Neohumanist Education, and the Spirit of Service" in Issue 54, of the Gurukula newsletter (<https://gurukul.edu/newsletter/issue-54/54-introduction/>)

Kathleen Kesson is the Program Director and Faculty in the Teacher Preparation certificate program offered through the Neohumanist College of Asheville. Her forthcoming book 'Becoming One with the World: A Guide to Neohumanist Education' will be available soon from Information Age Publishing at a date yet to be specified in 2024. Here are some of the endorsements that have been written about the book:

Becoming One with the World: A Guide to Neohumanist Education

What a wonderful book! Packed into its pages are decades of experience as a meditator, yogi, parent, educator, and Neohumanist. This latter is the crux of this text, designed to lay out in clear accessible language the fundamentals of this rich and inspiring philosophy and to touch on ways it can find its way into the daily flow of the classroom and school. A philosophy worth its salt is one that actually makes a difference in the day to day lives of people. In Kathleen Kesson and her comprehensive book, we find just this: practical, pragmatic insights into a philosophy both new and ancient! It is a gift to educators and anyone committed to wholesome futures for children, society and of course, the planet.

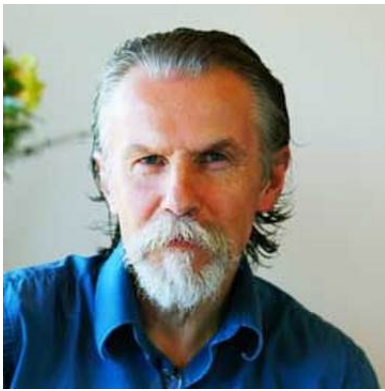
—Dr. Marcus Bussey, Senior Lecturer in History and Futures, School of Law and Society, University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia

Dr. Kathleen Kesson is a senior educational consultant and a long time Professor of Education. She has won the hearts of students around the globe through her introductory course on Neohumanist Education that she has delivered at The Neohumanist College of Asheville. *Becoming One with the World* is a superb introduction to this subject, a perfect entry to understand the philosophy, pedagogic principles and methods of Neohumanist Education. It is a long-awaited book and we are pleased to see it finally made available to a larger audience.

—Dr. Acharya Shambhushivananda, Chancellor, A.M. Gurukula, Anandanagar, India.

Kesson's *Becoming One with the World* is a timely book in this planetary transition. The transition is from a world created through patriarchy, capitalism, and the nation-state – a dominator world – to a world of gender partnership, cooperative economics and global governance/bio regions. The transition cannot be accomplished without a shift in worldview, a shift to Neohumanism. Kesson takes us on a brilliant tour of this new framework – her work is theoretically edgy, practical, beautifully written, and much needed.

—Dr. Sohail Inayatullah, UNESCO Chair in Futures Studies, Sejahtera Centre for Sustainability and Humanity, IIUM. Professor of Futures Studies, Tamkang University. Researcher, Metafuture.org



Humanism and Internationalism: A Neohumanist Perspective

By Roar Bjønnes

In the pursuit of global harmony and social progress, the concept of humanism and internationalism emerges as a beacon

of progressive hope. Yet, upon closer examination, the ideology of humanism reveals inherent flaws and limitations. Shrii P. R. Sarkar, in his seminal contributions to humanity delves into the complexities of humanism, dissecting its various manifestations and proposes a transformative alternative: Neohumanism.

Regarding internationalism, Shrii Sarkar succinctly spells out its limited potential and warns us of its potential destructive future. Echoing the current cold and hot wars between the power brokers of today, the US and its NATO allies versus Russia and China, he writes that *“when I use the term ‘internationalism,’ I am admitting the existence of separate nations... But when I discover that one nation is trying to thrive on the lifeblood of another, I oppose it, and this opposition ultimately leads to world war. So, internationalism is not the solution either.”*

Humanism, in its essence, extends beyond mere national boundaries or international cooperation. It encompasses a universal sentiment of compassion and solidarity towards all humanity. However, this lofty ideal often falls short in addressing the intricate dynamics of socio-economic exploitation and intra-human conflicts.

“Even within humanism there is still intra-humanistic clash”, Shrii Sarkar writes. He identifies a crucial distinction between genuine humanism and its pseudo form. While genuine humanism aspires to uplift all individuals regardless of their backgrounds, pseudo-humanism is tainted by ulterior motives and exploitation. The narrative of providing aid to disadvantaged groups often conceals underlying agendas of economic dominance and cultural hegemony.

With these words, Shrii Sarkar reminds us of the untold suffering inflicted upon indigenous peoples in the past few hundred years: *“Suppose we discover that a particular group is educationally backward. We feel pity for them because they are also our fellow human beings; so, we think, ‘Let us introduce them to the printed word, at least!’ and actually we do something towards that end. But through this so-called ‘literacy drive,’ we inject ideas in their minds that paralyze them mentally, and then we ultimately govern these mentally paralyzed people as colonized people.”*

Historical examples of this strategy can be seen in the colonial endeavors of European powers during the past few centuries. European countries justified their colonization of various regions around the world under

the guise of spreading civilization, Christianity, and enlightenment values—a form of pseudo-humanism. They portrayed themselves as benevolent benefactors, claiming they were uplifting and civilizing indigenous populations through their interventions. However, beneath this veneer of altruism lay ulterior motives driven by economic exploitation and cultural hegemony. European powers sought to extract valuable resources from the colonies to fuel their industrial economies and enrich themselves economically. They also aimed to impose their own cultural norms, language, and institutions onto indigenous societies, often with violent means, killing millions of people, and at the expense of local customs, languages, and traditions.

The narrative of providing aid and enlightenment to disadvantaged groups thus concealed the true intentions of maintaining economic dominance and cultural superiority. This exploitation and domination under the guise of pseudo-humanism led to significant suffering, exploitation, and lasting repercussions for many colonized peoples around the world. In contemporary times, we can observe instances of pseudo-humanism intertwined with economic dominance and cultural hegemony in various forms, often in the context of international development, humanitarian aid, and globalization.

Moreover, Shrii Sarkar warns against the insidious consequences of disregarding non-human life forms within the framework of humanism. The rampant destruction of natural habitats and indiscriminate exploitation of resources disrupt the delicate ecological balance, posing existential threats to both humans and other sentient beings. According to Shrii Sarkar: *“Human beings led by self-interest have been neglecting ecology at every step. We should remember that the sky and air, the hills and mountains, the rivers and forests, the wild animals and reptiles, the birds and fishes and all sorts of aquatic creatures and plants are all inseparably related to one another. Human beings are an integral part of that vast common society.”*

Shrii Sarkar also champions the concept of cosmic inheritance, positing that all individuals are entitled to a rightful share of the Earth’s resources by virtue of their birth in this world. This idea, Shrii Sarkar balances with the lawful rights of nature—land, plants, insects, and animals—to exist and thrive in perpetuity. This theory resonates with philosophies advocating for the commons, which argue that certain resources, whether natural or created, are inherent to humanity and should be managed collectively for the benefit of all living beings.

Cosmic inheritance, as advocated by Shrii Sarkar, extends beyond mere material possessions, embracing

Continued on Page 13



The Aim(s) of Art

By Marco Alexandre de Oliveira

In his manifesto *Non Serviam* (1914)ⁱ, the Chilean avant-garde poet Vicente Huidobro creates the figure of a rebel poet who exclaims that he will no longer serve the “old enchantress”

Mother Nature. In his words,

this *non serviam* “was recorded in a morning of world history. It was not a capricious shout nor a superficial act of rebellion. It was the result of an entire evolution, the sum of multiple experiences.” It was, finally, a “declaration of independence from Nature,” a proclamation of emancipation from being a “slave” to imitation. The poet was now free to create realities in his own world, with its own “trees,” “mountains,” “rivers,” “sky,” and “stars.” From that moment onwards, a new era was beginning to take shape in art.

Interpreted from a (neo)humanist perspective, the manifesto by the founder of Creationism, a literary movement not to be confused with the homonymous religious movement, might be read as an allegory for an art not based on the crude material world of nature but rather inspired by the subtler mental world of the human being. The artist would no longer be bound to reproduce physical things but would rather be compelled to create psychic objects. In other words, art would no longer be simply mimetic (*mīmēsis* = imitation/representation) but rather purely aesthetic (*aisthēsis* = sensation/perception). As such, Huidobro’s “general aesthetic theory” would appear to reflect the tenets of an aestheticism that transcends materialism and grants art not only independence from nature but also autonomy from society, a condition that has been formulated in the (in)famous slogan “art for art’s sake.” A predominant or underlying principle in the history of modern and contemporary art, “art for art’s sake” was originally conceived to differentiate aesthetic judgment from moral value, and has since been understood as an apology for an art devoid of social purpose or any other practical use. However, in a world where both society and nature are suffering from multiple crises of human creation, one might question whether an “art for art’s sake” would be the true aim of art, or whether art might indeed serve another, higher vocation.

In “The Practice of Art and Literature” (1957)ⁱⁱ, the Indian philosopher Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar – who elsewhere, in a series of discourses on Kṛṣṇa, theorizes on what he terms aesthetic science (*nandana vijñāna*) and supra-aesthetic science (*mohana vijñāna*) – rejects the aestheticism in vogue and offers an alternative: “The statement ‘Art for art’s sake’ is not acceptable; rather we should say, ‘Art for service and blessedness.’” Such an affirmation is consistent with the motto of his international organization Ānanda Mārga Pracāraka Saṁgha – *Atma moksartham jagat hitaya ca* (“self-

realization and service to humanity”) – and is used by Shrii Sarkar to promote the spiritual and social role of art. The discourse begins with a definition of the art of literature based on the concept of *sāhitya*: “that whose characteristic is to move with (*sahita* = ‘with’) the trends of life.” Literature is then described not as superficial invention or enchanting fantasy but rather as “the portrait of real life, an external expression of the internal workings of the mind, a bold and powerful expression of the suppressed sighs of the human heart.” To do justice to its profound significance, according to Shrii Sarkar, literature must finally “maintain a rhythm that reflects the dynamic currents of society,” or in other words, it must not lose sight of the people.

Conceived as *sāhitya*, the art of literature is meant not only for individual self-expression, but also for social progress in the sense of movement. Elaborating on this idea, Shrii Sarkar proceeds to provide another interpretation of *sāhitya*: “*sa + hita* = *hitena saha*, ‘that which co-exists with *hita* [welfare].’” Such a definition implies that literature must embody an “inner spirit of welfare,” that is, it must be marked by an essential benevolence. Consequently, the “creations or compositions of those who proclaim, ‘Art for art’s sake,’ cannot be treated as *sāhitya*,” according to Sarkar, inasmuch as welfare is either lacking or is “relative” due to its being based on the “mundane world” and not on the attainment of any “absolute truth.” Art or literature would instead represent a “grand, benevolent flow of ideas with the common people on one side and the state of supreme bliss on the other,” or rather, a means for social and spiritual realization. Considering the aforementioned conceptions of *sāhitya*, the art of literature would ultimately be defined by Shrii Sarkar as “that which moves together with society and leads society towards true fulfilment and welfare by providing the inspiration to serve.”

A far cry from the *non serviam* of an “art for art’s sake,” Shrii Sarkar’s “art for service and blessedness” is a call for an aesthetics that serves in many ways, all of which end in happiness. For artists, the creation of art allows for self-expression and the sublimation of the interior psychic dramas of life, a process that may then be appreciated and understood by a public which is, in turn, moved by the artworks. Art also provides the opportunity to serve humanity by promoting the general welfare, which positively impacts artists and society alike. According to Shrii Sarkar, “[i]n that artistic movement towards welfare both the attainment and the bestowal of happiness find simultaneous expression.” Indeed, herein would lie the actual purpose of art: “the aim of all artistic creation is to impart joy and bliss.” In order for artists to be able to spread such happiness, in order for them to properly serve, they themselves should aspire to transcend the world of the senses on which their aesthetics is based. The “artist’s ideal,” therefore, is to be

a “spiritual aspirant,” inasmuch as “[o]nly those who look upon all worldly things from a spiritual perspective can realize in everything the blissful Transcendental Entity.” Concomitant with the ideal of the artist, the aim of art is ultimately to serve for the attainment of universal happiness through the realization of the Cosmic Consciousness or “Transcendental Entity.” As Sarkar concludes:

“Art or literature is one of those sources from which common people get the opportunity to become established in the Cosmic Mind [...] The *sādhana* [endeavor/effort] of the artist or the *sāhityika* [litterateur] has been continuing through the ages, and its aim is to see One among many, and to lead the many to the path of One.”

