

# GURUKULA NETWORK



Newsletter of Neohumanist Schools and Institutes affiliated with Ananda Marga Gurukula

Issue 37 - November 2013



Renaissance in all the Strata of Life - The Neohumanist Educational Call

Global Education Conference News - Applied Learning - Story Traditions in Schools

NHE and the Current World - Theatre Arts in Learning - T'ai Chi Peace Games

Schools and Projects in Focus - Global News - 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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# Renaissance in All the Strata of Life<sup>1</sup>

By Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar



The real meaning of the word “renaissance” is reawakening. That is, humanity was sleeping, and now it must wake up from that cimmerian slumber and do something in all the spheres of life, in all the strata of existence.

There are three important strata in life: the physical stratum, the psychic stratum and the spiritual stratum. In the physical stratum, there are many strata: say, scientific achievement, social progress, political life, economic life, culture life. People often say that this twentieth century is the century of science. No, it is not the truth. Human life has been associated with science from the prehistoric era, from the very birth of humanity on this earth about one million years ago, and not only in this twentieth century. And as long as there will be a single human being, there will be an age of science.

Nowadays science means creating new weapons – strengthening the hands of warmongers; but the spirit of science should not be like this, and at the start, in the primordial phase of human life, it was not so. Yes, there is necessity of weapons – weapons not for strengthening the hands of warmongers, but for providing security for good ideas, good thoughts and good persons. Science should be just like art: science for service and beatitude. Art for service and beatitude, I said; and now I say, science is also for service and beatitude. Science should always be utilised for the proper progress of human society.

Then the social. In the social sphere there are several sub-strata, and the real spirit of social progress is to dispel all social disparities. Each and every member of the human society should enjoy equal rights as members of the same family, but there is disparity and it is the duty of the Renaissance movement to dispel the disparity and bring about equality, equilibrium and equipoise amongst human beings.

There are disparities, disparities of different types and different kinds. For instance, there are biological disparities existing in the society, which are being encouraged by certain selfish persons. The biological disparity between human and animal, between human and plant, between animal and plant – that disparity must not be there. Just as a human being wants to survive, a pigeon also wants to survive – similarly a cow also wants to survive, or a tree. Just as my life is dear to me, so the lives of created beings are also equally dear to them. It is the birthright of human beings to live in this world, and it is the birthright of the animal world and plant world also to remain on this earth. To recognize this right, and to get it recognized by the entire human society, the Renaissance movement will have to do something concrete.

Then there is disparity due to birth – disparity between people of higher caste and people of so-called lower caste. People of a particular country die of starvation, and people of another country die due to overeating due to voracity. It is a disparity – it is bad. It is a creation of selfish people, not of Parama Puruṣa (Supreme Consciousness). The Renaissance movement will have to do something concrete in this respect also. All are equal, with equal glamour as human beings.

Now, difference of colour. Due to geographical conditions, due to historical facts, there are differences in colour. A particular human beings may be of white complexion, someone black, someone very black, someone yellow. It is not an innate difference, it is an external difference. Why should there be a special type of scripture based on these differences? No, there must not be any difference of colour, or any social disparity because of difference of colour.

Now, there is the sex difference. Females are debarred from many socio-political rights. You know, a few hundred years ago they had no voting rights in many countries of the world. Why? They are also human beings – they also have the same rights as men. Renaissance people will have to start a movement for social equality and fight against such inequality based on sexual difference. Are women like cattle, or sacks of cloth that people give as gifts at the time of marriage? Are they slaves to be sold to others? As long as women lacked courage or intellect, they tolerated these things – but what a great humiliation! To submit them to such indignities is far worse than to whip them publicly on the road. Are women simply like bundles of cloth to be sent to the washerman’s house? Women must not be suppressed, and there should not be domination of males in the society. Society should have a cooperative leadership, not a subordinated leadership; there should be a coordinated, cooperative leadership, leadership between males and females. Renaissance people will have to start a movement immediately to fight against all these disparities; otherwise if fifty percent of the population, that is the ladies, remain downtrodden, how can there be all-round progress of human society? So these are all the social duties, the social responsibilities of the Renaissance movement. Renaissance people will have to wage war on these disparities, these inequalities – they will have to be rooted out of the society.

<sup>1</sup> Renaissance in All the Strata of Life, January 2, 1986, Calcutta; Electronic Edition of the Works of P.R. Sarkar, version 7; Published in A Few Problems Solved Part 7



In political life, a group of people exploit another group of people of the same country, or of some other country. There is political inequality. Still there is a sort of economic polarization, economic exploitation, and not only that, there are social and cultural disparities, and social and cultural exploitation also. Renaissance people will have to bring this fact to the notice of one and all: this disparity cannot be supported by good thinking, by right thinking people, and so we will not support it. Yes, in the political sphere, there should be the rule of moralist people, for immoralist people cannot lead the society: they cannot goad the people onto the path of righteousness. And this political life should also be based on universalism, without forgetting the fact that a particular area of the world has its own particular problems and its own particular conditions.

Economic life. In economic life there is extreme inequality and exploitation. Although colonialism no longer exists openly in the political and economic spheres till it persists indirectly, and this should not be tolerated. The Renaissance movement will have to do something in this respect. You should remember that in economic life, we will have to guarantee the minimum requirements to one and all. There cannot be any second thought, there cannot be any sort of adjustment as far as this point is concerned. The minimum purchasing requirement must be guaranteed to all. Today these fundamental essentialities are not being guaranteed. Rather, people are being guided by deceptive economic ideas like outdated Marxism, which has proved ineffective in practical life, and has not been successfully implemented in any corner of the world. Why do people still believe in such a theory, which has never been proved successful? The time has come for people to make a proper assessment whether they are being misguided or not.

Then comes one of the important points: cultural life. What is culture? Culture is the collection of different expressions of human life. The culture of the entire human race is one, but there are different local expressions. This difference in local expressions does not mean that people of different corners of the earth have different cultures – culture is the same, but the expressions vary.

Education is a part of cultural life. Education should be free, and education must be based on universalism. While imparting education you should also remember that there are certain local conditions, local problems and local requirements; so while formulating the educational structure, we should do everything remembering this fundamental fact.

So you see, the scope of the Renaissance movement is vast, and you will have to start your work from this very moment: it brooks no delay.

There are the different types of inequalities prevailing in the physical world. In the psychic world also there are so many ailments, and Renaissance people will have to wage war against these inequalities and man-made differences. There must be progress in the psychic realm, in the psychic arena. In the psychic arena, the progress should be unbarred and unaffected. There are so many ailments in the psychic sphere. You see, in the psycho-physical sphere, many people are guided by – rather goaded by – dogmas. Dogmas have taken root in the human mind. People cannot get rid of these false ideas because they have been injected into their minds since childhood. As a result, one human society is divided into different nations, and one nation is divided into different religions; religions also have different castes, and caste also have different sub-castes – what kind of situation is this? We have only learned how to divide and subdivide humanity, and we never learned how to unite the people. This is all due to the defective teachings of dogmas.

Some people think that the particular group of people to which they belong are the blessed beings of Parama Puruṣa, and others are cursed beings. This is a very bad type of dogma opportunists have introduced all this. Renaissance people will have to fight against these dogmas, and carry on the struggle endlessly. For that, they may have to confront numerous obstacles, censure and humiliation, but they will have to move on undaunted and unaffected. Dogmas are psycho-physical diseases.

Then there are physico-psychic ailments. Some people argue that animals have been created by Parama Puruṣa for our food. I knew a certain person who used to say that if people do not eat goats' meat, the world would become populated only by goats. And others said that if people don't eat chickens, there would not be even a single inch of space on this earth – it would be filled with chickens! Now my point is, even though human beings do not eat vultures, is there a crowd of vultures in the world? How foolish such people are! People don't eat earthworms – has there been an uncontrollable growth of earthworms on earth? Only out of excessive greed, people eat chickens and goats and are simply searching for logic to support their actions and cover up their weakness. This sort of cunning will not do. In the mobility of the psychic world, there are certain defective thoughts prevailing – that we humans are destined to rule this earth, and the creatures are destined to be ruled by us. You will have to fight against this type of psychology with the help of your strong weapon. What is that weapon? Neohumanism. All have the equal right to live here: this universe is for all. It is not the patrimony of human beings only. This is also the duty of Renaissance people.

Then there is the progress in the pure psychic level. In the pure psychic level, defective thoughts prevail in human society,

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# Fleeing Forward: the Neohumanist Educational Call

By Marcus Bussey

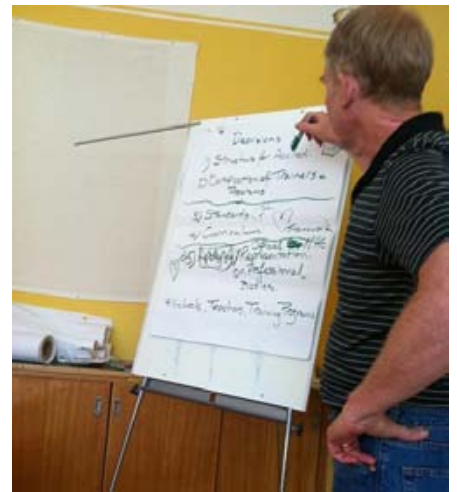
There are times, the historian Eelco Runia <sup>1</sup> argues, when we humans do crazy things like leap into a future that is unknown and murky. This 'leap', Runia continues, is a form of 'fleeing forward'. It is illogical in that it comes as a break with tradition and the past; it is also illogical because we do not necessarily know that whatever we leap into will be a better condition to live with than what we are fleeing from. This is an interesting idea to play with when we think about our work in Neohumanist Education. We can argue that Neohumanist Education is timely; that it grows out of a search for alternatives to the tried and failed educational experiments of the present and recent past; that given the current spiritual and environmental malaise of capitalist globalising culture neohumanism is the best of best alternatives. Yet, this logic will not give our movement wings. It will not call us to leap forward. Logic alone is never enough – it may be a sufficient condition for a new civilisation but it is not a necessary condition. The drive to flee forward into a range of neohumanist futures comes from another part of our individual and collective selves.

For Runia this drive comes out of us doing things that are better for us all now. Historically the rationalization of our actions, he argues, comes after the deed. In Gurukula for instance we are all working for a better future and seeking to understand our actions as a form of service, a blessed task we perform in loving relationship with the Cosmos, an ongoing learning journey, an experiment in culture building. Yet really what we are doing is trying to make a difference for those we serve. As we move forward we reflect and expand on our actions in order to make sense of them, and from this to develop the ability to share what we have learnt with others. We are leaping, perhaps even fleeing into the future with our hearts in our hands; we will have to wait for our heads to catch up. In this field of endeavor the world of action always precedes the world of thought. As the great Yogi, Swami Vivekananda once quipped:

*"Who cares whether there is a heaven or a hell, who cares if there is an unchangeable or not? Here is the world and it is full of misery. Go out into it as Buddha did, and struggle to lessen it or die in the attempt"*

In July of this year a group of Neohumanist educators joined with other innovative educational professionals at Ydrefors, Sweden to share and expand on what we have been doing in our various projects. The goal was to consolidate, dialogue and build the platform for some serious 'fleeing forward'. This gathering marks a new phase of institution building for Gurukula in which we move from abstract ideas and hopes to the concrete world of deeds upon which the future of Gurukula depends. To facilitate this move key people involved in the Gurukula movement met for three days before and after the conference. During these sessions we spent time reflecting on and celebrating what had been done; we acknowledged what still remains to be done; and then set ourselves goals to address these structural requirements. Many of us acknowledged that on our own we could only achieve so much, so one area that we committed to was working towards greater community. Community can help us by offering collective solutions to individual, location specific, needs. Community also harnesses the collective imagination and generates inspiration.

For all present both before, during and after the conference it was important that the goals we set were realizable, so we focused on establishing more effective communication networks between projects. We decided to have these networks



<sup>1</sup> Runia, E. (2010). Into cleanness leaping: the vertiginous urge to commit history. *History and Theory*, 49(1), 1-20.

based on regional collaborations and to allow each regional entity to develop its own agenda. We also decided to start Gurukula conversations and to run these via webinars in which we share, celebrate, inform and grow our community. At the structural level we also worked on clarifying Gurukula's role as an educational and organisational structure. Here the focus was on beginning the work of moving into the tertiary domain and on building regional functioning faculties. For instance Singapore will work towards hosting both the South East Asia and Pacific Yoga Teacher's Faculty and a Teacher Training facility; Thailand will be a site for a Neohumanist Educational Research Institute and Europe can be a hub for Microvita studies. The Yoga for Kids movement is gathering momentum and demonstrating a clear commitment to collaborate with kindred spirits around the world.

Another issue we addressed was the need for school accreditation and teacher training. This was deemed to be of the highest priority and we in Gurukula are currently working on a model for accreditation that will meet the diverse needs of schools world-wide. There was also a focus on recruiting able and committed folk to leadership roles in the current 44 faculty structure of our future Gurukula University. This is of course ongoing but over the days together we all became increasingly clear as to what our structure should look like and about how we can operate more effectively at the global and regional levels.

