

GURUKULA NETWORK



Newsletter of Neohumanist Schools and Institutes affiliated with Ananda Marga Gurukula

Issue 36 - May 2013



**Upcoming Education
Conference**

Conflict Resolution

Humanism Rediscovered its Soul

Can Universities Transform

Corporatocracy to Cooperatocracy

Home Grown Yet Global

Ecology

Schools in Focus

Global News

New Publications

and more



Sá vidyá yá vimuktaye - Education is that which liberates

Gurukula Network

**Newsletter and Journal of
Neohumanist Schools and Institutes**

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

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

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

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

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VISION OF ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA

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

OBJECTIVES OF ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA

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

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

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

NEOHUMANIST EDUCATION

Universal Love and Values
Holistic Development
Astaunga Yoga
Ecological and Social Consciousness
Academic, Practical and Personal Skills
Knowledge of Self and World Applied for Universal Welfare
Joyful Learning through the Arts
Culturally Sensitive Approach
Integrated Curriculum
Exemplary Role of the Educators

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EDUCATION & GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION

JULY 14 -18, 2013
(ARRIVAL JULY 13TH)

10th Global Education Summit

PLACE **CNS SWEDEN, GAMLA SKOLAN
YDREFORS, SWEDEN**

PRICE **155 € / \$200 US**

INFORMATION/
REGISTRATION

WWW.GURUKUL.EDU
AMGK.GLO@GURUKUL.EDU

This conference is open to all educators from around the globe. Please *join us to dialogue, listen, share and contribute* towards forging new ways, fresh attitudes, greater awareness and practical modalities *for improving educational practices.*



GAP International



Society needs transformation towards sustainability and greater harmony and progress. Education is a key source of hope and capacity as we strive towards these goals. This conference is an opportunity to explore the greater meaning of education in a global context that is rich in possibilities but currently driven by short-term political and economic agendas. Longer term futures need to be imagined, explored and acted on for diverse cultures to evolve at a pace that will ensure sustainable, whole, life affirming, safe and expansive futures for all.

In this spirit we invite all educators from around the globe to come together to dialogue, listen, share and contribute towards forging new ways, fresh attitudes, greater awareness and practical modalities for improving educational practices.

This global summit is being hosted by CNS-Sweden and will be partnered with GAP (Global Action Plan) International. The hope is to bring together leading neohumanist and progressive educators from around the world as we delve deeper into the forces shaping the educational spaces of the future. Plenary sessions will address themes of interest to all. Parallel workshops will address topics of specific interest to NHE staff, GAPs Learning for Change program as well as various faculties of Ananda Marga Gurukula; providing ample space for all participants to share their presentations, interests and passions. Evening programs will provide personal sharing that reflects inspirational experiences of participants' works, an entertaining cultural program, and a devotional night.

Our confirmed theme presenters include Eric Jacobson from Progressive School of Long Island, USA; Dr. Marcus Bussey of Queensland University, Australia; Ole Brekke of Commedia School, Denmark; Dr. Sid Jordan of Prama Institute, USA; Krisada Kampanatsanyakorn, Thailand, Marilyn Mehlmann of GAP International (Global Action Plan), Sweden; with a few others theme presenters still pending. In addition many others will share their expertise and ideas via a rich offering of workshops.

Themes that will be addressed in plenary sessions are as follows

July 14th - Education and Enlightened Leadership - How can education contribute towards enlightened leadership via rejuvenation of values and neo-ethics.

15th July- Education for Joy and Holistic health. How can education serve as a nurturing agency for the enhancement of joy and holistic health.

16th July- Education for Right Livelihood & Enhanced Quality of Life. How can educational systems utilize science, technology and ecological awareness to improve the life for the common people on this planet; building sustainable habitats and neohumanist futures for one and all.

17th July- Realizing Visions of Alternative Educational Spaces. What are our visions for building alternative educational-spaces where humanity can reunite in spirit & action and what role can progressive- educators, activists & social-entrepreneurs play in nurturing such initiatives?

This summit is not intended to be a mere talking summit. Rather, participants are invited to come together to deeply connect, share experiences, ideas, insights, and visions. The flexible format of the summit will allow for building collaborations for hastening the advent of a new society - a world where determination, dedication, imagination, creativity and devotion will replace the pessimism of the 'lost' days.

For more information and to register: amgk.glo@gurukul.edu

From Confrontations to Universal Harmony

By Ac Shambhushivananda Avt

Life is indeed a bundle of misunderstandings. It is not uncommon to face conflicts during one's life. Whether it is within a family, an organization, a business-relationship or among nation-states, it is almost inevitable that there will be conflict of some proportion. Conflicts are a double-edged sword. Some are an opportunity for growth and some could be devastating and destructive. Some conflicts strengthen us, while others may totally mar our motivation to move ahead. Some could leave a scar for a lifetime while others get healed through conscious endeavors. It is important, therefore, to realize the source of conflicts and attempt to find a pathway to go beyond them.

First Step

Dialogues and Communications

The first victim of a confrontation is the obstacles or even a closure of communication channels. The absence of dialogues can make it more difficult to find the solutions to problems emanating from diverse points of view. Hence, there is a need of conflict-resolution modalities. Some conflicts end up in the courts of law causing much expense while other get resolved through mediation or an initiative of a well wisher. In any case, 'empathy' is the corner stone of any resolution-modality. It is not uncommon that conflicts create a permanent division or breakdown in relationships and that could lead to further on-going misunderstandings. From the yardstick of sublime ideology, one has to nurture those points of view that can bring the greatest welfare. There is never a magic formula to deal with unpleasant situations created by any confrontation yet awareness and awakening of greatest need of all species could give us the needed strength to transform negativities into positivity. Since all living being search for peace--knowingly or unknowingly, let one and all contribute to the global goal of peace at all levels. Peace that is driven by love is the surest way to help achieve resolutions to conflict at every level.

Second Step

Collaboration and Competition

Since we do not live forever, the continuity of any institution or structure can only be accomplished through a conscious endeavor to build in systems of collaboration. While healthy competition helps to breakdown the sloth that results from centralized control, collaboration ensures that we tap the hidden potential of diverse elements of any system or structure. Collaborations demand respect and tolerance; freedom and governance; sense of responsibility & faith. To work together requires mental discipline, maturity and patience. It is so easy to walk away from one another but we also lose the opportunity to tap the hidden potentials among us. The yardstick of sublime ideology offers a healthy mix of benevolent competition and cooperative institutions as a way to create lasting collaborative mechanisms. Nature shows us that collaborations have given rise to numerous life forms. Collaboration is built in our bodies; it could also be engineered in the social institutions that we may create. 'Collaboration' is a necessary second step towards building a harmonious society.

Third Step

Exchanges among Sustainable Communities

There was a time when the individuals and small businesses used to become bankrupt. Now it is not uncommon to see the entire set of countries facing the same fate of collapse. It is high time that we realize that the sustainable future can be built only on the principles of self-sustaining decentralized economy. Building sustainable communities at the earliest is the greatest challenge of our times. However, it is even more important to build systems of supportive exchanges among these sustainable communities lest these well intentioned community building efforts fall into the abyss of old competitive--paradigms devoid of highest social consciousness. The umbrella of Universal Harmony is the necessary third step to ensure that we keep our intellects free from the dogma of narrow 'isms' and matter or self-centered ideologies. The yardstick of sublime ideology goads us to explore the avenue of 'universalism' in all things-big and small.

The various differences which split society must be removed in the interest of collective welfare. In order to do that, one must look for the common link, the points of affinity, in the multifarious lifestyles and diverse expressions of life. The points of affinity have got to be encouraged by all means and the differences must be discouraged.

Shrii P. R. Sarkar

Humanism Rediscovered its Soul

Neohumanism - Humanistic Psychology Workshop

By Sid Jordan

Recently I gave a workshop with the above title to the Annual Conference of Humanistic Psychology, which represents a division of the American Psychological Association. The theme of the conference was "Community in Difference: Cultivating a Home for Love and Justice in an Indifferent World". This seemed like a great invitation to present Neohumanistic views of how to create more "love and justice" in a world that often reflects indifference to humans and non-human entities alike.

My original motive for submitting this workshop proposal was to seize the opportunity to expand the humanistic psychology focus, which traditionally has been on humans and largely psychotherapy of humans.

In preparing this workshop and doing a study of recent contributions to the humanistic psychology tradition I found many approaches that were very compatible with P. R. Sarkar's Neohumanism. This led to a comparative study of Neohumanism and the current status of Humanistic Psychology resulting in what could be an expansion of both schools of thought. I offer this brief comparative study with the hope of generating a more inclusive and expanded views of both Neohumanism and Humanistic Psychology and their application to education, psychology and social justice issues. One resultant of this comparative study could be a better understanding of the contributions of Neohumanism and Humanistic Psychology to what Sarkar calls "group" and "service" psychologies.

In the 2011 July-September issue of the Humanistic Psychologist journal Bruce Levi stated that "When human subjectivity once more becomes central to a psychological understanding of a person's behavior, then psychology, as a science, will achieve a self-reflective maturity and rediscover its soul." This quote comes very close to Sarkar's encouragement of a subjective approach to an objective adjustment that is guided by our inner most self or atman (soul). When further exploring the contributors to post- modern humanistic psychology there are a myriad of approaches that resonate with Neohumanist philosophy that include multiculturalism, liberation theology and psychology, eco-psychology, evolutionary psychology, deep ecology and transpersonal psychology.

Pioneers of Humanistic Psychology

One of the earlier pioneers of humanistic psychology was Erich Fromm. Fromm coined the word "biophilia", love of the natural world, later used extensively by evolutionist E. O. Wilson who wrote a book by the title "Biophilia" in 1984. Wilson in this book asserts that humans have "the urge to affiliate with other forms of life", suggesting that there is an innate bond between human beings and other living systems. This concept of biophilia overlaps with the definition of Neohumanism that expands the love of humans to the love of all the living world of plants and animals. Neohumanism however goes a step further in embracing a love of the inanimate beings as well.

Eric Fromm in his Humanist Credo in The Heart of Man: It's Genius for Good and Evil wrote, "I believe that the man choosing progress can find a new unity through the development of all his human forces, which are produced in three orientations. These can be presented separately or together: biophilia, love for humanity and nature, and independence and freedom." This credo reflects the concept of liberation of the intellect from dogma espoused in P. R. Sarkar's Neohumanism Liberation of the Intellect written in 1982.

Workshop Exercises with Participants

1. Yama (social balance) and Niyama (personal balance) were presented as the foundation of the Ethics of Love and Devotion in Neohumanism. Aparigraha's concept of a "Simpler Life Style" was the first exercise:

Simplicity Visualization:

What is the one thing you would like to commit to simplifying in your life that would have a positive impact on you and others? Have participants go through number of images in their life involving a need for simplification. Select one and see yourself in the present tense going through the needed actions to simplify your life surrounding this chosen task. (2-3 minutes) Some participants may choose to share.

2. The next exercise was related to Tapah or Service:

Service Meditation:

Participants were given the following guided meditation based on Andrew Harvey's visualization to inspire "sacred activism". See yourself seated in your room before dawn meditating; focus on your heart and ask yourself the question: What in the world breaks your heart the most? Keep focusing on the feelings growing in your heart as you come to the focus on what in the world breaks your heart the most. As you focus on this question feel a flame growing in your heart and see yourself getting up from your meditation seeing the room lit by this flame in your heart. Open the door to the room and see yourself walking down a long hall lit by the flame in your heart. You come to a door at the end of the hall that you open and descend a staircase lit by the flame in your heart. At the bottom of the stairs is an opening to a cave. As you enter the cave lit by the flame in your heart you see a letter on the floor of the cave addressed to you in your own hand writing. Pick it up and open it. It is a letter from your heart; read it and meditate on the meaning for you of this message from your heart. After absorbing the full meaning of this message from your heart, open your eyes and return to the room.

Encourage sharing in pairs or in the larger group depending on the number in the group.

3. Exploration of Social Sentiments:

In pairs share your earliest perceptions of your family's attitudes towards other racial and ethnic groups; your earlier life experiences with a person from another racial or ethnic background. In the larger group Share Conclusions concerning your self-awareness of socio-sentiments (groupism) related to these cross-cultural experiences.

Fromm included “unity”, a sense of oneness between one person and the natural and human world in his eight basic needs of relatedness, transcendence, rootedness, sense of identity, frame of orientation, excitation and stimulation, unity, and effectiveness.

Maslow described his approach to developing the hierarchy of human needs as Humanistic Psychology that focused on the positive and healthy side of human nature as opposed to the pathological. In his book, *Towards a Psychology of Being*, in 1968 he stated, “It is as if Freud supplied us the sick half of psychology and we must now fill it out with the healthy half.” In his hierarchy of needs he believed that the basic physiological needs should be met first followed by the needs for security and safety, then love and belonging, then self esteem, cognitive, aesthetic and finally self realization.

Maslow and the humanistic psychologists believed that every person has a strong desire to realize their full potential and to reach a level of self-actualization. Maslow’s concept of a self-actualized person included honesty, benevolence, sense of wholeness and unity, perfectionistic striving and experiencing many peak experiences but no concept of “self realization” in the spiritual sense of liberation or salvation in becoming one with pure consciousness. Maslow later in his life concluded that self-actualization was not an automatic consequence of satisfying other human needs.

The main point of this new movement, that reached its peak in 1960s, was to emphasize the positive potential of human beings. An essential component of self-actualization was for an individual to find cooperative and meaningful relationships with the larger human family. This positive psychology and cooperative stance suggest a universal set of values that supports Sarkar’s cautions about a group psychology that threatens the underlying unity of all of society which includes the animate and inanimate as do many of the post modern contributions to humanistic psychology.