How to create an art that serves society and imparts bliss on humanity? Can the aestheticism of an “art for art’s sake” be reconceived or reframed as the aesthetic science of an “art for service and blessedness?” In sum, it would appear to have less to do with content than with intent (*intentiō* = exertion/effort), not only in terms of the artwork itself but also on the part of the artist.ⁱⁱⁱ In the

creationist poem “Ars Poetica” (1916), Huidobro envisages both an art of literature and an artist or poet with a divine purpose: “Let the verse be as a key/ Opening a thousand doors [...] Let whatever your eyes gaze upon be created,/ And the soul of the hearer remain shivering.” Invoking the power of creativity with his summons to “[i]nvent new worlds,” Huidobro then ponders: “Why do you sing the rose, oh Poets!/ Make it blossom in the poem.” Such verses recall his aforementioned manifesto of creationism, with its call to invention instead of imitation and its evocation of the poet’s special gift or talent, which has been provided by Mother Nature. Yet for whom does the poet or artist create, and in whose name? After considering that “[o]nly for us/ Live all things under the Sun,” the vanguardist ultimately proclaims: “The Poet is a little God.”^{iv} Thus, by recognizing the world or universe as belonging to humanity and identifying the poet or artist as a manifestation of the Creator, Huidobro unwittingly sees the unity in diversity and indirectly leads the reader to the unique origin and end of all artistic creation, whose true aim is thereby *served*, once and for all.

Marco Alexandre de Oliveira is a professor, translator, and writer who earned his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and M.A. in Romance Languages and Literatures from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (USA), and his B.A. in Religious Studies from the University of South Carolina (USA). He is a member of the Liberating Humanities and Arts faculty at the Neohumanist College in Asheville and is the author of scholarly articles on Neohumanism. His alter-ego Gringo Carioca is a poet and visual artist based in Rio de Janeiro whose work has been published in books and journals and exhibited in galleries and museums in several countries.

ⁱ Huidobro, Vicente. *The Poet Is a Little God: Creationist Verse*. 2nd edition. Translated by Jorge García-Gómez. Riverside, CA: Xenos Books, 1990.

ⁱⁱ Sarkar, Prabhat Ranjan. “The Practice of Art and Literature.” In *Prout in a Nutshell, Volume 1, Part 1*. 2nd edition. Kolkata: Ananda Marga Publications, 2009. Retrieved from The Electronic Edition of the Works of P.R. Sarkar. Version 7.5.

ⁱⁱⁱ It is worth noting, in passing, that both *sādhana* (in Sanskrit) and *intentiō* (in Latin) involve “a directing of the mind towards” something, in the sense of making an effort. See Lewis, Charlton T. and Short, Charles. *A Latin Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879. Available at: <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0059:entry=intentio>

^{iv} Huidobro, op. cit.

The Aim(s) of Art: Spiritual and Social Transformation



In August of 2024, Marco Alexandre de Oliveira will be offering the course, **The Aim(s) of Art: Spiritual and Social Transformation**. Considering that Neohumanism places special emphasis on the role of the arts and artists in society, this course is unique in the way that it explores the spiritual and social purpose(s) of art. It also allows students the opportunity not only to analyze and appreciate art, but also to produce and promote it.

Course start date: August 3, 2024
Course time: Saturdays, 10-11:30am ET
Duration: 8 weeks (Aug 3 - Sept 21)
Price: \$50 USD

Registration: <https://www.nhca-gurukul.org/event-details/the-aim-s-of-art-spiritual-and-social-transformation>.

From the Liberating Humanities and Arts Faculty of NHCA

In the last eight years of his life, from 1982 to 1990, Shrii P. R. Sarkar composed a corpus of 5019 spiritual songs, which he called *Prabhāt Saṁgiit*. These songs express his love for the beauty of the natural world, visions of social justice, and the intimate relationship between the human devotee and the Divine Beloved. *Prabhāt Saṁgiit* lyrics and melodies embrace the human sentiments of longing and joy that are vivid elements of devotion. The following article by Ayesha Irani, the lead faculty member of the Liberating Humanities and Arts discipline for the Neohumanist College of Asheville, brings us closer to this experience of these exquisite songs.



Songs on the Road, Songs for the Road By Ayesha Irani

On January 5, 1984, Shrii P. R. Sarkar left Anandanagar to travel extensively through North India, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh before returning back to Kalikata some time after April 10. Anyone who has traveled on India's terrible roads in the 1980s can understand the hardship that he went through over four long months on the road. For all who traveled with him on this long tour, those were indeed unforgettable days.

Today, we can trace his travels through the trail of songs he left behind; the place of composition of each being noted under every song in the printed editions of *Prabhāt Saṁgiit*. In January 1984, just after Dharma Mahācakra at Anandanagar when Shrii Sarkar would give a special set of discourses, he went straight to Deoghar, the very place where he had first given *Prabhāt Saṁgiit* on September 14, 1982. This next year, at the beginning of his long tour, he composed songs 1141-56 at Deoghar. Thence, he traveled on to Patna (songs 1157-1168), and onwards to Betia (1170-93), then Gorakhpur (songs 1194-1203), Allahabad (1206-19), and Kanpur, (1222-54), Agra (1255-80) and Delhi (1281-1304), Jammu (1310-34), Bilaspur (1335-37), Jaipur (1338-59), Kota (1360-94), Gwalior (1401-20), Banda-Chattarpur (1421-28), back to Allahabad (1430-32), then Varanasi (1434-53), and finally, to Daltonganj (1454-76), all places he stayed for several days on this long road trip. By the time he returned to his beloved Madhumālainca residence in

Lake Gardens, Kalikata, via Tatanagar four months later, he had composed a total of 364 songs.

In the case of many of the sites he visited, their topography, natural features, and history became the pretext for him to gift us a new song from his inexhaustible store. In Jammu, for instance, he composed songs on the Himalayan rivers and terrain. In Agra, the first song (No. 1255) he composed was to the famous blind saint-poet Sūrdās in a melody germane to Sūrdās' own tradition of *kiirtana*. The next (1256) was about the Taj Mahal, the world-renowned monument that the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan built to his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal. In the future, the people of these places will hold on to these songs as local treasures, tokens of his love for all time.

Thus, while he sped onwards by car from one destination to another, the river of song gushed alongside him. On this long trip, there are some special songs that he composed, quite literally, while on the road from one place to another. His cavalcade would suddenly be brought to a halt, and the “gāna party”—those he had designated to capture his songs—would scramble around him to learn and notate a new song. What wonder and excitement filled those heady days of being on the road with him!

Song 1307 is particularly poignant. On February 29, he seems to have halted momentarily at the ancient site of Kurukṣetra in today's state of Haryana on his way from Delhi to Jammu. Kurukṣetra, as is well known, is the site of the great battle of the Mahābhārata, where the Pāṇḍavas had to fight their cousins, the Kauravas, to regain their rightful claims to kingship. Lord Kṛṣṇa himself led the Pāṇḍavas on to victory at this site. The song goes thus:

*kāj kare jete esechi dharāte
kurukṣetra ei dharā,
basā ār shoyā sthāṇvat haoyā
e nahe jīvaner dhārā.*

*krṣṇa tumi jā' kare' giyeche
cakre tuñiire jāhā karechile,
se amar kathā se amṛta gāthā
rahiyāche hethā smṛti-jharā.*

*thāmivār kona upāy je nāi
tava ākarṣaṇe cale sabāi,
e kurukṣetre dvaepāyanete
se kathā rāyeche giitibharā.*

I've come to this earth to carry on working.
This earth is Kurukṣetra, the great battlefield of action.
Sitting and sleeping, becoming stationary—
these have no place in life's flow.

O Kṛṣṇa, that which you achieved
that which you accomplished with discus and quiver—
that immortal tale, that song filled with nectar
lives on here, overflowing with memories.

There is no way to halt along the path.
All advance drawn by your attraction.
In this Kurukṣetra, in Dvaepāyana's telling,
this truth lives on in unending song

Though Kurukṣetra literally means “the field of the Kuru clan,” Shrii Sarkar imbues the epithet with new meaning:

What is Kurukṣetra? The root verb kr + the imperative hi: that is, imperative mood, second person. Kuru means “do” – the imperative mood. Kurukṣetra means the field that is always saying: “Do something, O man, do something. Don’t sit idle – do something. Be engaged in [[work]]”. That field is kurukṣetra. So what is kurukṣetra? This world is kurukṣetra. You have come, you have to do something. (1)

Here too, in this song ostensibly written at this historical site of Kurukṣetra, he moves from the particular to the universal—the earth itself now becoming the great battlefield of action, wherein there is no room for idleness. Krśṇa, the bearer of the discus, a deadly weapon which he wielded with consummate skill, is remembered in a hallowed place which overflows with memories of the great warriors who died in this field. As the great archer Arjuna’s charioteer, Krśṇa held his quiver, but more importantly, the entire strategic plan for the gruesome battle that unfolded there over eighteen days. This war was masterminded by Lord Krśṇa himself in order to unite the inimical kingdoms of India so as to create a united Mahābhārata, a Great Bhārata (India).

One can only imagine the momentous nature of Shrii Sarkar’s visit to this legendary site. And yet, as he says in the last stanza, there is no time to halt, “no way to halt along the path.” This was true for himself, who was then on the way to Jammu. And, in a more philosophical sense, we, ordinary beings cannot linger either, lost in the past, for, like it or not, we “advance by the attraction of the divine.” This truth of “moving on,” *caraeveti*, is emphasized in many of his songs. Here it is as though

the very earth of Kurukṣetra is declaring this truth. The song, then, is his tribute to Kurukṣetra, to Krśṇa, and to the sage Krśṇa Dvaepāyana Vyāsa who wrote the great epic, the *Mahābhārata*.

As is widely known, the *Bhagavad Gītā* (The Song of the Lord), an excerpt from this epic is the eternal song of truth sung to the despondent Arjuna by his charioteer Lord Krśṇa to inspire him to fight this grim battle for the protection of *dharma*. Today, the *Bhagavad Gītā* has been translated into fifty-nine world languages. Some day, not too far into the future, I see a time when Prabhāt Saṁgiit will be translated into many more world languages than the *Gītā*. I am deeply grateful to a team of pioneering translators who are working on translating Prabhāt Saṁgiit into their mother tongues. Our group of international translators are currently translating into Chinese, Hindi, Odiya, Punjabi, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, Turkish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese. By their efforts, Prabhāt Saṁgiit will become more widely known to the peoples who speak these languages, and the literatures of these languages will be enriched by these spiritual songs.

If you have interest in translating Prabhāta Saṁgiita into your mother-tongue, please write the Humanities and Arts Faculty of the Neohumanist College of Asheville: ayesha.irani@nhca.gurukul.edu

(1.) Source: Dharmakṣetra and Kurukṣetra. Published in: Ananda Marga Karma Sannyāsa in a Nutshell [a compilation]; Ananda Vacanāmṛtam Part 5; Discourses on Krśṇa and the *Gītā* [a compilation]. Release: Electronic edition version 9.0.20

Continued from Page 9

Humanism and Internationalism: A Neohumanist Perspective - By Roar Bjønnes

the idea that every individual has an inherent right to access the resources necessary for their physical, intellectual, and spiritual development. This perspective challenges conventional notions of property ownership and underscores the interconnectedness of humanity with the cosmos.

In contrast, the concept of the commons emphasizes the shared ownership and responsibility for resources such as land, water, and knowledge, highlighting the importance of safeguarding these assets from privatization and exploitation for the betterment of present and future generations. Despite differences in terminology and theoretical frameworks, both cosmic inheritance and the commons converge on the principle of collective entitlement to essential resources and the imperative of equitable distribution and sustainable management. Through this course, we will delve into the nuances of these ideas, exploring their historical roots, philosophical underpinnings, and practical implications for shaping more just and sustainable societies.

The limitations of internationalism and humanism underscore the need for a paradigm shift towards neohumanism, which advocates for a holistic approach that transcends narrow interests and embraces the well-

being of all living entities. It seeks to foster a harmonious coexistence among humans, animals, and the environment, recognizing the intrinsic value of every being. In essence, neohumanism offers a transformative vision for a more equitable and sustainable world.

By prioritizing empathy, inclusivity, and ecological stewardship, neohumanism heralds a new era of social progress and collective flourishing. As we confront the myriad challenges of the 21st century, the principles of neohumanism may serve as a guiding light towards a brighter and more compassionate future.

Roar Bjønnes is the author of two books on PROUT (The Progressive Utilization Theory): *Growing a New Economy*, and *Principles of a Balanced Economy*.