Generally, attendees left feeling motivated and much more connected to both Gurukula as a central element of Neohumanism's mission but also more connected to one another. The need for ongoing and regular networking was recognised as the theme for a robust and dynamic Gurukula movement. For many this seemed best represented at the regional levels through a range of centres and at the global level by a cyber-university based on a physical campus or series of campuses. In addition, the emergence of regional hubs also sets the scene for a global campus for Ananda Marga Gurukula in which diversity, what Dr. Sid Jordan called a 'garden of diversity', is celebrated and the link between service and knowledge, founded on our spiritual practices takes centre stage.

For me this all points to a pragmatic 'leaping' and a devotional 'fleeing' in which the future neohumanist landscape beckons to us as a terrain more favourable to the expression of humanities' greater potentiality. It is clear that to foster this sensibility we need to cultivate the relational consciousness that has its source in the philosophy of Neohumanism and finds its dynamism in our individual and collective spiritual life. This gathering made it clear that we all must take responsibility for building a future in which diversity is valued and indeed recognised as a central feature of social evolution. We nurture this relational consciousness through our meditation and a real commitment to communication and its co-creative possibilities.

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## Upcoming Gurukula Webinars

**December 18**

**Dada Shambhushivananda**

**The Gurukula Story: Introduction to the Gurukula webinar series**

**January 14 - Didi Ananda Devapriya**

**Educating for Balance in an Accelerating World**

**February 22 - Dr Marcus Bussey**

**The Evolution of Consciousness**

**March 22 - Dr Sid Jordan**

**The Era of Neohumanism**

**April 19 - Henk de Weijer**

**Reflections about the Nature of Microvita**

**May 17 - Didi Ananda Rama**

**The Book Story**

**June 21 - Eric Jacobson**

**Education for Transformation**

**To participate in a webinar, please go to [www.gurukul.edu](http://www.gurukul.edu) for times and instructions**



# EDUCATION & GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION

JULY 14 -18, 2013

10th Global Education Summit

CNS SWEDEN, GAMLA SKOLAN  
YDREFORS, SWEDEN



GAP International



## Opening Address

**Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt., Kulapati, AMGK**

*History has been made by people who believed in an ideal and who chose to devote their entire strength to attain it. Here today in this historical event, we have attempted to bring together a sample of such potential individuals from around the globe who believe in an idea that is greater than them. I recognize that our lives are filled with many hopes, aspirations and a passionate sense of urgency. I hope that through this 'conference of sharing' we shall be able to further strengthen and spread our indomitable spirit in order to turn the tide in favor of a world that will*

*thrive in freedom, abundance, prosperity, inner peace, good health and unbounded joy to all. Of course, to do so will require a willingness to face the challenges and obstacles that are keeping us in vicious cycles of powerlessness. May we use this opportunity to address these and forge a path ahead for the entire humanity.*

*A lasting change cannot come without proper in-depth understanding of the problems & solutions. Beyond understanding, we also need a workable methodology, goodwill of others and active support of like-minded persons. Here, I hope, we shall find an opportunity to learn from one-another and build deeper ideological connections that will transcend all manifestations of factionalism, dogma and narrow-minded thinking.*

*On top of the agenda is the greatest predicament of our times- humans' clash with nature & a befitting ecological response. One cannot remedy this in the absence of enlightened leadership at all levels and this is where the educational systems need to play a key role. The greatest of atrocities in human history could not have happened without the support of highly intelligent persons. So intellect alone cannot be the savior of today's world. We also need the intuitional power of the spirit coupled with all-pervasive compassionate intellect to help us get over this hump. This gathering is unique because it is comprised of individuals who have dared to defy the status-quo and taken a step to embark on a new path- the path that will be inclusive of all, full of selfless spirit, imbued with benevolence and an awakened rationality.*

*I welcome each one of you to accept the challenge of building a road, which can become the torchlight for the entire humanity. Gurukul and its NHE movement opens its doors to one and all and we hope we can continue to collaborate and share to improve our effectiveness and impact especially for the future generations.*





# Conference News

by Henk de Weijer and Arete Brim

The 10th Global Education Summit, “Education and Global Transformation” was held July 14th - 18th, at the Centre of Neohumanist Studies (CNS) in Ydrefors, Sweden. The event was co-sponsored by Ananda Marga Gurukula and GAP International. Gap International is a not for profit network empowering people to live and work sustainably, teaching that the inner characteristics of our planet and its inhabitants are intertwined, and promoting the expression and integration of all human and global potentials. The summit was attended by 75 persons from 25 countries, including Japan, Romania, Thailand, Taiwan, Australia, Egypt, South America, United States, India, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Netherlands. It was organized in Ydrefors, not far from Linköping, in the midst of vast, forever rustling pine forests that offered its blueberries and strawberries to attentive hikers. The sun shone until late in the night and rose early in the morning, accompanied by chirping swallows waking up everybody, like excited children.

## Sunday, July 14<sup>th</sup> Plenary



After the opening remarks by Dada Shambhushivananda, the morning started off with a session on **Education and Enlightened Leadership** led by **Eric Jacobson**, Director, Progressive School of Long Island, USA and **Dr. Marcus Bussey**, Professor, Queensland University, Australia.

Eric Jacobson through a participatory leadership test explored how NHE education as taught at the Progressive School of Long Island fosters leadership qualities in the students that endure as demonstrated by graduates of Progressive School a decade after their graduation.



Marcus Bussey led the group in an exercise that explored the difference between hard and soft leaders and how they might respond to issues facing society such as climate change, education and immigration.



These participatory plenaries were followed up by a presentation the next morning by Marcus Bussey on: **Towards an Education for Sadvipraship**. In Neohumanist education, in preschools, schools, universities, and lifelong learning contexts, we are seeking to foster the conditions to enable the sadvipra (enlightened leadership) potential in all people.

**Marilyn Mehlmann**, Head of Development & Training, GAP International, Sweden, gave an introduction to **Learning for Change**, a process, widely taught and used in Africa, Asia and Europe, and intended

to accelerate learning from experience, which is a key element of ESD (Education for Sustainable Development). Changing human behaviour means becoming aware of personal attitudes to exclude or include to be followed by small, but conscious, daily actions.



## Workshops

Afternoon Workshops began with **Peace Games**, taught by **Marilyn Cooper**, Master Trainer Peace Games, USA. A series of nine interactive games that synthesize tai chi and meditation were presented. Based on tai chi body movements, these games are designed to help solve the problem of (youth) violence and poor health. They can be played by young and old and take no particular athletic ability. Please see full article in this issue on page 22.

**Henk de Weijer**, Netherlands led a workshop on **Deep Vision in Art and Ecology** for becoming aware of and refining our perceptions. It is difficult, if not impossible, to initiate proper and creative actions with a biased mind. Yet many perceptions occur automatically, unconsciously and biased. However, to fully understand the nature of Nature, more subtle minds are required.



**The NHE Early Childhood Kindergarten Curriculum of Romania** was shared by **Didi Ananda Devapriya**, Director, NHE Programs, Romania and **Magda Zambet**, educational Director of the Gradinita Rasarit Neohumanist Kindergartens in Bucharest. The presentation gave an overview of the curriculum which is grounded on a theoretical structure, derived from Ananda Marga's concept of the full potential of human beings, embodied in the concept of “Bhagavad Dharma” with its components of Continuing Expansion of Mind, Flow and Service.





**Monday, July 15th**

## Plenary

**Education for Joy and Holistic Health** was presented by **Dr. Sid Jordan**, Director, Prama Institute, USA and **Ole Brekke**, Director, Commedia School, Denmark through a series of exercises that supported the joyful collective sharing of physical playfulness, fantasy, songs in our native language and experiencing our heartfelt gift to our community. The joy of experiencing the gift you want to offer your community was done in a guided meditation and visualization. Participants began by meditating on the passion that they felt in their heart that led them to offer their special gift to their community.



**Caring for Our Blue Planet: a Biosphere Stewardship Journey** was presented by **Cynthia Lazeroff**, Executive Vice President & Director of Educational Programs at Planetary Coral Reef Foundation/Biosphere Foundation. Her presentation explored the work of the Planetary Reef Foundation and Biosphere Foundation and followed the journey of the Biosphere 2 experiment to the present day community conservation work in Southeast Asia. Its areas of focus were: challenges to coral reefs and oceans, solutions including community based education, outreach and conservation; the International Biosphere Youth Stewardship program in Bali-Indonesia and inspiring models for making a difference for a sustainable future such as Rights of Nature initiatives and the rights of the peoples of Planet Earth to live in a healthy biosphere. The short, but dramatic film “Midway Island” was shown. It was an emotional call to be conscious of the tragic consequences that our careless use of plastic has on millions of defenseless animals that - still- live in or directly near the oceans.

## Workshops

**Eric Jacobsen** and **Cynthia Lazaroff** teamed up to offer a workshop on **Service Learning and Caring for Our Blue Planet**. As a follow-up to the morning plenary, the work of the Planetary Coral Reef Foundation and Biosphere Foundation was further explored and coupled with how to turn service opportunities in the local and global community into service-based learning. When a connection is made between the classroom and real-life an inspiration for future learning is developed and skills are learned for life.

The **Learning for Change** workshop by **Marilyn Mehlmann** offered a ‘taster’ in applying the Learning for Change method to one’s own work in the field of ESD. A full length workshop normally takes 2-3 days and has the potential to improve both curriculum design and teacher training.

**Teaching Love through Storytelling** was offered by **Tang Taminga** of Taiwan. In this participatory workshops Tang shared a wide variety of techniques for telling stories that children can explore and retell themselves. All stories were built on a vision of growing the moral and spiritual qualities of children.





*A proper approach to human habitat development  
in cooperation and synergy  
with the natural environment*



**Tuesday, July 16<sup>th</sup>**

## Plenary

**Khun Krisida Kampanatsanyakorn**, Chairman of Cellenium, Bangkok, Thailand, gave an interactive Skype-lecture remotely from Thailand, accompanied by a local PowerPoint presentation, (pictured above side by side), on **The Vanadium Regenerative Fuel Cell: enabler of renewable energy into mainstream and a critical path towards sustainability**. The need for sustainability was discussed and specifically the production and storage of energy on macro and micro scale. The vanadium redox flow, that Krisida Kampanatsanyakorn and his group developed, has the potential to play an essential role in the future of generation, conversion and storage of electricity.



**Dr. Aditya Mohanty**, Professor, Center of Advanced Studies in Philosophy, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, India Future gave a talk on **Education: the holistic perspective**. Here is a summary of his talk.

*In the generic sense of the term 'education' is a continuous process of learning and unlearning from the cradle to grave. On account of possessing a developed mind man is capable of acting autonomously, independent of antecedent or circumstantial conditions that explain why non-human behaviour is predictable, whereas human ways are unpredictable. In common parlance, education is construed as the process of teaching and learning, i.e. it is a bipolar process, involving both teacher and the taught.*

*A highly developed country may have citizens with a poor sense of values and are culturally decadent, whereas a country, which is not so advanced in terms of economic resources or war potential, may have people who stand out aloft in terms of the values they profess and practise. Here, one is introduced to the seminal distinction between civilization and culture. Civilization is indicative of what we have, whereas culture is significative of what we are.*

*The crisis of today is essentially a crisis of values. When knowledge is cultivated with total disregard for values, there is every likelihood of man turning into an intelligent savage. Value awareness lends a sense of goal and direction, the concept of right and wrong. Values cannot be cultivated ad-extra. They are to be integrated into our mode of living. Education should enrich one's perceptivity or sensibility, so that every occasion of life turns out to be an opportunity to understand what is good and what is not and imbibes the former.*

*The million dollar question is how to effect the transition from paradigm to praxis, from theory to practice, from knowledge to action. It is quite possible that a person is fairly conversant with canons of morality, but turns out to be most immoral in his/her conduct. Knowledge and conduct should be so intimately wedded that given the one, the other can be read. Here lies the role of educators as exemplars of values. Actions speak louder than words. An ounce of practice weighs more than a pound of wisdom. A robot cannot replace a living creature. A teacher is a living embodiment of the values of head and heart. He/she inspires the taught, both in his/her presence and absence. Hence the best definition of education is the one given by the headmaster of Harrow School, London: "Real education is that which remains after everything is lost and forgotten."*

## Workshops

**Insights into Yoga Therapy** by **Christian Franceschini**, Yoga Instructor from Italy, explored the basic principles of Yoga Therapy like food, fasting, movement, herbs, mantra and natural remedies.



**The Personal Development of a Teacher** by **Tatjana Popov**, Director Sunshine School, Switzerland demonstrated how fostering of personal growth requires a holistic and integral approach. Such training finds its practical basis in the application of: Creativity (music, painting, theatre, dance, pantomime, asanas, mudras and martial arts); Intuition (mind mapping, mask building, autogenic training, inner order through color, visualization, focusing, listening to the inner voice); and Ethics (exploration of values through opposites). Exercises for this interactive, experiential workshop included examples from all three areas.