Humanism’s Bright New Multicultural Fabric

Among these new contributions to humanistic psychology that resonates strongly with Neohumanism is Multiculturalism, which includes the holistic concept of mind, body and spirit unity for many multicultural individuals. Comas-Diaz in a recent article in *Psychotherapy* (2012) stated that, “people of color tend to express their relationship with spirit in a highly personal and humanistic way..... that helps ethnic minorities to struggle against oppression by focusing on cultural resilience, consciousness, and liberation.

Multiculturalism pursues meaning through the development of a relational identity in a cultural context. Contextualism involves the tendency to describe self and other using more contextual reference and perspective. People from different cultures are advised to listen to the each other’s cultural perspective and narratives rather than imposing their own ethnocentric perspectives on others. People from two different cultures can then compare their narratives with each other and think in terms of a power differential analysis that examines awareness of “oppression” and “privilege”. This is an approach, which reveals and can prevent the pseudo-culture that Sarkar speaks of in Neohumanism where one culture imposes its values on another often at the expense of the recipient. Liberation theologian and psychologist are activist in the multicultural context that opposes this oppression of a people or culture.

Liberation, according to Paulo Freire, the author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, is a collective endeavor to liberate yourself by liberating others. Multicultural activist and therapist approach liberation through spiritual social justice actions congruent with liberation theology, pedagogy and psychology. Martin-Baró, a priest and psychologist, who popularized the concept of liberation psychology drew heavily on the work of Freire, the above mentioned Brazilian educator, who recognized a certain “psychology of oppression” in which the downtrodden become fatalistic, believing they are powerless to alter their circumstances, thus becoming resigned to their situation. Thus liberation psychology concerns liberating the oppressed from authoritarian rulers and corporate control. Martin-Baro supported rebellion against institutions, including the church, governments, and industries that exploited people and maintained status quo. Very much like P.R. Sarkar he opposed these institutions that turned one group against another in guarding their self-interest of amassing wealth and power. In the middle of the night on November 16, 1989, Martin-Baró, together with five

4. Awakened Conscience: Supporting the General Welfare Through Journaling

Free write: People I know from other cultural groups characterize people of my cultural background as

Free write: The socio-sentiments and stereotypes that other groups impose on people of my culture have the effect of

Free write: To remedy these effects Neohumanism’s approach (devotion, study, rationality, the general welfare, social equality, unity) to these socio- sentiments (group) and geo-sentiments (place) suggest

5. Group Dialogue: Appreciative Inquiry

-The best cross cultural experience I have had in a community, classroom or therapy

-Things valued most deeply

-How I would apply concepts of Neohumanism to further develop this positive cross-cultural experience in the community, classroom or therapy

6. Visualization of bonds with animals, plants and environments –

Select an image of being with this entity in the present tense and explore the following concepts:

-My strongest bond and best experience with another entity or being other than human is with.....

-The characteristics and mutual benefits of this relationship are.....

-The central meaning and value of this relationship for me is.....

7. End with meditation on Baba Nam Kevalam-

Love is All There Is; The Beloved’s Name Only.

colleagues, their housekeeper, and her teenage daughter, were forced out to a courtyard on the campus of Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas, where they were murdered by the US-trained troops of the Salvadoran government's elite Atlacatl Battalion.

Eco-Psychologies

As Martin-Baro fought for social justice through liberation psychology there have been other contributors to the fields of eco-psychology and environmental psychology that have fought for environmental justice. One of the earlier activists for the environmental movement who created the concepts of Deep Ecology is Arne Nasse. He was greatly influenced by Erich Fromm's concept of "biophilia" and Gandhi's "essential oneness of all life". Deep Ecology views nature as part of our self-identity. The central tenet of deep ecology is that the human species is part of the earth, not separate from it, and as such human existence is dependent on the diverse organisms within the natural world each playing a role in the natural economy of the biosphere. Human life is made possible due to the harmonious balance of interdependent relationships between these non-human organisms. The core of Arne Nasse's activist message is, 'The requisite care (for the natural world) flows naturally if the self is widened and deepened so that protection of free nature is felt and conceived of as protection of our very selves.'

Ecopsychology shares this notion with deep ecology that our identity or our mind is shaped by a larger social environment that includes the natural environment of evolutionary adaptiveness in which we evolved. Ecopsychology proposes that a closer connection with nature enhances an individual's emotional well-being and sense of harmony and balance in the world. The term Ecopsychology was coined by Theodore Roszak in his 1992 book, *The Voice of the Earth*. Other related fields of psychology include evolutionary psychology, environmental psychology, green psychology, psycho-ecology, ecosophy and a board range of therapies including eco-therapy, green therapy, and global therapy.

Environmental and evolutionary psychology are broad interdisciplinary fields that look at the relationship between the humans their environment. Among all their levels of analysis both fields have studied the impact of nature on our health and well being from an immediate and long-term evolutionary perspective. From a review of over fifty empirical studies by researchers it has been concluded that a "nature deficit" may have an undesirable impact on the human physical, emotional and psychic well-being. This problem is partly due to the visual and physical absence of plants and can be reversed by adding a green belt such as parks or more windows and indoor plants to enhance interior environments.

The bond between animals and humans is another important relational context of mutual support for animals and humans alike. Neohumanisms strongly supports that plants and animals are not here simply for our utilization but they also have an existential life. The positive human bond with plants and animals requires that we seek mutually supportive natural environments for all species. In other words we all adapt better in an environment that approximates some of the elements of our "ancient" environment of evolutionary adaptiveness. We are presumably adapted to live in a green environment that today is threatened by extreme urbanization and environmental degradation. Neohumanism not only reminds us of our spiritual unity and love of the entire animate and inanimate world but also our responsibility shared with humanistic and ecologically oriented psychologists as stewards of planet and people.

Service versus Group Psychology

Humanistic psychology with the pluralistic integration of multiculturalism, ecopsychology and transpersonal psychology has become a holistic psychology that along with Neohumanism honors a "subjective approach to and objective adjustment" similar to that espoused by P. R. Sarkar. This subjective approach involves a meditative or contemplative approach to self-realization and the objective approach of service to society that includes people, plants, animals and the inanimate world. P. R. Sarkar defines this "service psychology" as being based on the concept that society is one and indivisible. Furthermore Neohumanism supports a spirit of service that involves serving a Transcendental Supra-Mental Entity. Both Neohumanism and Transpersonal Psychology support this concept of a Transcendental Entity that is the goal of self-realization.

Neohumanism, like Transpersonal Psychology also takes the approach of "synthesis" that supports unity in diversity in society, a universal ideology that unites many diverse parts of society into a unified whole. In contrast an "analytical" approach emphasizes differences, which fragments society leading to the manifestations of a "group psychology". Thus a service psychology takes a synthetic approach in contrast to an analytical group psychology, which leads to divisiveness and conflict in society.

Humanistic psychology today is a pluralistic and holistic psychology that has much in common with Neohumanism. Humanistic psychology began with a focus on psychotherapy with skepticism of the role of spirituality. Today Humanistic psychology embraces multiculturalism that enriches the discipline with the psychology of liberation and spiritual unity; eco-psychology that expands humanism with a positive environmental perspective and transpersonal psychology that returns the soul to the scientific and personal growth journey of Humanistic psychology.

Neohumanism and Humanistic psychology can now exchange a richness that feeds a common passion for personal and social liberation.

Can Universities Transform:

A case study from Malaysia

By Sohail Inayatullah

CAN HIGHER EDUCATION TRANSFORM?

Will Higher Education in Malaysia transition from the factory model to a student-centred ‘Café’ approach, the ‘à la carte’ university? Will lecturers remain mired in bureaucratic form or will they be able to focus on teaching and learning? Will blended learning platforms succeed? Will the current pushes of the future – new digital technologies, an ageing society, changing paradigms in learning, heightened globalization – overwhelm higher education in Malaysia or can Malaysian Higher Education respond to these critical drivers in ways that meet student, professor, university, industry and community needs?

These and other questions were debated in Melaka from September 24-28, 2012 by academic leaders. Sponsored by the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education and organised by Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM), thirty-two Malaysian academic leaders – deans, deputy deans, and deputy vice-chancellors – from over eighteen different universities met in Melaka to develop scenarios and strategies for the futures of Malaysian higher education. Their future-oriented discussions were framed by the ‘six pillars’ futures approach, which is inspired by the works of P.R. Sarkar.

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION MINISTRY

The overall recommendations and conclusions by the academic leaders were as follows.

First, the Malaysian higher educational system needed to move from a regimented system to a flexible, adaptive one. This means a challenge to the factory model of education where rote learning, force-feeding and surveillance are considered more important than quality, critical reflection, and academic freedom. The factory model places Malaysia at an economic disadvantage as innovation is hampered. The system, argued academic leaders, had to change - business-as-usual was untenable.

Along with systemic changes, new metaphors – narratives - are required. One suggestion was a “Café in the library.” This metaphor evokes the importance of structured knowledge (the library) with informal peer-to-peer learning - fun, discussion and friendship (the café). Another equally provocative metaphor was the symphony orchestra, where coordination and proper directing led to heightened creativity. In both cases, the regimented factory model was considered the “used future” – no longer useful for the nation’s economic, scientific and cultural development. A third powerful metaphor was ‘à la carte’ wherein students had a more central role in co-designing their education.

Second, the lecturer, while remaining multi-task oriented needed to be freed from administrative documentation and other red-tape administrative procedures that took them away from reflection, teaching and community pedagogy. “Green-tape” measures that encouraged productivity were needed. They imagined the lecturer moving from being “scattered and exhausted” to “focused and motivated.”

However, given that they are being squeezed from above (university administrators demanding that they work harder and increase their productivity) and from below (students requiring instantaneous responses to their queries), the future is far from certain for them. To map the unknowns, they imagined four futures. In the first, their preferred, lecturers are high paid and autonomous, focused multi-taskers. This was contrasted with low paid lecturers who were caught between two masters: government and private interests. In the integrated scenario, their salary is based on performance. This was considered likely given industry demands, especially for elite lecturers. Finally, in the outlier scenario, lecturers and the higher education system are unable to adapt – students go overseas, international students avoid Malaysia, industry no longer values university certificates – and the lecturers lose their jobs. They wished support to avoid the outlier and the contrast scenario and help create the preferred or the integrated.

Third, the Malaysian university system needed to wisely address the digital gap between older professors and younger digital natives (both lecturers and students). New learning platforms that placed the student first needed to be developed. While adapting to new technological platforms was pivotal, face-to-face interaction was still required – blended learning.

Fourth, the disconnection that academics feel needed to be challenged. Academics need to connect with nature, with students, with industry and with the broader community. Instead of the “ivory tower” or “the enclosed castle”, new more open narratives were sought where systems were integrated and connected, creating an ecology of learning.

Fifth, the student needed to be at the centre of the Malaysian higher educational system. In the Café in the Library and the 'à la carte' model of education curriculum is modular, flexible, with course content coming from digital apps. Curriculum also quickly adapts to changing student needs. Face-to-face discussions are for assessments and for group learning. As well, flexibility of course duration is required. University degrees need to be tailored for students, designed for mobility, flexibility and the person. This means a major switch in mind-set, moving away from the factory-style, one age-set model to a life-long and life-wide (formal and informal) model.

Sixth, for the futures of learning, change would be targeted into three areas: (1) for elite students, the 'à la carte' model would work perfectly as these students had demonstrated the capacity to design their own education. However, for the middle of the road and bottom level students – the majority – the blended learning model – the "Café in the library" – where there was some hand-holding was more appropriate. However, given the pressure from parents – who remembered a different way of learning – and other stakeholders, who generally have more conservative views of learning, it was important, to ensure that what was offered in the café (or indeed, in the 'à la carte') was a 'Nutritious Buffet'. In this approach, the Ministry and the university leadership in consultation with the student body, would develop a healthy buffet of courses and possibilities. Quality control would ensure that "junk food" did not enter the buffet. They would thus ensure that content, even while student focused, still met the needs of Malaysia's changing job market and cultural framework.

In addition, the approaches outlined were time based. Even though it is still prevalent, the previous factory force-feed model has expired, its use-by-date having passed long ago. Knowledge poisoning is the result. The 'à la carte' student-led totally flexible and mobile person-based model is the long term future – 2025-2030 possibly. While the technology is rapidly developing, culture lags behind. The weights of history are numerous (mind-sets of academics, hierarchical nature of the university, the parent-child relationship between the Ministry and Universities). The 'café in the library', the blended model, is the emerging future, as it has a mix of top-down and bottom-up, digital and face to face learning. However, this future, even as it emerges, may not be appropriate for Malaysia's cultural needs. Thus, the prime recommendation is the move to a model of education with the metaphor of "Nutritious learning." It is neither force-fed, nor "all you can eat" but rather healthy eating for a healthy Malaysia: prosperity, community and sustainability.

Seventh, all agreed that the system had to adapt to changing conditions. Among those changes is the marketization of higher education. New actors are likely to enter the education market, as it is already a 2.5 trillion US dollar global industry and demand for higher education is likely to expand from 97 million students in 2000 to 262 million students in 2025. Along with public higher education, there is the private higher education market, which is estimated to be worth around \$400 billion globally.

To respond to these changes, they articulated four aggregate scenarios of the Malaysian University of 2025 – they integrated the ideal type preferred scenario of an Industry-based university with the needs of the community. This created an industry-community future by 2025, using the metaphor of Café in the library. The outlier was a return to the "Ivory Tower" with eventual loss of relevance because of new actors in the university market.

Eighth, whichever future, resulted it was important to stay true to the Malay cultural narrative of "agreeing to agree," that is, all stakeholders needed to be consulted and authentic win-win solutions developed.