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Shrii Mahesh Kumar has been working day and night to beautify the Gurukula Cakradhuri campus. The vegetables, fruits and flowers can be seen everywhere on the campus. With the completion of the Reception Centre in the Cakradhuri Campus, scores of persons visited the Gurukula Headquarters Campus. A special function was arranged on January 1st, 2024 where the children of Gurukula Chitmu School also demonstrated what they are learning. Visitors purchased AMGK literature and the honey produced by the beehives in Cakradhuri.



The Kulapati residence and guest house was finally completed and visitors could stay there during the January Gurukula gathering.



Shrii P R Sarkar Institute also found a space on the second floor of the reception center (Gurukula Bhavan). Prabhakar Overland utilized the room for coordinating the publication of **Neohumanist Review Journal** from there. Didi Ananda Devapriya also happily graced the facility and conducted her online programs from there. Recently, an optic fibre Wi-Fi connection was installed in Cakradhuri campus to improve digital connectivity.





A fossil of an ancient mammal was discovered on the Gurukula campus at Anandanagar and now resides as a museum piece in Cakradhuri to honour the rich geological and anthropological history of the area.

Solar panels and a water pump were recently installed on the Cakradhuri well that supplies water to the entire campus.



Chitmu School, Gopal Anandanagar

The Chitmu school building is almost nearing completion. It shall also be utilised for the Fine Arts and Music College Campus. Already students are getting music lessons from Acarya Omkareshvarananda Avadhuta. A special class has been started on Sundays for the children of the area. Recently some violins and other musical instruments were donated by Taiwanese well-wishers of the Gurukula Learning Centre.

Ranjana from Ukraine/Poland/Sweden charmed the children with her art skills and brought smiles on their faces. She was at Anandanagar in winter and bravely faced the cold weather. Rutger Tamminga brought a lot of art supplies and the children drew and proudly carried their creations to their homes. He charmed the children with his unique abilities to impart values through storytelling. Language was no barrier for him to communicate with the Chitmu children who spoke little English. The children were fed a sumptuous meal on January 1st at the Cakradhuri campus. Some of the children also attended the Gurukula Annual Meeting and impressed senior acaryas with their knowledge of cosmology, Sanskrit slokas and knowledge of Prabhat Samgiita.



Indoor Auditorium at the Cakradhuri Campus

Construction of a 4,000 square foot indoor auditorium in the main Cakradhuri building is going on in full swing. The roof is expected to be completed in a few weeks.



Gurukula School Chowkibera, Shyamal Anandanagar



Dada Shambhushivananda visited the Ananda Marga Gurukula School in Chowkibera started by the late Dada Svarupananda. Dada Pritiishananda, Dada Omkareshvarananda and now Dada Kalyanmitrananda have begun to address the challenges of this new school seeking affiliation with CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education). A set of AMGK t-shirts and trousers/shorts were distributed by the Chitmu children to the children of Chowkibera school. The Chitmu children also received shoes and school bags from Acarya Anirrvanananda Avadhuta, Rector Master of Anandanagar



AMGK Gurukula Gathering at Cakradhuri Campus, Gopal Anandanagar on January 19-22, 2024

Twelve members of Gurukula Global family met together in Cakradhuri Campus at Anandanagar in January 2024 and deliberated on the different ways the dream of Gurukula University as envisioned by Rev. Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiiji could be fulfilled. They also visited the site of the proposed University Campus at Guridih (Mohan Anandanagar) and Gurukula Fine Arts, Gurukula Electrohomeopathy College, Gurukula Chitmu Learning Centre and the Music College Campus at Gopal Anandanagar. Subcommittees were formed concerning further infrastructural development, academic development and for coordinating financial and administrative affairs. Prabhakar Trond Overland presented the second issue of Neohumanist Review to all participants.



Ananda Marga Gurukula Teacher Training College

Tributes were paid to the late Acharya Svarupananda Avadhuta, the founding Secretary of the AMGK Teachers Training College. Here, Acharya Kalyanmitrananda, the incoming Secretary and Mrs. Radha Gusain, Secretary of AMGK's registered society met with the students and staff of the College and assured them of their full support to take the College forward despite the loss of beloved Dada Svarupananda.



A Tribute to Acarya Svarupananda Avadhuta By Kulapati, Acarya Shambhushivananda Avdhuta



Acarya Svarupananda Avadhuta left his mortal frame on February 17, 2024 at the age of 85. He was an educationist and was instrumental in the establishment of the Ananda Marga Degree College in 1962 and the Ananda Marga Gurukula Teachers Training College in 2014. He was one of the closest disciples of Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji and was also serving as Upakulapati (Vice Chancellor) of Ananda Marga Gurukula. He was an avid story teller and served as a spiritual inspiration for young and old alike. His devotion, dedication and hospitality were unparalleled. He had a sharp memory till his last days and departed very gracefully from this earth in Singapore after an inspirational talk and a group photograph taken with all those present at his talk.

Neohumanist College of Asheville Bi-Annual Update



Current and Upcoming Programs

The Neohumanist College of Asheville's (NHCA) Yoga and Intuition Science discipline launched a new yoga teacher training course on January 10th taught by Dr. Steven Landau with 20 students and a Leadership for Social Change course on March 9 taught by Satya Tanner, Soraia Mendes and Avt. Ananda Devapriya Ac., with 9 students.

The teacher preparation course's cohort continued with Child Development taught by Ruai Gregory on January 9 and Astaunga Yoga for 3-11 Year Olds by Mahajyoti Glassman on January 11. 26 students enrolled in both courses. In week two of class, students experienced the joy of singing, movement and storytelling as techniques for imparting ethical values to children. Scheduled for August 3rd is a course entitled The Aims of Art: Social and Spiritual Transformation taught by Dr. Marco Oliveira which explores multiple arts with students given an opportunity to create art of their own choosing.



Board of NHCA News

The NHCA Board decided at its February 23rd meeting to make its priorities "financial viability" and "quality programing". The Development Director, Alberta Pedroja was supported by the board to lead a series of monthly board meetings that targeted fundraising and relationships that support the quality of the college's academic programs and institutional growth. Other key business items were a report on the NHCA seeking accreditation from Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC) that is approved by the US Department of Education



At its most recent meeting on March 27th, we honored retiring board member, Ellen Landau, with recognition as a founder of the NHCA and her large contributions as owner contractor and financial contributor towards the construction of the college and service as CFO of the college and Treasurer of the board. She and her husband Dr. Steven Landau will be moving to Greensboro, NC in May to live near their son, Joshua and their grandchildren. As a working board the larger share of the meeting was devoted to a conversation with the board concerning what each board member and staff member could best offer the college. Alberta Pedroja, Dr. Steven Landau, and Nataraj Datta were elected as new members of the board.

Neohumanist College of Asheville Press

Two new book launchings by the Neohumanist College of Asheville Press are "Come Alive with Kid's Yoga" by Mahajyoti Glassman and Nancy Niiti Gannon and "Shiva: The Father of Yoga" by Nancy Nitti Gannon.

Local Affiliations

In January NHCA joined the local Madison County Chamber of Commerce! Thanks to all you out there for showing up in the Social Media space to celebrate this important milestone. We garnered 59 likes on instagram and 11 comments - we appreciate all the love! Our New Year's Resolution in 2024 is to expand the reach of our local partnerships! In addition to the Chamber, we've started conversations and attended meetings with the Madison Chapter of Rotary International. We also met with the Superintendent of Madison County Board of Education, Will Hoffman, to discuss how NHCA can meet the needs of the district. NHCA was also awarded a \$400 professional development scholarship grant from a local funder's collaborative, Western North Carolina Pathways!

Campus Improvements

In 2024, NHCA plans to offer more on campus experiences, to complement our online programming! In addition to the completion of our second stone pathway to the main classroom, we installed 7 new directional signs to help visitors find their way to the campus. Special thanks to Geoffrey Steen, Orah Kittrell, Anne Dowling and Dada Maheshvarananda for braving the cold of the winter to build this beautiful pathway for our students, faculty, staff and growing community! Also, the funding of the landscaping would not be possible without the generosity of the Landau Family. Thank you all!



Contributors and Volunteers

The Neohumanist College continues to recruit volunteers and contributors. If you're interested in learning how you can support this project, please email info@nhca.gurukul.edu.

PRSI – PR Sarkar Institute



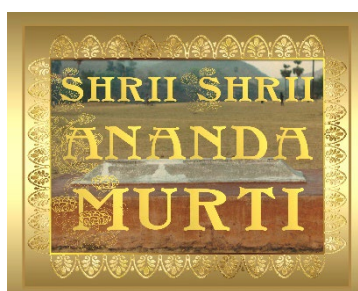
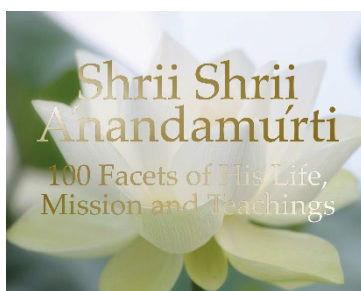
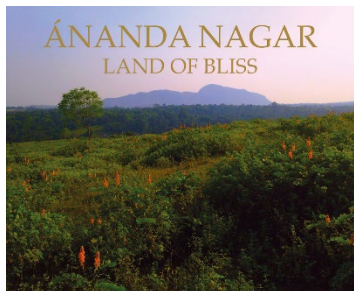
P.R. SARKAR INSTITUTE

Books and Films

Ananda Nagar: Land of Bliss is the definitive record of Ananda Nagar — the multipurpose rural development scheme and spiritual eco-village in north-east India. This large format photo book traces its past, present and future from its roots in Rarhi history, to its founding and development through the guidance of Tantric guru Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, to the present day and beyond.

Available here: <https://www.prsinstitute.org/outreach/publications> ...and here:

<https://www.anandamarga.org/store/ebooks> ...where you can also find...



Shrii Shrii Anandamurti: 100 Facets of His Life, Mission and Teachings and Shrii Shrii Anandamurti
Proceeds go to the ongoing work of the P.R. Sarkar Institute

The film **Ananda Nagar: Land of Bliss** will also be produced later this year.

Documentary Film Neohumanism: Path of Awakening and Benevolence **Sid Vishvamitra Jordan, Executive Director**

The documentary film, Neohumanism: Path of Awakening and Benevolence, was filmed at the Tonrak school and children's home in Thailand in March and early April. Kevin Peer, our cinematographer, has been able to film some new migrating children arriving from Burma into Didi Ananda Devamala's care at the children's home. Filming there captured the loving care that many of these traumatized children receive at the home and school. There is also an active rescue center for over 80 dogs. Filming ended in Thailand on April 9 and continued at the Ananda Kalyani Master Unit in Portugal for April and May where a large reforestation grant is being implemented at the master unit. The new forest school and environmental projects at this master unit offer a strong ecological theme for the film. This documentary will continue filming in Africa, Central America and South America before final editing and streaming as a documentary series and short films on a Youtube channel in 2025.



AMAYE

Ananda Marga Association for Yoga Educators
Global Online Yoga Mini Conference
Watch for it in October

PRESENTERS

Rutger Tamminga (Taiwan)
Didi Ananda Sainjana
Shravan (USA)

Dada Krsnasevananda (Denmark)
Dada Pashupati (USA)

Contact: MahaJyoti at mjyoga1@gmail.com



Neohumanist Teacher Training at Zonnelicht Holland, February 2024

Transformation through Quiet Time, Storytelling and Drama

By Emma Deckers

February this year Zonnelicht Daycare and Lotus Training Centre joined hands to organize another edition of the annual Teacher Training, aimed at inspiring and supporting the daycare and after school care teachers in their work with the children.

Teachers, trainers and foreign guests gathered together during three days to share their ideas, knowledge and experiences in Neohumanist Education. The theme this year was *Transformation through Quiet Time, Storytelling and Drama*.

Kick-off

The event was opened by Didi Ananda Devapriya with an inspiring talk about the challenges our world faces, the common purpose in Neohumanist Education and the importance of fostering an atmosphere of inclusive, universal spirituality. Teachers were encouraged to step into their role as changemakers and to be a part of the solution by helping shape a new generation.

Spiritual and communal elements

The workshops and presentations were interspersed with moments of introspection and grounding in

the body. Each day started with a yoga session; the lunch break was preceded by a shared meditation and kirtan session. The days ended in song and dance, allowing the teachers and guests to release pent up energy and to feel energized and connected before going home for the day. Musical sessions were led by John Dakpo and Ole Brekke.

Concepts in the classroom

To lay a foundation for the rest of the program, the teachers and guests split up in groups to brainstorm about (Neohumanist) concepts that were important for the age groups they personally work with the most.

Why did they choose these specific concepts? What do their students need to learn about those concepts, and

what do the teachers need to be able to facilitate this? Teachers and guests worked on concepts such as empathy, self-awareness, curiosity, diversity, creativity and a service mindset.