**Christian Franceschini** and **Tang Taminga** offered a workshop on **Yoga for Special Children with Different Abilities**. They shared their experiences working with children with different mental and physical abilities and methods that can be used to address their needs. This group includes children with deficiency of concentration, autism, emotional problems, trauma and other personal problems. The Yoga Touch Program of Taiwan was explained. Ways were shown how to choose yoga poses for children with developmental difficulties and what benefits can be expected for them.

**Ole Brekke**, conducted a workshop on **Informal Education Using Theater in the Classroom**. Today education is increasingly taking place outside of formal institutions and schools. Theater brings joy to the learning process making events more effective educationally, socially and personally. The workshop was a playful entry into the physical aspect of creativity.

## Wednesday, July 17th

### Realizing Visions of Alternative Educational Spaces

Dr. Marcus Bussey and Dr. Sid Jordan led the participants in a day of exploring our visions for building alternative educational-spaces where humanity can reunite in spirit & action and what role progressive - educators, activists & social-entrepreneurs play in nurturing such initiatives.

Sid Jordan introduced the day's task of Forming Communities of Practice surrounding the theme of what each of us wanted to contribute to our Future Vision of an Ananda Marga Gurukula University utilizing Open Space technology. Marcus Bussey then facilitated a What If....game after clustering peoples' individually chosen topics of interest into a number of Communities of Practice in the "market place" now called the Futures Wall. After choosing your group related to a Community of Practice each group selected a set of possibilities from all the choices provided in developing creative pathways by choosing 3 or 4 elements from the Futures Wall and suggesting outcomes. After working in groups, each community of interest reported to the larger group what visions of future education evolved in their discussions.

The afternoon session was devoted to an introduction to **Causal Layered Analysis (CLA)** as a means of developing a past-present-future scan of the **litany** of failed industrial models, socially conscious **systems** offering solutions, and dominant hierarchical **world views** as we looked for a **mythic metaphor** for a future university. The metaphor could serve as a nuclear concept to direct all of our open space work in synthesizing our visions in various communities of interest studied through the lens of the CLA. The workshop left the future vision for this future university open ended, but inspired continuing working of creating the metaphor and realizing a global campus for Ananda Marga Gurukula.





## Thursday, July 18

During the final plenary, Marcus Bussey shared one possible myth/metaphor for a new vision for Gurukula. Groups again met, this time to think about how Gurukula can help to support their continuing work and how they could contribute to the development of Gurukula. As an ending, participants of the summit shared their personal experiences and stories. It became very clear that everybody felt deeply inspired by the broadminded and all inclusive attitude of Gurukula that functioned as the cement for this Summit. Each person felt accepted and invited to implement his/her best potential for the welfare of the earth and all its inhabitants.

The Summit featured interactive programs both in the plenary and workshop programs, fostering a sense of community and group work. New grids of connections and relationships were built. Plans for collaborative work, including various people and disciplines, can be expected in the near future.

The energy and enthusiasm that was generated in this Education and Global Transformation Summit has inspired those present to move forward in creating new connections and concrete objectives that weave together our "pre-k through 12" and higher education goals. The faculty of Neohumanist Education is working with new speed that will enable us to actualize the next steps towards creating a global AMGK University: more primary schools, teacher training centers and affiliations with Universities. Our publications and forums will inform you how to participate in this renaissance in Neohumanist Education.

## Evening Programs

In the evening representatives of various schools and projects gave inspiring, and often moving, visual presentations about their projects. These included, Progressive School of Long Island by Director Eric Jacobson, Dr. Aditya Mohanty and the Aadruta Childrens' home in Bhuvaneswar, India, Didi Anandarma and her exciting experience with Nile River School near Cairo, Egypt, Didi Ananda Amegha's school in Venezuela, Tatanya Popov's school and teacher training work in Switzerland, Dada Shankarsananda's recognized Yoga Academy Singapore, Maya Pagandiri and the Surnise School, Bali, Indonesia, the Yoga Kids programme of yoga for children in Taiwan by Tang Taminga and team, the Yoga for Children and Teachers in Italy by Christian Franceschini and the Baan Unrak School and teacher training in Thailand by Didi Ananda Citrarekha and Jaree Naksamrit.





# 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 will explore some of these as they were discovered in an ethnically, religiously, and demographically diverse setting—New York. The first two gems appeared the last two issues: Pseudo-Culture vs. True Human Culture and Ecology. Upcoming gems will include: Awakened Conscience, Food, Health, Life as a Mission, Not a method, Holistic approach, Multiple Intelligences.*

## Gem #3: Applied Learning

“Why do I have to learn this?”

Perhaps the most common question ever asked in school by children, it deserves a better answer than “because it is on the test.” The heavy reliance on testing for feedback about human progress has skewed our perceptions about what really matters in education over the long term. Short-sighted test drilling does not address the deeper developmental needs of childhood. With so much invested in this memorize-test-forget approach to learning, it is little wonder that schools have no energy left for the real work of building a lifetime’s foundation of good values and positive attitudes!

The increased disconnect between learning and the real world has had serious repercussions. Some of these are increased stress levels, lowered sense of purpose, self-esteem under constant attack, more cutthroat competition, rampant cheating, a lack of practical skills, weak problem solving, and talents not being tested getting ignored. Noticing all this, some parents have started a counter-movement by withdrawing their children from testing altogether. This desperate step does little to change a child’s life however, as they continue to spend the whole school year preparing for something in which they don’t participate. It is just another form of disconnect.

Neohumanism addresses this issue from the get-go. Applied learning being at the core of Neohumanist method and purpose, NH schools are well-positioned to attract families who are waking up to the realities of a non-motivating education. “Why do I have to learn this?” is answered every day in a school that practices applied learning. Therefore students are more motivated. Therefore their capacity and output are greater. Therefore their self-esteem is higher. Therefore they want greater challenges. Applied learning creates a virtuous cycle.

All children have great curiosity before entering the school system. Schools do a good job of killing it, or squashing it until it finds expression elsewhere. In a system that doesn’t value and cultivate curiosity, the child will naturally start feeling forced and begin questioning the why of it all. In my childhood, I can still remember the answers: “Because you need to get a good grade, so that you can get into a good college someday, so that you can get a good job someday, so that you make a lot of money and be successful.” This assumes of course that making money matters to a seven year old. This line of reasoning left me in a panic, forming a much bigger question in my mind, “Is that all there is to life?”

If schools were to cultivate curiosity, what question would children ask? Perhaps they would say, “Why can’t I learn about this yet?” Unlike the first question, this question implies a positive attitude towards learning.

One way to accomplish this is by connecting learning to the real world through a constant, rigorous routine of applying newly learned skills in the environment. Assessment is also critical in this process. If students and teachers are evaluated on the basis of these applied exercises, you have provided a built-in incentive for finding new and more exciting ways to apply skills as they are acquired.

As with the other “Gems of Neohumanism,” the gem of Applied Learning is easily within the public’s grasp of understanding. I propose, as with the other gems, that a successful school could be started with just this one principle at its base. P.R. Sarkar, the author of Neohumanism, said, “*Educated are those who have learned much, remembered much and made use of their learning in practical life.*” But how can we insure that children will remember and put learning to use? Methodology plays a major role in this undertaking, as does alternative assessment. Crammed in under fear and pressure, traditional learning evaporates as quickly as the agents of fear and pressure are removed. On the job learning is what really sticks. Why? Because it is experiential, and we need to actually use it. Our preferred method should then be experiential learning that has actually had a need to be used. It is that simple.

Here are some examples of experiential based learning with an applied component:



## Service:

- A celebration is held for the 100th day of school and students bring in cans of food for a soup kitchen. The cans become part of a math activity of grouping by tens.
- We learn about sorting, mailing, weighing, and maps as we collect and distribute supplies for hurricane relief.
- Reading, measuring, hygiene, and following directions are taught through preparing special recipes used for feeding hungry people in the local community.

## Projects:

- Invention Convention: Over an eight week period students take apart and learn about how things are constructed, create their own idea, apply for a patent, diagram their trial and error, produce, and share an invention. Best ideas can be shared with local businesses, government officials, or via YouTube.
- Quilt: Students collectively make a quilt for someone in need. The quilt tells a story. Math skills are incorporated.
- Tibetan Sand Mandala: Small groups link their works together in a day of sand painting that illustrates their deeper self and dreams for the world. Outcomes can be shared via writing to the local newspaper.
- Environment: Students take on a challenge to save a local endangered species. Habitats are created or protected. The community is educated.
- Letter Writing: Students write letters to practice new skills. There are many possibilities: a letter to Grandma, a letter to a child in another country (practices foreign language acquisition), a letter to a lonely elder, or for younger children—labeling their environment or making informational or safety signs.

## Drama:

- Students conduct a realistic simulation of government as they elect a president, create laws, decide on human rights, choose a court, decide cases, and campaign for causes.
- Students act out famous stories that changed the world rather than read about the stories.
- Students write and perform skits to demonstrate knowledge in various subjects. Skits can then be performed for teaching younger children or elders.
- Students become characters and personalities from history. These characters then interact and use their actual words to demonstrate their personalities and points of view.

## The Arts:

- Students learn comparative writing by analyzing famous paintings, their similarities and differences. Can be combined with a real world trip to a museum.
- Students study a time period through the music of the times only. They try to draw inferences from what they hear about the nature of the times and how people thought.
- Students create artistic posters on various science topics to be hung in their rooms as a reference: clouds, classification of all things, layers of the atmosphere, simple machines, water cycle, photosynthesis, parts of a flower.
- Students learn symmetry with painting and folded paper. Finished product can become a birthday or holiday gift

## Visits and Visitors:

- During the Afghan War after 9/11, we brought in an Afghan refugee and a Muslim Imam. The question and discussion period was filmed by the BBC.
- Students went on a field trip to learn golf, but what they really got was an advanced lesson in focusing and following directions that they will never forget.
- An AMURT worker comes to the school and gives a presentation about the relief work the organization does around the world. Children brainstorm how they can help.
- Students interview an elderly person in their family. The best interviews are invited to the school to share their life experiences.

## Literature Extensions:

- “Hats, Caps, Socks, and Mittens” We collected hats, caps, socks and mittens for homeless families as a reading extension to the book.
- “The Rainbow Crow” A Native American story of self-sacrifice, our students explored the meaning of sacrifice in their lives. This culminated in a grant and newspaper coverage of a project to spend time with elderly patients in a local nursing home.
- “The Cat Who Went to Heaven” Students write animal stories inspired by the book, and mimicking the style of the author. The best stories are sent off to a Buddhist magazine and we had one published on the cover.
- “The Giving Tree” Students plant and care for a tree as a special project.
- “A Wrinkle in Time” Children imagine they could come back as an adult to visit themselves as children. They think about what advice they might give themselves. After this, they explore the concept that this is what parents try to do. They then do a project of understanding and appreciation for the role the parents are playing in their lives. Respect and love are cultivated.



# Why is Embracing Local Story Traditions in Schools so Important?

By Tang Taminga

Children love stories. Globally there are some wonderful tales that provide lovely concepts and ideas. However, telling our children stories from the local culture should remain the main stay of the children's story diet, as only these tales offer the child the imagery that can help them not only learn the psychology and values of the culture of the land, but also the spiritual wisdom. After all, stories have traditionally not been for children, but for adults who used these tales as entertainment to pass the long evenings as well as sources of wisdom: psychological, cultural and spiritual. Omitting these valuable and trusted sources for personal growth prevents children from discovering a deeper dimension of the self.

Taiwanese stories are a case in point. Though most children do know many Chinese stories, such as Fa Mulan, the stories of the festivals and the Chinese zodiac, the main stay of the Chinese children consists of cartoons and Disney-ized fairytales from the Grimm and Anderson tradition.

Taiwanese folktales are obviously not just Taiwanese. Over the centuries they have been influenced by Chinese stories and tales from the whole South East Asian region. Currently though the western cultural tradition has overtaken the shaping of the children's imagination. This is unfortunate. "The folklore of a people is a window into its soul" writes Fred H. Lobb, one of the few teachers here who uses Taiwanese folktales in his classes. More even than the Western fairytales, Chinese tales teach children their place in the cosmos and how all life forms are interconnected. Below are some examples.

## The Benevolent Universe

In **"The Good Man and the Good Ox"**, a man buys an ox destined to be slaughtered and keeps it at home. One night the ox starts to shout and dance, awakening the good man, who along with his family come out of the house to find out why their ox is making such a terrible noise. As they can't figure out the reason, suddenly an earthquake takes place and causes their house to collapse. As the good man sleeps outside, he has a dream about his ox, who says, "Last time you saved my life at the market, today I saved your life from the earthquake." The good man expresses his profound thanks to the ox in his dream and then asks, "But how did you know about the impending earthquake?" The ox answered that his grandfather is the 'Earth Ox', and warned him that he was about to turn over (causing the earthquake).

Superficially the story of the Good man and the good ox shows that good actions get rewards. It also shows the interdependence of nature and men and that the universe is fundamentally benevolent. One can connect to this



benevolence through one's benevolent actions and service. It also explains that while in western culture people refrain from horse, cat and dog meat, in Taiwan the older generation had an affectionate relation with its oxen that prevented them from eating their meat. In Taiwan, this story was common two generations ago. Today most people will be surprised. They have forgotten this source of living with reverence and thankfulness.

## Nature and Man

The story of **"The Umbrella Tree"** can be seen as a simple moral tale where two brothers meet totally different fates due to their personality and fate. On a deeper level it explores the dependence of the human condition on a balanced ecology. A girl is sick because a frog's home is blocked by a stone. There is no water because people didn't remove a fallen tree. This natural intelligence is a gift to moral and inner-connected people. Learning through reference to natural wisdom may help us find reference for ourselves, as inner and outer ecology are inseparable.



## Divinity as a Human Condition

All over the world stories show the importance of each and every action for building our future. Good begets good, bad results in bad. This moral connection is usually obvious in Taiwanese tales as well.

The real specialty of many of these Chinese folktales though is that morality can elevate one above the human level and helps achieve immortality, through the power of devotion and the close and intimate relation with God.



An example is **"Chunmei's Journey"**. Chunmei lives with her precariously sick father on a small farm in the mountains. The people tell her to travel to a temple in the city to pray for her father's recovery. The city is four days away and Chunmei can't leave her father alone. As she can't travel to the god, she decides to walk around the house for four days and then the fifth day pray fervently to the god and then walk again four days around the house as if she were walking back home.

During these days, a governor had ordered to be left alone in the temple in the city so that he could pray undisturbed. When he saw that he was not alone, but that a girl was also in the temple he got upset. He called the caretaker and asked them to chase away the girl. But when the caretaker looked around nobody could be found.

Meanwhile Chunmei's father recovered. Everybody was surprised and attributed the cure to the temple's god. The story of this spread far and wide and also came to the ear of the governor, who went to see Chunmei and her father himself. When he reached their house, he was surprised that the girl he had seen in the temple, was none other than Chunmei! He then realized that while she was unable to visit the god, her devotion had brought the god to her home!

The story of Chunmei shows that through sincere devotion, one can overcome one's adversity and that the gods favor truthful sacrifice of the heart. The story of **Guan Yin** shows that one can join the ranks of the immortals through total dedication and personal sacrifice. The story of the **Ten Suns** show that divinity can be bestowed upon us through Divine Grace. From these stories we do get the feeling that immortality is an aspect of the human condition.

This again goes to show that what we call children's tales today, in fact were sources of spiritual insight for adults who had no other means of sharing their wisdom in times that many people were excluded from government or academics. That many of these stories have found their way into temples and are celebrated today reflects the inclusive nature of the Buddhist and Taoist traditions which were open to all forms of worship.

Keeping these traditional stories alive in education is key to offering children the archetypal images that can help them develop their spirituality and inner wisdom.

In western cultures, there are many pre-Christian story sources which offer children the imagery that can similarly assist them in forming their spiritual nature. **The Edda** is an example. It is interesting that the church of the pre twentieth century was well aware of the spiritual importance of the traditional tales and therefore banned these as heretic and barbaric. In Europe, in what we now call fairytales, the peasants and uneducated found their sources of spiritual wisdom, something they were unable to get from the church services which were often conducted in Latin.

Today the major religions may be much more tolerant of traditional tales as they see these stories as ways of growing the spiritual nature of their members. Today the biggest threat to keeping local cultures alive is the overwhelming power of the market dynamics, and a gradually eroding awareness amongst teachers who are not aware of the need to embrace the local story tradition as a way of reconnecting them with their inner selves.



# Relevance of Neohumanist Education to the Current World Context

By Didi Ananda Devapriya

Within the context of the current global ecological crisis facing humanity, raising ecological awareness has an important role and must be cultivated. Ecological consciousness is based on a profound awareness of the natural laws guiding nature and society and of the interdependent relationship between man and the environment. It raises an awareness of the need to care for nature, to predict and understand natural phenomenon and to rationally and efficiently use all natural resources. Therefore, in contemporary society, as we witness the results of a lack of harmony between society and nature, the necessity of cultivating an ecological consciousness, a wise and rational attitude towards the natural world that increases its wealth and minimizes human impact and pollution, is of utmost important.

The concepts of universalism and unity in diversity are fundamental to identifying new tools for creating an inclusive world. This component of Neohumanist Education aims to prepare a generation capable of promoting and developing harmonious relationships between ethnic, and religious communities creating a positive framework for dialog between children of different nationalities, religions, that are open to accept ethnic differences (language, customs, traditions) etc.

Cultural diversity is a social reality that must be taken advantage of in the preschool kindergarten setting. The kindergarten setting is an intercultural space, offering children the opportunity to become aware of their specific historical and cultural surroundings, thus helping them to know and value their own personal ethnic and national identity, and to extend this identity to their membership in a wider universe. Neohumanist education emphasizes this sense of identity, considering it vital to be firmly anchored in one's own ethno-cultural values and traditions in order to guarantee the transmission of generational wisdom, as well as for healthy personal growth.

Knowledge of one's own past, ancestral values, and ethno-cultural legacy are roots that nourish the growth and flowering of the healthy individual identity of each person. The arts, especially the traditional arts, help to create a connection between past, present and future. An authentic sense of rootedness contributes to a sense of identity and self-respect, which is the foundation for being able to explore and experience other cultures in a constructive way that enriches the individual. Modern life creates increasing daily opportunities for interaction between different cultures, and the attitudes cultivated in Neohumanist Education help children to navigate the emerging "Global Village" in an open, compassionate and human way.

Neohumanist Education cultivates the aesthetic sensibilities of the mind and respect for culture, in order to shape the personality with refined aesthetic ideals, attitudes and behaviors. Thus, beginning with aesthetic awareness, a child gradually reaches higher and subtler experiences of beauty, or aesthetic feelings that are deeply lasting, as well as the specifically human experiences of appreciation and love for divine qualities. This is especially important in the modern world where children are overwhelmed with a multitude of stimuli from the profit driven mass media. Much of mass media is dominated by pseudo-culture, which threatens to erase subtler forms of culture with those that have the most sensational mass appeal, promoting consumerism, violence and a materialist emphasis on sexuality.

Finally, rationality and the awakened conscience are fundamental for developing a full, complete, balanced and free person. Neohumanist Education supports the development of the child's moral capacity to rationally discriminate right from wrong, and the self confidence and moral courage to act in accordance with their own conscience. This moral conscience is awakened by resonating with the child's own innate attunement with universal principles such as truth, benevolence, and love, rather than imposing morality through fear-based techniques which result in the child learning to trust authority, but not their own authentic conscience.

Self-actualized people and leaders are those that develop trust in their own thinking and the ability to maintain their principles, even in the face of external pressures. Forming the foundations of a strong character in early childhood helps children to build the strength that will be needed to resist the strong peer pressures that they will encounter in their adolescence, which have become increasingly dangerous in recent years. Contemporary adolescents no longer trust authority, thus attempts to instill moral principles solely through authority without developing the rational capacity of discrimination, tend to only be effective in childhood, and cannot provide the moral compass needed to navigate the turbulent teenage years. That is why it is so important for children to have contact with positive models and why it is so important for the adult to show the child respect for moral values through actions, not just words. In this way it becomes much easier to inspire the development of morality despite the many obstacles arising in modern society.

Benevolence, generosity, honesty, compassion, and loving kindness are the expressions of happy, fulfilled human beings. These qualities bring out our human nobility and must be generously encouraged in children right from kindergarten. At this preschool age, the focus is on an education of the heart, educating children in a spirit of cooperation, service-mindedness, free expression, responsibility and tolerance.



# The Play's the Thing

## The Theatre Arts in Learning

by Jane Greis

The first school play. I remember sitting in the audience as a parent when my own children were little and attending Sunshine preschool here in Switzerland. My older son, who was four at the time, played the role of the farmer as the class performed the song *The Farmer in the Dell*. And hi-ho-the-derry-o, he spontaneously chose none other than his little three-year-old brother to be his wife. Like any proud parent I was bowled over by the adorableness of my beloved offspring. If this were the sole benefit of participating in the school play it was well worthwhile. Yet, despite having a background in dance and theatre myself, it wasn't until I began teaching that I realized the real efficacy of the theatre arts as a tool for holistic learning.



When I started working with children, both preschool and school age, it was like a great homecoming for me. I had finally found my tribe. I had worked for years with actors and dancers choreographing dances and putting on plays. I loved the entire process of creating and producing performances. It required me to use all of my capacities in the service of something larger. Coming up with ideas and developing them was always a rich and varying interplay of textures, shapes, rhythms and impressions of the moving body, and the emotional, aesthetic and musical selves, all gently guided by intuition and intellect. And because I always worked in collaboration with other dancers and artists, I could add the interpersonal and social aspects to the mix as well. It was definitely a holistic enterprise.

At Sunshine, we use theatre to create a rich integrated learning environment for both the children and teachers and to foster a sense of community within the school at large. This co-creative laboratory becomes a scaffolding on which to hang our ideas, a loom with which to weave the threads of our experiences into a meaningful whole - a tapestry of life. In making a theatre piece we frame and contextualize our daily activities - our songs and dances, our stories and games all become raw material for the performance. We see how everything is related to everything else and how it all can come together into a meaningful whole.

### The elements of theater and how they interact and enhance learning

The building blocks of theatre are the very same modalities we use to engage young children in a play-based curriculum: story, song, dance, visual arts, and dramatic role play. It is through these practices and the interplay between them, that we develop our human capacities and intelligences: physical, emotional, cognitive, social, intuitive, and spiritual. This also includes more specific lines of development such as musical, mathematical or aesthetic for example. The process of making a theatre performance ticks off the developmental boxes quite naturally and always in exciting combination. It is integrative by nature. As Shakespeare said, "the play's the thing."

**Movement and dance** are key ingredients in any play and provide opportunities for developing the physical body as well as spatial awareness, imagination and aesthetic sense.

With little ones, this is pretty obvious yet with older school-aged kids,



movement and dance are often the first enterprises to be abandoned in favor of the more cognitive and verbal aspects of drama. As soon as kids are reading, very often the school play becomes merely a demonstration of each child's ability to read and memorize text. This need not be the case. In the picture for example, seven-year old Luc dances the role of the wind. His classmates play water, fire, earth, and ether. Water and fire combine to make steam, earth and fire to make lava. A science/social studies lesson is brought to life in full living moving color and woven into our play, *The Circle of Love*.



**Music** is another fundamental element that contributes greatly to any play and supports a child's development in myriad ways. In and of itself music covers the bases expressing the color, rhythm and tone of all aspects of life. Coupling fine gestures with song aids in memory and comprehension and provides an opportunity to practice fine motor skills. Teacher Gabi, leads the children in a tender German lullaby as part of our show *The Giving Trees*. Three little monkeys from a summer performance of the classic story *Caps for Sale* are getting English lessons as they tap out the rhythm of the text on their hand-made drums.



We bring in the **visual arts and crafts** as we create our own costumes and props. Handicrafts support the development of fine motor skills and working with shape, color, and texture requires our creativity and develops our aesthetic sense. Through making and wearing his own costume a child encounters the characters and the narrative of a story from a different more embodied perspective. A group of young lions show off the colorful expressive masks they made for their role in our production of *Circus Sunshine*. The big wall mural was an on-going group effort by all of the children and teachers.



A play tends to have an overarching **story line** as well as possible smaller narratives lines within, both of which offer opportunities for **language development** and **dramatic role play**. When children listen to and dramatize a story, they learn empathy as they embody a character, literally walking in someone else's shoes, or perhaps wearing someone else's hat! Having lines to

speak gives kids a chance to show off their language skills as well, especially for those learning a second language. Simply being able to follow a story line and respond to cues is a wonderful practice in self-regulation supporting cognitive development.

## What story do we want to tell?

For us at Sunshine, the story line of a play is very important. The content of the play is arrived at differently each year and is always a collaborative effort by all of the teachers, skillfully guided by our director Tatjana Popov. Each narrative emerges from our circle-of-love curriculum and is an expression of some aspect of our universal neohumanist values. For instance, a few years ago, with a strong verbal group of English speakers and a chance to work on a large community stage, we were able to mount a lovely production of the neohumanist favorite *The Fairy's Flowers* which explores the ten moral principles of yama and niyama.

The launching of our nature playgroup some years later inspired us to imagine a more earth-centered and sustainable version of the American classic *The Giving Tree* which we performed outdoors at the farm where our nature playgroup meets. *Circle of Love*, based on a poem written by Tatjana was a recent ambitious attempt to bring to the stage a telling of a neohumanist creation story in a way that children could understand. Our most recent endeavor, *Circus Sunshine* centers around Frogo, a frog who runs away to join the circus. As he attempts to participate in the various circus acts, he discovers and learns to appreciate his own unique gifts and talents by listening to his own inner voice. Back in the classroom and in the forest the integration of the material continues as the lions spill off the stage and into their natural habitat and the children practice inner listening skills and paint pictures of their inner voices.





## Building a Healthy Community

Perhaps the greatest benefit offered by the collaborative process of performance making is that it offers something for everybody. To quote Shakespeare again, “All the world’s a stage...” And as I see it, all the stage is a world.

Like Frogo, every child has unique gifts to offer the world- some ripe and ready to be picked and offered, others still held tight in the bud, needing water and sunshine and time to bloom. Some obvious, some hidden. For instance, I remember fondly, having a breakthrough with one particular child who I found generally rather challenging and increasingly disruptive. When we began focusing on our play, this child came alive. She was full of wonderful ideas and finally had the perfect circumstances to put them to positive use. Suddenly I saw her not as bossy and overbearing but as a creative and inspired little director in the making.

As we work toward a common goal, cooperation and harmony increase and our sense of community begins to deepen. Each child and teacher begins to find his or her place of contribution. We endeavor to highlight the strengths of all while creating a safe container to experiment with less developed more challenging areas.

When the day of the performance arrives, energy and anticipation are high. As the teachers and students are busy readying themselves, our families and friends arrive with platters and plates full of delicious offerings for the pot-luck lunch we will enjoy together afterwards. Through our theater play we share our Sunshine world with those we love and bring it into the larger context of the children’s lives. We offer parents a glimpse of the totality that is the Sunshine experience. What we do, how we do, and why we do it. Our plays are a mirror of our little Sunshine world and of our hopes and dreams of what a healthier more just and beautiful world at large might look like.



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*Continued from Page 5*

*Renaissance in All the Strata of Life - By Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar*

and as a result, an individual or a group of people often try to suppress or oppress others. Due to this type of defective psychology, a vast section of the populace suffers from psychic depression. The Renaissance movement will have to be active against this sort of exploitation, and it will have to save human society from the clutches of these defective philosophies. These ailments should be removed and dispelled from the minds of human beings.

There may be another disease, another psychic ailment, and that is in the psycho-spiritual stratum. In the psycho-spiritual stratum, the movement is a pinnacle one; that is, all ideas coincide in a particular point, and that point moves towards the Supreme Entity. But the movement is certainly a synthetic one, not analytic. However, if the movement is extroversial, the path naturally becomes an analytic one, and that is dangerous. In the name of psycho-spiritual approach, in the false name of religion, disparities are created in the human society, differences are created between human beings. In the name of religion so many sanguinary battles were fought in the past, and even now people belonging to one religious group cannot rely on other groups, or pay credence to other groups. Thus one should remember that only the pinnacle Entity, the apexed Entity is our Saviour – He is the only goal of our life. This is the panacea for all psychic ailments.

And the third stratum is the spiritual stratum. In this stratum the natural path is to convert everything into spirituality. This conversion should be in the realm of learning, in the realm of language, in the realm of studies, in the realm of solidarity. That is, in every arena of our spiritual life, this conversion should take place – the conversion of your entire existence, the parts and portions of your existence, into spirituality. But due to defective philosophy, defective guidance, people forget this fact, and they convert spirit into mind and mind into matter. That is, they take the path of negative Pratisaṅcara [devolution], and that is detrimental to the cause of human progress.

Renaissance people will have to raise their voices against this, and they will have to do it now – they will have to do it immediately. And I also desire that you all should move on the path of Renaissance, which is fully supported by rationality, from today – from this very moment. Let victory be yours.



*Marilyn Cooper, Karate and Tai Chi Master, is the founder of the Pushing for Peace Games. Pushing for Peace workshops have been conducted in the United States and in Europe thus far, at mediation conferences, non-profit corporations, public and private schools, treatment centers for returning veterans with PTSD, universities, etc. Marilyn taught the Peace Games at this summer's AMGK Education Conference in Sweden. If you would like her to teach Peace Games at your school or project, please contact her at: <littleliverwest@gmail.com>*

## Pushing for Peace

### The T'ai Chi Peace Games

By Marilyn Cooper

Pushing for Peace is a program that teaches T'ai Chi movements and philosophy to prevent violence and increase mental and physical health. Practicing T'ai Chi causes a significant shift away from the bully/victim paradigm, and towards a mutually beneficial exchange. It provides an opportunity to play on a level playing field - a safe space where there are no winners and no losers, and everyone gains.

The Games are based on T'ai Chi Ch'uan, Qigong and Bagua. They were created over the past fifteen years in classes with Kindergartners through Seventh graders. I cannot say precisely who made up these Games, as they were the result of the ancients who developed the arts coming through me in relationship to these children.

The Games have become increasingly streamlined for the sake of quick take and ease of assimilation. No time is wasted and the basics are all covered: mental clarity, relaxation, the movement of energy, centering, grounding, sensitivity, compassion for others, respect, balance, awareness and focus. Each game delivers a subliminal, powerful message that goes into the mind, body and spirit of the player.

### Origins of the Peace Games

In 1999, just after the Columbine massacre, a series of copycat threats to school buses were causing two hour delays for bomb sweeps. While driving my daughter to school, I realized the urgent need for T'ai Chi for youth, and began teaching my daughter and her classmates at St Paul's Lutheran Academy in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. My first day teaching was a rude awakening. I couldn't even get the students to line up and face me for warm-ups. Any hesitation on my part was an opportunity for them to talk out of turn, jump around aimlessly, or rough-house with each other. Traditional Chinese Kung Fu masters taught their art only to the most obedient and self-disciplined of students. My goal of peaceful, harmonious children through T'ai Chi was fading rapidly. I knew that I needed to create a seamless lesson plan that would eliminate the need for punitive, authoritarian discipline, which was not working anyway.

I quickly learned that different age groups required different programs. The four and five year olds became a separate a group I called Pre-T'ai Chi. The six to ten year olds could all understand and copy moves at about the same level, so they could be taught together. I spent the next three years struggling to motivate them to do something requiring self discipline and repetitious practice. Most kids don't choose to learn any discipline. They just want to have fun.

How could I keep the kids' attention long enough to give them the feeling of qi, let alone to grasp the T'ai Chi form? T'ai Chi's healing powers are renowned for restoring the energy of youth to the elderly. Could this art conversely give the wisdom of elders to youth?

Instead of beginning class with warm-ups, I began with a short discussion of Chinese history and philosophy, paying close attention to when kids started to slump over their desks with eyes glazed over. Kids all love the T'ai Chi symbol, an empty circle called Wuji, or infinite emptiness, divided equally by the black Yin and white Yang. A discussion of opposites interacting, creating infinite flow in the universe would ensue. Sesame Street had prepared them all for shouting out opposites like black and white, high and low and mom and dad, the latter of which defined easily how the One splits into Two which gives rise to 10,000 things. The youngest of students easily grasped concepts that had taken lots of books and years of study on my part.

### After Many Failed Experiments, Triumphant Successes

One of the most beneficial aspects of T'ai Chi is the notion that Loss is gain. Interpreted many ways, it means that experience is the best teacher and that you learn from your mistakes. In purely T'ai Chi terms, it means that when you lose space to your opponent, you gain knowledge of his or her position.

All the kids loved to describe the movements and warm-ups with imagery relevant to them. Repulse the Monkey was renamed Serve the Pizza, and Play the Pipa was dubbed Play the Bass. They thought arm swings were like the rotating action of the washing machine; with the waist rotations, we tried to stretch our tummies to be as fat as Santa Claus.



Qigong meditation was easy to make into a game. Kids live in their imaginations anyway. The ideas suggested to them when they were lying on the floor in winter or on rainy days (well distanced from each other!), or outside seated on benches, or tree stumps on outdoor days were really taken to heart. I could feel a collective sigh of relief when they were given permission to go to the place in their heads where they already were anyway.

Later in the year, the bigger kids began to mentor littler ones, like mini-masters and disciples, and this was only after they began to grasp T'ai Chi and had something real to teach. Instead of bullying and ostracizing the smaller, younger kids, the big kids were now taking them under their wings. They actually began to adopt certain ones with whom they had positive chemistry, which was a huge validation and a milestone in the program. It showed me that bullying could be transformed into compassionate engagement with the right factors at play-guidance from a caring teacher who knew what she was doing.

I taught the kids how to hold their ground by relaxing, sinking and connecting with gravity. They loved being able to hold off an adult three times their body weight. Pushing on a willing adult with all their might was another rare pleasure. Suddenly the forms took on real relevance.

Kids would line up for a chance to play push hands with me. They would have blissed-out expressions on their faces, otherwise seen only during the first lick of an ice cream cone on a hot June day.

## Peace Games Today

I was not to see these Peace Games come to fruition for another ten years, in the San Francisco Bay Area of Northern California, where Asian culture and the T'ai Chi community are both firmly entrenched. Ten years is barely anything in T'ai Chi years and the Peace Games have evolved.

Learning made fun is the new paradigm. Information that is useful for not getting knocked down in the playground, or for how to feel calm was really appreciated. Unlike the fear-based construct in which bad grades branded the student a failure, the students begged to get tested! They loved the method of somatic learning of T'ai Chi and the retraining of responses to stress because it was relevant to their daily lives.

The Peace Games expose kids to the profound ideas and feelings in T'ai Chi, teaching ways to be more in touch with universality; their own nature and other peoples'. Like T'ai Chi form, the people who play the Peace Games report feeling calmer, more centered and grounded and a significant increase in feelings of well-being. The energy is created by using the mind and body together, and then sharing that heightened awareness with others. Each and every student experiences owning their own space while respecting the space of others!

## Below are the nine Peace Games with an explanation of each, and their benefits.

**1) Be The Chair** - Seated meditation clears the mind. Students will have better focus after processing their mental chatter in stillness. A straight back while poised on the edge of the chair, as if sit bones are the feet during standing, is essential. The crown point must be lifted and the shoulders relaxed. Students are guided to listen to their thoughts without hanging on to them or judging them. "Be the Chair" begins the whole games series with the notion that the mind is in control.

**2) Operator** is based on standing in Wuji, (infinite emptiness), and on the idea of listening to energy. Students form a circle with the teacher, measuring the distance between each other by making the arms form the letter "V." Lightly touching the centers of each others' palms, with one side up and one side down, the teacher gives a gentle push to the student's palm they are touching while looking directly at it. Students follow gentle pressure from palm to palm around the circle till it returns to the point of origin. Make sure the eyes follow the hands. Teacher can follow the movement and see where it gets stuck, wherever a student is distracted and not paying attention. The same movement is done with eyes closed. This develops sensitivity to others and awareness of the feeling of energy. As guide, the instructor can keep her or his eyes open to notice when one or another student is out of it by their posture and gaze. They might be fidgeting or looking around the room. Inevitably, the movement will get stuck with them not paying attention. The whole group will pressure them to pay attention so the energy doesn't get stuck and they can go on with other games. We always start over until everyone passes the energy. This sends a message of the importance of participation and engagement to any process. It also gives the feeling of the importance of community.



**3) Turtle Races** are based on the T'ai Chi core principal of slowness. Moving slowly develops self-control. Competing to be last gives students a new perspective on the rush to win and beat others. Three qualities are: Slow, Big, Quiet. A few supplemental rules for the students who try to find tricks to win: Keep moving forward. No diagonal movement. Stay on

your feet and don't touch the floor. Give accolades for creativity, focus, and adhering to rules and principles. The obvious message from this games is that rushing doesn't mean winning and slow and steady wins the race.

**4) Follow the Leader, Lead the Follower** teaches the principles in T'ai Chi known as listening and sticking. Students will instinctively assume a posture that is loose, but resilient, poised and flowing, as they lead and follow each other. The postural alignment taken instinctively while listening and adhering is known as Peng. Students should stay connected at the backs of their wrists (left to left and right to right). The two students mutually decide who leads first. After a few minutes, they switch roles. Finally, the whole exercise is done with eyes closed. The other students stand along the walls or chairs and tell the principal players if they are getting too close. Lead the Follower teaches that in order to be good leader, you must be able to follow. It also teaches sensitivity, awareness and to neither anticipate or initiate, but rather to wait until you feel real motion.



**5) Sword Fingers** teaches students to turn the waist to deflect force, to use the whole body moving in concert rather than standing in place and arm wrestling. One student points to the other with the pointer and middle finger with the arm outstretched. Sword Fingers also teaches how to change direction from backwards/evading to forwards/attacking in one step. The hand must change (from sword fingers to open palm) when the advance turns into the retreat. Sword-fingers often gets students running, and is best done in a large, open space. This game is most like Shaolin and helps students dissipate excess energy. They must use their minds and their bodies. The familiar skill of running must integrate with the fine motor skill of changing the hand position: shield for retreat, sword fingers for advance.

**6) Glider**, done with eyes open and eyes closed, teaches how to move smoothly with weight sunk, to not grip, but only touch the opponent lightly on the elbow, and to breathe with the movements. This game increase sensitivity, awareness, balance, relaxation, and lowers blood pressure. Partners' heartbeats and breaths become synchronized. Students gain compassion and awareness of others from "Glider."



**7) Full Moon/Empty Moon** is the circular movement that Push Hand players do to sink and shift the weight, move the waist and hips, relax, and use no strength – just empty force that connects to gravity and the partner's movement. Students maintain constant contact as they touch each other's wrists and elbows, shift weight and turn their waists. Single and double-handed with the same leg/waist movement are both done. This has the same effect as "Glider" with the additional somatic message that you can let aggression pass by you without feeling compromised by listening to it, taking it in and guiding it past, almost like "turning the other cheek!"

**8) Push the Turtle/ Don't Break the Chain** is the U-Turn step from Bagua done with a push on a rounded (turtle shell) back. The contact is constant, with palms on the back and rolling in the turn on the arms. This can only be accomplished by keeping the arms rounded. When done with a whole group, make sure each student goes the way they are pushed in the turn. The subliminal message in "Push the Turtle" is a profound one for youth. When you are being pushed in a certain direction, the way the whole crowd is going, you can, at will, turn around and go in an entirely different direction, and in fact, change the direction of the whole group!



**9) Dog Chases its Tail** is Dragon Palm Circle Walking from Bagua done with a partner, and then with the whole group. Students simultaneously chase and are chased by one another. For this reason, students sometimes call it "Prey on Predator" or "Hunt the Hunter." The Leader calls for a change in direction from clockwise to counterclockwise with a UTurn step and a turning of the palms. This game is very intense and stimulating — a good way to generate lots of focused energy. It is important to not run because the abrupt change in direction can hurt the knees. Stepping should be controlled and steady. A music stand (or flag pole, broom, mop, etc ...) in the center of the circle helps keeps the eyes focused and the waist turned toward center. Sometimes adults can't do this, but I have yet to see someone young lose balance or become too dizzy. The message in this game is much the same as in "Push the Turtle."





# Incredible Social Service Education Projects in the Slums of Sao Paulo, Brazil

By Dada Maheshvarananda

About 1997 Didi Ananda Jaya (originally from Maharlika-Philippines) began supervising a small preschool in Perialto, an economically impoverished slum in the north of Sao Paulo city. Universo Infantil Ananda Marga ("The Children's Universe") now has 120 kids aged 1- 4 years. The preschool is open from 7am-5pm Monday to Friday. Subsidized by the government, this is free of cost to the families, and the kids are served a hearty vegetarian breakfast, lunch, dinner and two snacks -- for many, it is the only food they get on those days.



Three years ago Didi was asked to start another preschool in another nearby slum, Jardim Guarani. This project is also free, open the same hours each day, also serves food five times a day, and also has 120 children enrolled. This has an ecological rain catchment system and solar water heating system.



Didi Ananda Jaya also took over the management of two preschools in the south of Sao Paulo: Guarapiranga I, which now has 80 kids, and Guarapiranga II, which has 120 kids -- this preschool enrolls kids as young as 4 months and up to 5 years.

A fifth fulltime project that Didi is running is the Skywalker Project (Caminiente do Céu) in the Perialto Favela. According to the Mayan calendar it means those who are looking for new horizons. This is an after school tutoring project that helps 100 elementary school students aged 5-12 years old. Because the public schools are overcrowded and open for two shifts each day, half the students in this free project come in the morning from 8am to noon and are served a big breakfast and lunch before they go to regular school, while the other half of the students come at 1pm after morning public school and stay until 5pm. These students are fed lunch and dinner -- often these are the only meals they eat. The project spends only 20 percent of the time tutoring. They also do a lot of music, hip-hop dance, yoga, meditation, theater and arts and crafts using recyclable materials. The daily Trust Circle is an opportunity where the kids are allowed to share. This is transformative, because many of the kids feel invisible, never heard and never seen. This project tries to give them a sense of belonging.



A total of 75 teachers and other staff are legally employed fulltime in these five projects. The curriculum is great in each of the projects, including yoga for kids, infant massage, hiphop for kids, dance, music, art, etc. Since the beginning, free milk is distributed twice every week to 100 families in Perialto.

Didi says, "We don't just take care of the kids, we also impart Neohumanist Education. The teachers plan their lessons

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# CASA ILORI: Opportunities for Children

## La Carpio, Costa Rica

By Maritza Ulate

Sir Ken Robinson once said that the problem with education nowadays is that we have a nineteenth century system taught by twentieth century teachers to twenty-first century students. In our post-modern society, where hedonism and individualism tend to prevail, it becomes increasingly difficult for children to have access to a holistic education. Psychosocial, artistic and spiritual development ought to be as important as academic studies. These difficulties are accentuated when it comes to socially and economically disadvantaged children.

In 2008, WWDF (Women's Welfare Department Foundation) Costa Rica began to work in La Carpio, a marginal community in the outskirts of San Jose. It has an area of just 0.6 sq.km and approximately



Under the Wisdom Tree

20,000 inhabitants, of which 42% are minors, making it the biggest slum in the country. We identified a huge gap in relation to the quality of education that these children receive. In La Carpio children only receive 3 hours of schooling daily in crowded classrooms. As a result of this there exists a serious problem with children not passing the grade, and in general their academic performance is way below the national average. Combined with this many of them are faced with strong emotional and social challenges.

The CASA ILORI project was created with the objective of giving these children better opportunities and furthermore provide them with access to a Neohumanist education.

Casa Ilori is not a school, but an afterschool program. The afterschool program allows us to:

- Take advantage of the formal education system. In this way the students continue receiving the four basic subjects: Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and Spanish.
- Benefit a larger number of kids.
- Avoid being tied to a government-imposed curriculum.

Casa Ilori is a project that provides children with opportunities to access:

- Tutoring: We provide group and individual attention, depending on the needs of each student.
- Technology: Casa Ilori has a special laboratory for learning computer skills; this is also used as a tool to acquire knowledge in other areas. The objective is to ensure that the students acquire access to higher education and better employment opportunities. The public school system doesn't offer the children in La Carpio these skills in contrast to the majority of other public schools in the country.
- Artistic development: The arts are very important in Casa Ilori. We have daily workshops where children learn to express their emotions, feelings and interests through art.
- Creative movement: In La Carpio there is a total absence of recreational spaces where children can develop proper motor skills, have fun and be free to express themselves. We have a classroom dedicated to dance, creative movement and yoga



Yoga



Dancing







I Love Painting

- English: Our children don't have access to learning English at their public school. We teach English in a practical and playful manner by using dramas, songs and games.
- Life skills: Here we use "Circle of Love", which includes, storytelling, quiet time, cooperative games, artistic activities, etc.
- Psycho-affective support: Each child in Ilori receives individual attention to address their psycho-affective needs.
- Environmental education: La Carrpio is built around the largest landfill in San José, it is poorly operated and this creates huge contamination and health issues. We encourage the children to recycle, reuse and keep their community clean. We organize regular workshops, inside and outside the community where children can experience nature and learn to appreciate and care for the environment.

Currently we have 120 children in the program, which runs from Monday to Friday from 7am to 4pm. One of the main lessons we learned during our years working with the community is that we can give only what we cultivate within ourselves. In order to achieve our proposed objectives it is essential that each one of us be on a constant quest for inner growth inspired by the Neohumanist world view.



Reading



Arts



Play and Learn

*Continued from Page 25*

### *Incredible Social Service Education Projects in the Slums of Sao Paulo, Brazil*

based on the Circle of Love curriculum, and they do a lot of sensori-motor activities with the smaller kids. All of my teachers are university graduates in education, and each unit has a director and a pedagogical coordinator, most of who have a masters degree in school management. The bigger kids also do practical life, a special feature of Montessori education, with a Brazilian twist."

Last year O Globo, the largest TV and media news network in Brazil, searched the entire country to find the best social service project in any field for their "Generosity Project". Out of 400 projects nominated by their journalists, the Jardim Guaraní Preschool was one of ten finalists (more than one project was not allowed from the same organization), and it was later featured on both TV and the newspaper.

On Saturday, October 5, Children's Day, all four of the preschools will hold a public festival, as they have for the last 10 years. The street in front of the preschool is closed for the day, and over 2,000 kids come. The festival lasts all day with games, snacks, prizes, face painting, balloons, hiphop competitions, and the distribution of free toys and candies.

All these projects are run by AMURT/AMURTEL. Didi Ananda Jaya is managing them all single-handedly. You can contact her by email at: [anandajaya2005@gmail.com](mailto:anandajaya2005@gmail.com) .

# Bissiri School

## Ananda Vira't'a Master Unit

### Burkina Faso

By Dada Padmesha'nanda

With nearly half of the population living below the poverty line, Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 134 out of 137 in the human development index. Around 80% of Burkina's 16-million person population lives in rural areas, where basic necessities are generally lacking. With the literacy rate at just 21.8%, people are extremely dependent upon the land and the weather for work.

Our Master Unit is situated just at the edge of an artificial lake in Bissiri village, deep in the country side of Burkina Faso, 45 kilometers south of the capital, Ouagadougou. In a radius of over 10 kilometers there is no clinic, no secondary school, no road, no running water and no electricity.

The landscape resembles Ananda Nagar's in India, with its dry, red rocky soil and rare vegetation characteristic of hot and dry climates. It is home predominantly to the Mossi people.

So far we are running a small dispensary, evening literacy classes, agro-ecology trainings, organic vegetable and orchard cultivation and a traditional bakery. We are also currently building an agro processing facility which will first focus on Moringa (drum stick tree) by-products such as dried leaves powder, used as a food supplement to combat malnutrition. Our jurisdiction touches directly a population of over 5,000 people.

### Our School under Construction

In cooperation with AMURT Italy we decided to build a secondary school (JHS) to give the students coming from primary (public) schools access to the secondary level. We are now building the school, complete with 4 classrooms, administration office & storeroom. Plans are to start this year with the 6th grade and progressively grow, year after year, following the first batch.

We envision a school that will foster the values of Neohumanism in a rural context. Our wish is to bring a team of experienced teachers from the already established Neohumanist schools in Haiti to train our local teachers here. We dream in the future to expand our services to offer practical trainings such as income generating activities, agroécologie (aiming at local self-sufficiency, environmental care and ethical living through use of ancient farming techniques and good sense), etc.

Pictured below are children watching the construction of the school!





# Volunteering at the Lotus Children's Center

Accra, Ghana

By Shannon Rupp

For many years, I have had the desire to experience living and working in continental Africa. This past summer I finally had the chance to look for and pursue a volunteer opportunity. While looking for the right placement I came across a website called Kids Worldwide and was immediately drawn to the nursery school program and Neohumanist Education philosophy used at the Lotus Children's Center in Accra, Ghana. A great deal of my work and education background is in public health and programme management. At first I wasn't too sure how these skills would serve me as a volunteer in the school. However, I wanted to pursue this programme anyway, as I had just finished an MSc in International Child Health and wanted a chance to put that knowledge to use. So, I applied quickly and was accepted.



I ended up having the opportunity to first travel north to work on a rural schools project. I left to spend two weeks in the village of Dipale just outside the city of Tamale and also Gbali. My two weeks there were a great adventure for me and started my instruction about all of the obstacles facing education in Ghana. I learned very quickly that although primary education in Ghana is free that doesn't mean that everyone has equal access to it. I found out that because the villages are so remote that there are no government schools close by. The government will only sanction schools in those areas if the communities themselves will begin the schools and run them successfully for at least a year. Given all of the difficulties I saw in the villages it seems like an impossible task. These villages need help to get the schools started and they are motivated to see their children learn. In Dipale they have a beautiful school building and enough teachers for a primary school sanctioned by GES but many of the children are not showing up to school or are dropping out early (mainly the girls). In all the villages I observed that most of the students were behind for their age and class levels and these deficiencies were most apparent in the subjects of Math and English.

After returning to Accra I wanted to learn more about these issues with education particularly, teacher shortages and curriculum problems. As I became more involved in life at Lotus Ananda Marga School, I began to see a pattern in my work and encounters with people. One of my tasks as a volunteer at the center was to tutor one of the girls in her homework. She is actually from Dipale, and I learned that she was very behind the other students at Lotus when she arrived the previous fall as she could not speak English or do maths well. She is very bright and learned very quickly, but that is because she was receiving a good base and education at the Lotus where there is a strong focus on both subjects. She was representative of the other bright children I encountered in Dipale, where they are not receiving enough of a base or time in the classroom to develop their full potential.

I was also helping Didi with some of the administrative tasks in the school. The teacher candidates coming to interview for open positions at Lotus were struggling with the basic math and English skills questions on the testing exam given in the interview. It surprised me that this problem with low skills in these subjects was not just a problem seen in rural villages but that it was wide spread even in Accra. These issues about education really piqued my research interests. It also coincided with a project that Didi needed help with. Several years ago, WWD Ananda Marga had purchased land in Ghana. Their original idea was to build a Teacher Training Center and experimental primary school that would teach the Neohumanist philosophy. However, in order to continue the project they would be in need of funding to secure the land and begin building the school. This meant a project proposal would need to be written. This was a great opportunity to put all of my research skills and experience so far in Ghana to good use! Given everything I have learned about education in Ghana a project like a Teacher Training Center is vitally important for the country as it will help to improve education in Ghana. I believe that the teacher shortages, curriculum problems and apathy about school attendance would begin to disappear if many of the principles taught in Neohumanism, about love and respect for all life, would begin to spread throughout education in the country.

It has been an amazing opportunity to use my skills in a way that I didn't expect and to put all of my experiences in Ghana into practical use. Overall, I have had a wonderful time in Ghana. I have seen many interesting things, met a variety of people and learned about myself. Some of my best times have just been spending time with the girls in the Ananda Marga Children Home helping with homework, bathing and playing. Life can be hard here through cultural misunderstandings, water and electricity shortages, messy roads in the rain, etc. But, one thing I have learned throughout all of my travels that has even held true in Ghana is that at heart people are the same everywhere. They love and laugh and hurt the same and have a story to share with you if you're willing to listen.

*Shannon Rupp (Sa'dhana Devi) is from Alaska, US. During her stay in Lotus she developed a hand book for the school; wrote a project proposal for our Teacher Training Center project; helped with Pre-school teacher training and conducted a free medical camp. Lotus welcome females volunteers willing to work with the children and education.*

# GLOBAL NEWS

## QAHIRA SECTOR

KROZ ŽIVOT  
S GURUOM



### Croatia

In September, the personality of the late spiritual master and renaissance figure Shrii Shrii Anandamurti was featured during a special lecture at KIC, Zagreb's cultural information center, by Dada Shambhushivananda and Dada Nityashuddananda.



### CNS Croatia's Moja Prva Knjiga 2013 My First Book Contest

The contest for children to write and illustrate their own original stories had its 9th year of prize giving ceremony at Zorin Dom theatre in Karlovac, Croatia. Ten wonderful story books of the 1st prize winners were published from among 700 books that were sent in.



The winners with Sanja Pilic and Tito Bilopavlovic

At the ceremony the Zorin Dom children and youth theatre group performed a play of a tale in a forest. Sanja Pilic and Tito Bilopavlovic, the children literature authors of the jury congratulated the winners.

The 10th Contest was announced with a deadline in March 2014.



The printed stories



The young performers



Dada Shambhushivananda at the event



Volunteers giving individual consultations



The twins Agata and Apolonija Lucic who won first prizes, now as volunteers



## Egypt, Nile River School Kindergarten and Children's Centre

We are happy to look back on our first school year in our new school building. The school was running while work was still going on finishing the building. These are our achievements:

**Successful graduates from kindergarten.** Our Kindergarten students going to First Grade have learnt to read and write the Arabic alphabet and number recognition. They are independent and accomplished in puzzles and other cognitive games and free drawing. They have learnt basic discipline and some English phrases and songs. They are performing better than others who could afford to be sent to a regular kindergarten in town. We are very proud of this achievement!

**Local Kindergarten teacher.** A local girl has learned herself and then taught basic Arabic skills. She has truly earned the title of 'teacher' by doing.

**Inspiring the love for learning and confidence building.** We used many creative ways and learning incentives to develop their love for learning and becoming confident.

**Child to child teaching.** We encouraged older children to help teach the younger ones. This became a fun activity adopted naturally by the children. Three children were outstanding in this skill.

- English. All children are familiar with basic English conversation, the alphabet and know about 10 songs.
- Computer. Two outstanding students have started to learn computer skills including speed typing.
- Arts and Crafts. All children made one or more caligraphy 'koraneya'. Totally we made about 200 besides other art work.

We are looking forward to build on this first year's achievements with this coming year.

**Volunteering:** We welcome international volunteers to attend a 45 day training (LFT –Training) and volunteer at the same time. For more information please contact [nileriverschool@gmail.com](mailto:nileriverschool@gmail.com)



## Lebanon Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

AMURT has been busy in the last year providing food and non-food items to 10,000 Syrian refugees in the mountainous district of Shouf in Lebanon. From October 2013 education was added to the list of services and 500 children will be sponsored. More updates will be provided in the next issue. The photos here are some of the students AMURT sponsored in Bakaata, Mount Lebanon after receiving a grant from the German charity Kinder Not Hilfe.



## Nicosia, Cyprus

The Little Worry People Art and Drama Studio in Nicosia, Cyprus is performing a Neohumanist play called "*Tarabouska, would you like a place in my heart?*" This is a play about acceptance, friendship and love and the achievement of goals with patience and persistence. A play for kids and all the family.





in their native language using stories, songs and yoga.

The volunteers were especially involved in our annual Earth Day event and transformed into magical fairies that appear only to children that sing with lots of love in their hearts, and who can become very still and quiet, waiting with their eyes closed. The silent fairy communicated through expressive gestures, guiding them through a journey of discovery of nature's wonders in the woods - feathers, snails, stones, flowers. She also cried when she saw a tree that was damaged, and the children all gathered to hug the tree and give it love...they also saw her sadness when encountering a pile of plastic bottles thrown in a heap - and gathered them up to bring to the recycling!

In fact, in the springtime, recycling became a big theme, and many parents reported that their children had turned into recycling militants that didn't let them throw away a single piece of plastic in the regular garbage - and when walking in the parks or in town, they passionately insist that any carelessly tossed recyclables on the street or parks must be picked up! We were very proud of the kids! We decided to not only cover recycling as a thematic project, but also have now integrated it into our weekly routine. At least once a week, a group of children are selected to wear special "Earth Day Every Day" costumes and carry the recycling to nearby containers. It is always a festive moment for the children and designed to create a lifetime dedication to recycling. We also visited a special project "The Canvas Workshop" which is a work integration project that employs homeless women to sew cloth bags and campaigns for people to use canvas bags rather than disposable plastic ones. The children saw how the bags are made and listened to a talk about what happens when plastic is thrown away into the environment...They also got to paint on some of the bags and we ordered a set with our kindergarten's logo!

During the summer vacation, Alexandra organized a one week summer camp initiative for some of the neighborhood children, most of whom were from a group of Roma families that have little access to such enrichment programs. Every morning the children began the day with yoga and listened to stories in both Romanian and English. They also made masks, had various cooking activities, worked with clay, played lots of games and celebrated at the end with a party!



## Romania News

### Gradinita Rasarit Kindergarten Bucuresti

Thanks to a revamped website ([www.gradinita-rasarit.ro](http://www.gradinita-rasarit.ro)), our kindergarten is enjoying full enrollments and demand keeps on increasing, making us seriously consider opening up another location in the same part of the city. Parents have been requesting us to extend to primary grades, so dreams are forming...

Since February 2013, we also enjoyed the enrichment provided by including 5 EVS volunteers in our AMURTEL projects. In the kindergartens, Alexandra Tincu, Elisa Poggi and Jana Thenert assisted in the classrooms, learning how to teach the children directly



## Neohumanist Education Trainings in Romania

The Neohumanist Education Association of Romania (AEN) organized several trainings - both for the public and internally for the Rasarit kindergartens. International author and story teller Susan Perrow led an interactive workshop guiding us through a system for creating personalized therapeutic stories for children, based on the magic of metaphor. Christian Franceschini from Italy also came and gave a 2 day weekend intensive on Yoga for Children, at the Seeds for Happiness center in Bucharest. In June, Marcus Bussey from Australia, also came and led a "Futures Mirrors" mask-making workshop in the kindergarten.



## Accreditation Process

The Neohumanist Education Association of Romania (AEN) submitted the Neohumanist Early Childhood Education Curriculum our team has written to the Ministry of Education in November 2012. However, it has gotten tangled up in a bureaucratic game of ping pong. After several months of waiting for an answer, we tracked down one of the heads of the commission in charge of authorizing educational alternatives, and met with an elegantly evasive man who simply redirected us to another institution which then redirected us back to where we had come from...Though it would appear we have met a stone wall, we have faith that our 3 years of effort will not be in vain, and through our networking contacts, were introduced to one of the ex-ministers of education who will try to help us unknot this blockage.

## Fountain of Hope After School News

Meanwhile, the Fountain of Hope flourished this year, with 65 children and due to the active and creative involvement of new Romanian and international volunteers. Our Italian EVS volunteers, Beatrice Castella and Francesco Ghilotti led an intercultural exchange program about Italy - dedicating different days to exploring Italian geography, history, art, music and of course food! The event culminated with a Carnavale and the results of the program were made into a slideshow screened during the Open Day event for the community. Meanwhile, Anca and Valentin were an endless source of creativity and energy - introducing the children to many artistic activities as well as sports -from basketball to martial arts and bow and arrow. It was an exciting year for the children - yet even more exciting during the summer - when we launched the 3rd edition of "Club TIP" (The Clever Kids of Panatau) - a program to encourage youth initiative and active citizenship. The children participated in organizing different events, including a children's festival, disco, film screenings in the open air - as well as community service activities - most notably cooking a hot lunch for the elderly in the village and personally delivering it to their houses.

## Master Unit: Poieni

AMURTEL Romania is the first NGO in Romania to introduce a new form of Community Supported Agriculture called "ASAT Social Gardens". As in other Community Supported Agriculture partnerships, a group of urban consumers form a solidarity partnership with a small rural producer - with the difference being that the rural producer is an NGO rather than a single farmer. In addition, there is a component of social inclusion, as the objectives of the social garden include providing jobs for those at risk of social exclusion (in AMURTEL's case, young people that are leaving the care system), and to cultivate fruits and vegetables for AMURTEL's own social projects. The project has been included as a best practice in the European Grundtvig partnership project "Management of Labor Integration" and was presented in Valladolid, Spain as well as at the "Roma" conference in Liile France. In addition, the project received a prize in the EU-funded Prometheus program for " Excellence in Business Plans for Sustainable Social Enterprises. ", and it was highlighted on a front page article of the Romanian newspaper "Romania Libera" in July.

## DELHI SECTOR

### Design for Educational Institutions, India

Khushru Irani Design Studio (KIDS) of Pune India has joined the team of GK Consultants for improving the architectural design of school/campus buildings of Gurukula-related institutions. Founded in 2009, KIDS specializes in campus-planning, urban and interior design for educational institutions. You may contact him for help in designing your building or campus. Website: [www.khushru.in](http://www.khushru.in), Email: <[architecture@gurukul.edu](mailto:architecture@gurukul.edu)>



### Uma Nivas Women's College

At Uma Nivas, the global headquarters of Ananda Marga Women's Welfare Department in beautiful rural and ancient Rahr land in West Bengal, India plans are underway for a Women's College. The existing primary schools and Girl's High School are very successful and there is a great need for higher education of girls. A team of local Didis (Sister yogic nuns) with Ellen Landau from the USA surveyed the proposed site not far from the railway station at Dumurghutu Village . Any interested persons who would like to be part of this project in its inception, design, fundraising, please contact Ellen <[ele.landau@gmail.com](mailto:ele.landau@gmail.com)>.

## SUVA SECTOR

### Service Projects at the AM River School, Australia

A new project in the last term at the River School has preparing and serving free meals at the Maleny Neighborhood Centre. Once a week a group of older children heads to the Centre to serve our vegetarian food to some one hundred people. One week was special when the Prep children (5 years old) also sang during the meal.



## MANILA and SUVA SECTOR



### Sunshine School, Laos visits the AM River School, Australia by Kamala Alister

For four weeks in July students at the Ananda Marga River School in Australia had a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a student exchange with the Sunshine School in Laos. Nine students (mostly 14 and 15 years old), along with three teachers and school Principal Didi Ananda Gaorii, visited our school for the month.

The nine students stayed with five host families who kindly volunteered to have two children in each home. During the school days, the students spent some time together with opportunities for reflection and planning, and then some time helping out and taking part in the River School classrooms. On two days each week, the Lao students went on outings including some tourist adventures such as the Australia Zoo, Underwater World, and an outing to Brisbane and to the Gold Coast beaches. They also served a free meal at the Maleny Neighbourhood Centre for 60 people, visited another local alternative school, helped at the Children's' Garden, played indoor soccer with the locals, and did a ropes course at an outdoor education centre.

The students and teachers also organised a Lao Cafe Night for parents and student of the River School. Nearly 100 people attended the event, enjoying a beautiful Lao meal followed by two wonderful dances by the Lao students, a video about Lao and a powerpoint about the Sunshine School. This raised nearly \$500 towards the Lao students' activities.

Thanks to Didi Ananda Gaorii for planning and organising such a major event. It's been so positive for the entire River School community! I think we've all become rather attached to these nine brave students and their

lovely teachers, who have spent the month with us.



Students with Host Families



Posters for Cafe Night



Lao Students Performing at Cafe Night



## NEW YORK SECTOR



### California and Jamaica Sharing the Wealth

The Kentucky Flat Community Preschool in California, USA, directed by Jen Norris, collected art supplies from the parents and teachers of the school to donate to a needy school in Jamaica. Jen made contact with Didi Gunamaya beforehand, and during her family's recent trip to Jamaica, they visited the Ananda Marga Preschool in Kingston and delivered the art supplies in person. Dada gave them a tour of the school that offers services to low income families of children 2-6 years old in Kingston.



### Progressive School of Long Island, USA

Excerpts from a letter sent, by a parent of an alumnus, to director, Eric Jacobson

*"Dear Eric, On Friday morning, September 13, at nearly 9:30 an announcement came over the loudspeaker at East Meadow High School. Mr. Howard, the principal, cut into third-period class time to reveal the names of the valedictorian and salutatorian for the class of 2014. The recipient of the top award for scholastic excellence spanning several years .. turned out to be an individual well known to you: Nathan Siegelau. You might not remember that the six-year-old boy, who once sat in your office amusing himself with puzzles and books while his parents underwent a sort of grilling as to his suitability for attending Progressive, had planned on being enrolled just for kindergarten and then moving on to the public domain. But life often takes unexpected turns and Nathan's certainly did as he ended up staying on eight more years (thanks, in large part, to your generosity and sensitivity) in which he absorbed the lessons that would form his character, work ethic, and pure love of learning.*

*Probably you are not aware of just how pervasive an influence you've had on Nathan's makeup: You, Eric, were his choice of topic and subject for an essay assigned to all candidates for induction into the National Honor Society. You who changed his way of looking at the world; you who sparked his interest in knowledge that ignited his imagination and creativity; you who gave him the confidence to take on challenges and pursue excellence; you who recognized his character and worth and, with patience and care, nurtured his very soul. So it was not without emotion and consideration that Nathan lauded you for being his role model.*

...

*On the verge of applying to colleges and years removed from Progressive, I'd like to take this opportunity to express Betsy's and my gratitude for all you've done for our son and for all you still do in terms of the impact you have had on his (our) lives. An educator can receive no greater accolade than the one bestowed on you by Nathan, who credits you and Progressive for endowing him with the grit and intestinal fortitude to overcome obstacles and with building leadership qualities and confidence that allow him to set lofty goals and achieve superior results. The Siegelau's thank our lucky stars that we had the opportunity to be part of your family at Progressive, and, rest assured that you will always be part of ours. With utmost respect and thanks, -- Marc Siegelau"*

## HONG KONG SECTOR

### Beijing, China

#### Kidsyoga Teacher Training

Fifty teachers from all over mainland China attended the two day Kidyoga teacher training in Beijing, where yoga and Baba Nam Kevalam meditation were taught and practiced.

### South Korea

Dada Shambhushivananda gave a talk on Money, Power and Purpose.



## NAIROBI SECTOR

### Accra, Ghana

#### An update on the Lotus School

Due to the support of a local sympathizer on guiding teachers and zealous supervision from the Director, the school has improved rapidly since the last school year. The number of students is now 70, i.e. ten times more than a year and half ago. We currently have six teachers and four classrooms serving KG1, KG2, nursery 1, nursery 2 and crèche. The new classrooms and teachers have helped raise the standard of the school because we are able to give the needed attention to the children at different levels. Fine arts are also a part of the daily activities of the children. This is quite different from other schools in Ghana as many only use colored pencils often simply ignoring any other forms of art.



We are carefully choosing the right people and training them as responsible teachers who can be a good example to the children. Neohumanist principles are imparted to the children, teacher and parents through regular meetings and classes. Neohumanistic activities include teaching of morality in a dynamic way; developing a sense of [aesthetics](#) through cultivation of Fine Arts and teaching of inner and outer ecology. Teaching nature studies and gardening are part of daily outer ecology curriculum.



We have a new project to start a Teacher's Training Institution with NH approach in Ghana. For more information, please visit our websites: [www.lotuschildrencenter.yolasite.com](http://www.lotuschildrencenter.yolasite.com), [www.lotuschildrencenter.org](http://www.lotuschildrencenter.org). If anyone would like to contact us please write to: [jiivaprema2@yahoo.com.br](mailto:jiivaprema2@yahoo.com.br)



#### Dada Shambhushivananda's Lectures in Ghana

In August, Dada Shambhushivananda travelled to Western Africa and visited all NHE projects. He gave a lecture at the Accra Ministry of Information Conference Hall on *Self Realization and Social Action*. He also gave a talk on *Neohumanist Education* at the UKK in Togo to the 100 attendees from Ghana, Burkino Faso, Ivory Coast and other African countries.



#### Ho Ghana

In Ho, Ghana a new school has been built and is nearing completion. The well constructed building will accommodate 60-80 children and will open in the next few months.



#### Centre for Neohumanist Studies

The CNS building in Accra includes a holistic health and lifestyle centre. The Centre conducts programs such as yoga classes, therapeutic massage, seminars and conferences.



#### Nairobi, Kenya, Nairobi High School

In October 2013, the Ananda Marga High School in Nairobi was awarded 3<sup>rd</sup> place as one of the Most Improved Private Schools amongst all Private schools in Westlands district by the District Education Office of Westlands district of Nairobi County. Teachers, staffs and students were very happy.



## Ananda Marga Academy Kiembeni Closing Day Cultural Programme Nairobi, Kenya



The ambient on 7th August was congenial and the school hall charged with excitement of the children who participated in the term's closing day cultural programme. Parents were impressed with the variety of talent expressed. They were surprised to see that of the entire school of 450 children, everyone had a role in the presentations. No one was left out.



The guest speaker, Representative of Bamburi Ward, Mr. Riziki Fundi, was also very pleased with the imaginative show and later spoke to the parents praising the school and its role in the community. He expressed his regard for the policy of accepting and educating all children regardless of their academic ability; he pointed out that it is a defect to "sieve" children which some schools do in order to show a high result for their institutions. Ananda Marga Academy aims to bring out the best in all the pupils, even slow learners, which Mr. Riziki supports. He also urged the parents to strive for the higher education of their children.



The theme of the cultural event was "What makes up a good society?" Three actors from class seven creatively linked the nine presentations. One actor posed as a graduate student who was conducting a research on what elements make up a good society. He meets up with the second actor from Ananda Marga. Through seeing the children's performances, the grad student got ideas for his assignment. A third actor also joined in order to point out that animals also have a place in Kenyan society; they further tourism naturally, but also have rights. The last presentation had to do with leadership. Good leadership is a major requirement towards making a good society possible. A moving tribute was made to Nelson Mandela by classes seven and eight.

A video of the event & project is being produced, so that our friends may hear some traditional music of Kenya as well as see the dances and costumes.



### School and Children's Home welcome a volunteer from Spain



Itziar Arechederra, from the north of Spain has been a volunteer with the European Voluntary Service for over seven years. She served in the Canary Islands where her assignment was to help refugees from Morocco. She also worked with refugee children from sub-Saharan Africa in Madrid for an organization Karibu Madrid.

Itziar came to Nairobi in April of this year and was interacting with children in a school in Huruma slum, where she happened upon the Ananda Marga School there. And through Didi Girija, Itziar came to know of the

children's home and projects at Kiembeni. Itziar now plans to spend three months in the children's home and school. She brings lots of energy and creative ideas. So far Itziar's involvement has been in training Standard One pupils in movement and choreography for the Cultural Programme, in which they acted out animals such as lions, elephants and giraffes with a background of African music. She has also spent time with the girls downloading music, making bead jewelry and teaching Spanish dances.





# The 10 Yoga Keys to Happiness Our 10 Core Values

By Mahajyoti Glassman  
Morning Star Preschool, Denver, Colorado, USA

*The Yamas guide the manner in which we step into the World.*

Ahimsa ~ Kindness. No hurting. *I am friendly. I wear my warm fuzzies every day.*

Satya ~ Honesty. Consideration. *I speak up for myself and others.*

Asteya ~ Responsibility. No grabbing. *I take responsibility for my actions.*

Brahmacharya ~ Mutual respect. Unconditional love. *We are different and I love you.*

Aparigraha ~ Simple living. *Just two will do.*

*The Niyamas guide the manner in which we manage ourselves.*

Shaocha ~ Cleanliness. Orderliness. *I put away what I use.*

Santosha ~ Contentment. Acceptance. *I am happy. I can move on.*

Tapah ~ Self restraint. Patience. *I like to help and take care of my friends.*

Svadyaya ~ Understanding. *I like to learn what my friends like.*

Ishvara Pranidhana ~ Spiritual focus. *I take shelter in Goodness.*

*The Focus*

Baba Nam Kevalam ~ Love is All There Is!

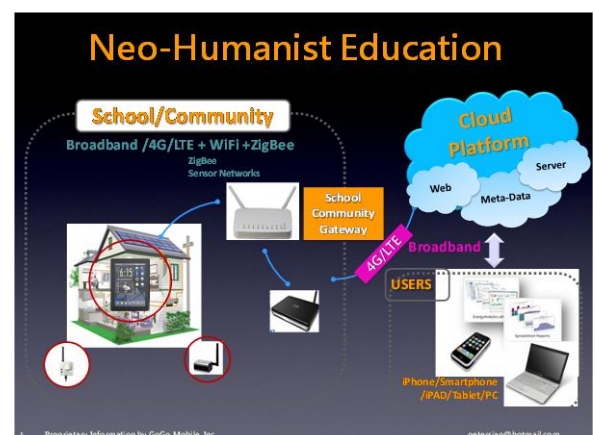
## New Children's Songs CD by Dada Veda and Friends Free to NHE Schools !



This new children's CD is titled "Do What You Can" after the song of the same name which tells the story of the squirrel who tried to help Rama build a bridge to Sri Lanka in The Ramayana. The CD also has some old favorites like "Eensy Weensy Spider" and "This Little Light of Mine" as well as songs which are sung in Neohumanist schools around the world like "Good Morning Dear Earth" and "Tiny Green Island." Dada Veda will send one free copy of the CD to any Neohumanist school which requests it. Others can order it on his website: [www.dadaveda.com](http://www.dadaveda.com). Profits from the sales of this CD will be donated to Neohumanist schools in developing countries. Requests for the free CD can be sent to [dada@dadaveda.com](mailto:dada@dadaveda.com).

## Cyber Connectivity Initiative

"Vidya Exchange Net" is a non-profit initiative intended to provide free or subsidised internet and mobil access to students/teachers and school communities around the world through the philanthropic courtesy & support of internet mobil-carriers and telecommunications service providers. It is hoped that educational content can be shared around the world instantly by educational communities leading to greater free exchange of information, knowledge and wisdom. This initiative is being engineered by Dr. Peter Siao, a telecommunications consultant based in Berkeley, California/Taipei, Taiwan for the upliftment of educational access to needy students, teachers and educational communities. For further information, please write to: [vidya-exchange-net@gurukul.edu](mailto:vidya-exchange-net@gurukul.edu).







# Ananda Marga invites you to attend the Neohumanist Conference

Public day **14 April 2014** and Seminar from **15 - 18 April 2014**  
location: Prout Reserach Institute of Venezuela, Caracas



## Neohumanist Education for Personal Development and Social Transformation

"Through adequate education and utilizing our capacity to discern, we can liberate ourselves from complexes and artificial distortions and expand our mind until we embrace with it the whole universe. This liberation and expansion of the mind converts us into responsible, benevolent, universalist and respectful human beings, indispensable conditions to create a healthy, ethic and progressive society."

P.R. Sarkar - Founder of Neohumanist Education

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; join us to dialogue, listen, share and contribute towards forging new ways, fresh attitudes, greater awareness and practical modalities for improving educational practices.

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

0058 (0)212 9867556 / 0058 (0)212 2388665

prices \$200 and \$100 for students and people from Latin America

A gateway towards change in consciousness in education



### Speakers:

**Acarya Shambhushivananda Avt**  
Chancellor Ananda Marga Gurukula, India.

**Eric Jacobson**  
Progressive School of Long Island, U.S.A.

**Mahajyoti Glassman**  
Morning Star Preschool, Denver, U.S.A.

**Jorge Enrique Sánchez**  
Sub Director Botanical Gardens in Bogotá and  
**Maria del Rosario Rojas**  
Professor of Ecology, Universidad Nacional de Colombia

**Mcs. Nora Manrique, PhD**  
Puerto Ordaz, Venezuela

**Dada Maheshvarananda**  
Director of PRIV, Caracas

**Ole Brekke**  
Director, teacher, performer and writer at the Commedia School, Copenhagen, Denmark

more to be announced



It is a great pleasure to invite you all to our first conference about Neohumanist Education and the emerging global Gurukula University, to be held in Venezuela. The conference will bring together leading educators and project coordinators from around the world who will share their vast experiences and innovative knowledge.

### The Conference Aims are to:

- offer an introduction to the concepts and ideals of NHE to Venezuelan society as well to the Latin-American countries.
- bring together and connect NHE educators and project coordinators in this part of the world.
- give an opportunity for interested academics to connect with the global Gurukula University development

### Background of Education in Venezuela:

In the past few years education has been made more accessible to the Venezuelan people; illiteracy has been almost eradicated. There is a search for new revolutionary ideas to bring about a more just and egalitarian society. In all public schools the children are provided free food. The Venezuelan system of teaching music to maximum number of children, even in the barrios, is well recognized worldwide. The children receive an instrument to take home so they can practice at home. The world renowned director Dudamel was trained through this system. The education system in Venezuela could greatly benefit from the holistic and spiritual view of Neohumanism and the social and economic aspects of the PROUT.

### The Venue:

The conference will be held at the beautiful PROUT Institute in Caracas which is located near the Avila Mountains with a lot of green areas and a terrace with a view of the whole city of Caracas. Basic and comfortable accommodation and vegetarian meals are included in the price which is \$100 for Latin America and \$200 for other countries.



For more information or to register, please contact Didi Ananda Amegha <[anandaamegha@yahoo.com](mailto:anandaamegha@yahoo.com)>





"Mandala made by the children at the Nile River School with help from Didi Anandarama.  
Each child contributed a fish and they are all swimming towards the golden center."

Gurukula Network  
146 Honness Lane  
Ithaca, New York 14850  
USA