FROM OVERALL TO CONCLUSIONS TO CRUCIAL DETAILS

These recommendations and conclusions were derived through the six pillars foresight process. This process is a structured create alternative futures and articulate related strategies. Each pillar has a number of methods to elucidate alternative futures. Most relevant for this report is the P.R. Sarkar Game. The Sarkar game was invented by Drs. Peter Hayward and Joe Voros from Swinburne University, Melbourne. In the game, participants are divided into four groups: the workers, the warriors, the intellectuals and the capitalists. Through scripts and props, they engage with each other to experience the use and abuse of power. Some groups find win-win solutions, where through acts of transformative leadership, the entire system wins. Other times one of the subgroups (the warriors, for example) eliminates the other groups and the entire system then loses. The game leads to insights into the deep structure of power and the behavior required for deep change.

Through the Sarkar game, university academics experienced how the university had moved from being run and organized by intellectuals to now being owned by the State for the purpose of national economic development. Thus, there are consistent calls from the Ministry for universities to be industry relevant, knowledge for pure research is considered far less important. In addition, students have now moved from being the workers of the system to the customers. This has meant more and more that lecturers have to teach with an eye to keep the student and the Ministry happy.

The warriors in the university tend to have become the administrators –within the university and externally through the Ministry, who maintain the traditional rules and procedures of the system. The integrity of the overall system is primary,

and thus they are generally resistant to new models of learning – the Ala Carte, for example, or global digital learning – as this challenges the “traditional” paradigm of how one learns. The main lessons for participants playing the Sarkar game was that as leaders, they needed to acquire the skill sets of each group – the worker, the warrior, the intellectual and the entrepreneur. In effect, they needed to listen and adapt to the changing needs of students, administrators, lecturers/professors and the Ministry, as influenced by the world market. For the participants, they kept on playing the game until all groups reached agreement, in effect, within Sarkar’s language, there was a collective transformation, and all worked for the higher good. This was a remarkable achievement, and, explained by the Malay saying of we work until “all agree to agree.”

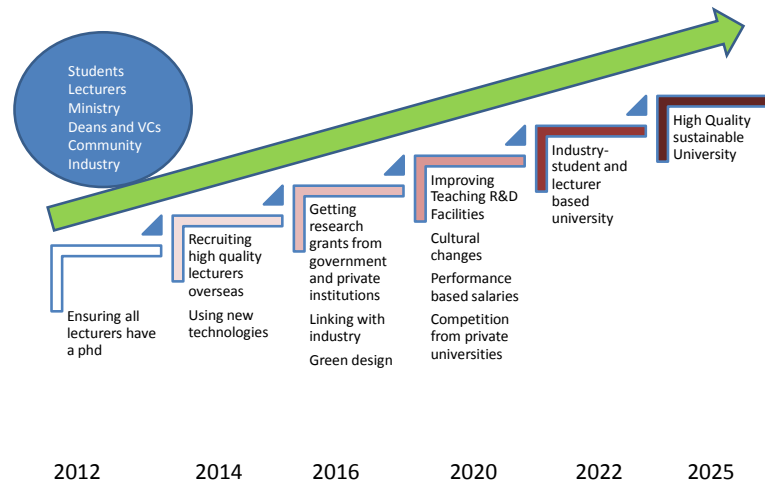
SHARED VISION MALAYSIA 2025

After considerable deliberation, through the use of the Sarkar game and scenarios, participants developed a shared vision of the Malaysian University in 2025.

The vision had the following characteristics:

1. The university was sustainable in terms of financing and energy use.
2. It was student-centred, focused on the Cafe’ in the library. There was blended learning – student flexibility and, indeed, students playing an important role in pedagogy design.
3. Lecturers had far more autonomy and were freed from administrative tasks so they could innovate in teaching and learning.
4. Measurements for success were balanced, including quality research, student satisfaction, industry relevance and sustainability.

STEPS TO REALIZING THE PREFERRED FUTURE BACKCASTING



Getting to this future did not seem difficult given the pushes from new technologies, digital migrants, the advent of the world knowledge economy and new apps. Indeed, they saw five intervening steps to get to this new future. The following illustrates the logic of their thinking.

REFLECTIONS

First, a number of methods and theories are crucial to understand possible futures. The Sarkar game, for example, is an excellent way to have groups understand the roles they are playing unconsciously and then through a reflection of their leadership strengths and weaknesses move toward transformative leadership; one that represents the needs of the system as a whole instead of one particular group. The game environment allows an authentic but safe embodied experience of the different structures. It also provides a framework for actors – lecturers, deans, deputy vice-chancellors, students, in the case of this report – to audit their leadership style, and assess what they and their team is missing, and to move toward a deeper model of leadership: one that can serve, protect, innovate and create value.

Second, as much as possible, the university needs to move away from regimented “force-fed” education to other more neohumanistic alternatives. The new digital technologies allow for more peer-to-peer learning, reducing the power of often exploitive hierarchies.

Third, the “nutritious buffet” scenario was compelling for many reasons. First, it allows for increased democratization of the university, giving students far more rights. Second, given that the young mind is still learning, and given resource constraints, it is important for elders to structure (with peer to peer advice) some limits as to what one can eat. As well, given the conservative nature of the education, the “nutritious buffet” scenario is the next step prior to the more radical ‘à la carte’ future.

Even with transformative leadership and dramatic waves of change – demographic and technological – the nutritious model is likely the wisest choice. Let us see what emerges.

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Corporatocracy to Cooperatocracy

A Proposal for Rescuing the US Economic and Political System

by Apek Mulay and Ac. Dhanjoo Ghista

Corporatocracy control of the American Political System and Economic System and Policies

Corporatocracy is a term used as an economic and political system controlled by corporations or corporate interests [5]. It is a generally pejorative term often used by critics of the current economic situation in United States. The term has been used by liberal and left-leaning critics, but also some economic libertarian critics and other political observers across the political spectrum [6]. Economist Jeffrey Sachs has described the United States as a Corporatocracy in his book *The Price of Civilization*. He suggested that it arose from four trends: weak national parties and strong political representation of individual districts, the large U.S. military establishment after World War II, big corporate money financing election campaigns, globalization and offshoring of manufacturing (once upon a time the bastion of American economy) tilting the balance away from workers[9].

The term has also been used by author John Perkins in his 2004 book *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, where he described Corporatocracy as a collective composed of corporations, banks, and governments [6]. This collective is known as what author C Wright Mills terms would call the Power Elite who wealthy individuals are holding prominent positions in Corporatocracies. These individuals pull the strings behind the curtain and control the process of determining society's economic and political policies [10]. The concept has been used in explanations of bank bailouts, exorbitant bonuses for CEOs, as well as complaints such as the exploitation of national treasuries, people, and natural resources. It has been used by critics of globalization, sometimes in conjunction with criticism of the World Bank or unfair lending practices, as well as criticism of free trade agreements [9].

How to now rescue US democracy and economy from these Power Elite?

Corporatocracy has resulted in (i) the 1% Power Elite driving the US public policies and turning it into corporate-democracy (instead of civilian democracy) and crony capitalism, with the associated (ii) downfall of US economy in terms of huge (almost irrecoverable) trade deficits and budget deficits. How to now rescue US democracy and economy from this Power Elite?

In this article, we are proposing an altered co-operative structure for companies, with the employees involved in owning company shares (instead of Wall Street), in company management decisions and sharing company profits. This would enable companies to concentrate on

company benefits and not be driven by Wall Street stock holders. With the 99% company employees now owning companies (not just the CEOs), the economy would also be owned by the 99% Americans, thereby making it possible for the realization of the All American Dream.

Corporate Structural Framework and Managerial Reform

The investors on Wall Street have been controlling the internal framework, workings and operational policies of companies and corporations. They have made companies and corporations controlled by the 1% CEOs who make the 99% employees do all the work and themselves take home 99% of the company profits. The Wall Street investors have also been demanding very high returns on their investments, thereby pressurizing US businesses (in all sectors—from electronics and semiconductor to pharmaceuticals and to medical devices) to outsource high paying manufacturing jobs offshore, in order to increase corporate profits and higher stock value to feed on the financial appetite of greedy investors.

To end control of businesses and corporations by Wall Street investors and stock holders, we are proposing a radical change in the company's internal organization and management framework, by stipulating that only the company employees should be permitted to become the majority shareholders (with only banks involved in sponsoring companies) and not the wealthy Wall Street outsider-stock holders. The company employees would also then automatically become involved in sharing managerial decisions and company profits. In other words, the company would then be organized as a cooperative, wherein all the staff are partners and have say and stake in the company operation and policy.

The proposed company organizational structure will enable the companies to become independent and freed from outside colonized ownership and policy making. The CEOs and CFOs of companies would then no longer be the 1% receiving 99% of the company assets and profits. Rather, they would be forced to make collective managerial decisions jointly with and in the best interests of their employees and in fact of the companies also. This company structural framework of employee empowerment would enable employee partnership in company ownership and participatory decision making. In other words, with the 99% employees owning the companies, the overall economy would also be owned by the 99% employees of corporations. Further, these 99% corporation owners would then turn around the Corporate Outlook and eliminate corporate dictatorship of American policies and financial control.

Co-operative Ownership of Companies

This system of Cooperative ownership of companies, resulting in “collective and cooperative management” by employees, constitutes an economic system that is based on PROUT (Progressive Utilization Theory) [1] [3]. This system would eliminate “outside (Wall Street) shareholders” and make the companies insulated from their pressures to increase profits at the cost of the employees’ interests and the national interests [1]. These employees owned and guided firms will then naturally also be able to provide health insurance and pension benefits to workers.

Elimination of outside interference by institution of this Cooperative Business Managerial System (CBMS) will help to preserve incentive to growth and not only avoid undue pressure from investors on Wall Street to ship jobs overseas but would also eventually put an end to even the presence of Wall Street and restore the country back to its 99% population, who have started the ‘Occupy Wall Street’ movement to protest against crony Capitalism and Wall Street’s greed.



Figure 1: Annual U.S. income share of the Top 1% 1910-2010. As shown in the figure above huge disparity in income caused great depression during 1930s and the same disparity is also the cause of great recession that has started since 2007 [11].

This policy of cooperative ownership of companies’ policy would also ensure that wages of hard working Americans to catch up with their productivity, increase the percentage of tax paying Americans and thereby help to eliminate budget deficits. This CMBS is most innovative way to (i) transform US Corporate-Democracy to Civilian-Democracy, which is what Democracy is all about—by the people for the people, and (ii) thereby restore the American Economy to its 99% Population—the All Americans!

The American Dream at Work: The Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP)

Currently, we have a version of CMBS in the form of Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). Most private U.S. companies operating as an ESOP are structured as S

corporation ESOPs (S ESOPs). The United States Congress established S ESOPs in 1998, to encourage and expand retirement savings by giving millions more American workers the opportunity to have equity in the companies where they work.

These S ESOPs provide retirement security, job stability and worker retention, due to the productivity gains associated with employee-ownership. Study shows that S ESOP companies performed better in 2008 compared to non-S ESOP firms and also paid their workers higher wages on average than other firms in the same industries. These ESOPs also contributed more to their workers’ retirement security and also hired workers when their non S-ESOP employers were cutting jobs during 2008 recession [21]. Scholars estimate that annual contributions to employees of S ESOPs total around \$14 billion [22]. The net U.S. economic benefit from S ESOP savings, job stability and productivity has been estimated to total \$33 billion per year [22].

A study conducted by the National Center for Employee Ownership found that S ESOP account balances were three to five times higher on average than 401(k) plans. While median employee account balances for S ESOP accounts were around 75,000 to \$100,000, median account balances for employees in 401(k) plans ranged from \$20,000 to \$22,000 [23].

A study released in July 2012 found that S corporations with private employee stock ownership plans added jobs over the last decade more quickly than the overall private sector [24]. Alex Brill, author of the study and a former advisor to the Simpson-Bowles bipartisan deficit reduction commission, concluded that “The unique strengths of employee ownership drove company gains and jobs in the past decade, while helping insulate S-ESOP businesses from the adverse effects of the recent recession.” Brill found that members of Employee-Owned S Corporations of America increased employment by 60 percent over the past decade, versus flat employment in the economy as a whole [25].

Now we want to go one step further with our CMBS, in which the employees will own the corporation’s stocks totaling its operating cost. Thereby they will be joint owners of the corporation’s assets and thereby of the corporation itself.

How would this CMBS be structured

For an established company, the company stops allowing outsiders to buy company stocks, buys off the outside owned stocks at share value, and offers them to its employees.

The total amount of salaries plus operational costs constitutes the company’s expenses. The sales constitute the company’s revenue. Employees can be given stocks to purchase, to make up the 1-year operational costs of the company; that acts as a safe-guard investment.

Also, for company expansion, the company takes out bank loans and offers stocks to employees to purchase. The employee stocks amounts need to be proportional to their salary. So in this way, the company's assets are owned by the employees through stocks.

The company's sales revenues go partly to support salaries and partly to make up the operational costs. The excess constitutes profits that are employed to give stock dividends to the employees.

If the sales fall down, the employees do not get stock dividends, but the company can still operate by making use of the stocks purchase money kept in the bank. Then when next year the company performs better, the employees can again get stock dividends. If the sales fall down for another year, the employees decide to take salary cuts instead of layoffs.

In this way, the company employees together make managerial decisions.

For a new to-be-formed company, the founding people come together and form an operational plan. Then they can take out a 10-year bank loan and offer jobs to appropriate people who have the requisite background for the company operations. From the bank loan, they defray the operational cost (including paying salaries). The company also offers stocks to be bought by the employees; this amount is kept in a bank. The company sales are used to pay the interest of bank loans and defray operational costs.