Storytelling and Drama

Throughout the program, there were several workshops based around the use of storytelling and drama as teaching tools. Some of Zonnelicht's most experienced teachers, along with foreign trainers Rutger Tamminga, Ole Brekke, John Dakpo and Didi Ananda Devapriya provided the teachers and guests with many examples of stories, songs and ways to incorporate drama

and movement to convey a message (for example, telling a story through yoga poses). Participants also worked on creating their own stories and songs to be used in the classroom.

Moral and spiritual development with young children

One of the most important subjects in the workshops on storytelling was the use of storytelling to help children learn about values, to develop their ability to discriminate between right and wrong, and teach them about spiritual concepts such as universal love and inner strength. Teachers, guests and trainers shared examples they'd used with success in the past, and came up with new ideas together. As with many of the other subjects in the three-day program, the approach differs for different ages, based on a child's development.

Quiet time for different age groups

At Zonnelicht, children of all ages start their day at the daycare or after school care with joint Quiet Time. This is intended to foster self-awareness, inner peace and a sense of interconnectedness within the group. Teachers and guests participated in workshops aimed to give them new inspiration and tools to improve this practice and how to deal with challenges in each age group. Examples are the use of a story or song to introduce the meaning or aim of Quiet Time, the incorporation of movement to help children release uncontrolled energy, and the use of mental imagery to help older children without prior experience connect to their inner wisdom during Quiet Time.

Staying grounded in the classroom

All these concepts, skills and teachings ask more of our teachers than the 'standard' daycare or education. This is why there is a continued focus on teachers' personal development within Zonnelicht. Several workshops were included in this year's Teacher Training to support teachers in discovering what's holding them back from staying calm and grounded in challenging situations, and recognizing and employing their personal strengths. These workshops also facilitated the exchange of personal experiences between junior and senior teachers and between teachers of different age groups.

Teacher presentations

On the final day, the teachers brought everything together in a presentation for each age group (babies, toddlers, 4-8 year olds and 8-12 year olds). These presentations included their own stories and songs about important concepts, role plays of challenges in Quiet Time and how to overcome them, and ideas for



activities to help the older children develop their moral values.

Feedback and takeaways

Many of the teachers reported feeling incredibly inspired to keep writing their own stories and songs to share with the children, to keep it light and fun yet still teach the children important lessons. They feel better prepared to deal with challenging situations, both because of the workshops in staying grounded and using their own strengths, as well as knowing they can lean on each other and use each other's creativity to deal with any challenge they face.

Teachers also appreciated the chance to learn from each other and from the foreign guests and their perspectives.

Next year, we are set up to receive even more foreign guests to participate in our Teacher Training.



Astaunga Yoga for 3-10 Year Olds

A course taught at the Neohumanist College of Asheville

By MahaJyoti Glassman

Once every year or two I teach this zoom class based on my observations, research, and work with young children for around 30 years. When teaching this zoom class, I get the golden opportunity to hear what students all over the globe are doing to make Astaunga Yoga accessible, relevant and attractive for young kids in a universal and inclusive manner. This class is designed for adults who are either currently working with kids or who dream to share Astaunga Yoga with children in the future.

Wow! What an opportunity to meet dynamic Neohumanist yoga enthusiasts from Ukraine, Finland, Denmark, Vietnam, Philippines, Africa, India, Russia, Indonesia, and more. In the class I just completed, there were yogic monks and nuns, neohumanist educators and yoga practitioners.

We explored the differences between adult asanas and kids' asanas. How do we take an 'adult' asana and make it 'kid appropriate'? In breakout rooms we shared asanas, breath techniques, deep relaxations, meditation strategies, and meditation preparation methods such as singing, chanting, and dancing. Together we discussed the Astaunga Yoga techniques and the therapeutic values of each technique.



Yoga Asana - Through the *I Love Yoga* book we experimented with various kid friendly asanas and how to make asanas come alive for children with sound and movement.

Yama & Niyama - Children's understandings of the importance of Yama & Niyama can be impacted thru Story Yoga, non-competitive Relationship Building Games, and partner yoga.

Singing/Chanting - Let us sing and dance with our musical instruments and clapping our hands today. We will sing 'Love is everywhere... everywhere... everywhere. Love is everywhere.' Kids can sing and dance: sitting down, standing up and moving from side to side in one place, in a circle, in a parade, inside, or going out the door.

Breathing - Using imagination and creativity with deep breathing experiences such as:

- Hold your hand on one side as if it is a flower, curling the fingers upwards and with the other hand, imagine that the index finger is standing alone as if it is a candle. Now smell the flower and then blow out the candle. Smell the flower...and blow the candle. Smell the flower and blow the candle. OR
- Sitting in a circle, let's breath in. I am feeling happy. Then breathe out. I am feeling happy. Breathe in and feel happy. Breathe out and feel happy. Imagine that all of Mother Earth's children are breathing with us. The Squirrel and the Eagle, the Rabbit and the Bear, the Whale and the Ant, the Flowering Tree and the Bees. Children everywhere are feeling happy, feeling loved.

Meditation - Accessorizing our meditations with young children by saying:

- Let's touch our Inner Light that lives in our heart. Let's smile to our Inner Friend. Let's feel that Inner Warmth. Do you know that it is always there shining for you even in the night?



- Give every child 2 pebbles to hold in each hand, rubbing that stone with their fingers. Remembering with each touch, something about Nature, something about Mother Earth that they love very much. How can they help that being? Be next to and with that being. Helping it. Breathing in. Breathing out. Tell us what you saw.

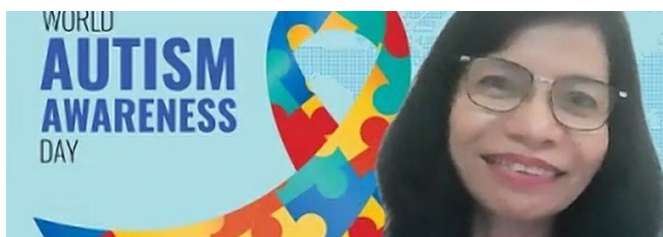
Deep Relaxation - And, of course, examining how to develop a deep relaxation or guided meditation experience for young kids that is meaningful and therapeutic.



If you would like more information about the course, or about Astaunga Yoga for young children, you can contact MahaJyoti at mjyoga1@gmail.com.

Online Seminar on Autism – Indonesia

By Rutger Tamminga



Didi Ananda Subhada of Medan's Kindle School for children with special needs organized an online seminar on the occasion of Autism Awareness Day. As a co-speaker it was an honor to be part of the event.

Evelyn Tjiandri, University of Toronto, spoke about the role of music on the brain and how this supports the recovery process.

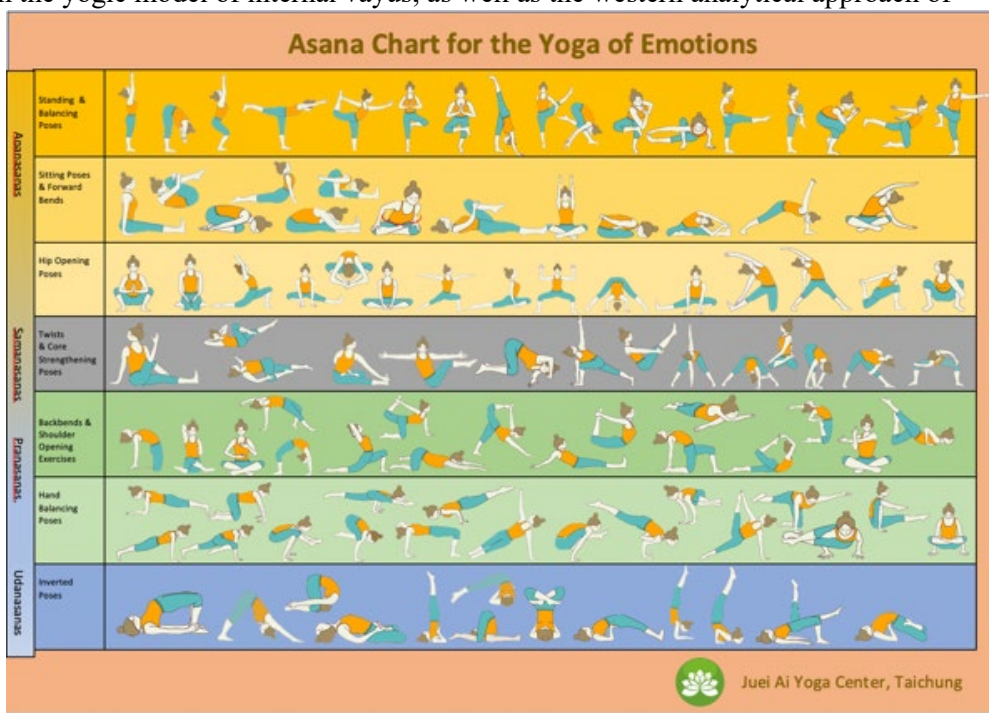
In her excellent and scientifically well researched speech she showed how those recovering from accidents or people with neurological problems (including ADHD, Alzheimer's, dementia, autism, epilepsy) recover faster with music and rhythm based on neurological plasticity.

I gave a presentation on my experience with Kids Yoga for special needs, which has been something I have been engaged in for the past 25 years. I did so based on the yogic model of internal vayus, as well as the western analytical approach of stimulation of the nerves, glands and sub glands and how the effects of yoga differ per age group.

Daphnie Wong and Didi Ananda Subhada spoke about Brain Gym and their experience in Indonesia and Malaysia with special needs children. Daphnie's center Achievement Brain Cognitive Development Centre in Kuala Lumpur has been going on for over twenty years and served many students through her creative and dynamic support.

AMAYE was a co-sponsor of this event. The recording of the seminar, which was presented in English with translation in Bahasa is available through Zoom upon request.

[<rutgertamminga@gmail.com>](mailto:rutgertamminga@gmail.com)



Storytelling in Schools As a Model for Personal Development

By Rutger Tamminga

Neohumanist Education, aims at the nurturing of rationality and a strong connection with universal ideals. Neohumanism sees this as a way to overcome the debilitating effects of prejudices based on geo- and socio-sentiments and thus grow a socially just and harmonious society.

All around the world there are different approaches to implement this Neohumanist vision. Here I wanted to share an approach that focuses on storytelling as a means of shaping the minds of our students. This storytelling approach can be enhanced by relating stories to the layers of the mind, and related propensities.

When I started with storytelling, I did so out of sheer desperation. I did not know how to get the children to pay attention. I had tried movement-based learning, flashcards and singing, but I found that the only way to get my students' attention was with the lure of a cookie, candy or sticker. I felt a personal failure, a cookie teacher. My children learned because there was a reward, not because they wanted to learn or enjoyed the idea of discovery. That all changed when I started to tell stories. Children did not need rewards to listen, and when the story was finished, they used the story contents in their conversation! They had absorbed the story and made it their own. Storytelling was how I decided to guide my children.

That was thirty years ago, and a lot has happened with my storytelling journey. Exploring all sorts of story types, my children grew up on a daily diet of stories, sometimes 4-5 stories in one class. For the little ones this would be short stories, for the six and seven-year old's I could tell stories and keep their attention for twenty



minutes and they would ask for more stories and more stories. And that in a foreign language! Storytelling became such a big thing in my school that I got invited to lecture on it and share my experiences.

I began to do research on why storytelling works (*Story Proof*, Kendall Haven is a good resource), and I found there is a whole science behind it. One professor (yes, you can do a Master's Degree in storytelling!) even spoke about transcendental consciousness as a result of listening to stories. But what I did not see was a model that links storytelling and personal development. Stories were often described as offering archetypal

imagery that connect with the unconscious and thus affect how we think. That has been mostly the explanation offered for the connection we feel with stories.

In yoga philosophy the mind is divided into five layers, with more details on the layers of the unconscious mind. In addition, the mind is driven by propensities, innate releasing mechanisms that create the patterns for our minds to operate. For a person to grow, the propensities have to be recognized, redirected and absorbed in a higher ideal.

While the yoga tradition offers several practices for this, storytelling is so captivating because the emotive element of the story arouses a corresponding emotive response in the audience. While we 'see' the emotion expressed in the story, we feel it within ourselves. The physiological and neurological process includes mirror neurons, synergy, empathy, endorphins, dopamine and cortisol, but on the psychological level, stories make us see our own propensities' thoughts.

When this is understood, we can help children talk about these propensities and discuss ways and means we handle these. Storytelling can become a process for self-realization!

To clarify this approach, I have made a simple framework for the mind, some propensities related to these aspects of the mind and the values (translated from Yama and Niyama) along with some story examples that could be used to help children reflect on their own propensities.

We see that many stories little children relate to very well have to do with existential issues. The fairytales



such as *Little Red Riding Hood* and the *Three Little Pigs*, deal with threats to their very existence. *Hansel and Gretel* relate to this as well, but show the relative security of social bonds. *The Gingerbread Man* is a story of a cookie who wanted to be independent, thinking he could outsmart everyone, but finds that pride comes before the fall. Hubris is an element that afflicts the people fixated on the third layer of the mind.

And then there are stories that deal with ideals – the heart's forces that transcend intellect. The simpleton who conquers the worldly arrogance that surrounds them as in the Brothers' Grimm's *The Three Feathers* is a fine example. Other stories where compassion wins over the cleverness or force of others also come in this category.

The stories that deal with universal laws such as we see in mythology would fit the highest layer of the mind, where self-reflection is intuitive and touches on the deepest identity. Stories for the Pure Self would include stories about the origins of life, as we see in stories of the Sun Mother (Indigenous Australian) and other origin myths.

The beauty of stories is that they reflect the variety and depth of the whole of human experience. Guided by the story framework and the layers of the mind, we also can help children reflect on their different qualities. Especially during Story Talk, when we evaluate stories, we can guide self-discovery and perception of the sentiments that are reflected in the story and use this to reflect on and manage our own emotive forces. A storytelling-based curriculum in that sense can make our

students aware of the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of our lives.

With this complete perspective of oneself, one is bound to develop a complete perspective of others. It is obvious that this asks a lot from the teacher, but the ability to interpret stories and focus on the personal development of the child, instead of just the academic skills, may make teaching for a storytelling teacher more interesting.

As we use stories as the basis of our curriculum, this does not mean we do not touch on the other academic subjects, but that we center all learning on the literary journey. There is sufficient research that shows that children who have internalized a story have better writing output than when children are asked to write based on standard test exercises. The work of Pie Corbet in the UK is inspiring in this regard. There also is sufficient research that shows that storytelling is beneficial for mathematical and memory skills.

Helping our students discover their own full potential should be the greatest gift an education can give. Storytelling-based curricula have this potential, especially when done within the developmental framework of the layers of the mind complemented by the Yama and Niyama character values. And such curriculum can be applied anywhere in the world, whether in affluent neighborhoods or in a poor rural area. Embracing the idea that a story-based curriculum can awaken the depth of the child is all that is required! Storytelling in schools is a universally applicable model for Neohumanist Educators.

Layer of the Mind	General Features	Archetype	Related Propensities	Value	Story examples
Pure Self	Self-realization	The Master	Devotion	Cleanliness Surrender	Stories that touch on our Soul and self-discovery – creation stories
Cosmic	Evolved Insight - wisdom	Magician	Self-Awareness, universal perspective, intuition	Cosmic Perspective	Mythology
Ideal	Inspired by an ideal, guided by morality	Idealist	Hope, sacrifice, consideration, conscience, love	Non-harming Honesty	<i>The Girl who could talk with the Birds, The Three Feathers.</i>
Independent	Rational and Ambitious - shaper of own fate	Warrior	Jealousy, anger, hatred, fear, slander	Discipline, Non-stealing	<i>The Gingerbread Man</i>
Social	Identity linked to group	Orphan	Emotional, insecure, addictive, cruelty	Contentment, study	<i>Three Billy Goats Gruff</i>
Biological	Physical existence and survival	Innocent	Greed, selfishness	Simple life	<i>Little Red Riding Hood, Three Little Pigs</i>



Storytelling in China - February 2024 Rutger Tamminga

After three years of not visiting the PRC, I had the chance to give three workshops over a six-day period in Changzhou and Nanjing. The program was well attended with over 60 teachers, many of who came for the first time. The courses touched on the basic techniques of storytelling and prop making, and stories for environmental education (The Story Tree program). Storytelling in China is growing and I also visited a Storytelling Center to see their approach. We are promoting the Storytelling School model as a way to nurture compassion, self-respect and universal love.

Fairy Tale Halloween Night in Lily Kid House Vietnam By Hoang Thao Ly

Nowadays Halloween is an unmissable event in October festive season all over the world. With the spread of pop culture, children and young adults in many countries look forward to dressing up in spooky and horror outfits and join parties as the fancy trend of the modern world. When I worked in the corporate companies, Halloween is a lucrative occasion to attract new customers. It not only serves as a marketing tool for schools but also a money-making channel for consuming and entertainment industries. It is said that Americans spend 10-12 billion dollars for Halloween, ranked only behind Christmas (Investopia, 2023). Although Halloween does not start until October, advertisement or promotion around it starts much sooner. This pop culture attracts millions of young adults all over the world. And Vietnam is not an exception.

When I was younger, I never fell in love with this spooky festival; but I didn't ask about its origin or meaning either. My involvement with it was either I followed my friends or it was my job responsibility. Later on, when I got in touch with Neohumanist philosophy; I had a question how the festival would impact on children's minds as it has become more and more ghostly and scary. As Shrii Prabhat R. Sarkar explained:



"The method of extracting work by terrorizing the minds of children is not only made use of by a particular type of teacher, it is also often still more harmfully practised by parents. They frighten their children, tell them lies, engage in scurrilous brawls before them, and deceive and torment them; but they still expect that someday their children will become respectable members of society – that their children will bring glory to their family name. When their children are reluctant to drink milk or sleep, they terrify them by invoking imaginary goblins or frightful ghosts. Children initially have no fear, yet a fearful panorama is played out before them. Through this practice the parents may achieve some temporary gain, but even if the children wait a lifetime, they can never be compensated for the harm done to them. Even when these same children attain young adulthood, the thought of ghosts will not leave their minds – ghosts will become their permanent companions" (Education, 1959).

I started to oppose the celebration of the event. In the first year of the center's operation, instead of organizing Halloween; I organized Deepavali in November to promote the message of shining the light on the darkest night of the year. However, it was difficult to attract the participants because nobody knows about Deepavali in my community, and rarely in Vietnam. The next year, when we decided to host a Halloween night for children; lots of them came. It was not surprising for me. However, it helped me learn: "how to go with the trendy flow in the society but channelize it into something more positive and meaningful". This was the inspiration for the fairy tale Halloween night we had with the children last winter. Children could celebrate the festival they were expecting but with full of wonders and miracles.



We had changed the direction of the event based on fairy tales and legendary stories. Instead of infusing the children's minds with ghosts, zombies, or goblins...; we selected fairy tales based on their requests to tell them in the story telling time. There the red-haired princess Merida bravely overcame all challenges and misunderstandings to save her mother, Queen Elinor, from being a bear as cursed by the witch. Then there was the sisterhood of Princess Ana and Queen Elsa, who had a magic that could turn everything into ice. Or they could witness the adventure of Princess Rapunzel finding her way back to her family or listen to the deep love story of the Little Mermaid Ariel for the prince on earth. They also had a chance to know the Tinker bell fairies who were cute, adorable and always helped people.

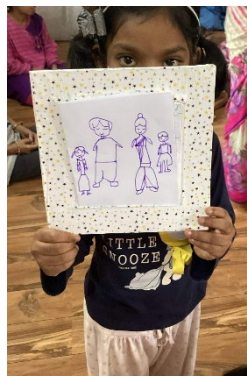
After that, the children discussed with the teachers which characters they wanted to play, since each had their own idols. Some girls wanted to be the Little Mermaid or the Princess Tangled or Queen Elsa; while other boys wanted to transform themselves into superheroes or Spiderman. Younger children agreed to become the "baby boss" or snowman. There they were...we had all characters signed up for the big day.

The joy of preparing this event was that children were always excited and looking forward to the banquet; while helping the teachers for the decoration (decoration was the challenge in this event since we wanted to create a fully miraculous atmosphere for them). They also worked very hard to practice performances for the party, especially the fashion show. Moreover, parents were also asked to dress up with the theme or create costumes for their children. In short, all family, children and the center joined hands together to organize this unique festival.

The biggest night of the month has finally arrived. Looking at the children dressed up in costumes of princesses, fairies, superheroes, spider-man or the cartoon characters...made me feel excited too. The banquet table was mysteriously decorated with many dishes like in the fairy tales: Timeless Fruit Carriage, Rapunzel Spaghetti, Princess Jelly or Magical Drink. The sound of a violin signaled the start of the event. Each character appeared in the background of different music – charming and mystical or heroic and majestic or cheerful and joyful, along with the sparkling lights of stars, moon and the universe. This made the participants really have the feeling that they had all flown back from a distant fairyland. A truly sparkling, magical and impressive night! I believe this is an unforgettable memory for the children and adults too.

Neohumanist Education Summer Camp Bangalore, India

A Neohumanist education summer camp was held at the Ananda Marga School kindergarten hall, in Bangalore, from 13th to 17th May. The theme and teaching revolved around, "Inner and Outer Harmony". Around 40 students between the ages of 5 to 10 years enrolled in the program. The camp was organised by Avadhutika Ananda Anupama Acharya and the classes were conducted by Reetu, Pranab, Margavi, Diptima and Manjula. Activities included storytelling, dancing, care of plants, yoga asanas, quiet time, and many more Neohumanist themed activities.





Creative Learning - Innovative Teaching

Grădiniță Răsărit - Romania

By Didi Ananda Madhupurna

Grădiniță Răsărit is in the city of Bucharest. It's one of the few vegetarian kindergartens in the city. We have 3 groups of children. The youngest group is *Ladybug* for toddlers to 3 years old. The middle group is *Butterfly* for 3 to 5 years old and the oldest group is from 5 to 6 years old. Currently we accommodate 38 children. Children come to our school every day to attend the program. Ginnie was appointed as our new director last year, but she has served our school for 10 years and dedicated her time to the development of our school.

Grădiniță Răsărit was established in 1995. Over the decades, it has contributed to the community in many ways. Arriving at this stage took significant contributions from many stakeholders. Values and political dynamics from the time of communism have influenced the education system. Our school has maintained the values of Neohumanist Education, but the challenges that we face internally and externally have forced us to constantly learn how to innovate in applying these values and philosophy. Our team's motivation is always to give the best education and opportunities to our children. Every year we have inviting programs that are embedded into our curriculum. We need to make sure that NHE is implemented with deeper and deeper understanding.

There are two things we should give our children: one is roots and the other is wings
(author unknown)

When applying NHE, we aim to give our children strong roots, so that they may be able to hold to their principles while surrounded by challenges in a materialistic world. When children have strong wings, they can fly higher and they gain the freedom to explore their own creativity in order to

achieve their goals and dreams. At Grădiniță Răsărit, we give the children opportunities to expand their learning with the full extent of our resources. In Grădiniță Răsărit, innovative teaching and creative learning are fundamental in the application of Neohumanist philosophy. They cannot be separated in forming strong roots and wings for children's education at school.

Innovative teaching is any kind of teaching that applies innovation to methods and contents, whereas creative learning refers to offering learners the possibility of developing their thinking skills and learning in a new, creative way.

Innovative teaching includes both the processes of teaching for creativity and teaching creatively (Ferrari, Cachia, & Punie, 2009b; Jeffrey & Craft, 2004).

Innovative teaching practices seek to make learning more interesting and effective. Both innovative teaching and creative learning require an active role for the learner and new roles for the teacher, who acts as mentor, orchestrator, and facilitator of the learning process. It's important that educators be actively involved in innovative teaching. What environment do we need to create? What tools do we need to have? Every one of us has roles to play. Educators need to be well equipped, passionate about their job, trustworthy,

and fearless in their teaching approach. They need to express a culture of collaboration, develop self-reflection and build a flexible learning environment.

We have scope at our kindergarten to implement innovative learning. We have several programs and activities that we do regularly that give us the scope to put NHE principles into practice.



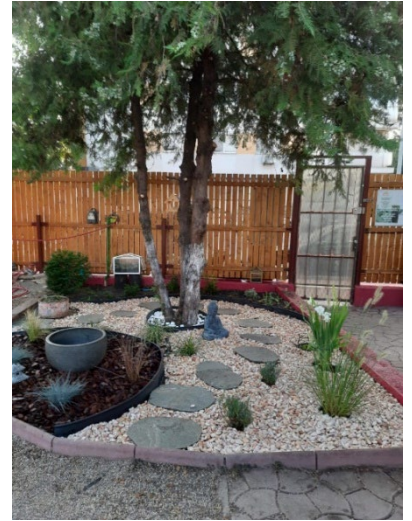
Earth Day - Ziua Pământului În Fiecare Zi

We could say that earth is represented by the colors of green and brown. Green is a positive color that reminds us that we must nurture and love ourselves, everyone, and everything around us. In many Western cultures, brown has taken back its original meaning of earthy. It's used to depict sustainability, health, nurturing, and dependability. What involves everyone and everything that surrounds us? The environment and nature around us. Earth Day activities are ways to remind our children and us on how to make our world a better place for everyone and everything. We provide children with a large amount of



time in a natural outdoor setting where they can play, explore, and experience

natural systems. Also, exploring natural environments promotes curiosity, self-confidence, and creative thinking. Children today often need help to feel connected with nature. Throughout the whole week, we have various activities to connect children to nature and explore creativity and innovation in the teaching and learning of children and educators too.