After 2-3 years, when the operational costs plus bank loan interest are met with from sales revenues, the profits can be used to pay stock dividends to employees. Then from there on, the company has to be collectively managed, such that the operational costs and bank loan interest are met by sales revenues and the profits are used to pay dividends.

When the company's operation becomes stable, the bank amount of employee share purchases can be employed to start giving additional stock dividends to employees and also for the expansion of the company.

After the bank loan is paid off, the company can take additional loans to expand the company operations.

Towards Cooperative Capitalism

This policy of Cooperatively Managed Corporations (CMCs) would ensure prosperity to all Americans with a sustainable economic demand and minimize malpractices which lead to economic bubbles with a minimal government interference. This policy would also ensure that wages of hard working Americans catch up with their productivity in *Figure 1*, thereby regenerating consumer demand, eliminating budget deficits and paving way for balanced economy. [13]

Moving further, if the employees were to become the share-holders and joint owners of companies, the working Americans would in turn become the share-holders of the US Economy. In other words, if the majority staff of company owns the majority of their company assets, then the majority of Americans would own the majority of American Economy, thereby providing the solution to the "99:1 Issue" of the Wall Street movement.

Finally, let us announce one overarching benefit of CMBS. Thus far, CEOs and owners of corporations have dominated the 99% American working class, by controlling businesses, banks and even governance policies. Now when, due to this CMBS, the 99% workers of companies and businesses have joint stake in the company and business operation and policy making, the economy will automatically come within the control of the 99% Americans [4].

This will in fact replace Corporate Capitalism by Collective (or Shared) Capitalism, and bring relief to the 99% Americans. With this transformation, many policies will become people-centered [4]. For instance, we could even make the universal healthcare dream of the people become a reality. Not just that, but we can foresee the realization of the All American Dream of Education for all, Healthcare for all, Housing for all, Public Transport for all, Employment for all, and Fulfilling Lives for all!

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Home Grown Yet Global:

Growing our Cosmolocal Neohumanist Story

Marcus Bussey

The universal aspirations of our Neohumanist Education movement offer a deeply shared sense of purpose and meaning to all of us working in schools and communities around the world. The overarching goal of this work is Liberation of Self and Service to Humanity. Neohumanist educators appreciate that education is that which enables this liberation of self. This is why the motto of Neohumanist education is: Sa' Vidya' ya' vimuktaye: Education is that Which Liberates! We take this directive from the work of Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar. Sarkar has argued that humanity is moving from a sense (albeit imperfect) of being one collective human family to being one universal family. The pressures for this shift are all around us today and include climate change, socio-economic inequity, movements for gender equity, and a growing awareness that to be sustainable we need to broaden our minds and hearts to include all participants in the cosmological system. This shift is relational in nature and marks a new phase in the evolution of consciousness on this planet.

This expansion in relational awareness challenges the local expressions of culture to let go of the limitations of mind that hinge on sentiment for one's local context, or one's species, nation, tribe or social affiliation. Relational consciousness acknowledges that the human tendency is to think small and act to preserve local lifeways at the expense of a more expansive logic. However, such are the current challenges of environmental and social conditions that the limitations to this approach are becoming increasingly obvious.

Localities are not immune to social, economic or biophysical global processes. In such globalised contexts liberation can be understood as a collective good, but will always be experienced individually on a case by case basis. Because self realisation is an individual matter with collective implications the local becomes vitally important to the process of liberation. One cannot ignore one's roots and culture when seeking to expand our horizons. The universalism at the heart of Neohumanism is born not from a negation of one's locality but through a celebration of its uniqueness within nested systems that are ultimately Cosmic.

I argue that from a neohumanist perspective universal and local are not simply opposites as they are often caricatured to be. They are dynamic processes within a living system. In the intellectual history of the West there is a tendency in to think dualistically in either-or terms. Thus universalism is often thought of as the negation of localism. Localism is seen as parochial, small, disconnected and limited. Universalism is seen as noble and better. Such thinking is unhelpful and actually undermines the neohumanist project which strives to bring dignity and value to human life everywhere and to link it with a vision of our relationships with the world that is layered and in which all expressions are understood as manifestations of the Divine.

This nested systems vision is premised not on the logic of win-lose and its zero sum calculations but on the win-win of relational consciousness in which a good in one place has universal implications for all other places. In this the implications of complexity theory align with the wisdom of spiritual traditions to generate a vision of spiritual-complexity in which the unique and the cosmic come together in a dynamic, vital yet unstable process of emergence. Such a confluence is described as Chaosmos in Deleuzian theory and the constant unfolding of the Brahma Chakra cycle in Sarkar's re-interpretation of Tantra.

Either way for Neohumanist Education the focus shifts from ungrounded universalism, if there ever was such a thing in this essentially pragmatic movement, to grounded Cosmolocal explorations in liberation. The French philosopher Michel Serres once described knowledge as a movement against the current of the 'entropic stream, toward the solar origin, itself adrift'. As with many things European Sarkar's reading would be the reverse, knowledge – as in vidya – is that which calls us towards the 'solar origin', the Cosmic hub which is similarly adrift as we are all ontologically linked to that same origin and the process of 'drift' can be either towards or away from the hub.

The map for such drifting lies within us and is tethered to our local identities which are in turn Cosmically reoriented through an education which promotes deeper knowing of our place in the world, a deeper grasp of our potential, which is from a spiritual perspective potentially unlimited yet always contextually limited through history, culture and the editing of imagination which power imposes upon all stakeholders in society. The liberative power of our Cosmically oriented education system is to affirm locality by opening up history to deeper and less tribal 'stories', nurturing universalist culture over the pseudocultural accretions of millennia, and freeing the human imagination to explore realities and possibilities beyond those imposed by authority and custom.

[Continued on Page 16](#)

Theatre in Education Workshop

by Ole Brekke of Commedia School

A Report by Aimee Ranquist

Delegates from Russia, Taiwan, Vietnam, Argentina, USA & India were delighted in early April to attend a two-day intensive theatre workshop given by Ole Brekke of Copenhagen Commedia School. The theme was “*play*.” So much of our lives are spent doing other things, other than play. Re-incorporated in every aspect of life, adults and children alike can benefit from the relaxation, creativity (imagination) inherent in play.

Colors, pictures, the sensory motor organs ... growing roots and walking like a tree! ... “It is a lot of fun and also it inspires our creativity. It is a good way to learn things through play and games,” said Sis. Jivandhara. From being a worm ... to how would a butterfly react ... to how can we make a human couch ... and bounce around like bursting fire crackers! “I feel it is a very good way to express ourselves,” said Bro. Devaranjan. Ole Brekke brought warmth & freshness to the cold Swedish seminary surrounded by lots of snow.

“It was about developing certain skills – a great opportunity to understand how to be an actor, how to play, (how to interact as a teacher, role model, parent, participant in most any facet of life), which doesn’t usually happen in our day-to-day lives,” said Bro. Dharmamuti. Not only does it help enhance Social Skills, theatre was used to bring out other education characteristics: Knowledge, Inquiry and Problem Solving, Communication, Values and goal setting. It is indispensable to teamwork and LOVE!

(If we can’t add love in here, it’s just not the same.)
Decidedly, this was the most fun this diverse group had experienced together as a team sport. ... Good times, fun and laughter were had by all.

Workshops by Ole Brekke give both theoretical and practical experience in using a theatrical approach in any educational situation from early childhood to professional and technical studies and including, of course, primary and secondary school settings. For more on Theatre in Education visit the website of The Commedia School- <http://commediaschool.com/>.



Continued from Page 15

Home Grown Yet Global: Growing our Cosmolocal Neohumanist Story

In our educational project the local fosters healthy identity when it is linked to spiritual principles which reframe identity as always provisionally local. Thus the home grown is always a global proposition. The school becomes a garden in which the soul of each child is nurtured into fullness and in which practical skills inform this growth. The logic of liberation in such a context is linked to the learning of such skills. To be skilful means also to be useful and this usefulness is such an important element in building a strong sense of self. Then to link utility, as Neohumanism does, with service expands the heart by making one’s usefulness socially relevant. In this process the deeper skills of unconditional loving and relational reasoning enable the utility of a skill owned by one’s hands to become a skill that empowers a community.

Neohumanist educational projects are cosmolocal initiatives which foster global consciousness whilst attending to the immediate needs of students, their families and the broader community. How this work of learning occurs depends on the local context but should never be defined by that context. Education systems vary widely from place to place as do the resources available to schools and communities. What is a constant is the human spirit and its desire for liberation from the narrow bondages imposed by sectarian and fragmented consciousness and the vested interests that benefit from disarray and confusion. Today we are at the growing edge of consciousness and the pressure is on us all to grow our neohumanist education story, to nurture a vision of a healthy and diverse society which holds universal values whilst honouring the unique expression we all bring to that story. There is no one future before us – there are many futures and each one is rich with promise.

AYAM Intensive Yoga Teacher Training

Córdoba, Argentina

by José Luis Ferrero

The AYAM (Academia de Yoga de Ananda Marga) Intensive Yoga Teacher Course was held from January 15th to 31st at the Ananda Mayadiipa Master Unit. This MU is set among the mountains, in the beautiful province of Córdoba, in central Argentina. It is a rugged area with rivers, mountains, lakes and forests. There also are many plant and animal species living in the wild. This area of lush nature is a suitable environment for the practice of meditation and ásanas and for the study of spiritual matters.



AYAM offers to the students involved in this activity a deep and unique experience, with a total immersion into the study and practice for 17 consecutive days. The natural environment, full-time dedication, ásanas, meditation, subtle food and coexistence with teachers, acaryas and peers have a profound positive effect on the body and mind of all participants. As teachers we have thoroughly enjoyed this activity, sharing and getting inspiration and spiritual growth with our students.

Nine students from various provinces of Argentina and from Chile and Mexico participated in the activity. We are very happy with this group of brilliant yoga teachers who put their energy to the service of humanity through the ideals of spirituality and the Neohumanism of P. R. Sarkar. Below we transcribe the opinion of some of the graduates of this course.



"Beyond learning new matters, concepts and disciplines, this course was learning for the life, was a "magic" period. The warmth of the teachers, the privilege of sharing the experience with acaryas, the peace of the environment, all ... just makes me want to go back, not to acquire more knowledge, but to stay. I thank my son who motivated me to do this training." - Patricia Vera Sánchez – Puerto Montt – Chile



"This intensive course was a very pleasant experience. It goes far beyond the asanas. It allowed me to work with patience, tolerance, humility and self-criticism: it was very enlightening. Knowledge provided is deep and so are the lessons learned through coexistence. I learned a lot, felt more, remembered much. For me it's a before and after." - Lorenzo Giménez Camarones – Chubut – Argentina



"I cannot say that the experience "was" in one way or another, because it continues now with the changes arising from this course; Changes arising from the attempt to put into daily life the knowledge that we shared. I went in search of a yoga course, imagining that I would work with the body and mind, balance and harmony of both, and I received a balm for the spirit. Consistency and holistic internal work, applied in practical life, gives greater meaning to take this path. I appreciate the loving treatment given to us by the teachers Jyotirmaya and Kriipamayii and the acaryas Dada Ramashrayananda and Dada Tattvabodhananda. They opened our hearts to learning. I think it's a beautiful start on this path." - Azucena Sánchez – Usuhaia - Argentina






PRAMA INSTITUTE holistic education for people and planet

The Prama Institute (PI) started off the new year in January with a kiirtan concert featuring the well known kiirtan artist, Jai Uttal. The concert held on Friday night at Fuerguson Hall on the Asheville Buncombe Technical College campus attracted 300 participants. Jai Uttal conducted a kiirtan workshop in downtown Asheville on Saturday at One Center Yoga for 35 participants.


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 **June 7 - 16, 2013**
www.pramawellnesscenter.org

The Prama Institute Wellness Center which had opened in September continued to hold a monthly detox weekend with different themes. The January theme was Super Immunity for Winter and Beyond; February focused on Ayurveda and March on Highly Nutrient Foods. These programs while varying the content for an in depth nutritional education all included juice and vegetable broth graduated fasting, yoga, meditation, stress management and social support group sessions. The social support groups involved journaling, group discussion and supporting each other's efforts at accomplishing individual health and life style changes. The PI Wellness Center completed construction of an additional private bedroom on the second level to increase our residential capacity to 10 individuals. The PI Wellness Center is now opening up our schedule to accommodate daily appointments on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Upcoming Programmes include a Yoga Detox and Rejuvenation Retreat (10 Days), with Dada Dharmavedananda and Ramesh Bjornes, June 7-16, 2013. This comprehensive, week-long program will teach simple, effective techniques to take charge of one's own health. Yogi and naturopathic expert Dada Dharmavedananda will give first rate, hands-on teachings in how detoxification and rejuvenation really works.

The group rentals for our Winter months at the PI domes included a number of yoga studios, Willmington Yoga, Blue Lotus from Raleigh, Asheville Yoga Center and Charlotte Family Yoga.

We have just conducted a work weekend in April that completed the landscaping for three areas of gardens in the rear of the PI and developed four raised beds for our Spring vegetable garden. The Women's Welfare and Development Foundation (WWD-F) completed work on their greenhouse construction on their land and added a hydroponic system for year-round production.

Construction of the first community residence is nearing completion on the eco-village where those working on the Master Unit will live. When completed this house could accommodate two families and several single individuals. Preparation for the construction of a second house on the 25 acre eco-village next to the MU is now underway.



Gems of Neohumanism

By Eric Jacobson

In the process of applying the philosophy of Neohumanism to the education of a new generation, we discover that while the general public is likely unaware of the philosophy, certain facets of it are easily appreciated and strike a resonant chord of agreement. This series is exploring some of these as they were discovered in an ethnically, religiously, and demographically diverse setting—New York. The first gem, Pseudo-Culture vs. True Human Culture appeared last issue.

Gem #2: Ecology

Ecology is the branch of biology dealing with the relations and interactions between organisms and their environment, including other organisms. Human beings around the world have increasingly embraced the practices recommended by ecologists in recent years. Neohumanists can not only ride this powerful wave of increased awareness about our relationship with the world around us, they can add momentum to it!

The original catalyst for the popularity of the ecological movement was fear—fear that we humans were going to destroy the very ecosystem we depend upon to live. In spite of mounting evidence which came in the form of losses in air, water, and soil quality, and extinction of other species, the majority of the world's population long remained ecologically ignorant in the policies of their governments, the procedures of their businesses, and practices of their daily lives. One can argue that this ignorance remains—barely checked by the ecology movement. Then the movement gained momentum with the immediacy of global warming and its threat to our lives.

The ecology movement, however flawed, is a force to be reckoned with, creating change at every level of society. But as long as the ecology movement remains grounded in the selfish preservation of human life, its progress will be slow and unreliable. Today ordinary people want to save the world for their children. But today's children want to go beyond their parents' dreams, and save the world for everyone and everything.

The motivation of self-preservation cannot lead us to true ecology, and cannot be a renewable self-sustaining source for the depth of inspiration, research, and action that is needed. Societies that consider themselves ecologically aware are still creating poisons away from their homeland as a by-product of manufacturing, burying contaminants underground, shipping trash to other communities, and destroying species “non-essential” to humans. Even if humanism were practiced to perfection, and the ecological movement guided us away from anything which harmed anyone anywhere, it still would fail in the long run because humanity is not above and apart from the rest of creation.

This is where the Neohumanist movement steps in. By defining humans as integrally connected to, ***even one*** with the rest of the living and non-living environment, it raises ecology to a new level. In fact, this concept is so profound that a new term had to be coined for it, “deep ecology.” That is, an ecology that is endlessly renewable and has a self-sustaining source of inspiration. Neohumanism not only embraces deep ecology, it provides the means to experience this new definition of what a human being is through meditation and yoga practice. In simple terms, “*We must act to preserve nature for the welfare of humanity,*” must be replaced by “*We must act to preserve nature because it is us.*” Neohumanist schools are therefore at the forefront of this global ecological wave, providing new energy and ideas, leading the way to better education and practice. We are not just recycling plastic bottles but caring for the local flora and fauna. We are not just reducing our electric use, but creating our own clean energy. We are not just trying to avoid the dumping of contaminated water, we are collecting and purifying rainwater.

Due to our sublime, all-inclusive philosophy, we cannot help but to create new ecological curriculum and curriculum in action for our students. And while the public at large may not know our philosophy by name, they can get a glimpse of it through our actions. Ecological actions strike a chord with the parents of the world—that makes it a Gem of Neohumanism.

Each of the Gems of Neohumanism is so powerful as to be capable of being the main focus behind creating a school and then attracting people to it! I once heard somebody say that Neohumanist education was just a new combination of old methods. To that I confidently say, “Nonsense!” It is not even a particular method! And that, my friends, is the whole point of this series—to share with our readers the awareness that Neohumanism comes endowed with a purse of precious jewels, each of which could easily stand on its own as the foundation for a school. Now imagine if we used all those jewels in each of our schools!

In the next issue we will share Gem #3 with you. Upcoming gems will include: Awakened Conscience, Applied Learning, Food, Health, Life as a Mission, Not a method, Wholistic approach, Multiple Intelligences.

The following article about conflict resolution is taken from the curriculum of the NHE schools in Romania. It was just published in a Romanian journal about Mediation in schools, called "Social Economic Debates: Domains of research - education and educational policies, economic politics, social economy, management/marketing, mediation." by the Association for Promoting Entrepreneurial spirit and published by the publishing house "Rosetti International" volume 1/2013. The paper was also presented to about 100 professors, lawyers, mediators, etc. on April 4th at the National Conference on School Mediation which was held at the Faculty of International Economic Relations through its Master program of Integration and European Business together with the Faculty of Juridical science and Administration through its Master program in Mediation. The event was held at the Christian University "Dimitrie Cantemir" in Bucharest, Romania.

Conflict Resolution

In most educational settings, conflict between children is considered an unwelcome, bothersome interruption to the educational process. By contrast, in Neohumanist Education, conflicts are seen as excellent, spontaneous opportunities for coaching children's socio-emotional skills. While pro-social communication skills can be pro-actively encouraged through story-telling, discussion and role playing, the most important "teachable moments" are those that arise naturally in daily situations. Neohumanist teacher training spends a great deal of time providing teachers with skills in mediation, problem solving and positive communication techniques. The few minutes needed to solve a conflict between children, not as a judge of a court, but as a facilitator, involving children in the process and teaching them to understand and recognize their own feelings and the feelings of the other are invaluable opportunities for important life lessons.

Neohumanist philosophy has a fundamentally positive approach to obstacles, reframing them as "helping forces" rather than hindrances. Teachers are guided to reframe their perceptions of children as "bad," "naughty," "hyper-active," etc. and to seek to understand the cause of the behavior, not just its symptoms. Difficult behaviors are often signs of dysregulation, a state which has surpassed the child's level of stress tolerance. Dysregulation is usually caused by fear, stress or overwhelm. Difficult behaviors often serve a functional purpose for the child in modulating their dysregulation. Bolting away from the classroom, for example can be a sign that the child is overwhelmed on a sensorial level or that he is feeling threatened. Attention seeking behaviors are a sign that the child actually needs soothing adult attention to return to a regulated state. If these behaviors are correctly interpreted, the adult can then respond in a compassionate, appropriate and effective way, rather than just reacting to the behavior out of their own stress, fear and overwhelm and thus increasing the level of dysregulation. Once the underlying purpose of the behavior is understood, then the teacher can find ways to increase the child's self-awareness by reflecting back to him what she is understanding through her empathy and validation. For example if a child tries to grab a toy car from another child, the teacher can accept her feelings by saying "I can see how much you want to play with the car, but right now it is with Vlad. Let's ask him if you can play with it when he is finished." By contrast, when teachers attempt to ignore, judge or invalidate feelings, and solve the problem directly themselves, they tend to leave the child feeling frustrated, blocked and disempowered. For example, the teacher could have said "That isn't nice, Emma – give the car back to Vlad right now and wait your turn." The child may obey, but she is not likely to have gained skills that will help her to learn how to avoid the same problem in the future.

In Neohumanist Education, the "correct" interpretation of the child's behavior is one that creates compassion, rather than judgment. Once the teacher is convinced of her own judgmental evaluation of a child's behavior, it tends to create a self-fulfilling prophecy. If the teacher believes for example "he doesn't want to listen", indeed the child will no longer want to listen. Children are very sensitive to the positive or negative attitudes of those around them. Judgments create a barrier and tend to cement negative behaviors in place, while understanding creates a bridge and open up new possibilities for change and transformation. Children have a deep desire to please the adults around them, and when adults have positive expectations and communicate empathically even when children are dysregulated, they are motivated to meet those expectations. On the other hand, when a child feels that an adult has already labeled them, they often accept the adult's evaluation as true and stop trying to be any different.

Teachers learn the art of positive communication putting greater emphasis on clearly expressing desired behaviors rather than constantly reactively correcting negative behaviors with "don't do that", "no" etc. Similarly, it is important to look for opportunities to validate and reinforce positive qualities by looking for opportunities to clearly describe them to children. An example for a child that tends to be restless but is standing in line the teacher may say, "It isn't easy to wait your turn quietly – you are really trying hard to be patient today!" Describing such a behavior is much more effective than simply praising a child for being "good," as it offers clear information about what the adult is noticing, and thus encourages the child to repeat the behavior.

The Wisdom of the Clown

Lessons in the language of the heart

by Jane Greis

At Sunshine we have a special affinity for the performing arts as truly holistic modality. Every year at this time we begin co-creating a theatre play to be performed in the spring by the children and teachers. This collaborative process is challenging and satisfying for everyone. This year we have the good fortune of launching the process with a weekend workshop and performance dovetailing beautifully with the upcoming local Carnival festivities.

The workshop begins with a Friday afternoon performance for the greater Sunshine community. Children, teachers and parents gather in the bright sunny classroom. Excitement is in the air as we greet our special guest performer... a clown.

A clown named named Dr Klutz.

The audience settles in with eager anticipation as Dr. Klutz sets up his performance space in front of the big-top circus poster made earlier this school year by the Sunshine students and teachers. The perfect backdrop for the show. Something magic is afoot!

Dr Klutz sets a classic and intriguing scene and our curiosity is piqued. He's got the jaunty circus music playing in the background, the requisite loud colorful clothes and funny hat, a magic wand among his enigmatic props all on display and a collection of old battered suitcases full of mystery and delight, no doubt. The excitement is palpable. Already, we are on the edges of our seats! And in a few moments, the show... or should we say, the english lesson begins.



Within two minutes we are totally immersed in this delightful world. We are transported beyond the classroom and beyond ourselves to a place where anything can happen. Before we know it, between giggles and squeals of glee, even the shyest of kids are thrusting hands in the air and repeating after Dr Klutz “white glove,” “walking stick” and other english words and phrases as they arise within his amusing antics.

Dr Klutz is the alter ego of Schelie Nielsen, a gifted Australian clown/educator who has made his home in the Czech Republic for many years. Schelie uses clowning, mime and theatre to teach english to children of all ages. He has been offering performances and workshops for both children and teachers at schools throughout Europe and Australia for nearly 20 years.

After meeting Schelie at an education conference last year in Croatia, Sunshine director Tatjana Popov, invited him to Switzerland to co-present a weekend workshop on the performing arts in learning. The workshop is part of an on-going neo-humanist teacher's training program Tatjana offers for both aspiring and experienced teachers. Watching Dr. Klutz in action was not just good entertainment on the opening afternoon of the workshop, it was a beautiful and inspiring embodiment of play-based holistic learning in action.



The particular performance that afternoon, designed to motivate young learners of english is entitled, “The Magical Language Show,” and revolves around a rather inept but charming magician who can only get this magic tricks to work with the help of the children speaking “good english.”

A proponent of the “Total Physical Response” approach to language learning or “TPR” pioneered by James Asher in California in the late 70’s, Schelie uses the well-proven technique of coupling language with physical gestures and activities to aid children in learning and remembering vocabulary and context. On this strong foundation Schellie builds an exciting learning experience that goes well beyond language acquisition.

By adding interactive performance, clowning, music and magic to the mix Schelie places the work in a much larger and richer context. He creates a magical realm, in which he takes the TPR methodology to the next level. And in Schelie's skilled hands, the children are indeed learning english and so much more. Yes, they are learning with the aid of their physical bodies but also with their minds and imaginations, and most wonderfully, with their hearts and with each other. What Schelie does I am tempted to call the "Total Child Response."

As a teacher, and a performance maker, I am watching with rapt attention and asking myself, "What are the elements that make this Dr Klutz's show so effective?" I will try to unpack this notion like one of Dr Klutz's mysterious vintage suitcases looking perhaps for the secret recipe for the magic spell he casts.

The structure of the program itself mirrors that of the learning process, expressed simply and elegantly by nature educator Joseph Conrad as "flow learning." Flow learning describes the four phases of the learning process:

1. Awaken enthusiasm,
2. Focus Attention
3. Experience Directly
4. Share Inspiration



The third element, "experience directly" is key. The show is highly interactivity. Dr Klutz creates a warm and inviting world in which there is ample opportunity for the children to come forward and participate with comfort and confidence. And as they do, the performer/audience split, slowly begins to recede as the kids sidle up closer and closer to the action. By the end, the theatrical "fourth wall" has completely disintegrated and the show has morphed into a giant dance party with the entire community boogying together with great abandon and joy. As a teacher, it was wonderful to see some of the more reserved or less verbal children participating so fully and happily.

Next we have humor. The benefits of humor in the classroom is well known. The positive physical and emotional effects of humor include improved circulation and breathing, increased relaxation and receptivity, reduced stress and anxiety and increased motivation and focus - all good things for learning. Any preschool teacher will take their hat off to someone who can keep a room full of three and four-year-olds spellbound for 45 minutes! That alone is worth the price of admission.

I must also give props to the narrative premise of Schelie's show: the hapless magician messing up his tricks and needing the kids to bail him out. This is a wonderful device. By now, the kids have completely bought into the game which now demands an extra level of concentration and cognitive engagement as they witness Dr Klutz messing up the tricks over and over again. This is not passive consumer entertainment. They have a job to do. The kids must pay attention and follow closely in order to give Dr Klutz the necessary fix. Add to that it must be in english!

So here is this delightful character, showing us how to teach language by means of anything but language. Schelie has spent years refining this performance/lesson, and it shows.

This is important for us at Sunshine, we are working with the complexities of multilingualism every day. Take a look at the population of Sunshine both children and teachers and you'll find a veritable United Nations. With parents from literally every corner of the globe, the majority of our kids are growing up in multi-lingual, multicultural homes. Yes, we teach english and "in english", german and "in german," russian and "in russian." Schelie's rich embodied approach reminds us that underneath our multilingualism what we are really endeavoring to teach, and for that matter learn, is the "language of the heart."

What is this language of this heart? How does it manifest? How do we cultivate it and move toward fluency? This is pretty much the ongoing inquiry for us as teachers and human beings, and what characterizes our neo-humanist approach.

For me, the language of the heart speaks to that which is universal in us and arises from our hard-wired need for and desire for connection. It is the natural domain of young children as it is fundamentally preverbal and precognitive.