Disability Day - Copil Ca Tine Sunt Și Eu

An important point in NHE is inclusivity. This day is a powerful reminder of the importance of inclusivity, accessibility, and equality for individuals with disabilities. It serves as an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of disabled people. It helps them to promote their rights and wellbeing, to raise their awareness about their rights, and to advocate for a more inclusive society. A question comes up, why are they important to us? Shrii P.R. Sarkar said that everything and everyone has its utility and



existential value. They have something to contribute to society. We all contribute to society. Disability Day is a great learning experience for our children as well as our educators. We invite the local community with the opportunity to get to know each other better, evoking empathy for our children and how important it is to be inclusive.

Cultural Diversity Day - Diferit Este Frumos"

The beauty of this program is that it promotes appreciation of cultural diversity. It helps children gain respect for other people's cultures by learning how they function and live. Children learn new skills from others and experience innovative learning through dialogue and consultations. Why is it important for children to experience cultural diversity at a young age? Naturally by exposing children to a range of opinions, thoughts, and cultural backgrounds, we encourage them to be more open minded later in life.

This will allow them to be open to new ideas and attain a greater understanding of a topic by taking in different points of view (The importance of diversity and multicultural awareness in education – Drexel University School of Education).

Children who are exposed to different cultures during their early education feel more comfortable and safer with differences later in life. I grew up in a country

where we have hundreds of local languages, islands, cultures, and art. It was a very useful experience for me. Although we lived among various ethnicities, cultures, and religions, we lived in harmony.

On Cultural Diversity Day, we usually invite families that come from different backgrounds to share their experiences living in different countries, including their languages, types of food, artwork, songs, and dance. It has been an ongoing learning experience for our children.



We are continuing to grow. We are continuing to learn and experiment with innovative teaching for our educators, and with creative learning

for our children. I believe those two aspects are like two sides of a coin that cannot be separated. They influence one another. Times continues to move for better or worse, and innovation is always needed to expand and establish Neohumanist philosophy in order to serve the needs of society.

Lily Kid House's Annual Retreat to Hoi An: Nurturing Holistic Growth Together

By Hoang Thao Ly

School and family are two important pillars for children to grow up healthy, safe and sound. We, therefore, organize family outing trips twice/year annually to nurture this connection and bond in Lily. This year, we ventured to the ancient and serene town of Hoi An, a place that not only promises relaxation and fun but also an invaluable opportunity for families to bond and immerse themselves in an environment that represents a balanced, pure and peaceful lifestyle.



A Sanctuary by the Thu Bon River

Our retreat location, Triem Tay Garden, was carefully chosen to reflect Lily Kid House's standards. Situated 5km from the heart of Hoi An and nestled on the bank of the romantic Thu Bon River, Triem Tay offered an idyllic escape. Surrounded by bamboo thickets and vegetable gardens, it served as an ideal natural space for both parents and children to participate and experience a sentient lifestyle. The fresh air and tranquil surroundings could certainly soothe and enrich the souls.

Learning and Growing Together

The retreat was marked with activities designed to foster a deep connection with nature, each other and our inner selves. Our mornings began with the "Morning Circle", a cherished tradition where children and their parents gathered to share moments of reflection and anticipation for the day ahead.

Children were encouraged to explore their surroundings with guided nature walks, followed by drawing sessions where they could express their observations and feelings creatively. Meanwhile, adults engaged in lively discussions centered around Neohumanist Education (NHE) and yoga lifestyles, critically examining the nature and characteristics of traditional education and envisioning the changes they desired for their children's generation.



Culinary Connections and Playful Learning

A highlight of our trip was the cooking session, where families came together to prepare sentient food. There a Vietnamese idiom says: "the path to the heart must go through the stomach" (meaning you can make connection with each other through sharing food). This year, parents have already got used to sentient food, so we didn't have to explain a lot. Lunch was prepared deliciously together and everyone enjoyed this sentiment of sharing.

The afternoon was alive with laughter and joy as children and parents participated in team-building activities and relay games. This playful spirit continued until late evening and everyone had lots of fun together.

Reflections and Forward Thoughts

As the retreat drew to a close, families shared their reflections and hopes. The discussions revealed a unanimous desire for an education system that prioritizes moral values, practical skills and the nurturing of individual talents over rote learning and academic achievements alone.

This trip has reinforced the connection and bonding among all of us. It proved that Lily Kid House is more than a school; it is a family united by a common vision of raising children holistically to become adults with creativity, rationality, love and compassion for all.

Introducing my “Universal Family” at Lotus Children’s Center, Accra, Ghana

By Benewaa Dadzie and Didi A’nanda Gun’amaya

Many families from diverse tribes of Ghana come to Accra in hope of better living opportunities. They co-exist peacefully; still there is a tendency towards tribalism. For example, it may happen that a member of a determinate tribe favors someone who is wrong just because s/he is from the same tribe. Therefore, in our Ananda Marga school in Accra, known as Lotus Children’s Center, we aim to expand the ‘belong’ feeling into a universal sentiment. Recently the Government introduced the subject “Our Word, Our People” (O.W.O.P) in the KG-Primary curriculum. We took that as an opportunity to work its various contents from a Neohumanist perspective. We developed a curriculum for KG which starts with “Myself” culminating in “My Big Family”. Here, the learning includes appreciating the beauty of the different cultures around them and one’s own culture as well. In “Our Wealth” they learn a bit about Africa. Further, as our pupils explore about people from far away, they understand that, although those people have different appearances and costumes, they have the same needs and feelings as they have. Seeing the unity in diversity, the children embrace different peoples as part of their own family.

The journey begins by sharing personal experiences; the children are asked to observe themselves (what makes me angry/happy?). They make an “All about ME” booklet where they draw and decorate themselves, their favorite things, places they like to go, etc. It is a time to start understanding oneself, then gradually move on to the nuclear and extended family; how everyone matters in our community; the appreciation for the different languages of the ethnic groups in our area, etc.

We invite natives to dress up in their traditional style to tell stories in their traditional way (as it is still done in the villages); teach some sentences in their language (some which will be the same mother tongue of some of the pupils); explain about their different festivals and foods, teach their songs and dances and so on. Children are encouraged to ask things which make them curious - that is a big achievement in a society where to speak or even look at the eyes of elders can be viewed as disrespectful.

Group Work: The children also learn about the original homes of those tribes and make a map of the country to locate them. They study the different predominate religions - traditional, Christian and Islamic - and paste pictures of them in the various regions of the Ghanaian map they made, thus moving to a bigger view.

The “OUR WEALTH” unit

Smart phones brought much open mindedness to our community, some which helped to remove stigmas towards our NHE educational system which includes yoga and vegetarianism. However, the influence of the Western advances quickly disrupts the local *Pran’a Dharma*, as many people tend to replace their ancient customs with foreign ways, without even pondering which of them is better. Sadly, there are families who do not allow their young to talk in their mother tongue even at home. Recently, a mother of one pupil warned the teacher to speak only in English to her child, refusing to accept our explanation that the mother tongue would help the child to gain confidence. Now and then the mother would complain that the child uses her mother tongue to sing her tribe’s songs at home!

As there are a wide range of ethnical groups in Accra, English is used as the official language to communicate. However, to forbid one to cultivate his/her own language at home is likely to be an expression of the inferiority complex inherited



The children make a mural where they will paste a representative for each of the groups that they study.



Each child gets a space to add the members of her Universal Family



A native explaining about their festival to the children

from colonialism (and kept alive by neocolonialism). Thus, to counter act that, it is important to create a feeling of positive identification for one's roots. Towards that end, we introduced the unit "Our Wealth", which includes experiencing the local culture - language, music, art - of the various ethnicities present at our school. For each tribe they learn about, they will also learn a traditional dance. In the villages, those are part of the life of people but in big towns like Accra, that knowledge is waning making people alien to their roots. One of our students believed he did not belong to any tribe, and would not respond to any local language. In the process of learning about the festivals, and by participating in the tribal chatting time, he started to be interested and curious to learn his native language (Ga). He already graduated from Lotus, however he continues to practice on his own and nowadays he can speak Ga.

The children get the help of an Atlas to research about the animals and plants and landmarks they should place in the different regions of their map (the teacher reviews and corrects them when necessary). There is also awareness about the natural resources of the land, such as minerals and even medicinal plants. We also tell them some subtle stories which warn about neocolonialism.

CHOOSING WHAT YOU WANT TO STUDY

In addition, we develop their sense of decision making by introducing the various themes they can study and letting them select one of them. For example, when introduced to the native grains (using youtube videos) they chose millet as the crop that they would like to explore. This subject is quite important because some grains like Fonio, are on the verge of extinction as most of the population prefers to eat imported Asian rice!

Usually the young children are attracted to colorful objects – they voted the millet by its beauty. The children used their senses to experience the raw kinds of millets and eat dishes made with the cooked one. They learned how to make crafts from different parts of the plant. They identified the places where millet can grow on their map. They also learned about some of the health benefits of millet. Indeed, we started to provide free breakfast in the school as we saw the poor choice of food the children had. We have reintroduced nutritious local dishes. Surprisingly, there was resistance from some parents who insisted that we should feed their kids in the "UK" style, i.e. white bread with tea, instead of the local porridge we serve, which is made of groundnuts, soya, millet, local rice and other nutritious ingredients! Parents accepted this better when they saw the photos of their ward really relishing our local breakfast.



Meditation time

SELF-ANALYSES

To experience one's real being, meditation the children get more attached to their Divine nature, meditation helps them to see that they are not their weaknesses. However, for those children who are not surrounded by a sentient environment, only meditation may not be enough. So, in order to help to build the pupil's character, our teachers take opportunities which arise during school time to lovingly guide the children to listen to their inner voice. Once we have explained the concepts of morality regularly to them, we just help the child to connect with the love within and find solutions in difficult situations. Indeed, their heart already knows everything – how to apply those concepts, i.e. how to do good for others and to oneself.



The children practicing a new tribal dance



Enjoying traditional food

Thus, from the introduction of “Myself” unit henceforth, the educator is alert to raise awareness about how emotions can help or impair one’s character. The results we see are that our pupils master their feelings and also handle their classmates better. An example of how we work on that: there was an argument at Free Play time, a 5 year old was crying and punching his classmate at same time. The educator observed the child who caused the commotion - in that case it was the aggressive one. First, she helped the child to calm down by hugging him, and then asked what he was feeling that led him to hurt his friend. The child expressed that he was angry because he wanted the same toy that his friend had. The teacher asked him what would be the right thing to do, to which he replied that rather he should have asked if he could play with the toy. The teacher got him to call his friend for a conversation. After hearing the other child, the teacher suggested that instead of pushing the toy back, he could have proposed his friend to share the toy. We expect that approaching the children in such positive ways will help them to get interested in self-analyses as they grow; and being able to face their weaknesses not with shame but as small challenges to be overcome.

DESCRIPTIVE INQUIRY

Descriptive Inquiry is quite an indispensable tool in this process. Although still we have not organized the time for the teachers to observe and take notes of the children with regularity, we do use it when we are having issues with a child. It was of great help to deal with a child with a “bossy” tendency, for example. During learning, playing, even when the teacher had to be absent from the class for few moments, Mimi always wanted to impose her ideas on her classmates. Her classmates did not like that behavior, especially the ones who also were a bit leaders. The teacher tried then to convert that bossy tendency to a healthy one. Mimi was faster to finish the classwork, so when she submitted her book, the teacher would ask her if she could help the other children who have difficulties. At first, Mimi would react impatiently when they could not understand her. The teacher reminded her of the way she herself was taught and how she would feel if the teacher would also lose patience with her: “We have to use good words”. With time, Mimi stopped raising her voice at them and instead, she would look at the teacher, who kept encouraging her to lovingly guide the person instead to say what should be done. It affected Mimi to the point that at group activities she would ask the opinion of her classmates, opposite to before when she would order them - even telling them what colors to use. Even if initially she did so in order to please her teacher, it is becoming a habit, and a good one.

Although in the school every subject is taught in a fun and involving way, the children look eagerly for the O.W.O.P’s time.