We make connection non-verbally, through our physicality, our movements, our deeds, the music, rhythm and color of our voices, expressions and interactions with each other. Sounds like the building blocks of theatre, doesn't it?



In our western culture our education system has placed a premium on intellectual and cognitive aspects of the self and the rest of our faculties and propensities have been left to wither on the vine. Rather than transcend and include our non-verbal, non-cognitive early ways of knowing, our tendency, in recent generations has been to marginalize them or abandon them altogether. Thank goodness we are slowly becoming hip to the error of our ways, but still we are often at a loss as to how to go about reclaiming our non-cognitive, non-verbal ways of knowing.

Enter, the clown, our protagonist, the embodiment of wholeness and the teacher of the language of the heart. He will show us the way. The clown archetype is strong and rich and is present in some form in nearly all cultures. The clown, unfortunately, lives much of the time in shadow here in Switzerland as elsewhere in the western world. During this carnival time, this potent time before spring, before renewal and awakening, the clown comes out to play. He gives us gifts for the coming year.

Simply said, clowns are funny. Clowns are entertaining. They have a cheeky trickster quality and an innocence, and a vulnerability, that are irresistible to us. They exhibit a myriad of emotions, but let them pass without judgement like clouds in the sky. A clown can show us our humanity in all its glory and pathos, in a way a child can grasp intuitively. He is so

simple yet so complex and we love him dearly for it. He is the mirror of our emotional life.

And mirror he did as we moved into the teachers training portion of the weekend. Fridays performance was delightful, and inspiring. It laid the ground work for the teachers' work shop. I was excited to glean from Schelie some basic skills around clowning, mime, and developing performance. Our spirits were high and Schelie introduced us to the concepts of TPR, taught us some juggling and mime basics. We were having a great time and imagining how fun it was going to be to incorporate this into our daily work with kids.

As the day progressed and we got deeper into the material, we donned our red noses and tried our hand at the practice of evoking our own inner clown. That is when the transformation and the real learning began. Under the gentle guidance of both Tatjana and Schelie, we had built a strong container - a crucible in which we could hold this sacred energy of the fool and receive its teachings.

Through his honesty and authenticity, Schelie seemed to be the very incarnation of the clown archetype. His example gave us the courage to risk taking the deep dive with him. The clown began to embody us all - not just the playfulness, openness and humor we normally associated with the clown but something perhaps unexpected - a deep vulnerability and a willingness to risk being seen.

For that afternoon, we got a taste of what social researcher Brené Brown calls "living wholeheartedly," owning our imperfections and foibles, all the while never doubting our fundamental value and worthiness. Something that comes naturally to the clown. We came to a new place of intimacy with a deeply personal sharing. I think every one of us bumped up against our edges that afternoon and dared to stretch beyond them. We were connecting, we were building community through the language of the heart.



Vulnerability is the core, the heart, the center, of meaningful human experience. -Brené Brown

AMSAI and AMJAS MGQ Las Pinas City

Nursery and Kindergarten in Manila, Philippines

A Beautiful Story

By Amelia Arsenal



Background

I have always felt that the Living Quarters of the late Shrii P. R. Sarkar in Manila, Philippines should be home to activities that reflect his universal philosophy of neohumanism. Thinking about this, in 2007, I approached the then Sectorial Office Secretary for Ananda Marga, Dada Unmantrananda, and told him that I would like to start a school at this location so we could practically share the philosophy of Shrii P. R. Sarkar with the neighborhood. From the first day we introduced Shrii P. R. Sarkar as the founder and inspiration of the school, and explained to the parents about his vision.

The first steps

In August 2007 we started to recruit children. It was in the middle of a typhoon, but in spite of us having only a small space of 30 sqm, and we were completely unknown in the area, by Grace we got 25 students enrolled. As this was an outreach program in a poor neighborhood, the fees were minimal and it

was a deliberate policy to accept children of poor parents only. The initial investment for equipment, and the shortfall between income and expenses, was at this stage paid for by the Lanesra Foundation. The school fees varied depending on the ability of the parents to pay, and the evaluation included interviews, examination of pay slips, electricity bills, water bills and rent agreements, and was completed by a home visit. As this was a subsidized school inside Shrii P. R. Sarkar's own house, we called it an AMJAS, Ananda Marga Jagrti (spiritual center) School. AMJAS schools offer low cost education to those in need.

Expansion

After running in a subsidized manner for two years, and in the process turning away all people who could afford to pay proper school fees, an idea suddenly came to me. Instead of having the school subsidized by us, why not let those who can afford to, pay for those who can't? The question was how to do this? Why would someone with money pay substantially more for their education in order to subsidize poor parents they did not know?

Again, Grace was with us. We started a second program that was full tuition based, at the same premises, only at a different time of day. Amazingly, the wealthier parents agreed to send their children to the same school premises at a much higher price, even though the education was essentially the same. We did give them some extra amenities such as air conditioning, computers, TV, etc., but classes were held in the same 30sqm room. In this way we became partners with the new parents, and they helped us to achieve our goal to provide everyone with high quality education. We called this program an AMSAI, Ananda Marga Special Academic Institute, and held classes in the afternoon and AMJAS in the morning.

These days, the AMSAI pays all the bills and salaries of teachers, as well as the shortfall of the AMJAS. There is no longer any need for any subsidy, as the schools, taken as a whole, are self-sufficient. Presently the schools combined have around 75 students divided into 4 sessions, which is the absolute maximum we can manage in the space available.



Academic Excellence

We have received numerous testimonials from parents of our graduates who tell stories of how the teachers in their child's primary school are surprised at the level of knowledge of the children that graduate from both the AMJAS and the AMSAI School. They all want to know where this fantastic school is located!

We also decided to test our level of education in an objective manner, by sponsoring children to sit for the entrance exam of the San Beda College, one of the most exclusive private schools in Manila. Every year all those we send pass the exams, which confirms that the educational level in our schools is second to none. Still, even though we strive for academic greatness, the central theme of Neohumanism is never forgotten. Children learn to take care of the environment, be kind to animals and plants; get to try a vegetarian diet; and last but not least, get to experience the peace derived from meditation.



The Future Is Now

Currently, we are planning for the future. We have been given land opposite Shrii P. R. Sarkar's house, and we are presently constructing a fence around the premises. Lanesra Foundation and Ananda Marga are currently working on a new school building which should be ready this year. At the same time we are registering the school with the Department of Education, which will enable us to expand the classes to become a full primary school.

This is the beautiful story of the schools and Shrii P. R. Sarkar's home in Manila. By Grace, a simple idea took form and became a successful, economically self-sufficient service project that helps the children and makes Shrii P. R. Sarkar's philosophy known in the neighborhood.



Continued from Page 20 Conflict Resolution

As only a regulated adult can soothe a dysregulated child, the teacher's own self-development of the ability to manage and cope with stress is essential. For this reason, teachers are provided with training in stress management techniques such as deep breathing, relaxation, yoga exercises and self-awareness. Often children may easily become very wound up and agitated if they sense that the teacher is stressed out. The teacher's level of stress can create a sense of insecurity in the classroom environment, increasing the likelihood of children becoming dysregulated. Just as safety, connection and empathy help to regulate children, insecurity, judgment and disconnection tend to aggravate dysregulation. Self-reflection is also necessary to understand whether difficult behaviors may be a sign of boredom, indicating that the curriculum pace is too slow or not providing enough challenge for more active learners. It may be a sign that the learning styles of all learners are not being met, and thus methodology may need to be enriched for multiple intelligence learning. It may also be a sign that the teacher is not listening and understanding the children attentively. Often children will express their needs, and if the behavior is not given a positive outlet, it tends to boil over into misbehavior. Difficult behaviors provide a useful mirror for the teacher to better understand herself and improve teaching strategies. In addition, when a teacher is successfully able to regulate a dysregulated child in the classroom, this provides an important modeling of compassionate behavior that helps the other children to understand how to communicate responsibly and effectively.



Ananda Ratna's Neohumanist School in Lomé, Togo

Background:

Our 3.5 hectare property was given to Ananda Marga in 1990, by Togo's former president, Gnassingbe Eyadema. During the 90's, there was much political, social and economic instability in Togo, which seemed to have slowed the development of Ananda Ratna. Between 2001 and 2003, Dada Gunamaya and Dada Jayakrishna were working together in Togo, and began Kindergarten classes in the meditation hall. After their departure, Dada Tanmaya arrived from Ghana and began to develop the school. By 2008, with help from a couple of private donors and AMURT (Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team) – Italy, Dada constructed 8 classrooms and expanded the school to include Kindergarten through Class 6. Aside from his work with the school, Dada has planted beautiful gardens around the jagrti (spiritual center).



Current:

Our Neohumanist School is steadily growing. The new school committee has created a wonderful atmosphere for over 445 children to progress in all spheres of life.

We have now integrated the first secondary 3 classes in order to welcome those who finished the primary term. The new office and library building is almost over and cultivations are going on in the garden. Our priority is to complete the fence, build 2 more classrooms for the secondary school and provide the children with top quality education based on the principles of Neohumanism.

Our main challenge is the land encroachment. It is by no means common to have 3.5 hectares of land in the middle of a city (Lomé, is the capital of Togo) this size. Currently, the land has no fence. For this reason, neighbouring households and individuals are throwing their rubbish on the land. Some years ago, the late Dada Rudreshvarananda recognized this serious problem and gave some funds to construct concrete pillars on half of the border. Later, thanks to Gurukula's fundraising efforts we could complete 60 meters of fence.

We are now urgently seeking funds for the 600 meters of fence remaining. The estimate is about 4.000 USD per 100 meters of fence. Thank you for your support!



The “Soft Side” Based Alternative:

Neohumanist Schools, Thailand

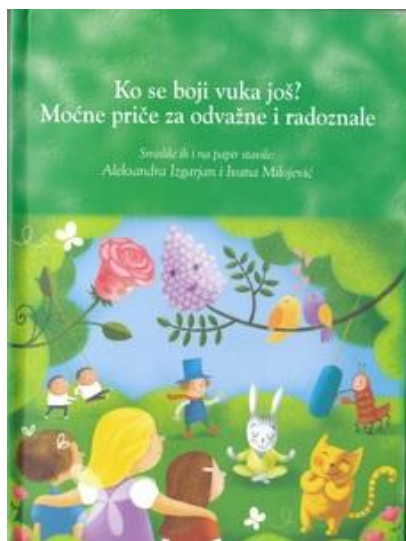
By Jaree Naksamrit

After studying in the university for 4 years, in November 2012 I decided to help the Baan Unrak School again for a short period as their Principal. When I traveled back again to Sangklaburi, Thailand, I found that the school had some problems with teacher training. Although the teachers had received training to become Neohumanist teachers, not all were able to integrate what they learned into their teaching. The problem is that it is difficult to change the paradigm of mainstream education and this old paradigm blocks the teacher’s ability to think differently and learn new ways. At the same time, the students want more care, more guidance and good models, but they only get what teachers teach from books and this learning method offers little for deeply learning about humanity and civilization. For many years I saw that Didi Ananda Anuraga tried hard to guide the teachers in the school, but there was always a bit of a language barrier in communication making it difficult to lead teachers from a different culture in following a Neohumanist school strategy. This made it difficult for the school to succeed quickly in becoming a Neohumanist School. The “soft side based” alternative education is one of the solutions for the school as it focuses on the human side, to meet the needs of both the teachers and the students. Teachers and students have the opportunity to provide feedback to the school and the students and teachers and administration work together as a team.

I found that many good things are happening in Neohumanist schools in Thailand. The Amatyakul School in Bangkok is based on Neohumanist Education, and run by Dr. Kiatiwan Amatyakul and his wife. They have succeeded in guiding and leading their teachers to become Neohumanists. The teachers have high self esteem, self sufficiency, and awareness of the planet. They teach the students to be loving, service-minded and to think positively and have integrated positive methods in their teaching approach. Teachers and students sing Baba Nam Kevalam (love is all there is) to inspire everyone in the school and to help develop the teaching and learning environment with concentration and happiness. At the end of the year the school showcases the teachers and students academic and life skills. The students are happy and proud of themselves as are their parents. This again is what I call “the soft side based”, or human based alternative to school management. The administrators, teachers, students and parents are united like a team; they work together, are satisfied and love each other and expand to the world around them. These are living schools.

This year the two Neohumanist schools in Thailand, Baan Unrak School in Sangklaburi and Amatyakul School in Bangkok are brother and sister schools. They will learn from each other and share their experiences to improve Neohumanist school pedagogy and develop the character of their students. This will facilitate implementing the Neohumanist philosophy of P.R. Sarkar’s, conducting more research based on Neohumanistic Education and developing a Neohumanist management model for a better society.





Who Is Afraid of the Big, Bad Wolf? Awesome Stories for the Courageous and Curious

by Prof. Aleksandra Izgarjan and Prof. Ivana Milojević

*Deconstruction of gender and cultural stereotypes in folk tales
Reconstruction of stories which reflect values of a democratic and inclusive
peace culture*

*From violent to nonviolent conflict resolution
Envisioning social inclusion of marginalised groups*

*Creation and enhancement of peace building networks in schools via the use of
traditional and new ICTs*

*Practical strategies for stimulating dialogical approach and critical literacy
when working with students*

The primary goal of the program Storytelling for Peace, Gender Partnership and Cultural Pluralism is promotion of gender equality, cultural tolerance and inclusive education as well as non-violent conflict resolution. A large number of traditional stories studied in schools in Serbia (and beyond), despite their undoubted aesthetic and cultural values, contain gender and cultural stereotypes which, to start with, present young women as victims, passive, sleeping beauties who wait for the prince to wake them up and save them (Cinderella, Red Riding Hood, Snow White, Beauty and the Beast, Little Mermaid). Older women are most often portrayed as evil (evil witches, fairies, queens, step mothers) and dangerous especially for young women whom they are trying to destroy.