Volunteers Welcome

<https://lotuschildrencenter.org/volunteer-now/>

Helping Each other

September and October NHE courses open to all at NHCA. Learn more at nhca.gurukul.edu or get details of when registration is open at info@nhca.gurukul.edu





Ten Days in Bali: Kidyoga Teacher Training in Indonesia By Rutger Tamminga

At the invitation of the education department of three districts in Bali and in cooperation with AMURT Indonesia, I was given the chance to conduct kidsyoga teacher training to teachers from 120 different kindergartens.

The problem the teachers were facing was that they felt that the children lacked concentration to attend class and that the teachers had difficulty in classroom management. The idea was that yoga and meditation should be introduced as a way to help children balance themselves.

The first training was in Bangli district with forty teachers. Some of them had already introduced some quiet time in their classrooms. Actually, Bali culture is deeply Tantric and each meeting begins and ends with Om Shanti or Om Swasti and a short period of silence. Introducing yoga and quiet time is something very natural to the people there.

In the two-day workshop, I introduced quiet time methods, yoga asanas with songs, yoga games, yoga stories, simple breathing techniques and massage and relaxation. The whole program took eight hours and though these ideas are part of the local culture, the practices were quite new. To encourage them, I asked them to use the Bahasa language for the yoga songs and activities and they created beautiful, elegant and gracious dances and movements.



In Badung the director of education for the district introduced that he had been practicing yoga as a student at university for three years and found he got much benefit from the discipline and lifestyle. For that reason, he encouraged the teachers to be serious about their efforts and take this opportunity for the welfare of their students' development.

In Karangasem district the teachers expressed that while they are used to the traditions of their culture, the blissful side of kidsyoga and teaching has offered a 'new feeling in the heart.' This is one thing I often observe that the devotional feelings that arise through our practices bring a sweetness one often does not experience in the drudgery of

daily life. Kidsyoga, and I should say by extension Neohumanist Education bring a sense of joy and innocence that many adults seem to have forgotten, even in idyllic Bali! And it is this innocence and purity that we aim to regenerate in society to give it a new direction.

Amala, who coordinates the education department activities with AMURT emphasized the follow up strategy to ensure that whatever was learned in the workshops gets implemented. AMURT aims to nurture a group of facilitators who can coordinate kidsyoga long term within the school system. We see that this is a beautiful initiative, which was superbly managed by the AMURT Indonesia volunteers, and others. Many thanks to them!



Inauguration Bali Public School New Campus

Bali Public School has built a new campus on their owned land at a cost of over \$2 million US dollars. The impressive facility was inaugurated by Acharya Nityasundarananda Avadhuta in the presence of the Director of Education of Denpasar and Acharya Shambhushivananda Avadhuta, Chancellor of Ananda Marga Gurukula. On the occasion, Dada Shambhushivananda introduced the importance of Neohumanist Education as the panacea for solving problems facing our society. The children gave fantastic cultural performances and twelve hours of spiritual kiirtan was organized to infuse the campus with spiritual vibrations.



Dada Shambhushivananda gave a class on PROUT at the local center and also visited the Wood School in Ubud area. He was highly impressed by the neohumanist curriculum being followed at the Wood School by Arul Selven and his dedicated team. A local Balinese Hindu Temple is now offering a piece of land to Wood School to expand their facilities and make

it more sustainable. Kiran from Canada also met Dada Shambhushivananda and offered to assist him in making a book showcasing neohumanist exemplary projects around the world.



Campo Divino, Argentina

Water Well: 'La Bombera Project'

By Kuntur Deva

‘Water is life!!’

This short, clear and meaningful saying had been repeatedly heard in this part of the world. How true is this!! Back in November last year, with a historical record of 6 months without rain, the seemingly unstoppable river that crosses the southern area of Campo Divino from whose water everything was depending, all of a sudden stopped. Yes, it was silenced for the first time ever since we've been here and indeed it created a big shock and desperation! Last time the river stopped was 65 years ago, the locals told us of those days, however for us this represented a tough and challenge in the present.

Some weeks after that episode, the summer storms finally appeared and brought abundant water, freshness, flooded rivers, lakes recovering their levels. However, nature moves in its unique way ‘as we know’ and besides the relief also got several thunderstorms, winds, hail of tennis ball size and by the beginning of 2024 a localized tornado - yes a tornado! also passed by these mountains affecting countless ancient trees and younger ones, trails and roads, the local community's houses and greenhouses and gardens. It touched deeply everything on its way!!

“Difficulties can never be greater than your capacity to solve them.” - Shrii Shrii Anandamúrti

In the middle of such a situation, inspired by the above quote, Campo Divino's cosmic team launched a global campaign, with the help of worldwide volunteers connected to the project, targeting to ensure a stable water source with a detailed plan for a Water Well to be constructed.

Water scarcity exist in so many other parts of the globe; a natural phenomenon created by unnatural activities puts the affected areas and ecosystem in a so call ‘Water Emergency’ with all the associated implications. Such an emergency call was largely announced in Calamuchita valley last November. It was time for learning, for coming closer as a community, respecting nature from the starting point and planning better for the progressive utilization of natural resources that support life and everything that it represents.

Special thanks to Mario - our longtime dear friend Geologist - who led and supervised the project with his amazing team Ariel, Sergio and Fito (the drilling machine's builder) and to Julia from Germany as well for offering her best to let this plan be a reality and name the project with such a beautiful expresión: ‘La Bombera’.

Julia's testimony:

‘I arrived in a rough dry time in the Divine Land in which the river, the life vein of this magical place, was almost completely dried out. Thanks to universal grace a tiny daily water source could be pumped by the river pump so the plants and herbs in the gardens could somehow survive. The “bombero



project” was born in this time and got its name when I mixed up the Spanish word for the pump (la bomba which I called la bombera).

I really felt a deep connection and great motivation to let this big project become true. Due to my knowledge as an osteopath I sensed the drill as a life-force - like the heart in the human body which pumps continuously blood and with it nourishing ingredients and of course the living force to every cell of the body.

The whole project, which started at the end of November, was completed around Easter. For me a significant time coincidence representing new flourishing life energy. We created a donation campaign including a video, fotos, texts and calculations which were sent all around Argentina, Germany, the Netherlands, the US and Italy.



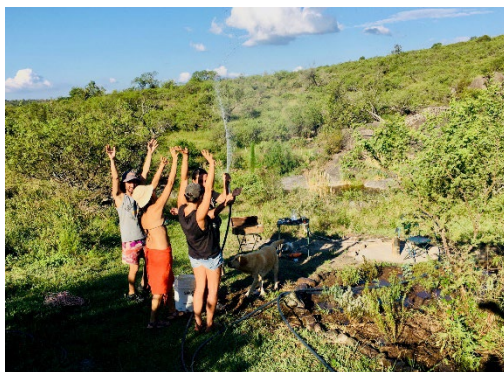
The “big” day, 19th of February 2024, was a very warm, sunny and clear day. The big truck, which came from the other side of the mountain, couldn't pass the very last part of the road, and the transport plan had to be spontaneously and creatively adapted. So, the drilling was delayed until later in the morning. It was a very long, dusty and loud day, which ended around 10:30 pm in the night, having drilled to a depth of 62 meters.

Surprisingly for everybody the whole crew stayed overnight in Campo Divino because there was not yet concrete water found. So, we all spent a nice and loving sharing time and night dinner together. In the early morning the crew cleaned the drill and finally we were

blessed by the longed-for water fountain...which also created an emotional fountain of happiness and relief in all of us!

This project was a very intense and unforgettable experience which I hardly couldn't imagine.

The presence, the support, the help, the participation and the motivation of so many people in this project offers me an overwhelming warm inner feeling of gratitude and wide connectedness. The imagination that this water source will bring a secure nourishment for Campo Divino's inhabitants for years - the plants, the animals and the people - and maybe further to people who really need water in poor areas in this country in the form of connecting projects, makes my heart feel like it is melting.'



Water conservation and its precious availability responds to an Integrated Farming approach plan which enables the functioning of various activities concerning community settlement and growth, land cultivation and development, food and essentials' production, health, ecology and education, etc. (Please refer to Ideal Farming part 2 given by Shrii Shrii Anandamúrti for further details)

The low energy consumption submersible pump, run only by solar energy during sunny hours, lifts 1,000 liters of pure water to the uphill containers on a daily basis from 60 meters down in the earth. Looking forward to water analysis results!

Immense Gratitude to all!!!

Development of the Master Unit Ananda Uma, Vietnam

By Citrá Trần Thúy Ngọc

The Master Unit, Ananda Uma, a land of 6 hectares - located at Phước Tân Ward, Biên Hòa City, Đồng Nai Province, 30km away from the south of Hồ Chí Minh City - is now entering the first phase of our Master Plan of development. View details at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/903986594630293>

The water quality of the Buông River for irrigation has been tested, surrounding fences fixed to prevent trespassers, the kitchen renovated, and the core team for land care and human care have engaged in their preliminary work. To pay for the maintenance cost, products from the neem tree and the fruit tree gardens including jackfruit, bananas, cashews etc. have been sold at our various events. Activities such as youth camps, festivities and so on have attracted attendance of various faiths to get to know the land and contribute their service.

Targets of 2024 follow:

* Land care

1. Park boundary road construction completed (Red line at least).



Core Team Discussion and Field Survey



Food Distribution to People in Need

2. Planting of four garden areas completed.
3. LOGO installation completed.

*Human care

1. Interactive links with regional schools established (kindergarten, primary school, junior high school, high school).
2. Youth community volunteers established (community care, learning guidance).
3. Summer Environmental Education Youth Camp held.

Developing an ideal Master Unit is a new experience for everyone, yet we know Belief + Faith + Action are the prerequisites to fulfill this spiritual path. Even a small step that is helpful to the environment, nature and the society will sow the seeds of love and hope to the next generation.



Diet for a Green Planet Exhibition - Taiwan

The Earth Lovers Family Association Taiwan organized a one-day seminar on the occasion of the opening of its Diet for A Green Planet exhibition. In cooperation with other organizations concerned with the ecological balance of the world. We introduced the exhibit along with launching the updated Chinese version of “What’s wrong with eating meat?”

The exhibit consists of ten boards that explain how meat consumption has quintupled in the past fifty or so years. Per capita consumption globally is currently close to 100 kg per year and is projected to expand further. In financial terms the global meat industry is bigger than the smartphone business and exerts tremendous influence on government policies. This multi-national meat industry has led to animal cruelty, the destruction of half of the world’s forests and has an overall devastating impact on human health. Meat consumption is linked to heart disease, digestive cancers, lung infections, diabetes, obesity and Alzheimer’s. The exhibit then explains how we can live on plant-based proteins when we have a balanced diet.

Nearly one hundred people attended the one-day seminar and vegetarian lunch. Three different speakers talked about holistic living, PROUT’s vision for a sustainable economy and the fact that reducing meat consumption is one of the top three approaches to keeping global warming within limits.



The program was recorded and is being shared on line. As the exhibit is mobile, we have appointments to bring this program, along with environmental storytelling, to other cities in the coming months to other associations, schools and programs.

We aim to bring a new topic through this format every year, as it is relatively economical, yet impactful and inspiring to make personal changes for a sustainable world.





Earth Day Program, Metro Manila, Philippines Be Mindful, Be Conscious of Plastic Use

A program, organized by Araceli B. Carodan, was conducted to celebrate Earth Day in Metro Manila, Philippines, on April 22, 2024. Didi Ananda Madhurii opened the program by singing Samgacchadvam, while Didi Shivanii and Dada Shiveshananda graced everyone with their expertise in kaoshiki and tandava, adding a spiritual dimension to the festivities. The performances, including the captivating Earth Dance and the soothing sounds of the crystal bowl, resonated deeply with all participants. The day was filled with enriching activities, from invigorating asanas to guided meditation sessions for beginners. The presence of the Pranic Healing Foundation of the Philippines, along with the Krishna Balaram Ashram ISKCON, further enriched the event, culminating in a collective kirtan that reverberated with positivity and unity. The Training Center of Biodiversity Management Bureau provided a fitting backdrop for this celebration of Earth and humanity's interconnectedness.

This year's theme tackled Planet vs Plastics, focusing on raising awareness about the environmental impact of plastic and encouraging individuals to reduce their plastic consumption. Plastic pollution is a significant issue that affects our planet's ecosystems, wildlife, and overall health. The theme emphasized the importance of being mindful and conscious of the choices we make regarding plastic use, encouraging us to think about the plastic products we use in our daily lives and find ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle them. This can include choosing reusable alternatives to single-use plastics, such as using reusable water bottles, shopping bags, and food containers. Additionally, we can support initiatives and organizations that promote plastic recycling and waste management.