In Serbian folk tales and poems women fall into two broad categories: mothers (mother of nine Jugoviæi, mother of king Marko) and nurturers (The Girl from Kosovo) and they are presented as nameless and silent bystanders. Some of these stories directly or indirectly advocate violence against women and create prejudice against marginalized groups (story Magical language, poem Building of Skadar). Thus many traditional stories can have negative and devastating influence on positive human and democratic values. Specifically in many traditional European and Serbian stories violence against women is the norm, conflicts are resolved violently while social hierarchies and gender, racial and national stereotypes are preserved. Selfishness, cruelty, spitefulness and manipulateness are often common characteristics of the heroes and the methods they use to achieve their personal goals since they are not interested in solving problems in a way which would be beneficial for the whole community. Unlike the heroes, the heroines in the traditional stories solve all their problems by getting married. Revenge instead of reconciliation, forgiveness and dialogue is also a common point and often other nations are presented as enemies and not as collaborators and potential friends. Addressing such contradictions, especially in the context of post-conflict society such as Serbia, is crucial for fostering peace oriented, ethical and caring relations as well as democracy rather than authoritarianism and violence.

Critical analysis of themes and methods of conflict resolution in traditional stories is therefore essential in the process of creating a society which rests upon modern, positive and democratic values, that is, a society which has as its main goal well-being of all its citizens, both male and female, and of all cultural backgrounds. The program Storytelling for Peace, Gender Partnership and Cultural Pluralism and the book Who Is Afraid of the Big, Bad Wolf? Awesome Stories for Courageous and Curious focus on improvement of the educational and pedagogical practices in relation to the following problems: discrimination, prejudice, gender, racial and national stereotypes, direct, verbal and psychological violence, especially violence against marginalized social groups.

The book Who Is Afraid of the Big, Bad Wolf? Awesome Stories for the Courageous and Curious, contains ten stories and one poem. The book uses motifs from traditional stories and poems in a new and innovative way since their heroines are independent, resolute and just, they oppose gender inequality and discrimination of any kind and together with changed male characters present positive role models for children. Traditional story motifs are from Cinderella, Snow White, Red Riding Hood, Zidanje Skadra - Building of Skadar, Kosovka Devojka - The Girl from Kosovo, Smrt Majke Jugoviæa - The Death of Mother Jugoviæi, Devojka cara nadmudrila - The Girl who Outsmarted the Emperor, Alice in Wonderland, ciklus o Marku Kraljeviæu - Marko Kraljeviæ series of poems.

Through retelling of traditional stories and creation of new ones, the book aims to promote positive and democratic values, and society which is open for all. The objective of the book and the program is prevention of violence, prevention of discrimination (i.e. via gender, racial and national stereotyping) and the inclusion of children and students from socially marginalized groups, including children and students with disabilities. Poem Jedna Mala princeza (One Little Princess)

explicitly engages with the social inclusion of Roma students. Reworking of Alice in Wonderland in the story Milica i Danica u Miroljubivoj Zemlji Èuda (Milica and Danica in a Peaceful Wonderland) deals with nonviolent conflict resolution and promotion of peace culture. Several stories focus on cooperation of children and animals (Red Riding Hood, Fairy Ravijojla), preservation of environment through recycling (Cinderella) and respect for nature (Zidanje Skadra i vila Zagorka - Building of Skadar and Fairy Greenleaf) in order to awaken ecological consciousness in children and develop their responsible attitude towards the environment.

The book Who Is Afraid of the Big, Bad Woolf? Awesome Stories for Courageous and Curious aims at inspiring girls and boys to continue creating stories for the new age and better future.

The basic objectives of the program therefore are promotion of: tolerance and inclusion, basic human rights, gender equality, ecological awareness, cultural pluralism, critical thinking and reading, creative writing and non-violent resolution of conflicts. The book has 4 priorities which correspond to the priorities set by the Serbian Ministry for Education:

Priority 1: Prevention of violence against children and maltreatment of children

Priority 2: Prevention of discrimination

Priority 3: Inclusion of children and pupils with disabilities and children and pupils from socially marginalized groups as well as development of individual educational plans for them. (The program and the book are primarily focused on inclusion of pupils from socially marginalized groups.)

Priority 4: Development of communication skills

Methods and strategies which are part of the program and which are described in the Workbook at the end of the book of stories Ko se boji Vuka još include reading of traditional and new “retold” stories, analysis of values and messages of traditional and new stories as well as participation of children in creation of their own, new stories. Practical strategies, games and activities for students are also suggested. These described methods are relatively simple, flexible, accessible and inexpensive so it is possible to use them in most educational and pedagogical processes. They can also be used by parents when they read and tell the stories to children and discuss them afterwards, or by professors, teachers, educators, and experts in the classroom while they work with children. Further to this the book and the manual could be used in the fields of: Serbian language, literature, social sciences, liberal sciences and civic education. They could as well be used in workshops on education and pedagogical processes designed for experts and trainers. Through the use of stories, dialogical approach in all these processes is promoted. So is creativity and critical thinking both in the case of children and students as well as teachers and educators in general. Therefore, instead of proscribed didactic approach, through reading, analysis, retelling and writing of new stories, indirect approach which respects opinions and attitudes of the children so that they feel valued by the parents, teachers and the society is promoted. Reading, analysis, retelling and writing of stories have been proven in practice to be very efficient educational and pedagogical methods for the achievement of the above mentioned educational goals.

For all further information please contact the authors of the book and the program Dr Aleksandra Izgarjan aleksandraizgarjan@nscable.net and Dr Ivana Milojeviæ ivanamilojevic@bigpond.com.

Who Can Ride The Tiger?

Stories of Baba's Life

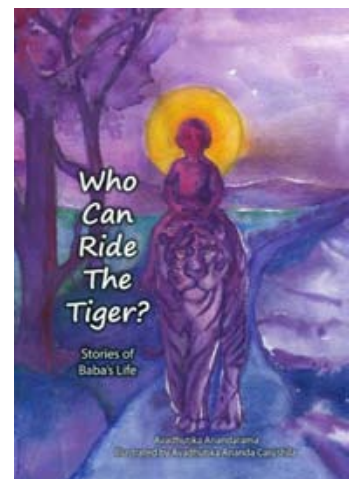
Edited by Avadhutika Anandarama

Illustrated by Didi Ananda Carushila

This is the title of a new book presently at the designer for final preparation for printing. This book is a collection of wonderful real life stories and events in the life of Shrii P. R. Sarkar (affectionately called Baba) for children. These stories are from his early years and young adult life while he lived in Jamalpur from 1922 to 1966. The book has attractive illustrations by Didi Ananda Carushila that may catch the attention of young children to whom the parents or guardians could either read or retell these stories.

We are looking for sponsors and advance payment orders to help us publish this book. The book will be A4 size with 160 pages. The price will be ca \$20 depending on the number of books we will be able to print. The book is endorsed by the Ananda Marga Archives and Publication Departments.

Please contact didianandarama@gmail.com for more details. Thank you.





MANILA SECTOR

Bangkok, Thailand

NERI (Neohumanist Education Research Institute)

Neohumanist Education Research Institute (Thailand) is being organized to further the research and propagation of neohumanist principles in Thailand. Didi Ananda Devamala, Didi Ananda Anuraga, Didi Ananda Citralekha, Dada Ramakrishna, Ms. Jareeporn Naksamrit, Nuntaka Thaweeekul, Nun & Isarawong Kongmebhol, Rachmi, Prof. Kitiawan & Mrs. Ajana Kampanatsanyakorn, among others, have been some of the leading practitioners of neohumanist philosophy in education over the past decade in Thailand. Now, they join forces to bring the benefits of neohumanist philosophy to more schools in Thailand. Recently, Dada Shambhushivananda met with some of the members of the neohumanist network in Bangkok, Thailand to discuss the action - plans of NERI (Thailand).



Amatyakul School

Dr. Shambhushivananda spoke at Amatyakul School in Thailand, which has 1720 students enrolled and is successfully implementing many NHE values. The theme of his talk was Challenges of Future Education in which he spelled out three mega-trends impinging the world of education.

First, the ecological constraints of human society are real. These can no longer be put under the carpet. The old paradigm of education has tended to neglect the ecological realities of our times. Instead, the new-paradigm must make "ecological-consciousness" the central response to the preparation for a peaceful and harmonious world. In this respect, both inner and outer ecology deserve special attention in the new-curricula. Without attitudinal changes, there cannot be a new world of lasting peace.

Second, we are faced with a new economic reality - where the old models of consumption-oriented culture are goading us towards economic collapse. Today, even many so-called developed economies have been on the verge of collapse. No country is today free from the impact of unsustainable policies being followed by so-called developed world. Hence, the sooner we adopt a new-paradigm of decentralized economics, the sooner we shall strengthen the resilience-stamina of a nation and sooner we shall become prepared to face the economic-tsunamis that are just around the corner.

Third, the technological revolutions led by internet and micro-gadgets are transforming our entire life styles. Our children can no longer remain oblivious of scientific temper and it is the duty of the education systems to cultivate the scientific temper in a way that it does not destroy positive values and continues to nurture the unfathomable power of the spirit. Dada stressed the need for building strong character, fostering universal values and cultivating the stamina to face all obstacles & conflicts that may come in the way of building a sustainable, peaceful and prosperous world of tomorrow.

Dada praised the Principal and teachers of Amatyakul School for continuing to implement the new-paradigm policies.



Spotlight: Neohumanist Teacher of Thailand

Dr. Jareeporn Naksamrit (Janaki) has joined as the director of the demonstration school near Mae Chaem, west of Chiang Mai and close to Doi Inthanon National Park. Bhodivijalaya is a rural campus of Srinakharinwirot University. The Center for Learning of the college will be located in Mae Sod district, Tak province, which is next to the Myanmar border. Dr. Naksamrit will be training teachers in the alternative paradigm of education based on principles of self-sufficiency. Dr. Naksamrit completed her PhD from the Department of Educational Policy Management and Leadership of Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. She has volunteered as the Principal of Baan Unrak School over the past few years. Dr. Naksamrit is also the volunteer Executive Director of NERI (Thailand) and translates neohumanist education materials into Thai language. She is assisted by Prof. Kitiawan and Ms. Nuntaka Thaweeekul of Lampang in the propagation of neohumanist education in Thailand.

Vientiane, Laos Sunshine School

Our annual participation in the Vientiane Women's International Group (WIG) bazaar took place on February 2nd. The event attracted thousands of visitors from the Vientiane international and Lao communities. All the main embassies and NGOs were represented as well as international schools and local businesses.



For the WIG bazaar show our M3 boys group, 'Size SSS', performed a crowd-stopping dubstep dance in cool blue and black vested suits with sunglasses. Our second performing group were a special group composed of Sunshine School graduates - M4 girls from 2012 & 2011 classes- performing a 3-in-1 K-pop dance. It was great having them back in high form dancing for Sunshine and the Vientiane community.

Our stall was decorated with six big photo presentations of the school activities; out the front we had a wonderful spread of tasty vegetarian food and on the grass under the trees, our always popular face painting team.

SUVA SECTOR

Music Faculty News, Auckland, New Zealand

By Jyosna LaTrobe, Coordinator, Music Faculty of AMGK

Culture Clash Production

In the Fall, 2012, a community theater production, Cultural Clash, displaying the multicultural face of Auckland, featured a cast of 40+, professionals and others from the community. The production opened with scenes from the conflicts from Kosovo that have forced immigrants to flee from their homelands. Fragments from diverse personal histories were entwined to build a dazzling collage that honoured the uniqueness of each. Performers were from different backgrounds, ethnicities, ages and disciplines with fire, music, dance and theatre. Directed by: Beth Kayes, Creative Producer: Margaret-Mary Hollins, Story Consultant: Renee Liang, Musical Director: Jyosna La Trobe, The show had 8 performances given to appreciative audiences with glowing reviews, and featured the music of Prabhata Samgiita performed by Jyosna, Kavita and musicians. The photo is of the Culture Clash Cast with Race Relations Commissioner, Joris De Bres,



Ananda Marga Community Choir has formed with members coming from Auckland, Northland and Waiheke Island. The Choir has around 15 members at present and is directed by Jyosna. They meet every Thursday night to sing Prabhata Samgiita and devotional songs. The Choir performed at Voices of Sacred Earth festival, February 8-10th 2013, and a Yoga Conference in March. They were a great success with many different culture/spiritual groups joining the BNK Kirtan. At the festival, Jyosna led two workshops covering the foundation blocks of devotional music (kīrtan), focusing on specific kirtan ragas and instrumentation, such as guitar and Indian khol drum.

Stars in Her Eyes, feature film

Directed by Athina Tsoulis and produced by Angela Hicks, Musical Direction by

Jyosna La Trobe and Sound room, featuring Prabhata Samgiita and original music, with local musicians participating. *"Our movie is about an Indian woman who is trying to come of age, albeit later than most. It is essentially an immigrant story which many will identify with,"* said Athina.



Rarhi Culture Tour planned for late February 2014. Including visits to: Chhau Martial Dancers village, Painters village, Mask Makers village, Rarhi Kiirtan festivals with training given by kiirtan expert Jagaran Mahato, Prabhat Samgiita classes at Uma Nivas Music School, and many other exquisite sites. Please direct all enquiries to jyosna@jyosna.com.

New Kirtan Music Studio in Auckland: Situated in the beautiful setting of bush and sea, this studio will suit the needs of Kirtan singers worldwide. Soon to be launched, donations kindly accepted to complete the development of this project. Tel: 0064 9 8109602

DELHI SECTOR

Umanivas, India Ananda Marga High School for Girls

News of recognition of the Umanivas High School for girls has been recently received and the efforts of the Principal, Avadhutika Ananda Vratiisha Ac., the WWD department actively supported by ERAWS, and Gurukul, have been rewarded after almost one and a half decades.

The application for recognition was submitted at the turn of the millennium, while West Bengal was being governed by the CPM . With the change of Government the whole scenario changed and in mid April they received the news of recognition from the District Education Office.

The Didis at Umanivas, especially the Principal, have put in hard efforts for the all round development of the school and also expanded the already big building of the High School, adding several rooms. Students are increasing and recognition will add to the school's status.

Running a lady managed school in remote area like Umanivas is not that easy. Infrastructural development is still not to the mark. Road, reliable power connection, good quality internet, water problems all have improved but still a lot needs to be done.



Surat, India Summer Camp:

A summer camp was organised From 21st to 25th April by Didi Ananda Madhusmita Acharya and Didi Ananda Jyotirekha Acharya in Surat India and attended by 30 children. The camp was inaugurated by social service workers Magan Bhai Patel and Aravind Bhai Patel.

During the camp teachers gave classes on the following subjects: Painting by Umesh Bhai Patel, Rangoli by Dhinesh Bhai Patel, Asanas by Didi Madhusmita, Dance classes by Didi Ananda Jyotirekha and Moral Classes by Didi Tanmaya.

Activities and competitions included a Running Race, a Spoon Race, Memory test, Hand writing competition, Dance competition, Drawing competition and Rangoli competition. Prizes were distributed to the winner along with Best camper and Best in Discipline prizes.

The camp was concluded on the 25th April with a colourful cultural programme performed by the camp children. The chair persons donated 6000Rs for the Children's Home.



HONG KONG SECTOR

Russia

Didi Ananda Cetana has been working with highly retarded children in Russia, and monitoring basic levels of mind and body progress. She has developed an evaluation process and form for how they best focus which each of their senses. If you would like a copy of this form, please write to Didi Cetana at: <didicetana@yahoo.com>

BERLIN SECTOR

London, United Kingdom

Sunrise School

A parent's experience of the Vegetarian Lunch on 16th March 2013

I always try to attend the Sunrise fundraising Vegetarian Lunch. A vegetarian lunch to fundraise for the school is a wonderful idea, it brings people together and sharing food brings warmth to the hearts.

First of all, the children really want to go, meet their friends and catch up with the ones who have left the school. Then I too want to spend time with the Sunrise parents, most of whom have become close friends over the years. Sunrise has created a wonderful social frame in my life and I enjoy all their events.

The food is always delicious and balanced, and I noticed most kids ate what was on offer, tasty and healthy Indian food, probably cooked by loving hands.

The children love rehearsing for the show in the afternoon and we were treated to some great music by the primary children, by two home educated children who attend the school part time and by some adults too. The belly-dancing show was awesome.

To end the afternoon a parent got everyone to dance together in a circle, the children love it and the parents had great fun.

Time went by very quickly and we soon had to leave, some of us after giving a hand at tidying the community centre.



QAHIRA SECTOR

Lebanon (and Croatia)

"My First Book" Contest news

The contest in Croatia for children to write their own story book and illustrate it has brought this year 700 wonderful books. The contest in Croatia is in its 9th year. In Lebanon we launched a similar contest and received 65 books for the first time.

In both places we are in the process of determining the winners and preparing the printing of the winning books.

Smart Academy in Lebanon

At the Smart Academy in Lebanon which is an after school programme with various activities, children participated in a national contest on "Safer Internet". This contest was sponsored by World Vision in relation with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Social Affairs. Out of 28 schools that participated, students at the Smart Academy won the first and third prize with making a video game and and booklet respectively!



Egypt

Nile River School update

This education project is harmoniously flowing along with life in the little village. Our teacher, a 20 years old girl from the village enjoys coming to school, so she comes seven days a week. And of course the children love to come as well. About 70 children come, about 50 regularly and 20 irregularly. The teacher is now at the beginning stages of being able to read Arabic and what she knows she can now easily teach to the children. She has earned the title of 'teacher' now by her sincerity.

These past few months we were focusing on Arabic. The older children got into the habit of teaching each other, especially enjoying dictation.

We now have lots of marigold and calendula growing around our school. The children learned about collecting seeds and growing flowers and propagating geranium flowers from cuttings.



After a lot of art activity on paper we thought to do something that could be useful and decorative for their homes. So the girls painted canvas bags that they can use now for their notebooks and made nice mirrors. The boys wanted to do something as well. They asked to make a calligraphy picture. We experimented and with the help of computer projection of nice images we managed to produce artistic calligraphy verses from the Koran. We also made moral sayings such as 'Using words for the welfare of others', 'Not to harm others in thought, words or action', 'Love is all there is' etc.

The calligraphy pictures became such popular decorative objects in their houses, appreciated by the parents and neighbours, that everyone wanted to make more and more. One for the local mosque, the Koran teacher wanted one, some the kids took to their school in the next village. We made one for the old lady across our school who lives alone (and the boys fixed her three-legged table as well). The man in town who sells us the card board wanted one and somebody from the other shore of the Nile as well, even some went to Cairo!

Well all in all so far we made 100 'Koraneya' as the children call it! The school became a little factory almost and the children learned to saw, hammer, colour and collect seeds, shells

and all kinds of natural things to glue on the frame. They learnt to appreciate and make beautiful things. I would spray the frame golden early mornings and the kids would come fresh from bed running to see their finished product and proudly take them home! Some children have now two or three 'Koraneya' decorating the bare walls in their homes.



Essays on Sound and Creation

by Frank van den Bovenkamp

Idea and Vibration

In spirituality it is nearly impossible to introduce the subject of sound, because sound itself is that which introduces everything. The English word sound means something you can hear, and it also means "deep" or "profound". The Dutch word for sound, "geluid", is spelled like a past participle meaning "done something loud", for example when you have tolled a bell. It is a subjective or an objective approach of the same idea.



Sound expresses through the media of an extroversial (objective) and a synthetic (subjective) phase, which are not opposite as in philosophy, but complementary. The shape of the path of light through these media is known as a cakra. Oppositely, the path of a sound vibration travelling through the medium of light is sensory experience.

Thus there is a sacred concomitance between sound and light or color, conveying a certain vibration and a certain idea. From the viewpoint of the objective mind, shape is what binds sound and color. From an abstract point of view, it is geometry.

Spiritually, perception separates a person and an object or idea. Conceptuality brings you in ever greater proximity with your object of ideation. A mantra has a psycho-physical effect and a psychological meaning, but its most profound and powerful aspect is that of sound itself, as the beginning of sound is the beginning of Creation.

Sound and the Causal Mind

Like a child finding a beautiful seashell and burying it in the sand, only to playfully rediscover his treasure the next day, or even at the end of the season, sound is a gift of the distant ocean buried within layer upon layer of reality, until one day it's inner treasure is found again and will lead us back to the Source.

The apparent transmutation of universal consciousness into nucleus consciousness reflects the primary desire and impulse to create. Sound is the initial expression of consciousness. Hence, sound is the primary characteristic of nucleus consciousness, conveying the pure idea of creation. The characteristic of the Causal Mind is uniformity of substance and non-uniformity of flow. For example you see an elephant. It has many different attributes and characteristics, but your perception of the elephant is one single flow. So the physical world is characterized by non-uniformity of substance and uniformity of flow. In the causal mind, the perception of an elephant is represented by a single wave, by one single vibration. This is called the entitative wave or entitative rhythm. The undisturbed primary vibration, the initial creational sound wave emanating from the causal matrix, is called the incantative wave. Under influence of various entitative vibrations, the apparent transformation of nucleus consciousness back into universal consciousness is a different process, following a different path, a different trajectory than it's primary incantation. Therefore, the subtlest phase of the causal mind is characterized by non-uniformity of flow.

Sound is the Cosmic code leading light into self-awareness. As pencils of light learn to traverse cosmic pathways, harmonically encoded in the subtlest portion of the universal citta, this creates the physical universe and sentient beings. You can see it everywhere - in the shape of a flower, the dance of insects in a sunlit spot in the forest, the sensitive motions of a small mountain stream.. This sacred concomitance of divine incantation and colors emanating from the causal matrix represents an exalted stage of pure creation. This is the central stage of the causal mind, known as hiranmaya kosa - the completely pure. As this blissful and fully cognizant dance of sound and light together conveys and materializes the divine idea of creation, this stage also represents non-uniformity of flow in the causal mind.

Nucleus consciousness is still perceptible in the subtler stages of the objective mind, however it is now increasingly getting influenced and tainted by the multivarious entitative vibrations. In this stage, on the brink of physical manifestation, the causal matrix relates to and controls the non-uniform, attributional world through microvita and energy. This way, it takes care of all the specialties and necessities of life. Hence, the final stage of the Causal Mind is also characterized by non-uniformity of flow. Rather, this stage represents the transformation from non-uniformity of flow, into non-uniformity of substance, that is, the attributional world.

Where there is no uniformity or non-uniformity of flow, and therefore no expression whatsoever, this is a state of eternal truth, called Satya Loka. Hence, Satya Loka is beyond the influence even of the Causal Matrix. Only the Causal Matrix, through its multi-dimensional bifurcations, creates the physical universe.

If we pick up a nice, big seashell and listen closely, it gives us a feeling of proximity to the ocean. In that inner sound, the infinite potentialities of creation lie hidden. Still deeper and deeper, beyond all transformation, lies the nucleus of all sounds of creation, it's never ending flow of incantation creating cosmic templates of ever increasing awareness. As actual psychic and psycho-physical incantation this is mantra - a rediscovered treasure on the beach of the Cosmic Ocean.

Neohumanist Education

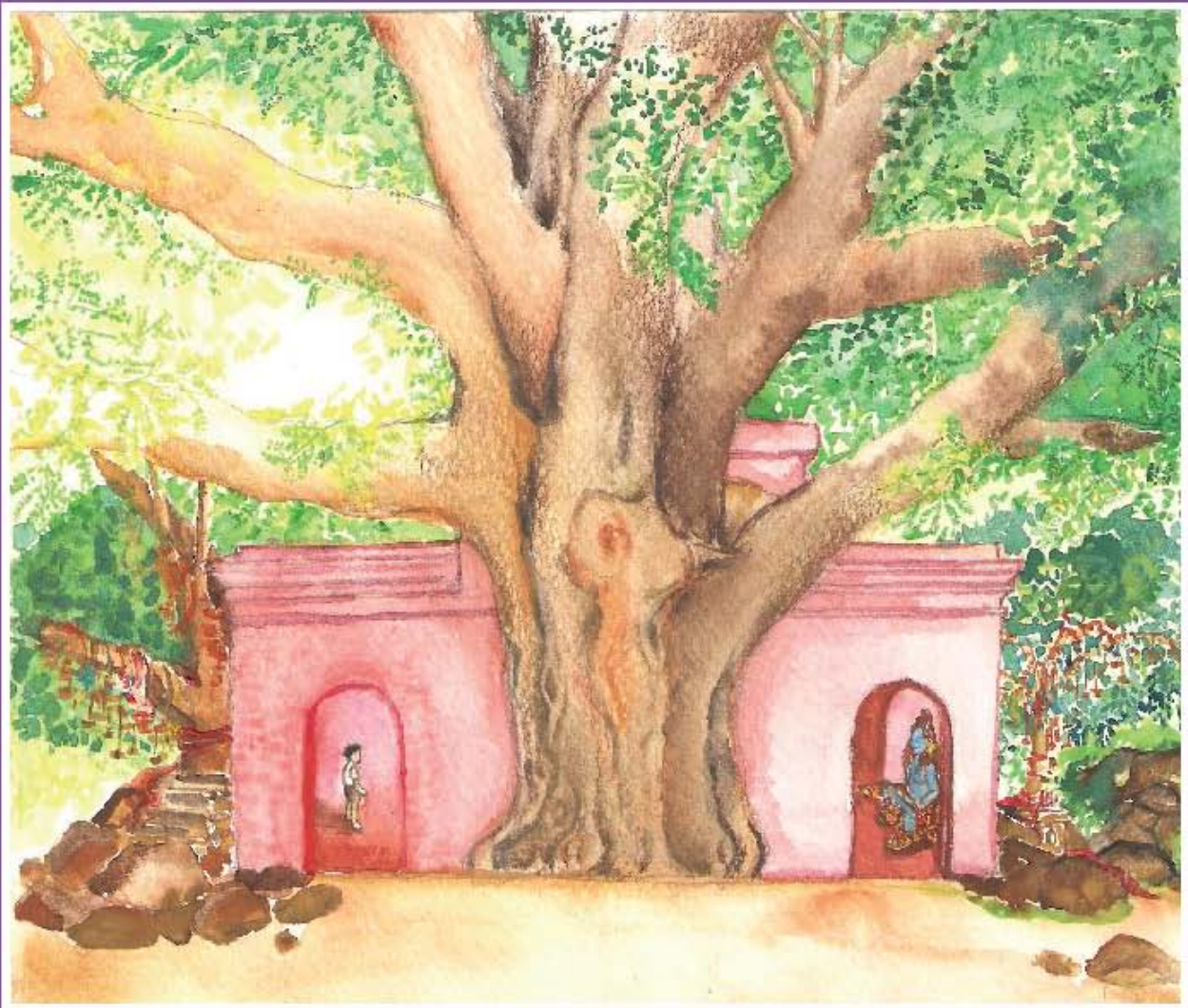


Illustration from the new book "*Who Can Ride The Tiger?*" See page 29.

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