Dada Shambhushivananda was invited to share some words about this.

We are all becoming painfully aware that the fragile web of life is at risk today. The rivers and oceans are polluted with plastics affecting marine life. The species of flora and fauna are declining day by day, too. With the pressure of the increasing population, more and more agricultural lands are erroneously being allocated for human habitats instead of first making existing resources more efficient. The forest cover on the earth is declining due to economic greed. Thus, we are faced with innumerable challenges to protect planet's eco-systems, wildlife and overall health of its creatures.



I am glad to learn that on the occasion of Earth Day, 2024, the organizers have made it their focus to make the general population aware of the dangers of plastic use. The environmental impact of widespread plastic use is now being recognized by all earth-watchers. It is time to make the ultimate move towards alternatives to plastic use. This is a policy matter, and scientists and businesses are already exploring biodegradable materials as an alternative to plastics.

Numerous planets in our galaxy have been identified which would be capable of supporting organic life, but so far, this earth is the only place in the universe that we know for a fact is inhabited. If we make our planet increasingly uninhabitable by increasing use of toxic chemicals, non-biodegradable plastics and removal of the forest-cover, we shall be leading the society towards an abyss of scarcity, pollution and greater vulnerability to pandemics. Let us instead make a concerted effort to adopt a lifestyle that is good for our body-mind and spirit, and which is conducive to the flourishing of all life forms.

There are three stages to change: First, awareness, which stems from humane research. Second, positive mental attitudes built on a moral foundations. Third, lifestyle changes, which emanate from deep inner spiritual connection with the biosphere. Today, we need a greater awareness of what is good for us as well as for the environment. Also, we need a positive mindset to make conscious choices for the betterment of our own health and for the protection of all life-forms on the planet earth. Finally, we have to generate an uplifting lifestyle so that earth is freed from the polluting influence of impure thoughts and degenerating habits.

Neohumanism is a cosmic ideology that propagates healthy living and simple thinking. It embraces the spiritual world view that is transformative, trans-disciplinary and transcendental. It calls for the recognition of both existential value and utility value of all things and encourages use of value-oriented discrimination in the use of earth's resources. It calls for use of renewable sources of energy instead of increasing use of fossil fuels.

Neohumanism suggests preparedness to halt the turning of calamities into disasters. The knowledge which sensitizes us to the bio-sphere consciousness is real education. Let the world move away from destruction of the environment through senseless use of military arsenal and instead create a world where problems are resolved through dialogues. World peace is indispensable to fulfill the aspirations of all creatures of this beautiful earth. Let us consider the entire earth as the common patrimony of all creatures on this earth and, not the least, save this planet for future generations.

Come Alive with Yoga For 3-10 Year Olds

By Mahajyoti Glassman and Nancy Gannon

This new arrival explores the 8 limbs of yoga as outlined by the Yoga Sage, Patanjali, 2000 years ago and upgraded more recently by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti. Come Alive redefines Astaunga yoga with child-friendly tips on how to transform adult yoga for young children through creativity, imagination, sound, and movement. This Astaunga Yoga section is sprinkled with how sensory experiences are the spices that make yoga come alive.

Here the yoga enthusiast (whether parent or teacher) will find:

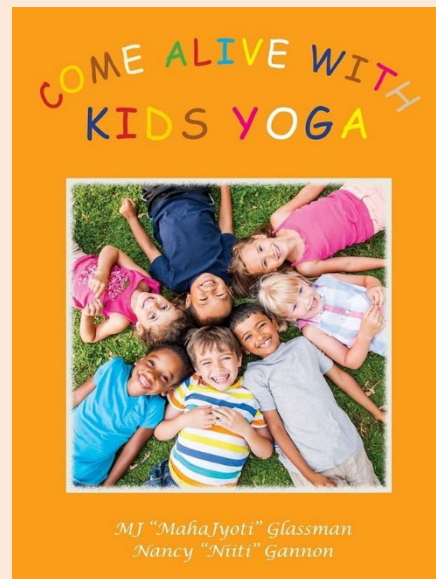
- Numerous gentle and safe breathing experiences.
- Singing, dancing, and yoga chanting, the most uplifting preparations for meditation.
- Directions for creating guided deep relaxations.
- Several unique strategies for kids' meditations.
- Using positivity to nurture resiliency.
- The therapeutic advantages of each of these 8 limbs.

MahaJyoti delves into the very foundation of Astaunga yoga, the Yamas and Niyamas. Speaking of yoga ethics, the most ideal strategy for introducing these to young children are through yoga stories. Niiti has created over 2 dozen delightful yoga dramas which are easy-to-facilitate at home or school with over 20 beautifully illustrated yoga cards.

Come Alive is a wonderful guidebook for providing Astaunga Yoga experiences for the young 3–10-year-old child, a special tool for every yoga library.

Come Alive can be found at:

**<https://www.nhca-gurukul.org/product-page/come-alive-with-kids-yoga-the-8-steps-of-yoga-for-young-children>
for \$19.95 plus shipping.**



In other

GLOBAL NEWS



DELHI SECTOR

Chandigarh, India

Rutger Tamminga conducted a series of workshops in Chandigarh, New Delhi, Tansen Music Academy in Kalkaji and at Anandanagar. He conducted a workshop on Yoga of Emotions and introduced the concept of Vritti cards and how to use them in order to understand our emotions. He also led children's yoga sessions. He charmed the children with his unique abilities to impart values through storytelling.



Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

Dr. Shambhushivananda was invited to speak at the Renaissance Universal Club of Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India. "His talk was both enlightening and inspiring", said Nitai Dhall, the presiding chairman of the Club. Dada was hosted at Silicon University Guest House. The theme of his talk was "Education for a New Era".

Educational Training Camps December 2023 at Anandanagar

Dada Shambhushivananda was present at winter and summer Education Training Camps organised by Dada Mantracaetanyananda. The Stuvol Book recently published for the Gurukula Chitmu Learning Center was shared with other participants of the ETC. Recently, another STUVOL book in Hindi language has also been prepared by Dada Mantracaetanyananda and his team for the primary section.



HONG KONG SECTOR



Meinong, Taiwan

A teacher training camp on Neohumanism was held from February 2nd to 4th, 2024, at Ananda Matrika, a centre for women, in Meinong, southern Taiwan. During the camp, Dada Caetanyananda introduced his pioneering concept of "Ecology of Love" and invited participants to reflect on the questions of "Who am I?" and how to apply intuitive science in teaching and lesson planning. Didi Ananda A'rus'i led sessions on yoga postures and meditation, also sharing the connection between Neohumanism and the Demonstration Village. Tapesha shared his experiences of applying Neohumanism both outside and within public schools, and guiding participants in self-care through drama and action.

MANILA SECTOR



Bangkok, Thailand

Radhika from China visited Bangkok and met Dada Shambhushivananda and Dr. Jareepon Naksamrit there. She was full of energy and is greatly inspired by the Neohumanist movement. Dr. Janaki Naksamrit invited Dada to her new university where she is now teaching courses on Educational Administration. Dada presented copies of Gurukula Network and Neohumanist Review Journal for her colleagues.

Singapore

Gurukula members met in Singapore to explore the possibilities of starting a Neohumanist school in Singapore. Among those present in discussions included Arul

and Erica from Bali, Kalyanii from Malaysia, Dada Shambhushivananda from India/Sweden and Dada Premamayananda and Raghu from Singapore.

Dada Shambhushivananda also spoke at a meditation session at AMIA, Singapore and emphasized the role of moral conduct to bring inner peace and external harmony in the society. He also discussed the stages of spiritual progress.

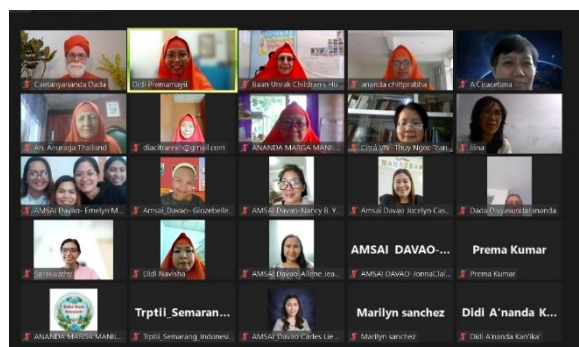


Dada Premamayananda has recently taken over as the sectorial coordinator of Gurukula for Manila Sector. He also will support Dada Shambhushivananda in establishing a global university project at Anandanagar.



Education Training Camp, Manila Sector

Didi Ananda Chittprabha organized an online ETC for Manila Sector in November 2023. It was attended by 30 directors and teachers of NHE schools from Manila Sector. The program included a class by Dada Caetanyananda on Neohumanist Education with the perspective of the Ecology of Joy, one by Didi Ananda Anuraga on NHE Curriculum, one by and Dada Premamayananda on NHE Orientation, and one by Dada Unmantrananda on Fundraising for schools.



Gurukula Global Contacts

DELHI SECTOR

Ananda Marga Gurukula Headquarters Cakradhurii
Anandanagar, PO Chitmu
Dist Purulia, West Bengal 723215
<https://in.gurukul.edu>
<kulapati@gurukul.edu>

Ananda Marga Gurukula
C-8/243 Yamuna Vihar,
New Delhi 110053, India

AMGK Coordinator India
Radha Gusain
<gusainradha@gmail.com>

AMGK Teachers Training College
Ac. Svarupánanda Avt.
Anandanagar, PO Baglata
Dist Purulia, West Bengal 723215

Rahr School and Girls College
Avtk. Ánanda Vratishia Ac.
Uma Nivas, Vill. Khatanga, Kotshila,
Dist. Purulia, W Bengal, India

International Neohumanist Center
Mr. Ravinderji/Jasbirji/Dada
No.593-594,Vikas Nagar, A1, Lane
#5, Gate No. 1, Naya Gaon
Chandigarh 16103 India

HONG KONG SECTOR

Neohumanist Retreat Center
Ananda Jyoti c/o Rutger Tamminga
No.54, Hsiao Ken Rd. Shiman Area
Taipei, Taiwan

International Neohumanist Center
Juei-Ai Center
Hansi West Road
Section 3, 438, Taichung, Taiwan

Gurukula Office Taipei
Yun-Chin Ko
<snehalata.edu@gmail.com>

MANILA SECTOR

Ananda Marga Gurukula
(Asia Coordinating Office)
Dr. Jareepon Naksamrit
c/o Rajaprarop Garden Condo,
99/129 Soi Annap Narumit,
Bangkok 10400, Thailand

Gurukula Office Singapore
AMIA
#01-3497,Block 57,Geylang Bahru,
Singapore 330057

SUVA SECTOR

AMGK/NHE Coordinator Australia
Dr. Marcus Bussey
c/o The River School
PO Box 411
Maleny, Queensland
Australia 4552

NEW YORK SECTOR

Ananda Marga Gurukula Global Liaison Office
Arete Brim
Ithaca, New York, USA
<amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>

Neohumanist College of Asheville
Sid Jordan
160 Wellness Wy, Marshall, NC
28753, USA

GEORGETOWN SECTOR

Gurukula Coordinator
Didi Ananda Jaya
Rua General Nestor Passos 161
Mandaqui, São Paulo Brasil
CEP 02417-140

Campo Divino
Claudio Moreni, Chaco 613
Ucacha 2677, Cardoba, Argentina

BERLIN SECTOR

Ananda Marga Gurukula Stockholm
Överland/Kohli
Aprikosgatan 1B, Lgh 1001
Hässelby, 165 60 Sweden

Center of Neohumanist Studies
Rossato Silvano
Gamla Skolan, Ydrefors, 598 73
Gullringen, Sweden

NERI
c/o Yolande Koning
Bankade 3, 5236AX
Den Bosch, Netherlands

Neohumanist Education Association - Romania
Avtk. Ánanda Devapriya Ac.
strada Foisorului 121, Sector 3
Bucuresti, Romania

Yogis Academy
Christian Franceschini
c/o Frazione Senaso, 25, 38078
San Lorenzo Dorsino TN, Italia

QAHIRA SECTOR

Neohumanist Education Center
Avtk. Ánanda Ramá Ac.
Rehab City, Group 69 17/42
Cairo 11841, Egypt

NAIROBI SECTOR

Ananda Marga Gurukula
c/o Avtk. Ánanda Gunamaya Ac.
Soko Community, Accra, Ghana



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Neohumanist Education



Music Class with children of the Chitmu School, Anandanagar
with Dada Omkareshvarananda, principal of the Music College

FROM: Gurukula Network
146 Honness Lane
Ithaca, New York 14850
USA

To: