

# GURUKULA NETWORK



Newsletter of Neohumanist Schools and Institutes affiliated with Ananda Marga Gurukula

3 USD

Issue 42 - July 2016



Cultivating

Love

Expansion of Mind

Service to All  
of Creation

*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, January and July, serve as a means of communication for Neohumanist projects around the world.

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

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

Please send submissions to:

**Gurukula Network**  
**AM Gurukula Global Liaison Office**  
<amgk.liaison@gurukul.edu>

**Editor**  
Arete Brim

**Editorial Assistance**  
Henk de Weijer  
Lee Hamilton  
Scott Brim

**Cover Design**  
Avtk. Ananda Advaeta Ac.

**Electronic Version**  
Michele Montenegro  
<http://gurukul.edu/newsletter/issue42>

**Printing and Mailing**  
Yun Chin Ko, Tseui-Jiuan Li, I-hua Chiu

### Websites

**Ananda Marga Gurukula**  
<[www.gurukul.edu](http://www.gurukul.edu)>

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

**Global Association of Neohumanist Educators**  
<[www.gane-educators.org](http://www.gane-educators.org)>  
All NHE educators and projects  
are encouraged to join

**Headquarters of Ananda Marga Gurukula**  
Anandanagar, Dist Purulia, West Bengal, India

**Donations** are welcome.  
Please make checks payable to  
Ananda Marga Gurukula  
and send to AMGK Liaison Office  
c/o Brim, 146 Honness Lane, Ithaca, NY 14850 USA  
or by PayPal to: <[amgk.glo@gurukul.edu](mailto:amgk.glo@gurukul.edu)>

## 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 and Inclusive Approach  
Integrated Curriculum  
Exemplary Role of the Educators

## **Ananda Marga Gurukula**

- 4 Announcements: NERI India Conference and GANE
- 5 The Status of Inanimation in the Philosophy of Neohumanism - By Shrii P.R. Sarkar
- 5 Centenary Celebration of Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar

## **Conferences and Seminars**

- 6 A Reflection on the Neohumanist Summit Den Bosch, Holland – Dr. Marcus Bussey
- 8 NHE and the Layers of the Mind - Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt.
- 9 Second International Seminar on Microvita Research, Udaipur, India - By Dr. Vartika Jain

## **Plant Research, Agriculture and Master Units**

- 10 Growth Rhythms and Guna Cycles - by Brian Ragbourn
- 12 Agro-forestry & Silvo-pasture - by James Geoffrey Steen
- 14 From Africa to Appalachia: living and growing on two Master Units - by Daniel & Latasha Isner

## **Courses in Naturopathy and Yoga Psychology**

- 16 Global Network of Yoga Wellness Centers holds one-month Naturopathy Training
- 16 Neohumanist College - Yoga Psychology Book Club

## **Neohumanist Education Teacher Training**

- 17 Personal Development of the Teacher - Lotus Center, Den Bosch, Holland
- 20 Education Training Camps - India
- 21 NHE Seminars - Brazil
- 24 Knowledge is Bliss: Neohumanist Teacher Training - Capiatá, Paraguay
- 25 NHE Teacher Training - Ghana
- 27 NHE Teacher Training - Mexico
- 27 Neohumanism through Art: NHE Teacher Training - Iceland

## **Neohumanist Education Methods**

- 28 Fun with Japa and Kiirtan - by MahaJyoti Glassman
- 30 Including All Families - by Didi Ananda Devapriya
- 31 Yama and Niyama Fairies - Sol Nasciente, Brazil
- 32 Identity and Masks at Casa Ilori, Costa Rica - by the ILORI World Team



## **Neohumanist Education Schools in Focus**

- 35 New School - Path of Joy School - Kasoa, Ghana
- 36 Nong-Bzanga Junior High School - Burkina Faso
- 38 Centru Tbexbix - 10th Anniversary of Neohumanist Education in Malta
- 39 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Kithandur School, India
- 40 The River School Turns 21 - Maleny, Australia
- 42 Beautiful New School Opens in Melbourne, Australia
- 42 Mountain Breeze School Opens in Marshall, North Carolina, USA
- 43 Community School - Lebanon

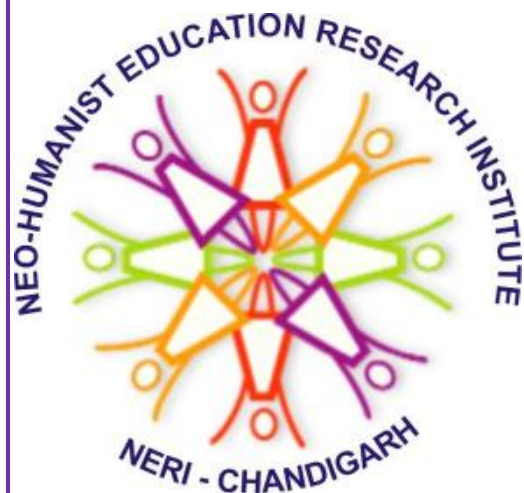
## **Book Review**

- 44 Stargirl, by Jerry Spinelli – reviewed by Eric Jacobson

## **Global News**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 45 New York Sector - USA                           | 48 Hong Kong Sector - Taiwan              |
| 46 Georgetown Sector – Chile, Argentina, Venezuela | 49 Berlin Sector - Italy                  |
| 47 Manila Sector – Bali, Vietnam, Philippines      | 50 Delhi Sector – India                   |
|  | 51 Gurukula Resource Exchange Initiatives |





# NEOHUMANIST EDUCATIONAL FUTURES CONFERENCE

Chandigarh, India  
November 18 - 19th, 2016

NERI-Chandigarh is pleased to host a two-day seminar on Neohumanist Education. Among the expected participants will be teachers, educators, social activists, policy-makers, research-scholars, students and parents interested in looking at the educational process from fresh perspectives.

## Some of the themes to be explored will include:

Education and Creativity  
Ecological Perspectives  
Meditation and Yoga in Schools  
Causal Layered Analysis for Future Studies  
Neohumanist Ethics  
Service Learning  
Training of Wisdom-Teachers  
Neohumanist Strategies in Diversity and Inclusion  
Design Challenges for a new Educational Policy  
Innovations, Technology and Social Justice

## Call for Papers:

Interested participants are invited to send the abstracts of their papers by October 15, 2016, and full papers by November 15, 2016.

**Registration Deadline:** October 15, 2016

## Contact:

NERI-Chandigarh  
c/o Puneet Bawa  
#70 Sector18A, Chandigarh 160018  
Tel: +91-9953101378  
admin.india@gurukul.edu



# GANE

Global Association of  
Neohumanist Educators

## GLOBAL ASSOCIATION OF NEOHUMANIST EDUCATORS

GANE - The Global Association of Neohumanist Educators is a membership association for the professional development of neohumanist educators worldwide. Established by AMGK, GANE brings together all neohumanist educators, institutions (including schools, yoga academies, PROUT institutes, master units, wellness centers, neohumanist centers, etc.) and staff members of AMGK around the world on a common platform, strengthening our global network.

GANE members have access to websites, a newsletter, forums, standards, resources, affiliations, publications, conferences, seminars, webinars, teacher training programs, directories, and networking.

## Join

If you are not already a member, you are invited to join. There are many levels of membership offered in GANE on a sliding scale starting from free. Through membership dues we all support our global network which in turn benefits each member with support services, including the GANE website itself with our network directories.

**Go to <[gane-educators.org](http://gane-educators.org)>**



# The Status of Inanimation in the Philosophy of Neohumanism

By Shrii P.R. Sarkar

Neohumanism includes within its scope not only human beings and animate creatures, such as plants and animals, but all inanimate entities as well, for the scope of Neohumanism extends down to the smallest particles of sub-atomic matter.

What is Neohumanism? Neohumanism is newly-explained humanism. 'Humanism' and 'humanity' have been very popular words for the last century, but only human beings have come within the scope of humanism and humanity. This explanation [of the concept] is not sufficient – it cannot quench the thirst of the developing human society. Why should the love and affection of developed human minds be restricted to human beings only? Why should it not include all living beings, including plant life? This is the new explanation of humanism – Neohumanism – for within Neohumanism the entire animate world is included.



But what is the status of inanimation [the inanimate world] in Neohumanism? Fundamentally there is hardly any difference between the world of animation and the world of inanimation. Some people explain that when there is a characteristic of movement within a structure it is animate, otherwise it is inanimate. But this explanation is not sufficient, because there is a characteristic of movement within both animate and inanimate objects. Others say that if the source of this internal characteristic of movement is the unit mind, it is animation, otherwise it is inanimation. But this is not a perfect interpretation either.

Even within inanimate objects as minute as the atom and smaller particles, there are still smaller particles that maintain their structural unity and struggle against their internal and external fissiparous tendencies. If the scope of Neohumanism is extended in this way from an extensive scope to an intensive scope, then we should go deeper into matter – not only into composite structures of animation and inanimation, but within the subtlest and smallest assembling structures.<sup>1</sup> And within the smallest assembling structures, where the point is nadir, the assembling body is the perfect status. But that perfect status can be reached only theoretically, never in the realm of practicality.

So in Neohumanism our movement, our progress, must be not only be extensive – that is, bringing within its scope the whole world of animation; it should also be intensive, a never-ending movement from the imperfect world of humanism to the perfect world of the unit assembling body, to the original primordial phase of perfection.

And that golden day is sure to come when that perfect stage of structure, that is, unit existence in the intra-atomic world, will be reached, when human intuition will realize that the essence in the sub-atomic world is pure Consciousness.

31 May 1983, Anandanagar,

*Published in: Neohumanism in a Nutshell Part I*

<sup>1</sup> The smallest essential sub-atomic particles. –Eds.

## 2021 Centenary Celebration of Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar

**Ananda Marga Gurukul (AMGK) announces the beginning of preparations for the centenary celebration of the birth of Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar, the great socio-spiritual leader also known as Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji and affectionately called Baba.**

**AMGK is sponsoring this celebration of Shrii P.R. Sarkar's legacy of knowledge, inspiration and mission of social welfare and universal love. We invite one and all to bring forward creative ideas and five year project and research actions plans, for a befitting celebration of this great personality.**

**If you are willing to be part of an international working team for the next five years to help organize year-long, 2021-2022, celebrations around the world, or would like to support the international team in any way, or would like to share your creative ideas and action plans, please write to:**  
**[prsarkar.centenary@gurukul.edu](mailto:prsarkar.centenary@gurukul.edu)**



# A Reflection on the Neohumanist Summit

**Den Bosch, Holland, February 2016**

**By Dr. Marcus Bussey**

A small group of Neohumanist educators met in February to ponder a serious question. What is it that makes our vision special? What is it that defines Neohumanism in a way that distinguishes it from the crowd of amazing, innovative and cutting edge educational experiments going on around the planet today? We were together for three intense days to try and find a simple ‘formula’ that might express what our hearts told us every day when we began the work of expressing Neohumanism in schools, classrooms, institutions and communities: namely, that there is something amazingly powerful about the Neohumanist approach to education and life that is unique and needs to be shared.

Yolande and Tim from Lotus Netherlands put a lot of work into preparing for this event. Participants were requested to answer an in depth online survey. This survey was collated and made available to us on arrival and it served as the source for our Day 1 discussions.

It was clear we knew a lot about Neohumanism. We knew that it was holistic, spirit centred, child centred, ecologically centred and creative. But so were other systems. We knew that the propounder of Neohumanism, Shrii P.R. Sarkar, had envisioned it to be a ‘panacea’ for the ills of the world. We also knew the Neohumanism was an optimistic and visionary approach to life that promoted a sense of possibilities. These possibilities we knew started with the very young child, with a vision of the child’s evolution into adulthood that was marked not by competition, fear and insecurity but by collaboration, trust and resilience. Not only that, we knew that such qualities stemmed from a deep philosophy of mind that drew on spiritual experience. We knew that spiritual practice consolidated and deepened this same understanding. We knew we had to practice this spiritual process, to honour it in our lives to be able to communicate it, to make it real in the world. We also knew that the whole point of this ‘work’ was to serve our planet in ways that increased the ‘love quotient’ in order that alienation and suffering decrease and meaningful relation become the defining characteristic of our lives. But, and here is the rub, did we understand what this all meant for the world? Did we understand how to take such wonderful ‘knowings’ into the world and share them in a way that made the remarkable possibilities of this knowing accessible to people?

Shrii P.R. Sarkar of course knew that the difference between knowing and understanding was vast. Thus he commented: *There is some difference between knowing and understanding. Whatever information regarding some object we gather through the medium of the sense organs is what we “know” about that object. But when the basic or ultimate nature of the object is fully subjectivized, then we “understand” the object.*

As we sat around the table and began the job of mapping out our knowing and seeking to subjectivize it, as Shrii P.R. Sarkar had instructed, we found an intense bond of shared experience. Experience builds understanding. There is no doubt about that. Yet experience too is so varied. We had people from all over the world – from Egypt, from America and Australia, from Holland and from Romania, from London, Malaysia and India too. We had all walked a dusty



‘Neohumanist road’ to get to the table and we had many stories and experiences that were unique. The trick was to move from the unique variety at the table to something coherent.

**The first day** we collected the stories, the bits and pieces. We also shared meals, meditated and chanted, laughed and yawned together. At the end of the day we also played together as we developed a remarkable Neohumanist Game that illustrated perfectly how each of us saw Neohumanism as unique patterns of possibility organised according to our specific context and priorities. What was important though was that we used the same elements to create this patterning. That was the first deep understanding. We had the elements before us but we created different patterns from them. This is a powerful understanding.

## Three Core Areas

We took this understanding and the following day boiled it down to three core areas. Neohumanism involves a specific –

specialized – theory of Mind, one that draws on the Tantric theory of **the layers of the mind** (the kosas). We understood that this unique offering had major implications for education and beyond. Neohumanism we all agreed is also a spiritual philosophy that promotes **love of creation**. This is a Heart centred approach that brings meaning to all we do. As the heart is all about loving relationship it puts the emphasis on collaborative cultures that challenge forces such as identification with family, social groups or ones country of origin and species that seek to keep us apart. The practical expression of Heart in life we saw as **service**. Society is the context in which we serve and of course learning to serve involves both practical interpersonal and personal skills. Service is the action that manifests Neohumanism in the life of child, teacher and society.



By the end of **the second day** we identified these three elements as key characteristics of Neohumanist expression in all our varied projects. We felt that the way they complemented one another was particularly unique. The Neohumanist theory of mind offers us a developmental model that connects beautifully with the spiritual dimension of heart. The Neohumanist understanding of heart as the field of spiritual endeavor emphasises self-development in the context of society and the planet. The Neohumanist understanding of society as a planetary community in which service is the task that informs all aspects of relationship links to our understanding of mind as an evolving process of entering into relationship with self and other through a process of subjectivization based on the principles of Astanga Yoga. And so the circuit is complete.



**The third day** was devoted to deepening our understanding of these three categories and to developing a set of research activities that would inform our ongoing interactions as a group over the coming year. We intend to meet again in 2017 to continue this special journey. In the meantime we are happy to have developed a broad and easily understood template for our future actions as members of an evolving Neohumanist research initiative. We are also happy to have settled, for the time being, on a sense that it is the unique combination of a theory of mind with neohumanist love and a commitment to service-oriented pedagogy that is our gift to society and the future.



# NHE and the Layers of the Mind

Ac. Shambhushivananda Avadhuta

Yogic and Buddhist philosophy have long recognized that the human mind is multi-layered containing many sheaths called kos'a's. While the nomenclature is used differently, the basic ideas are similar. Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiiji in his magnum-opus, Ananda Sutram, articulated the raison d'être of the mind in a sutra (aphorism):

*Sutra 3-1. Painçakośātmikā jaeviisattā kadaliipuśpavat.*

*[The living being is the composite of five kośas (layers of mind), like a plantain flower (with its petals).]*

While modern scientific disciplines are still struggling to understand the hardware and software of what we call the mind, applied sciences like education have forged ahead to utilize this conceptual knowledge about the kos'a's in enriching their theory and praxis. The NHE movement has over the past two decades utilized this six-kos'a' model as the cornerstone of its educational curricula and human-development model.

Education is about the manifestation of perfection and potentials lying embodied in each being. If it is indeed so, shouldn't the process of education begin with the broad understanding of what we are made of? Our knowledge to date is still very preliminary when it comes to understanding our own selves - our own minds and bodies. For instance, we have a plethora of therapies for treating the imbalances of the human body, but we still do not have a comprehensive model of the human body, that can show the limits and efficacy of different healing traditions. Perhaps that understanding will come when we fully grasp the sub-molecular structures of our existence. This is where knowledge of "microvita" will further enrich our understanding of the body, the mind and the cosmos in which we live. It is crucial to understand how we affect the world around us and how the world shapes us. Thus, the knowledge of inner and outer ecology would be incomplete without a full appreciation of life at the microvita level, as we continue to keep moving forward with "expanding the love of the human heart to embrace the entire living and non-living world". Our understanding would be greatly substantiated by any research on "negative and positive microvita" initially postulated by Shrii P.R. Sarkar in his seminal discourse: "Microvitum-The Mysterious Emanation of the Cosmic Factor".

Neohumanist Education (NHE) recognizes that the annamaya kos'a' may be more fully understood in microvita terms that would help us find ways to utilize the power of positive-microvita in building an ideal lifestyle and a healthy environment for sustaining ourselves. NHE must design a program of inner ecology to nurture all levels of our inner-being - from crude to subtle to the causal layers of our existence. This may ultimately lead us towards the attainment of our goal: balance (and liberation) in all spheres of life. NHE is ultimately about this all-round emancipation. "Sa' Vidya' Ya' Vimuktaye". NHE is a dynamic educational model that nurtures all levels of the human personality-from its crudest existence to the subtlest consciousness as illustrated in this table of **NHE Learning Outcomes** as associated with each layer of the mind.

<b>Hiranamaya (Supra-mental Causal Mind)</b>	Inner Peace; Compassion; Benevolence; Magnanimity of Mind; Forgiveness; Self Restraint & Inner Discipline; Firm Determination; Strong Will Power; Surrender to the Supreme & Ego Transcendence; Recognition of Sacredness of all things: living and non-living; Universal Love; Service Spirit; Missionary Zeal; Supra-Aesthetics; Sweet and Smiling Behavior; All-round balance; Concentration.
<b>Vijinanamaya (Subliminal Mind)</b>	Neohumanist Ethics & Inner Moral Compass; Awakened Conscience; Sense of responsibility; Moral Courage; Readiness to sacrifice for others; Above hatred, anger, vanity, prejudices, pseudo-culture, and group-ism; Commitment; Fore-sight, Far-sight and In-sight; Access to Intuition; Discriminant Faculty; Fight for Justice; Preservation & Celebration of diversities; Concern for future generations, Minimum Disparities; Sustainability; Accountability.
<b>Atimanas (Supra-mental Mind)</b>	Aesthetics, Creativity, Joyful Learning; Trust, Harmony, Loyalty; Spontaneity, Innocence, Light-Heartedness; Straight-forwardness, Simplicity, Inner Charm; Unity in Diversity; Art for Service & Blessedness; Playfulness; Humor.
<b>Manomaya (Sub-conscious Mind)</b>	Deep Thinking; Thirst for Knowledge; Understanding inter-connectedness of all things; Freedom from dogma, superstitions & fissiparous tendencies; Enlargement of Mind; Photographic Memory; Cognitive development; Discerning Cause-Effect Relationships; Problem-Solving and Decision Making Skills; Rational and Positive Outlook; Scientific Aptitude; Knowledge of Flora and Fauna & the Elements of Nature.
<b>Kamamaya (Conscious- Mind)</b>	Practical Life Skills-Technical, Entrepreneurial, Communication, Interpersonal, Organizational; Skills-development; Time-management.
<b>Annamaya (Human Body)</b>	Healthy Lifestyle Habits; Proper Nutritious Diet; Safety, Martial Arts, Exercises; Cooperative Games; Sports.





## Second International Seminar on Microvita Research RNT Medical College, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India, 8th April, 2016 By Dr. Vartika Jain

After the success of the First International Seminar on Microvita Research in 2012, a second seminar was held at Pediatrics Seminar Hall, RNT Medical College, Udaipur, India with equally favorable outcome. The seminar was organized by the Society for Microvita Research and Integrated Medicine (SMRIM), Udaipur and the main theme was “Mind, Microvita and Meditation”.

Chief Guest of the Inaugural ceremony was Prof. H.K. Bedi, Ex-Principal of RNT Medical College, Udaipur, who emphasized the need for research on the mind’s potentialities in view of microvita science. Prof. Suresh Goyal, Head of the Department of Pediatrics, RNT Medical College, Udaipur, was Special Guest of the ceremony. Dr. S.K. Verma, President of SMRIM, welcomed all the guests, and Dr. Vartika Jain, Secretary of SMRIM, presented a brief overview of the Society’s current activities. During the inaugural ceremony the 3rd issue of the 7th Volume of SMRIM’s official magazine, Bulletin on Microvita Research and Integrated Medicine (BOMRIM) was released, and three eminent personalities were felicitated with Fellowship in SMRIM for their sincere efforts in propagating the concept of microvita and integrated medicine. On this auspicious occasion, Dr. Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt. inaugurated the official website of AMURT, Udaipur ([www.amurtudaipur.org](http://www.amurtudaipur.org)).

Four invited lectures and three oral presentations were delivered at the Seminar in two technical sessions. Henk de Weijer from Amsterdam gave an excellent talk on “Local Forms of Consciousness”. Dr. Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt. from Sweden spoke on “Spirituality - the Path to Divinity” and explained that both inanimate and animate are the embodiments of consciousness. He said that microvita could be the missing link between matter and spirit. In addition, Prof. S.K.Verma from Pacific Medical College, Udaipur gave a talk on “Mind, Microvita and Medicine”. He described how mind is behind every disease and the action of microvita is behind medicine. Dr. Renu Khamesra from RNT Medical College, Udaipur talked on “Neurosciences behind Meditation”.

In the second technical session, Dr. Phool Chander from Punjab, India talked about some references of “Microvita in Patanjali Sutra”. Dr. D.K. Verma from Udaipur demonstrated about “Microvita and their Role in the Efficacy of Homeopathic Medicine” by showing some real examples. The final speaker was Dr. Kailash Choudhary of Kanore, India, who spoke about the existence of “Third Eye in Meditation”. At the end, a panel discussion was organized where queries of the participants were resolved by the invited speakers.

About 100 participants from all over the country and from abroad attended the Seminar. The consensus was that research on this mysterious subject should be started at the earliest possible date in collaboration with different faculties of science.

## Talk at B.Ed College in Udaipur

Dada Shambhushivananda spoke at the Teachers Training College outside of Udaipur on Neohumanism and led a day of training in Yoga and Neohumanist Education.



# Growth Rhythms and Guna Cycles

by Brian Ragbourn

The growth of a plant shoot or bud is not a continual process of enlargement, but is actually rhythmic: a series of expansions interspersed with contractions of a smaller proportion.

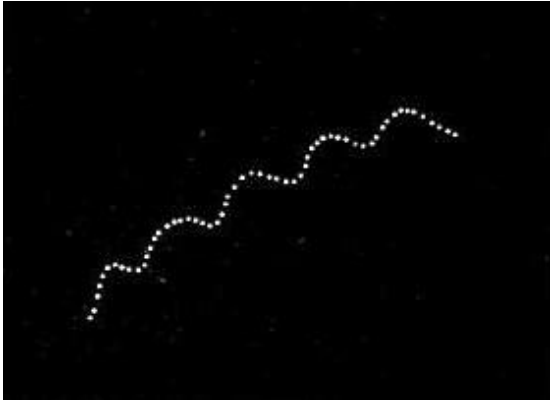


Figure 1: Bose's growth record of a plant shoot.

In 1921, Indian botanist Jagadish Chandra Bose published a paper in *Nature* reporting his invention of a device called a crescograph which subjected plant growth to a succession of two 100x magnifications. By means of this 10,000x magnification Bose discovered a systaltic growth pattern, like an ascending wave, whereby the plant would experience a spurt of growth followed by a contraction of about a quarter the size of the growth newly-gained. Figure 1 shows Bose's crescographic record of the magnified growth of a desmodium plant in which each dot indicates a one second interval, the sum total of dots representing just over a minute's growth. Conducting the experiment in a controlled setting for such a short period of time enabled Bose to eliminate the possible effects of changes in temperature, light, or humidity from his consideration.

Meanwhile over in the United States, in 1921, botanist D.T. MacDougal reported a similar fluctuating pattern of growth which had been detected by using a dendrograph to encircle the trunk of a tree and continuously monitor its diameter. The trunk diameters of the various species measured would reach a maximum soon after sunrise, then decrease to reach a minimum soon after noon. Yet whereas Jagadish Bose's crescograph recorded five cycles within the space of a minute, MacDougal's dendrograph revealed just the one cycle per day.

MacDougal further detected that the distance between the last two nodes at the end of the twig of a pine tree would lengthen then contract, in tune with the diurnal rhythm of the changing diameter of the trunk. (Figure 2) He subsequently reported a similar correlation between the fluctuating size of a growing walnut and the diurnal rhythm of various walnut tree trunks.

MacDougal attributed these diurnal variations to the internal process of hydration, and transpiration. However, in a three month continuous dendrographic monitoring of a maple tree conducted by Harold Saxton Burr during the particularly dry summer of 1944, the same diurnal trunk rhythm persisted in spite of the drought conditions. Recent research conducted by Ernst Zurcher et al in 1998 and corroborated by Peter Barlow et al in 2010 has identified a lunar tidal influence within the rhythm.

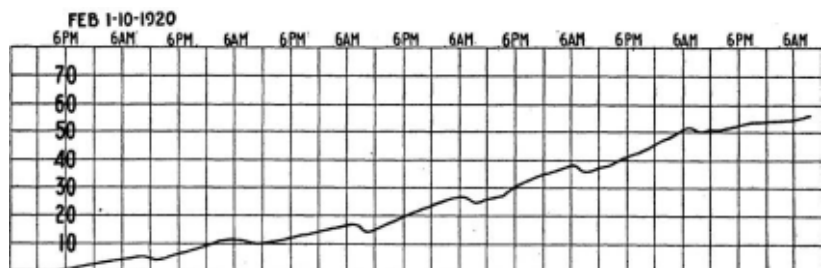


Figure 2: MacDougal's record of the growth and shrinkage of the terminal internode of a young pine tree

I recently joined the Vortex of Life group who, as a result of many years' dedicated research, has accumulated statistically significant evidence that the growth patterns of buds of different species of trees are influenced by specific planets. To be more precise, the growth pattern of a particular bud has peaks and troughs in accordance with a specific planet being in alignment with the Moon and the Earth. Research entails the daily photography of buds during their "dormant" period. Day-to-day comparisons have revealed that the dilation of a terminal bud prior to forming a leaf is interspersed with contractions of a systaltic nature. Terminal buds pulsate both in length and in breadth, one day swelling, the next day shrinking, the sum total of the tension and relaxation being a bidiurnal increment of growth and curvature.

My own daily photographic documentation of the growth of blackcurrant and jostaberry buds identified this trend (Figure 3). Unfortunately, minor differences in the distance between bud and camera lens have caused some variation in the size of the digital images which has complicated the comparison of measurements. I am currently photographing the late-developing bud of an ash sapling in order to hone the technique and precision in preparation for documenting the entirety of the dormant period this coming winter.



Why has this systaltic rhythm of growth not gained wider attention? I don't recall it ever being mentioned in biology lessons at school. This is probably because botanists do not have a satisfactory explanation. Data which defies conventional understanding has a tendency to get shelved. And even Bose was preoccupied using his crescograph to reveal the effect of light, water, temperature, gravity, and various chemicals and gases on plants, rather than concentrating on identifying and exploring the source of the natural pulsation.

Could these cycles within cycles be attributable to the interplay of the three gunas? The concept of the three gunas dates back several thousand years in vedic literature, and is mentioned in classical texts such as the Bhagavad Gita. The term guna literally means the 'strand' of a rope, in the context of the three gunas having been woven together to create our manifested universe.

The periodic swelling and shrinkage of the terminal buds and the walnut could be interpreted as the alternation between the centrifugal force and the centripetal force. If we envisage a centrifugal force transforming into a centripetal force, then the transition should take the form of a wave. This wave model complies with *Ananda Sutram*, in which Shrii Shrii Anandamurti describes the three gunas thus: "*transformations of Sattva into Rajah, Rajah into Tamah, then again of Tamah into Rajah and Rajah into Sattva have been going on back and forth endlessly.*"

Elsewhere Shrii Shrii Anandamurti comments: "*In every matter of the world, there is incessant struggle going on between Rajahgun'a and Tamahgun'a. So long as Rajahgun'a prevails, there is the graceful lustre of Sattvagun'a. Look at a bud. So long as it is blossoming, you will find that it is gradually blooming and the victory of Rajahgun'a in the struggle with Tamahgun'a is manifested in the graceful lustre of Sattvagun'a. But when the force of Rajahgun'a is spent up, then Tamahgun'a predominates every moment. The flower gradually withers and fades, the glow of Sattva wanes and eventually, the all-devouring hunger of Tamahgun'a transforms it into a state of crudeness -- that is to say, it dies. In transformation from a sprout to a blade and from a blade to a leaf and then to autumn defoliation, from infancy into youth and from youth declining to old age -- the struggle between Rajahgun'a and Tamahguna is queerly manifested.*"

If the pulsatory natural rhythm in plant growth described by Jagadish Chandra Bose as 'the wavelets of a rising tide' has a similar root cause as the systaltic rhythm that was detected by D.T. MacDougal in growing tree trunks, internodes, and walnuts, then the respective evidence could be interpretable in guna terms, with Rajah playing the transformational role.

Logically, there are three stages to the research: firstly, validating that the specified growth rhythms actually exist; secondly, investigating whether they are ubiquitous to the growth of all life forms; and thirdly, whether or not they can be related to the gunas. We have made some progress in the first stage, we have initially explored the second stage, and this article reflects how our hypotheses are developing for the third stage.

#### Resources:

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (1975) *The Intuition Science of the Vedas* Subhasita Samgraha 3  
 Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (1981) 'Prakrti Tattva and Onmkara Tattva', *Subhasita Samgraha* 1  
 Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (1984) *Ananda Sutram*  
 Peter Barlow, Miroslav Mikulecky, Juroslav Strestik (2010) 'Tree stem diameter fluctuates with the lunar tides and perhaps with geomagnetic activity' *Protoplasma* 247:25-43  
 Jagadish Chandra Bose (1927) *Plant Autographs and Their Revelations*  
 Harold Saxton Burr (1945) 'Diurnal potential in the maple tree' *Yale J.Biol.Med.* 31:249-253  
 D.T.MacDougal (1921) *Growth in Trees*, Carnegie Institution of Washington  
 Ernst Zurcher, Maria-Giulia Cantiani, Francesco Sorbetti-Guerri, Denis Michel (1998) 'Tree stem diameters fluctuate with tide' *Nature* 392:665-666

*The author is developing a forest garden project nearby the Irish Master Unit and can be contacted at [brignath@yahoo.ie](mailto:brignath@yahoo.ie)*



Figure 3: Day-to-day photographic documentation of the growth of a jostaberry bud

# Agro-forestry & Silvo-pasture: the future of food and restorative land management

by James Geoffrey Steen

The rate of social change is unimaginably rapid. Take the example of electricity: lights, trains, the internet, mobile phones & refrigeration. Less than a hundred years ago, most of the world lived without these things, and even today about 1/3 of the world's people continue to live without power or a reliable source of it. In this article I will be discussing *agro-ecosystems*, not social change. The example merely serves to charge the imagination a little; to make it capable of stretching out to view possibilities beyond its container of the mind, a thing also ordinarily limited by its appetite for objects of study, e.g. books and media focused on the present or the past.



I like to study history for imagining *the future*. *Changes in the Land* by William Cronon is one book of many that have aided me in understanding the inseparable histories of ecology and society, in particular of how rapidly human culture and economic need leads ecological change. Is it possible the Eastern woodlands may again be drastically diminished? Due to shortage of heating oil, for instance, how many years would this rich forest survive millions of homes seeking an alternative heat source? I would not like to waste time pondering this question because it is much too urgent *now* to imagine solutions and take action for existing ecological problems around the world. These problems and their solutions will become replicable models for designing and managing farm ecosystems for resiliency, helping prevent further disturbance to soil, land and water when changes arise in the social system.

In its biggest usage, agriculture is the production of not only food, but also fuel, fodder, fiber and medicine. Everyone eats and because of this, they make agricultural choices that directly affect climate change, ecosystem destruction, species extinction, social justice, and racial and gender equality. Agriculture weighs heavily in all of these issues. Unfortunately, agriculture has never produced much money in its dependence on uncontrollable natural forces, commodity price windfalls, lack of everyday production (duration from input to output) etc. For this very reason, rural districts worldwide continue experiencing *brain drain* as the smart kids leave for better pay and the remaining ones become exploited by powerful businesses unsentimental to consistent harvests, clean water, fertile soil and family livelihoods. This is when I invite the reader to imagine robotic arms and diesel machines raking the earth's dry derivatives of chemical-controlled waste-farms (please, let's not talk about farm animals).



On the bright side, there is a movement rapidly gaining momentum to rehabilitate land devastated by both industrial agriculture and the pressure of subsistence economy populations. The main tool of these new land managers is the integration of production systems for maximum output while reducing inputs through an exchange of ecological services. This exchange could fill a university level *agro-ecology* class, so I will keep it simple and funnel words into imagination again: *animals graze an improved mixture of broad-leaved plants, grass & legumes between rows of trees. These trees are of multiple distinct species, multi-strata and multi-purpose; some of them fix nitrogen and the others produce nuts and fruit. A few rows away, an electric wire keeps the grazing ruminants away from vegetables, root crops and grain also growing between rows of trees. A number of workers are trimming the lower branches of some tall-looking, fast growing tree species and spreading their leaves and branches as a fertilizer for the nut and fruit trees. Some of the tree stuff is carried away as feedstuff for animals or to*

*be used as green manure for vegetable crops. Meanwhile--to banish any thoughts that this is a sickle & oxen utopia--the nearby tractor is loaded with chestnuts and sedately moving with its whiny diesel hiss to the cooperative mill.*

For an example of this kind of system watch the video titled **Syntropy** from Brazil, highlighting Ernst Gotsch's efforts there. The rate of carbon sequestration and implications for climate change mitigation & *reversal* is incredibly high with such an integration of production systems (*E. Toensmeier, 2016. 'Carbon Farming'*). Sequestration of carbon dioxide in the soil by the action of plant photosynthesis and root exudates plus *effective management* (take note of this for later) is paralleled by a rise in soil fertility. This means reduction of inputs like synthetic fertilizer and chemicals.



Additionally, the production of food can be massively higher than any rice paddy or cornfield, possibly 7-10 times higher (M. Shepherd, 2013). *Silvo-pasture* systems that incorporate timber or orchard trees into animal pasture and contour alley cropping of agro-forestry systems are getting lots of attention. In light of this, 60 experts published an article in the UN's *Trade and the Environment Review* ('*Wake Up Before it's Too Late*', 2013) stating that despite good efforts underway, industrial farms that simply tweak their standards of production will *not* mitigate land degradation and climate change or be able to feed the growing populations. The article states that only integrated agro-ecological and organic systems practiced widely offer hope of both feeding the world and regenerating land and managing it sustainably. Agro-forestry and Silvo-pasture are brightly included terms in the cover letter of "key recommendations".

My work in this field includes leading installations of multi-species orchards on three sites in Eastern North America. I am hopeful these fields will be managed for maximum production and used as education sites. Here, maximum production means incorporating nitrogen-fixing trees for coppice/fertilizer/fodder, continually re-planting them on a regular cycle, running animals in the field, and producing tree crops and vegetables crops if possible.

The first is 19 acres of pasture land in North Carolina with an existing dairy operation of six cows. The land dries out on account of being so steep, so we have dug water retaining ditches called *swales* to hold moisture and as a means of preparing the ground for rows of trees. Temporary electric wire protects the young trees from grazing. So far, 150 N-fixing Black Locusts have been planted, 95 Chinese Chestnuts, 40 apples and pears, 20 Hazelnuts, plus many Mulberries, Russian Olives and Persimmons and 4 experimental species.

The second site is two hours west, over the mountains in Tennessee. **Ananda Arpana** is a *Master Unit*, based on the *socio-economic ideas of Prabhat Sarkar*. He used this term to describe multi-dimensional centers for service, innovation and sustainability with the goal of elevating rural districts worldwide. These projects strive to create replicable models in numerous areas of human endeavor including agriculture, education and healthcare, just to name a few. At Ananda Arpana, I have designed and lead an installation of 1,200 beneficial trees on a rolling 2.9 acre field. This offers a unique glimpse of how to rehabilitate over-farmed land by establishing plantings of early, mid and late-succession trees that with a little scientific management boost soil fertility and also produce an abundance of good food for people and animals.

The third orchard is 1.2 acres of old hay field at **Ananda Viplava** near Albany New York. Here, the land is flat and ready for planting a large variety of fruit trees incorporating Black Locust as the fodder/fertilizer tree plus Chestnuts and hybrid Hazelnuts. This site would be ideal for an alley-cropping system growing vegetables and other annual crops between rows of trees. With its attainable plans for a seminar center and close proximity to many centers of higher education, I am hopeful that this project will help to promote agro-forestry in the Northeast.

Such integrated planting schemes using high density plantings of beneficial trees and perennial crops provide a variety of ecological services through diversity. Properly designed projects are a demonstration in how rapidly old farmland can be improved and made productive by the appropriate application of science to agriculture. This cropping pattern foretells a direct shift from dependence on annuals for all our staple foods (carbohydrates, proteins and fats) to include perennials. Perennial plants like trees grow year after year undergoing their reproductive stages of life after 1-10 years of vegetation whereas annuals complete vegetative and reproduction within one year, typically aided by farmers who eliminate competition of other plants through destructive cultivation of the soil or chemicals.

The key to maximum production is *management*. By proper design, dense planting, pruning and cutting the fodder/fertilizer trees, rotational grazing, and rotational cropping in between rows of trees, an efficiency of nutrient-cycling is reached that requires no inputs. Increased management ensures ongoing productive returns with the added investment in long-term fertility. In contrast, modern industrial farming is like a mining operation in the sense that it employs chemical inputs and a minimum of human management to extract crops with negative returns year after year unless added inputs are used. The soil is merely a substrate to anchor plants feeding on a chemical solution.

Many people declare that silvo-pasture is easily practiced by turning their animals loose in the forest, but this is where such simple thinking gets muddy. The colonial settlers of the eastern states did this commonly with terrible consequences. Not only did the forest offer little animal forage because the soil and plants were not prepared for browsing, but their animals often got sick. A productive and sustainable silvo-pasture system is actually an intentional process, requiring that the forages be of species capable of growing back from heavy browsing (typically grasses and forbs of European origin), appropriate for eating, and that the grazing be seasonal and rotational and not exceed recommended stocking rates of animals per unit land. Trees in this system should be managed for soil fertility as much for their production of timber, timber byproducts, fruit, nuts or medicine.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 19**

# From Africa to Appalachia

## A couple's reflection on living and growing on two Master Units

By Daniel & Latasha Isner

On a windy day under a scorching sun, some two dozen villagers gathered around a large pointed, thatched cone on the ground. Then in unison, we hoisted it into the air and walked it over to a round-walled mud hut and set the roof firmly in place. After years of living, working and visiting some very remote areas in West Africa, we finally had a rural home of our own. No longer were we merely visitors - we were community members. More importantly, our home was part of the Ananda Viirata Master Unit in Bissiri Village, central Burkina Faso.

It was there that we worked alongside caretaker Rasmani, Dada Padmeshananda and countless others to establish the master unit's (MU) agro processing facility, expand the model educational and market farm, improve the level of care offered at the primary health clinic, and build the area's first secondary school. It was a true community effort where, despite numerous setbacks (from a depressed local economy and severe weather, to the death of a beloved wife and mother of seven children) we were able to achieve what would have been impossible working alone.



Even in this nascent phase, the Ananda Viirata MU proved to be a living example of what can happen when a community confronts its obstacles and harnesses the grace, inspiration, and energy necessary to move forward in a progressive direction. Earlier this year, Ananda Viirata was awarded the overall first prize at the regional agriculture fair and exhibition for the farm's delicious tangelos, vegetables and moringa project products. It was the first time in fifteen years that the MU and caretaker Rasmani had been given any sort of recognition from the local government. It was incredibly encouraging for everyone.

### A Return to the West

Contrary to common belief, Burkina Faso offered good food, clean water, fresh air and a solid, supportive community, though years of vigorous work and travel through West Africa had taken their toll. Several bouts with malaria and other maladies compelled us to return to the US for a much-needed period of restoration and preparation for the next leg of the journey.

Arriving in Nashville, TN, we were surrounded by our wonderful family and dear friends at the "Good Food for Good People" agricultural community. Soon we learned that our first child was on the way which prompted us to begin envisioning what kind of environment we wanted our daughter to grow up in. Time and time again, our answers pointed to a simple desire for an environment rich in nourishing food, pure water, clean air and a loving community. It's discouraging, at times, to see that those very fundamental elements are not at all guaranteed to the vast majority of our global population. In fact, situations of food insecurity, polluted water and a lack of proper housing are commonplace, even in communities throughout the West. At the time, we were living in downtown Nashville near a noisy interstate, both working hectic full time jobs and longing again for the life we lived in West Africa, rich with its sublime landscapes, large families, and clear purpose.

### An Appalachian Oasis

Then we learned that just four hours east of Nashville, nestled and well preserved in the Appalachian foothills of Eastern Tennessee, was the Ananda Arpana Master Unit. Like so many MUs around the globe, Ananda Arpana needed desperately to attract interest, people and investment. While Nashville was welcoming more than 4000 new residents a year to its vibrant music scene, economic boom and southern hospitality, our hearts were seeking a simpler way of life with our hands in the soil.

It was a delight to meet Ananda Arpana's founder and perennial caretaker, Laksman. As we walked the 71 acres of rolling hills, we were inspired by both the farm's beauty and vision for its future. When Laksman invited us to assume responsibilities in developing the MU, we quickly accepted. With gratitude, we moved to Ananda Arpana shortly after our daughter, Kaevalya was born. That's where we are today, and once again, we feel at home as part of a master unit rich with possibilities. For us, moving here was not only a way out, but a solid step towards a more ideal way of life. There is





something special about this place - a palpable, spiritual vibration that runs deep into the heart of this rural sanctuary. Our wish is to extend its welcome to all people and wildlife, offering a unique experience to all who visit.

### More than A Place

At their core, master units are rural service and development centers where all aspects of life can be nourished and harmonized. Unexpressed, they may appear to be merely a plot of earth, lacking funds, housing, and resources for life. Fully expressed, however, they represent a most ideal place to raise children, grow food, nourish minds through intentional community engagement, and to grow old and wise in the shade of their beauty and serenity. Whether under a scorching West African sun or in the shadow of verdant Appalachian hills, master units offer respite and hope to a sometimes chaotic, oftentimes brutal world.

For us, Ananda Arpana is an ideal environment for our daughter to spend her early years. Its clean air, rich soil, and crystal spring providing all the property's water needs, along with a small but committed community of like-minded people, have inspired us to establish roots. These roots will join ones we have already established abroad in connecting our respective master units in ways that remain to be seen. We believe very much in the mutual cooperation between master units globally.

This winter has given us the chance to reconnect as a family and strategically plan an ideal future for both our family and the society we seek to serve. We've spent much time sitting, studying, stretching and smiling with our newborn near the warmth of a wood stove which has proven to be a very healing time for us physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. We spend time sharing stories and reliving memories from our time in Burkina Faso and elsewhere, while dreaming about what practical cooperation between global master units could look like in the future. We see that rural society, in particular, is becoming more fragmented and increasingly unstable. Yet, there exists a fertile opportunity to envision and continue building a better world. It is interesting that fertility and vulnerability often occupy the same space. As we have learned in both Burkina Faso and in Tennessee, there is much physical and metaphorical fallow ground waiting to be engaged and utilized.

This year we have agreed to shift from viewing our ideals as a future goal and begin our present journey towards self realization and an ever increasing service to humanity. We firmly believe in the potential that master units hold to broaden the scope of all fields of study and practice, restore socio-economic balance and eventually create a human society we can be proud to leave our children.

### A Blissful Beginning

Today, we are focusing on growing Kaevalya's first solid foods in the greenhouse and fields at Blissful Spring Farm. This was the name we have chosen for the farm at Ananda Arpana MU. It simultaneously reflects the abundant freshwater spring on the property and the season of coming alive! A name is something to live up to and we feel Blissful Spring Farm is well on its way.

In the days leading up to the Spring Equinox, we welcomed a handful of friends who worked tirelessly and joyfully to mark contours, plow swales and plant some 1200 trees. Red mulberries, persimmons, apples, pears, chestnuts, hazelnuts and locusts now accent the steep lower pastures of the farm. For our friend James Steen, conceptualizing the system and planting the trees was not unlike an artist who imagines a scene and then paints it onto a canvas. This silvo-pastoral system was created to serve all by providing food and nourishment to humans and animals while encouraging maximum biodiversity. Drawing on a wellspring of spiritual inspiration, we are moving forward into 2016 with an ever increasing sense of purpose and zeal.

Our wish is that more and more people around the globe will recognize the great potential of master units and this relatively stable, auspicious moment we have to make our vision for a global network of MUs manifest. Whether an agro-ecologist, yoga instructor, farmer, educator, retiree, businessman or baby, everyone has something meaningful to contribute to make our collective offering a blissful one.

# Personal Development of the Teacher

NHE Teacher Training at the Lotus Center, Den Bosch, Holland, February 12- 14  
By Dr. Sid Jordan

A three day teacher training was held for the teachers of Zonnelicht School in Den Bosch Holland in February. It was conducted with approximately 25 teachers with varying levels of experience with yoga and meditation. The trainers, Didi Ananda Devapriya, Didi Ananda Rama, Dr. Jordan and Dada Gunamuktananda focused on the teachers acquiring greater self-knowledge and balance of mind, body and spirit.

## First Day Highlights

The first morning, began with Yolande Koning, the director of Zonnelicht giving an overview of the training which aimed at what teachers had been requesting, to go deeper with their own spiritual practices. Didi Ananda Devapriya conducted a meditation and yoga class followed by the *Kaosikii* dance three times a day. The first day's training gave the teachers three choices among which they could attend two consecutive sessions: Didi Ananda Rama's Food and Fasting workshop, Didi Ananda Devapriya's workshop on a variety of kiirtans and Dr. Jordan's experiential workshop on Intuition as Guide in Making Loving Assertions.



## Intuition as Guide in Making Loving Assertions

In this workshop, Dr. Jordan had the teachers first discuss the role of the intuition as a guide to the ego in making benevolent assertions. The participants were then asked to visualize situations, as though they were happening in the present, in which they had been less assertive than they wanted to be. Recruiting all the multisensory details of that situation and attending bodily sensations and feelings they experienced, they were asked to come to the meaning of the situation for them. They were then asked to let go of the scene and focus on their breath and relaxation followed by meditation on their breath and mantra for a minute. They were then instructed to return to the former scene and visualize themselves at the point when they felt less assertive responding 1. spontaneously 2. plausibly and 3. in a manner that benevolently served them and others. After the intervening meditation and application of spontaneous, plausible and benevolent imagery a few participants shared that they were able to be less reacted emotionally and more positive in their assertions. One person said that not only their emotional reaction disappeared but that they felt at peace and had no need to assert anything.

In the afternoon Dada Gunamuktananda gave a talk using the metaphor of mycelium in the earth to illustrate the interconnectedness of all entities and the fundamental unity of the animate and inanimate world. One of the most poignant points he made was that the nurturing quality of neighboring trees was facilitated by the connective organic material via the mycelium network to exchange nurturing minerals and water with neighboring plants - an example of healthy symbiosis for all beings.

## Second Day Highlights

The theme of Clash and Cohesion was introduced as reflected in the Rumi poem, Guest House - *"Even if they are a crowd of sorrows, who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture, still treat each guest honorably. He may be clearing your out for some new delight."* The theme of seeing the silver lining in times of crisis was further amplified with the story of *"Good Luck, Bad Luck"* which turned every disaster of a farmer and his son into a blessing.

The teachers then joined in an art exercise that had them draw on four quadrants of a page, with crayons and art materials, four emotions that they had experienced. They then were asked to turn the page over and draw a synthesis of these four emotions on the other side. They then joined in groups of six to discuss the impact of synthesizing positive and negative emotions in their drawings. The morning ended with them visualizing an event in their lives that at first had the impression of being a disaster but turned out to be a blessing in disguise. After contacting the visual imagery, their bodily reactions



and the felt meaning of this event they milled about the center of the room and randomly chose a partner with whom to share their story. The afternoon began with reflections on their experiences from the Clash and Cohesion exercises. Many felt that it was about finding “their own voice” that makes use of “radical acceptance” and determination to overcome all obstacles in achieving their goals.

They were then asked to journal in a “free write” style which encourages responding to a prompt by writing spontaneously without editing; expressing freely your thoughts for 2.5 minutes. The prompts were:

1. What I am most determined to express or achieve is.....
2. The first step to take is.....
3. Obstacles to overcome are .....
4. Strengths that I have to reach my goal are.....

Many of the teachers comfortably shared in the larger group the results of their journaling.

Another exercise involved a heart meditation on what they most loved that allowed them to more fully express themselves and simultaneously serve others.

This visualization ended with finding a letter on the floor of the mouth of a cave that was addressed to them in their own handwriting. It was a letter from their heart. They were asked to open and read this letter from their heart. They were then asked to write down this letter from their heart.



They were then asked to write down this letter from their heart.

The day ended with reflections on the value of getting out of their heads aided by the multiple modalities of art, visualization and meditation moving from dealing with synthesizing their emotions and experiences with the help of their peers to identifying their heart felt desires. In the evening they had a fun frolic of an outdoor treasure hunt.

### Third Day Highlights

The day began with a film, “Schooling the World” which reflected the imposing of a western approach to education on the rest of the world without sensitivity for local culture. Didi Ananda Devapriya then raised the question of “what are we educating children for?” This discussion explored the broader vision of how we as educators must, as Gandhi encouraged, become the change we want to see in education.

This third day of training focused on how to acquire positive qualities of leadership in teachers. In a brainstorming exercise led by Dr. Jordan, teachers identified positive qualities of teachers as leaders that included expanded vision, empowering others, service, strong intuition, and empathy. The teachers worked in small groups of five to explore these five qualities of leadership. When the question was raised, could these qualities of leadership become a liability, the teachers recognized the need to have a balanced approach that was intuitive and sensitive to time, place and person in applying these qualities. The larger group concluded that the development of these leadership qualities would be aided by continuing education similar to what they were getting in this three-day training. They affirmed that this holistic training at a physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual level would support them as teachers, leaders and models of a healthy life style. A few cooperative games were then performed in their small groups.

Didi Ananda Devapriya then focused on strategies that teachers, students and educational institutions could embrace to more effectively implement the needed change to accomplish excellence in education. Two films were shown that dealt with developing “determination” and “multiple strategies” to produce change. The first film, “Will as a Skill”, demonstrated that “will” could be taught. This training was based on the earlier “Marshmallow” research of psychologist Walter Mischel, who demonstrated that delay of gratification which strengthened “will” could be successfully taught. This education produced stronger “will” in youth that was retained when the same subjects were tested 40 years later. This study demonstrates the long-term effects of early childhood education.

The second film shown was “*All Washed Up*” which demonstrated that multiple strategies in teaching desirable behavior such as hand washing for hygiene were more successful than single strategies. It was demonstrated that three or four strategies such as rewards, verbal instructions, environmental support like signs and peer pressure produced eighty percent more change in behavior than one or two strategies. It has been well demonstrated in education that multiple strategies and modalities (verbal, written, film, field trips, arts etc.) facilitate learning.

To demonstrate these principals of the use of multiple modalities and strategies in the teacher training we applied yoga postures, meditation, chanting, brief talks, films, visualizations, art exercise, improvisational drama, stretch breaks, journaling, self assessment charts, dyads and small groups to share the personal impact of exercises, and large group

reflections on the impact of training. One example of a self-monitoring chart that Didi Ananda Devapriya shared with the teachers was a Ten Day Yama Niyama Challenge that utilized a 10 point scale to rate the minimum to maximum application of the yoga ethic principles. Another example was the use of a multiple strategies chart to monitor your progress on behaviors you wanted to change.

The training was a holiday for the teachers, providing a break from teaching and an opportunity for enjoying each other's company, away from their daily routines. Most of all they felt it gave them an opportunity for deeper exploration of their individual needs to grow together socially, emotionally and spiritually. They shared much personal gratitude for each other. They complemented their leader and founder of the school, Yolande, for continuing to make this type of training possible for them. They thanked the leaders for being sensitive to their needs. For the trainers, it was a privilege and an honor to spend these days of training with the teachers and staff of Zonnelicht School during the Lotus Teacher Training.

Afterwards, Didi Anandarama gave an extra workshop to a dozen teachers on how to make a 16 page story book. Each teacher came up with their own stories and illustration styles and started to make their own book to show it as an example to the children. They were very enthusiastic and creative, well versed with story telling and looked forward to their finished product and to facilitate the same with afterschool children.



---

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

### ***Agro-forestry & Silvo-pasture: the future of food and restorative land management***

The question arises: are animals necessary? This depends of course on the interests and goals of the farm and its capacity to manage unintended growth of plant species by mowing, pruning or chemicals. The one idea that I will volunteer in this regard is that wild ecosystems always have animals of many sizes and because our goal is to create agro-ecosystems it is important to incorporate animals in order to obtain a peak of productivity and efficient cycling of nutrients. Here, scientific management means maintaining plants at the height of their bell curve by not grazing our domestic animals too early or too late. Grazing or trimming many types of plants before flowering maximizes their vegetative states, enabling them to become more productive later on. Incidentally, this sequesters huge amounts of carbon into plants and the soil as well.

It has been estimated that in the next 15 years another 2 to 3 billion hungry human beings will come to Earth before the global population begins to plateau. Without a sharp increase in the amount of farmland appropriately using science to integrate production systems, wild lands will continually be thrashed and existing farmland will continue failing to produce without chemical controls. Supporting farmers, agro-foresters and permaculturalists working at the farm scale is going to be an essential part of repairing the damage of the last century. A new vision of the natural world and a new experience of how we live become possible when the terms *agriculture* and *ecosystem* collide. The desperate race to save species and the last wild places of the Earth comes into focus when we understand the necessity and possibility of radically, rapidly changing the farm and forestland we're using and abusing already, if not in the seat of a tractor then with our money and food choices. Such changes in land management with an increasing development of perennial crops may imply shifts in human dietary patterns. If you're interested in this subject, there may be a ready market for a cookbook titled something like **Food Forest Cuisine**. That's all for now, thanks for reading, you may contact me here:

[ravenridgefarm@gmail.com](mailto:ravenridgefarm@gmail.com).

*James Geoffrey Steen is an agro-forester and a tradesman. He leads workshops on nature awareness & homesteading, enjoys reading, writing, soccer, group meditation and good humor. His webpage is [www.ravenridgeagroecology.com](http://www.ravenridgeagroecology.com)*





## Global Network of Ananda Marga Yoga Wellness Centers Holds one-month Naturopathy Training By Dada Dharmavedananda

The spread of the wellness movement throughout the world goes on fast and furious! Those attending global training sessions continue to be in large numbers, and more permanent centers are opening. This dynamic movement, affiliated with the Naturopathy Faculty of Ananda Marga Gurukula, is growing for the following reasons:

- 1) Our treatment system is effective, easy to learn and understand, while the food is delicious even while it is detoxing and healthful
- 2) As collective spirituality expands, people feel the increasing need to become more subtle on all levels - or else one's health suffers and thus interest in better health is growing as consciousness grows.
- 3) Those living a healthy life style have a unique service they can offer, with a little training.

The latest annual one-month training was full to the brim with 15 trainees who hailed from such diverse places as South Africa, Papua New Guinea, China, India, Australia, Bali, Hong Kong and Singapore. The first Yoga Wellness Center opened eleven years ago in Cebu, Maharlika (Philippines) – and it continues to be the hub of our global coordination and training. At this moment we have three more beautiful full-fledged in-patient Centers besides Cebu – i.e. in Asheville NC, USA, Ananda Nagar India, and Yuching Tainan Taiwan. And two more are scheduled to soon open – in Bali and Durban South Africa.

If you or anyone close to you is challenged by such problems as skin problems, diabetes, high blood pressure or cholesterol, cancer which is not yet extreme, obesity, or almost any other chronic disease – we can very likely help you in a major way. In the near future we will have a global website for all of our centers and programs. In the meantime, please see details at [www.amwellness.org](http://www.amwellness.org) or write to [info@amwellness.org](mailto:info@amwellness.org)

## Neohumanist College News

In October, a 10 week book club/course was conducted through Neohumanist College on-line, facilitated by Richard Maxwell, Ph.D, on “Yoga Psychology”. A new course concerning “Trauma-Sensitive Yoga” is in the works for later this year. This course will be an elaboration of work that Eileen Maxwell, CSW, RYT, has done teaching elementary yoga practices to small groups of individuals with histories of significant trauma and emotional distress.

### Yoga Psychology Book Club By Dr. Richard Maxwell

The Neohumanist College on-line platform was used for open discussions of chapters from the book Yoga Psychology. Each week several chapters were read and related topics were examined and discussed by posting comments to a forum. The hope had been to simulate the active discussions that might occur in a true book club in which everyone comes together to discuss what they have read. One extended discussion considered the point at which a bodiless mind incarnates into its new physical structure. Other exchanges examined spiritual dreams, past life memories in children, scientific support for extra-cerebral memory, morality, psychic pabula, psychic training centers, conceptualizing mental health disorders, male/female differences, the interrelationship of bhakti, jnana and karma yogas, devotion and Guru's Grace, etc. This was a first try at something like this. Future efforts will focus on a true course design providing more extensive novel information.



Neohumanist College  
Distance Learning

# Education Training Camps

## Anandanagar, India

A five-day Education Training Camp was held at Anandanagar in May, 2016, hosted by Ac. Avanindrananda Avt. Ac. Svarupananda Avt. gave the inaugural speech and Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt., Kulapati, Ananda Marga Gurukula, gave a key note address on Neohumanist Education. Several workshops were conducted by Ac. Sudamshu, Avtk. Ananda Sunitii Ac., Avtk. Ananda Cittaprabha' Ac., Ac. Kalyanmitrananda Avt., Jay Govind, Ac. Ounkareshvarananda Avt., Ac. Sujitji and several others.

The construction of the AMGK Teachers Training College Extension Building at Anandanagar is continuing.



## Bankura District of West Bengal, India

The winter session of the Education Training Camp was held on 17-21 Dec 2015, at Durlovpur, Bankura district of West Bengal, India, 200 km from Kolkata. There were nearly 250 participants including acharyas from different schools in India. The building where the program took place was newly donated by a noble lady, Tanushree Chattaraj, in the loving memory of her husband Partha Chattaraj, who had a sad demise in 2008. It is a huge three storey building sprawling over 4 acres of land beside the Raniganj-Bankura Highway

The program began on 17th December morning with a housewarming ceremony. Classes were conducted on various subjects by experienced educators.

- Prof. Rajarshi Roy from Vishvabharati University,
- Methodology – Shantiketan,
- Professional Development of Teachers and Integrating Life Skills in Primary Education - Arpita Bhowmik, research scholar on Neohumanism at the Regional Institute of Education, Bhubaneswar,
- Maths - Sushanta Roy,
- Specialties of Stu-vol - Jinanendra Jena,
- Teaching English -Tapas Sinha,
- Fundamentals of NHE - Ac. Priyaksnananda Avt,
- Childhood misdeeds and their remedies - Ac. Kashishvarananda Avt,
- Motivating Students - senior LFT Laxmikant Hazra.



Apart from these classes there were competitions on story-telling, rhymes, yoga asanas (postures), dances of kaosikii & tandava, and a workshop on skill development of students. Collective kiirtan and meditation sessions created a strong spiritual vibration. There was a wonderful Cultural Program on 20th evening presented by the children of the Ananda Marga School, Burdwan and RAWA artists from Shantiniketan. The audiences were highly pleased by the magnificent presentation of the young talents. In the concluding ceremony on the 21<sup>st</sup>, noon time, the participants expressed their feelings that the ETC was highly educative and inspiring. The winners in various competitions were awarded prizes by the guests and the program was closed with "Amra gare nabo Gurukul..." the last Prabhat Samgeet no 5018, given by Founder of Neohumanist Education Shrii P.R.Sarkar.





# NHE Seminars in Brazil

*Taraka Prema Popov from Switzerland travelled to many places in Brazil in February giving NHE Seminars and Workshops as well as a TV interview and University presentation. Here is an account of her journey and work.*

## NHE Seminar at Ananda Dakshina Master Unit, Porto Alegre

A five day intensive teacher seminar was held from January 30th until February 4th at Ananda Dakshina master unit near Porto Alegre, just before the sectorial retreat that took place in the same MU. This seminar was organized by Didi Ananda Sushila.

We managed to hold a strong mystical vibration throughout all 5 days of our seminar. What happened there was truly beyond words and yet, it was so concrete and obvious to all of us eight participants. Only eight? It doesn't sound many in numbers, but lay it flat and it becomes infinite.

The training explored the qualities that we express in each and every aspect of our work and our life. We started with ether and played with its allies: time and sound. Education is a process that unfolds in time. Instead of mechanical time we should be cultivating organic time and respectfully observe the cycles of a child's development. Everyone needs his or her own time to ripen fully. We experienced the importance of the Inner sound and respected that, in some of us, it was still asleep. Words are also sounds. How do we use them? Finally we explored the "witnessing entity" and the question Why? (why education at all? why anything?)

The next day we studied air, accompanied by an exploration of space, touch and the question What? We went in search of a home in nature, we gave and received massage and we felt the breath of life. How much space do we need? How much space do we give? How do we respect the space of another being? How much life energy (prana) do we infuse into education? Are we truly touching students' hearts (Anahata cakra)? Are we fostering the expansion of the mind (vistara)?

Our fire day was the hottest of all (no wonder). Action, vision and person were the key topics as well as the question Who? The importance of leading and teaching by personal example inspired us to go in search of people who had contributed to our education making us more aware of the role we may play in the life of another. Responsibility, motivation, warmth, compassion, transformation, a burning desire to be of service to others (seva) filled our day with various activities. One of them was capoeira, a traditional Brazilian martial art form.

Pouring rain accompanied our day of water exploration. It was a day of flow (rasa), taste, reflection and the question How? We played with water, observed it closely, and listened to it. We practiced eye contact and discovered the principles of mirror neurons and empathy. We explored different kinds of flow and asked ourselves if our lives were tasty or not. Is our education tasty or not? We shared dances and songs from cultures that we love.

Eventually we landed on earth! How exciting was that! With the possibility to manifest and materialise all that had been just





potential in all the other dimensions, we thoroughly enjoyed this very practical element. The questions Where? and When? had simple answers: here and now. The challenge was how to tap endlessness into here and eternity into now! The base chakra is the seat of spiritual power (kundalini) so we symbolically released a Kundalini snake (soft toy animal) from the sacred altar of education into the world.

## Yoga Dance Workshop In Ubatuba, Sao Paulo

After the sectorial retreat workshop, I offered a workshop in the center “Namaskar” in Ubatuba, Sao Paulo state organized by brother Nirainjan and sister Erika. The teachers had loved the yoga dance choreographies I introduced as well as the many other dances that we did accompanied by classical, ethno and mantra music. Twenty enthusiastic social workers, pedagogues and teachers took part in that workshop. They were predominantly working with youth from the Favela area. The values of mainstream society play an important role during the teenage years and teachers face difficulties due to the superficial and profit-oriented psychology that is overwhelming society and education. I have found that the best way to be a revolutionary teacher is to patiently introduce homeopathic doses of Neohumanist love into children’s lives.

## NHE Workshp, Belmiro Braga

Soma Brys, dedicated teacher and the founder of “Sol Nascente”, a Neohumanist preschool at Ananda Kiirtana, a vibrant eco-community, organized a workshop for me approved by the municipality of Belmiro Braga town. It was considered “continuing education” and upon completion, participants received a certificate. Not surprisingly, it was through dancing, playing with colours, acting and storytelling that we were able to activate the spirit of Neohumanism and bring it to life.

Soma introduced the concept of the 10 ethical qualities known as Yama & Niyama, through a story about 10 corresponding fairies. Our 35 participants were truly enchanted and delighted to learn more from the abundant well of Neohumanist inspiration.



## Educating Teachers for the Future, a Neohumanist Approach, Juiz de Fora

Soma Brys additionally organized a TV interview and University presentation for me. I found myself standing on the stage of the University of Juiz de Fora, one of the biggest cities in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. There were nearly 100 people in front of me: students, professors, the rector and important heads from the ministry of education, all eager to hear about Neohumanist pedagogy.

Before landing on the University stage, I gave an interview on a local TV program. That was a perfect way to advertise for the University class since the TV debate would be viewed by about half a million people specifically interested in academic topics. At the same time, it also afforded an opportunity to introduce Neohumanist Education to a broader audience and acknowledge the work of countless social service projects inspired by this educational philosophy. Additionally, it was a chance to discuss the International Neohumanist Education Seminar that took place last year in Brazil and the creation of the Brazilian NHE network called “Movem”.

As I stood in the corner of the stage behind the podium at the University, I considered how I might best approach this lecture, knowing that my words, however intelligent, would activate just one half of the brains of my audience members, thus never providing a full understanding of Neohumanist pedagogy. And so I began: “Today’s science provides ample evidence that cognitive intelligence is just one of many different kinds of intelligences available to us humans.” My dear friend and translator, Ananta, carried the verbal message of my lecture gently but now the time had come for a major shift! I needed to bring these scholars out of their heads and into their hearts and bodies and in contact with other ways of knowing. How was I to accomplish this? I simply walked to the other side of the stage and by that action I illustrated that, after working on our verbal brain hemisphere, the time had come to move to the non-verbal





half and complete the awakening of the whole person. I invited students to come onto the stage, choose their favourite colour from a stack of coloured cards and so we began to create a collective mandala.

My inspiration was a beautiful mandala that a group of about 60 people had created during the yoga retreat at the end of my workshop on the “Colours of the Mind” that I had given earlier during my stay. Not only was the result great, the entire process continued to work in us for the rest of the retreat and beyond. So, why not offer this form of work here at the University, I thought. I invited the university students into my world and, before long colour frequencies were filling the space on the paper and the space in the hall. The students were fully engaged in the nonverbal, and so it was time for the natural next step: body movement through yoga dance.

So there we were, in the university auditorium, dancing to “I’ve Got Joy like a Fountain”, a song from one of the CDs from our Neohumanist production. But this was just the warm up! The real stuff came next: more than ten minutes of “Baba nam kevalam” kiirtan by Jyoshna resounded through the University hall as we held hands performing the “snake dance”, walking throughout the auditorium, between the seat rows, and in circles and spirals...

We ended up in the middle of the room encircling a small shrine I had prepared before the class. In addition to spiritual ideation I had added a few leaves, flowers, twigs and stones collected from the natural area surrounding the University. These items symbolised the five elements: earth, water, fire, air and ether. The 5 elements accompanied the teachers training program that I offered earlier at the Ananda Daksina MU. “If that mystical vibration can enter now, the University students will touch the point which is the core of our NH educational experience,” I thought to myself.

As our work unfolded that day, the intensity of our encounter increased. The profound feeling of the web of life surrounding us and streaming through us caused our hearts to overflow. Our heartbeats united us with each other, with our Mother Earth, and with the pulsation of the Universe (oh, yes, that is where the word university comes from.)

We were embraced in the circle of education, the bridge between the individual body, mind, spirit and collective nature, culture, community. What could be more exciting than being an educator of that kind?

As the university class came to a close, nobody wanted to be released from this wonderful embrace. In another dimension, we can hold on to this feeling forever but in the here and now I had to say goodbye.



## Mystical Beauty of Fairy Tales Workshop, Pontal do Sul

The next stop was Pontal do Sul where I gave a workshop on “The Mystical Beauty of Fairy Tales.” Still aglow from my exciting experience at the university, as I travelled to Pontal do Sul, I could already envision the participants choosing their own fairy tale cards and embarking on a journey of archetypal exploration. I saw all of us creating our own wonderful new story and performing it with costumes, masks, music and props on the stage of Anirvana, a center run by my amazing friend Tannistha. Thanks to the contribution of a wonderful group of participants, the actual workshop was even more satisfying than my imaginings.





# Knowledge is Bliss: An Experience Report of Neohumanist Teacher Training at the Neohumanist Toledo Cañada School, Capiatá, Paraguay by Aniishá Domingues and Kevala Monteiro

Education is a transformation process based on universal love. With this assumption, we began this experience report of the teacher training which took place in March 2016 at the Neohumanist Toledo Cañada School in Capiatá, Paraguay, held by artist-educators Kevala and Aniishá and with the coordination of Didi Ananda Somadhara and participation of Didi Ananda Divyarupa. The training was attended by 8 school teachers.

## Initial Steps

A year ago, we started a study group of the book *Neohumanism – Liberation of Intellect*, by Shrii P. R. Sarkar with weekly meetings via Skype with other Brazilian educators. A common desire was to improve our understanding of Neohumanist Education and, who knows, come up with new practices in the schools and other Neohumanist projects in Brazil. The meetings were essential to strengthen the network among many educators, and inspire their individual careers as people who are committed to social transformation. Thus, we had already started thinking about concrete actions for training in Neohumanist Education. We had also been thinking about exchanges between educators of Neohumanist institutions in Brazil and worldwide. On this journey, we arrived at Capiatá, a rural municipality almost two hours from the Paraguayan capital Asunción.

## Training in Neohumanist Education

It was a cool, misty morning at the Neohumanist Toledo Cañada School. Together with the eight educators of the institution, we plunged into the "Training in Neohumanist Education", sharing and exchanging special moments among us.



According to Shrii Prabhat R. Sarkar, one of the key points of NHE is the trilateral development of human beings through education: spiritual, physical and mental. Thus, we began the day with a class on yoga asanas and meditation, promoting the well-being of the people involved. Our immersion followed with the theoretical exposition of Neohumanism bases, investigating fundamental concepts such as socio-sentiment, geo-sentiment, trilateral development and universalism, among others.

We emphasized the importance and the role of the Neohumanist teacher in the everyday doings at the school. Who am I? What do I believe? How do I act as an educator? These were the guiding questions for the dynamics and conversations among the participants. Besides this, we had the opportunity to share special moments such as the collective lunch in the schoolyard. Thus, among conversations, laughter and a delicious lacto-vegetarian lunch, we could experience learning and universal love as pedagogical facts.



**CONTINUED ON PAGE 26**



# NHE Teacher Training in Ghana

## Teaching some of the Foundations of NHE through Morning Circle, Arts, Creative Movement and Dance

By Didi Ananda Gun'amaya

We had a joyful one-day intensive teacher training at Lotus. The attendance included our teachers from Lotus Children Center, one teacher from another school and the new teacher for the new Neohumanist School at Kasoa.

This teacher training was a new experience for me, as I let the participants contribute more and make most of the activities around their own ideas, guiding their minds to flow towards the foundations of NHE. I felt it was more effective to have more practical activities in comparison with the theoretical classes we have had in the past.

During this training we talked about the importance of the school activities being able to generate a family feeling amongst all, teachers and students, and the students including into their family other beings such as plants and animals.



We experienced the goodness of preparing the body for a new day using vigorous and stretching exercises. Physical activities increase the focus of the students, such as carrying objects while walking in a line and a'sanas (yoga postures), which work with the balance of the body. Other activities included:



- Sharing stories with good morals and cardinal values;
- Recycling materials to make art;
- Appreciation of one's heritage;
- Exploring creative movement as a preparation for drama.

We felt the good effects as we sat together to do the Morning Circle, and as we made crafts with paper mache and danced and played together.

Each of us shared songs; some were created by the teachers themselves - happy songs to welcome the day, songs reminding us of the friendship amongst us, songs to bring the attention of the students when they are distracted during classes and songs to be sung at transition of activities. There was a beautiful diversity as each of us had the opportunity to lead. We felt a very special "togetherness", as they like to say here.

Our teachers introduced to the newcomers the a'sanas which they like to do with their children, while I let them think about the benefits of those a'sanas to the general health and growth of the children. A'sanas can also be used to treat children who have difficulty concentrating or who are hyperactive.

After a'sanas and relaxation, when the mind and body are very calm, comes the moment to bring some beautiful ideals in the mind of the children. To give a practical example I told them the story from the wonderful book "Old Turtle", which tells us of the Oneness of things and presence of the Supreme Consciousness in everything. It simultaneously exists in the stillness of rocks and speed of the wind, high above the clouds and down in the depths of the sea. Far away in the shining stars and nearby in things we can smell, hear and feel.

This story helps to present to the child this Supreme Consciousness as their goal in life: the culmination of all our aspirations, all that we dream of and all that we seek.

Different kinds of stories are welcome at different times during the day. Stories help to stimulate fantasy and creativity. They increase worldly knowledge, awaken a desire to read and make the students feel closer to the storyteller along with so many other gains. The stories in the Morning Circle at Lotus are selected with moral values in mind because at this time the children are very receptive. We don't need to tell the whole book to the child, just what you can see they are able to grasp at that moment.

Our class included a brainstorm about sentiments associated with the cardinal values, such as "Honesty" to "Benevolent Truth" and "Togetherness" to "Universal Love". So as well as working with values through suggestion (by repeating positive affirmation during assembly time such as "I like to share") teachers are to select one sentiment to be treated

according to a specific principle of Yama or Niyama in the Daily Routine. They may create their own stories or select books about that sentiment. So it will greatly vary and will give children a broader interpretation of morality.

The pick of the program was the local dance which started with our expert dancer facing difficulties to give the first step out of shyness; culminating with all teachers coming in to contribute with some dance or song they knew from their communities (our participants were from 4 different tribes). Others tried to follow along, playing drums, clapping, singing and dancing. It enriched the program very much as we brought out our gifts with our different styles and languages, letting our motor and sensory organs dive in those melodious flows.

It was funny when we came to the Art session and the teachers found themselves in front a table full of empty containers, bottles, boxes and toilet rolls. As I explained that we were to create animals from that material using glue made of flour, old books and tape, it seemed that I could hear some non-expressed voices coming from the newcomers: “Why, this is rubbish!” But soon (after encouraging them by saying that these days this kind of activity is appreciated abroad) they dropped their hesitation and engaged in their task. They created very beautiful works. There was a pleasant silence in the class and the artists lost the notion of time, so much so that I had to start packing the things so we could have a collective meal.

Drama is somehow challenging to our teachers, as in our community most people don't spend much time playing and pretending in their childhood, instead they have a hard life helping to generate income for the family by selling. If they get the opportunity to study, the educational methods of the local schools do not explore arts and creative movement, and they rarely do drama. That is why we can't force our teachers to do drama with the students without preparing them on expressing themselves through creative movement. So Didi Vinamrata started by asking them to walk in different ways and the teachers started to move as someone who is very happy; light as a feather; tall and strong; etc. Talents came out and everyone was delighted.

To close the training I continued with the book “Old Turtle” which talks about the coming of human beings in this world as a message of love from God to the Earth and a prayer from the Earth back to God. But by misusing their powers human beings started to destroy the earth and each other, as they forgot who they were. They argued about who was God or where God was; until they learnt to see God in one another and in the beauty of all the Earth.



## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24: Neohumanist Teacher Training Paraguay

In the second stage of our training, we chose to offer hands-on activities that could allow the educators to experience playful and creative exercises. In our first activity, everyone dyed their fingers with colored inks and gradually materialized their own self portraits on the blank sheets of paper. Our second project gave free rein to creativity as we made rag dolls. The needles and flaps, dolls and smiles were themselves an exercise of active and creative meditation.

### V'y'a é Vidya (Happiness and Knowledge)

In Paraguay, in addition to Spanish, a great part of the population speaks the indigenous language Guarani, which is a strong mother tongue that strengthens the heritage and memory of the Guarani native people. We learned a few words such as V'y'a, which means happiness, a sound that immediately reminded us of Vidya – knowledge in Sanskrit. We thought then that for Neohumanist Education, Vidya is not separated from V'y'a because, being guided by universal love, we get to know the world while we are overwhelmed with bliss! And so we ended our journey in a day of a lot of exchange in the Neohumanist Toledo Cañada School, with colorful fingers and full of inspiration for new steps.



*The Neohumanist Toledo Cañada School is coordinated by Didi Ananda Somadhara. The school started in 1993. We have 246 children from 4 to 16 years old, kindergarten to grade 9.*



## At New School in Mexico

Including the principal of a secondary school in Puebla, Mexico, a total of 15 people received one day training in Neohumanist Education. Didi Ananda Mamata, who had just arrived from Guatemala conducted the training.

Nora, the principal of the secondary school on which premises the training was held, is planning to extend their school to include 2 or 3 classes for pre-school and kindergarten aged children. The new classes will be under the supervision of Didi Ananda Shanta, to make it a truly NHE school, based on ethical and universal spiritual values. The school will provide purely vegetarian food, etc., also for their elder students.

The training, with many practical activities, was an introduction of the specialty of our education system. After an introductory game and two NHE songs, the participants learned the basics of Neohumanist philosophy and a bit about the Kos'as and how to implement a holistic education by taking care of all the 5 layers of the mind. There were discussions about discipline, ecology, service and how to increase the love for all in the students as well as in the teachers. They



learned 19 short NHE songs with gestures, listened to some Yama and Niyama stories and had fun doing Yoga for Kids. They received some techniques and visualizations for meditation, learned how to do morning circle and enjoyed the playful methods of teaching academic subjects.

Ambika prepared a delicious lunch and snacks for everybody, Dada Anuvratananda and Dada Krpasundarananda helped Didi Ananda Shanta to organize the training and Didi Ananda Mamata shared her experiences working in many Neohumanist schools around the world.

# Teacher Training at Iceland School

## Neohumanism through Art

**By Didi Ananda Kaostuba**

During our Staff Training day I organized healthy competition among all of our staff. The subject was to express Neohumanism through Art, Music, Dance, and Storytelling. It was very nice to see

how everyone expressed Neohumanism in their own way. Jurtina expressed Neohumanism through her art work pictured here. The printable word-clouds are the words that she associate with neo-humanism, pictured here in the form of a tree and a flower.



# Fun with Japa and Kiirtan

## Introducing Chanting to Teachers and Young Children

By MahaJyoti Glassman

Chanting is the rhythmic speaking or singing of words or sounds. Chanting a mantra, sacred text, name of God, or other words is a commonly used ancient practice.

Throughout history many communities have considered chanting to be a tool for spiritual development. There are diverse examples of chanting around the world African, Gregorian, Vedic, Hebrew, the Qur'an, Baha'i, Buddhist chants, Roman Catholic chanting of psalms and prayers, yogic chanting, to mention a few. Various Hindus and Buddhists chant Om. Followers of Islam chant the 99 names of Allah, "the beautiful names". Around the seventh century Christians developed the "Jesus Prayer" or "Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me." Native Americans observe chanting in preparation for activities such as healing, hunting, battles, controlling weather, initiation rites and funerals.

In today's global society chants are used in a variety of settings, such as sports events, protesters championing a cause, auctioneers driving the price, kids jumping rope, and musical concerts. Chanting creates a feeling of passion and a collective connection of purpose.

There are two basic types of chanting. Japa is personal chanting where one chants alone. Chanting in a group with others is called kiirtan. Kiirtan is usually accompanied by musical instruments, clapping, and other movements or gestures.

### What is mantra?

Mantra is the transformation of breath into sound. This sound may be a single syllable or group of words. Clinical studies indicate that rhythmic breathing and repetition redirects negative thinking and brings a more positive focus. The actual word "mantra" means "that which liberates the mind". Chanting mantra transforms the mind from the mundane to dimensions beyond the physical.

*Chant is a bridge between the inner life and the outer expression,  
Between the solitary practice and the shared beauty and fellowship.  
When we chant we are using the whole body as the instrument  
With which to feel the meaning of the sacred phrase.  
~ Rabbi Shefa Gold*

The science of mantra is based on sound as a form of energy that has a definite predictable effect on the body-mind. Mantras have the ability to alter defective patterns of the mind as well as the actual brain chemistry. The power of the mantra is in the energetic vibration of its sound(s).

Mantra may be chanted internally or externally. It is a formula for controlling and directing the mind in a more positive way. Science acknowledges that emotions, feelings, and beliefs are vibratory in nature. By engaging in a mantra practice, spiritual aspirants choose the thoughts that define who we are, what we want to feel and believe. We make that commitment to select and redirect the thoughts that occupy the brain.

*And all that we are  
Is the result of  
What we have thought.  
~ Buddha*

### How and why does it affect us?

Chants, songs, and mantra can provide technical support by directing our thought patterns towards a specific goal. In yoga this goal is becoming one with the Supreme or maximizing one's fullest potential. Through this practice we are choosing the positive power that certain syllables or sounds evoke. The effect of the sounds corresponds with the degree to which the practitioner feels or understands the meaning of the sounds. Although clinical studies show us that some benefit can be derived whether the meaning is understood or not.

Many mantras are derived from Sanskrit. The Sanskrit alphabet is based on the inner sounds emanating from within the body, specifically from the 50 glands clustered around the cakras. Thousands of years ago advanced meditators attuned their minds to these inner sounds and each sound became represented by one Sanskrit letter. There are 50 glands, 50 sounds, and subsequently 50 letters in the Sanskrit alphabet. The careful combination of Sanskrit letters can vibrate these glands, the body, and the mind in a specific manner, creating a powerful elevating effect.

*If you want the truth, I'll tell you the truth,  
Listen to the secret sound which is inside you.  
The One no one talks of ...speaks the secret sounds to  
Himself  
And He is the One who has made it all. –  
Kabir song*

Chanting requires slow deep breathing. Consequently many of the benefits of prāṇāyāma, the science of breath, are also applicable to chanting as both of these practices have the shared benefit of relaxing the sympathetic nervous system.

Chanting is a method for regaining and maintaining peace during stressful times. When we are feeling stressed, 5-10 minutes of focused chanting (especially external) can clear away the negative thoughts that obstruct our connection to Inner Harmony. When lying



down to sleep, internal silent mantra repetition can calm the thoughts, giving the body permission to relax more completely. Scientific studies indicate that repetition of certain sounds has a calming effect. When sad or frustrated, it can uplift the emotions and refocus the attention towards positivity.

When the mind is calm and clear, we make the best decisions. Our mental equipoise influences others' feelings of peace and harmony. Our positive kind words and actions impact not only our individual potentiality but others around us as well. This is how we make the world a better place.

*If one does kiirtan from the bottom of one's heart, with full bhava (devotion) and prem (love) even the trees, birds, and animals will respond. They will be deeply influenced. Such is the power of kiirtan.*  
*It brings the devotee face to face with God.*  
*~A Spiritual Aspirant from India*

## Chanting Techniques

With the young child, chanting may be with words and/or sounds that have meaning or no meaning, simply because they like to play and explore everything, including sound. They may engage their mouth, hands, feet, and body. They can stand, sit, dance, or jump when repeating.

The following are a few fun chanting experiences that can be shared with children:

The vowels: Ahhhhh. AAAAA. EEEEE. IIIIII. OOOOO. UUUUU. ~ Great for literacy learning as well!  
Consonants: MMMMM. SSSSSS.  
Om.  
Śhantiḥ. (Peace) ~ Other words from various languages can also be included, i.e., “shalom” from Hebrew. This can be extended to other multi-ethnic words for “hello” and “thank you”.  
Om shantiḥ.  
Om Jyoti. (Light)  
Baba Nam Kevalam. (Love is all there is)\*  
Love is above me. Love is below me. Love is all around.

When singing kiirtan together, children love moving their hands: clapping, engaging mudras such as Jnani or Namaskar mudra, making hand/arm movements over the head, behind the back, holding hands, clapping partner's hands, clapping body parts, and so forth. And don't forget those feet: stomping, marching, twirling .... dancing can also be added.

They may chant or sing together or do a “copy cat” call response. There are five levels of chanting vocalization: 1) singing loudly, 2) softly, 3) a whisper, 4) only the lips moving (no sound), 5) inside (completely internal).

Chanting can be practiced with young children while sitting or standing, prior to meditation, during meditation

or during śavāsana (yoga deep relaxation pose). The “Continuous Om” or “Ocean Om” can be practiced sometimes up to a minute or more with older children. This is a practice of continuously chanting with every individual chanting naturally following one's own breath pattern ~ not in unison. Usually a mantra (or positive affirmation), this can be repeated at least 5 times (the children can choose how many times) followed by a few minutes of stillness, taking the cue from the students (restlessness) as to when to end. A drum may be played, a bell chimed, a singing bowl engaged, or other instrumentation if desired.

*Close your eyes.*  
*Fall in love,*  
*Stay there.*  
*~ Rumi*

Chanting may be practiced at any time during the day. One may break out into a chant at any moment. It is particularly effective when a child (or teacher) is experiencing sadness, frustration, burnout, to change the group flow, when happy, or for absolutely no reason at all!

When singing and dancing a chant such as Baba Nam Kevalam, the chanting melodies may range from a simple monotone or one tone to a few notes to a highly complex melody. With young children chanting can even be blended within a familiar nursery rhyme such as ‘London Bridge is Falling Down’.

\*Baba nam kevalam” is a mantra which means “That which is nearest and dearest to my heart is Everywhere” or “Love is all there is”. Children are encouraged to feel the warmth of Love in their hearts, the Love of all Living Beings, the Love from the sun and all those who participate in this Creating. Singing this mantra of love and connection accelerates the speed of one's momentum towards achieving that Supreme State of Being within. The mental clarity that comes from chanting can help spiritual aspirants find solutions to problems and can provide relief from physical and psychic ailments.

*One should be as humble as the grass*  
*And as tolerant as the trees,*  
*One should give respect to those whom no one respects,*  
*And always do kiirtan....*  
*~Anandamurti*

May your Inner Light shine ever brighter by chanting Baba Nam Kevalam! Now let the kiirtan begin!

# Including All Families

By Didi Ananda Devapriya

Families play a central role in the life of children - indeed a child's identity is first formed in relationship to her family. To develop a healthy positive sense of self, children need to have their family experiences affirmed when they start to venture out of that safe nest and experience the larger society. Children are very sensitive to noticing differences between themselves and expected norms and feeling different can lead to a feeling of isolation and that something is wrong with them if not handled consciously with care.

## Thematic projects on families a pro-diversity opportunity

Many teachers frequently use family as a thematic project during the course of the year. Such projects provide a wonderful opportunity to apply a pro-diversity approach that address the many different experiences of children and supports each child.

## The wide variety of family structures

The modern world has had an undeniable impact on the structure of families around the world. While most educational materials and content still reflect a traditional concept of families with a mother, father, brothers and sisters, the reality is that the children that come to our kindergartens are living in a wide variety of home situations: single parenting, parents in the midst of a divorce, with adoptive parents, in maternal assistance programs, living with grandparents while parents are working abroad, or with two mothers or two fathers in same-sex households. Some have brothers and sisters, many are only children. Some have half-brothers and sisters and live altogether, while some are living in other places, even other countries. Some families have parents with different nationalities or ethnicities. Some families live together with uncles, aunts, cousins and grandparents. There is no one single "normal" family, rather it is important to recognize that these families are normal for the children growing up in them, unless and until they receive direct or indirect messages that tell them that there is something "not okay" about it.

## Encouraging inclusive attitudes

So how can we effectively support all of these children, each with a unique family experience? It is natural that children first come to kindergarten assuming that their family is what all families are like. Soon they are exposed to more information and friends and they become sensitive to ideas about what is "normal". Children want to fit in as they begin forming social relationships outside of the family. Differences can make them feel uncomfortable or insecure about their place in the wider group, but when reassured by messages that difference are positive and interesting such discomfort easily dissipates. Environments in which all children are

encouraged to develop accepting, inclusive attitudes create more safety for everyone.

## Common assumptions can unintentionally exclude

Though good, conscientious teachers would never intentionally make a child feel bad about his or her family, there are many messages that contain common assumptions that can unintentionally exclude children that don't fit the stereotype. For example, a child being raised by their grandmother may feel sad, confused or left out when a teacher asks all of the children to make a painting for their mother as he has never met his mother. Taking care with the language we use when discussing families is of particular importance. In the commonplace example above, there is an implicit assumption that all of the children have mothers, which can inadvertently transmit a message that something is wrong with you are not living with a mother like "everyone else" • .

## Defining Family - those who we love

Children's definition of family is usually based pragmatically on those who they love and who love you and take care of you. This understanding is one that is good to encourage as it easily leaves scope to include many different family configurations.

## Using language that invites many individualized responses

So consider instead of asking the children to paint something for their mothers (or fathers, or grandparents, or sister, etc) using a more "open-ended" • language such as "Who would you like to bring this home to?" • or "Let's paint something for our families". It requires some effort on our part to become aware of situations where we automatically revert to language based on assumptions of only one "normal" family structure but once we are deeply convinced of the importance of all children feeling validated in school, with a small amount of effort, it soon becomes second nature to use more inclusive language.

## Giving scope for differences

Instead having a theme about "brothers and sisters" • when there may be children who are only children - we can encourage children to talk about "who else is part of my family?" • to give scope for each child to include those he or she feels close to - many may talk about brothers and sisters, but those that don't have brothers and sisters can still participate in the discussion by talking about their grandparents, a beloved nanny, cousins or even family pets.

Rather than discouraging such responses by saying "yes, but they aren't really your family" - it is healthy to allow children to define their families according to the idea that your "real family" is made of those people that you love



and that love you. When discussing families and differences arise naturally, as one child talks about sharing a room with brothers and another one with a grandparent, such situations provide important opportunities for teachers to notice and appreciate the differences, positively affirming how each of our families is unique and special.

Here is an example of a thematic project on Family. You will notice that many of the contents refer simply to family rather than “mothers and fathers” “sisters and brothers” etc. This is intentional, in order to provide scope for children to contribute with details from their own families. So in place of having discussions or activities centered around “my mother and father” we can do the exact same activity about “who takes care of me in my family?” or in place of sisters and brothers “who is smaller than me in my family and who is bigger than me?” When some children talk about their sisters and brothers, this can be affirmed - but children may also come up with other creative answers even if they do not have sisters and brothers.

#### **List of ideas for supporting the diversity of families in the classroom**

Besides creating a thematic project, other specific ways of continuing to provide inclusive support for different types of families is to take use techniques such as:

#### **Persona dolls**

The biographies of persona dolls can include different family structures which are introduced in a matter-of-fact way as different details from the child’s home life are discussed - in both happy and difficult situations.

#### **Collages**

Inviting children to make a family collage together with their family and each week having a different child’s family appreciated - encouraging the families to share pictures, write down songs or poems they like to use together, what is special about our family. It is a process of identity affirmation for both the child and family and makes each child’s reality visible to the kindergarten community.

#### **Partnering with families**

Invite families to participate in a theme about “lullabies” for example or “family traditions” and to come to the classroom to share these with the other children.

#### **Real life stories**

To share our own stories about real friends and families and their uniqueness in a way that demonstrates acceptance and inclusiveness through our narration.

#### **Didactic materials**

Buy or make your own materials that include a variety of abilities, skin colors, sizes and ages so that children can reflect their own realities in play.

## **Yama and Niyama Fairies Fly into the Hearts of Children at Sol Nascente, Brazil** (as told to Kamala Alister by Soma Brys)

This little school at the Ananda Kiirtana Master Unit in Brazil found a touching way to share Yama and Niyama with the children. Each month they had a special event when a new fairy was introduced, such as Brahmacharya or Iishvara Pranidhana fairies. Staff wrote special stories for each one that the teacher presented with the dolls. The children each got to take the fairy doll home for one night, with a special letter to the parents telling them the meaning of the doll.

The photo pictures the Brahmacharya fairy with dolls for the Guardian of the Forest of Light and the little boy name Atma.





# Identity and Masks

at Casa Ilori, Costa Rica  
By the ILORI World Team

## Circle of Love

In Casa ILORI, the space where children can explore who they are and how they relate to each other and their environment, is called “Circle of Love”. Using tools such as theater, dance, music, yoga, arts and games, this space fosters self-reflection and self-esteem. In Circle of Love, we encourage children to express creatively, with their bodies, words and emotions. Our approach is holistic, as we work towards the integration of body, mind and soul.

## Identity

Therefore, the topic of building your own identity and personality is at the core of this space and to develop it, we use basic, everyday concepts to provide the children with tools and knowledge to help them in this ongoing process.

Some of the principles used to approach the topic of identity are:

- Identity as a relationship with oneself. One recognizes oneself as a unique being, with one’s own history and personality.
- Our individual identity is built through relationships, such as with family, friends, teachers, peers, etc.
- We grow up in a community, and therefore the topic of communal identity is another aspect in the process of identity building.
- We live in an environment which has influence on us, as we have influence on it.



## Identity and Masks

The word mask in Greek means person; our face and our personality are part of our identity, of our singularity. We use masks as a concrete element to explore the topic of identity. The whole process is developed through play, and using Theatre Pedagogy that encourages dramatic play and bodywork, which are essential tools in the learning process. We create a dialogue using body, words and imagination, to strengthen our sense of being through art and games. When constructing our personal identities, it’s important to know where we come from, to know about our cultural heritage and our ancestral roots. This enhances our self-knowledge and generates a feeling of respect and gratitude toward our ancestors.

*In Costa Rica several indigenous communities use masks to represent themselves and others. The indigenous communities of Boruca y Térraba from the southern part of Costa Rica maintain traditions such as the game of The Bull and the Devils, using beautiful, colorful, traditional masks. The Devils represent the indigenous people, who are chased by the Bulls, which represent the Spanish conquistadors. In the end, the Devils manage to defeat the Bulls who have chased them and taunted them the whole game.*





## Masks in the Circle of Love

Creating, decorating and using masks in the Circle of Love created a space to meditate on identity, a difficult topic for children as it requires introspection.

They played the ancestral game of The Bull and The Devils with enthusiasm and joy. Then they explored the relationship between the game and the indigenous cultures and the details of the masks by seeing a movie. Over several classes, each child built their own masks, after reflecting on their own sense of identity.

## MASKS

Children participating in the Circle of Love created colorful masks to represent their identities. The method of creating the mask was adapted to their ages and capabilities:

### What we expected to achieve

While the children create a mask from their own faces, we encourage them to express their creativity, and to analyze their own identity from an outside perspective.

Throughout this process, the children may not always be aware of this, however looking at the way they draw, paint and decorate the masks, it's clear they are expressing how they see themselves, how they identify themselves and how they want to be seen. Likewise, the way they treat the mask - some with the utmost care, others allowing it to fall or hitting it- reflects on how they feel about themselves. Giving them complete freedom when decorating the mask allows them to express, in an abstract way, what they perceive or what they want others to perceive. During the last stage of the process each child is encouraged to create a story about their mask, and tell it to the rest of the class. In this way the child can elucidate on each detail of their mask, as well as the concepts and values that they learned during the process. In a metaphorical way, through the character of the mask, they could express what they feel, their life experience, and what they wish they could be or do in life. For most of the children this was natural, they created their own symbolism and metaphors to express their identity.

### Some thoughts

- Encourages self-reflection and self-knowledge and inspires one to become introverted
- Strengthening the children's sense of identity contributes to better relationships with families, peers and communities.
- Strengthening the communal fosters hope and encourages actions that could better the community.
- The process inspires the children to respect each other's singularity, and encourages diversity and dialog between cultures.
- The process encourages a respectful approach and appreciation towards indigenous people, and allows children to get to know their traditions.

### What we learned

Children learned to express their identity through a fun, free process. Amanda, the facilitator of Circle of Love, considers that the activity was very fruitful, because the children got to express themselves and their way of seeing things. Amanda



### 2- dimensional masks for children from kindergarten to 3rd grade

Materials: bond paper, construction paper, color pencils, scissors, glitter, colorful fabric scraps, wood craft sticks

- Learn with the children how to play the Bull and The Devils.
- After the game, show them the video of the Boruca culture (can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8RvDwI9MpM> )
- Show images of the indigenous masks, and talk together about how they're made and the materials used.
- The children draw and color their own masks, interpreting the Boruca masks they previously saw and mixing it with their own preferences.
- Cut the masks and paste them on the craft sticks
- Decorate the masks with the glitter and fabrics, according to each child's preference.

### 3-dimensional plaster masks for children from 4th to 6th grade

Materials: Plaster, plaster gauze, vaseline, acrylic paint, fine sandpaper, glitter, beads, elastic, and other decorative elements.

- Apply vaseline to the kids' faces
- Wet the gauze in water and immediately apply on the child's face. Kids can help applying the gauze to one another.
- Allow the gauze to dry for about 20 minutes on the face and then carefully release from the edges to the center. Children can help removing the mask from one another.
- Add water to the plaster until a fine texture is achieved. Apply the plaster mixture to the mask and wait for it to dry.
- Sand down the mask.
- Apply a second coat of plaster, let dry and sand again.
- Give the children time to visualize their mask. How do they want to paint it? What will it look like? Use guiding questions such as: Who am I? How to others see me? How to I want others to see me?
- Instruct children to create a story using the mask (or the character or story that it represents) and the relationship with themselves.
- Each child will decorate the mask according to their visualization. At this part they're completely free to make their vision into reality. Provide as much materials as possible to encourage creativity.
- Add the elastic to the mask for wearing and further decorate adding glitter, feathers, ears, horns, beads, etc.



comments that the stories that the children wrote for their masks referred to themselves and their own life experiences, but they used metaphors. For example, a child said “it’s not me, it’s the story of a Transformer who felt sad”. “It’s an abstraction, it’s symbolic, so it’s nice how they talk about themselves through drawing, art, painting, singing, writing a story”. To Amanda, the stories that the children wrote were particularly revealing, because it was possible to see what was on their minds while making the mask.



The process wasn’t free from obstacles. The plaster masks allowed one to create an almost perfect mold of the child’s own face; however they are also very delicate, so the constant manipulation while decorating caused some of them to crumble. Besides, making the mold implied putting on a thick layer of Vaseline on their faces, to allow the mask to come off easily. Some of the children resisted to put on the Vaseline, mostly because they felt embarrassed to do so in front of their classmates or because they didn’t like the feeling of the Vaseline. Further into the creative process, the children



who worked faster and were further ahead felt bored because they had to wait for the others to catch up. However, the children themselves solved this by offering to help others, especially those who had a difficulty with a certain step.

To those who want to do a similar workshop, Amanda recommends dedicating at least two hours a week to this type of activity, in order to be able to include a moment to think back on what we have learned at the end of each session. Other recommendations include working in small groups of no more than 10 children, so the process can be further tailored to their individual needs. Also it’s a good idea to assign roles to the children, so those who work faster or have an easier time with the tasks can direct other children in some parts of the process and thus help each other. The whole experience of creating the mask, gave the children the opportunity to talk about themselves without feeling over-exposed or necessarily having to say “I feel” or “I am”, the game allows them to talk more freely about themselves. Another positive aspect of this activity is that the masks may be used in a future activity or game.

### Brayan’s story

Brayan is a 6th grader who, during previous sessions of Circle of Love, hadn’t been willing to work on emotional topics such as self-esteem. During the process of making his mask, he participated very well, creating a very strong, hard mask. However, when it came to telling the story behind the mask, he only described it physically and didn’t make a symbolic connection between himself and the mask. Towards the end of the process, when asked about his mask Brayan responded “here it is!”, and threw it on the ground. It seemed like Brayan wasn’t being careful with his mask, however he then said “no, the thing is, that my mask won’t break, I can throw it like that. I made it so it was very strong, it’s like me. I’m very hard, I can get hit and it doesn’t hurt, I fall and it doesn’t hurt”. Brayan had made a symbolic connection between the masks and his own identity, and he himself came to that conclusion.

*“My mask is yellow and black and it has a bow that’s white because I like lions because of their color. I made the mask with white plaster and then I sanded it. I painted it with the colors black and yellow and lines. I am Brayan, I am skin-colored and I have black hair and I have ears that are skin-colored and I am blond. I have a heart inside my body, and on the inside I have veins, I have blood, I have bones. “*



*For More Information on Ilori, please visit <http://www.biendemujer.org/en.html>*



# New School

## Path of Joy School

### Kasoa, Ghana

By Didi Vinamrata'

After many years our dream is finally becoming true. We have completed the construction of the first classroom, two offices, a bathroom, a septic tank and a solid foundation that will be able to support a four store building in the future. We started library activities on 31st January with the participation of more than 60 local children.

Thanks to the kind collaboration of Mohamukta, Rutger Tamminga and other sincere supporters, our "Path of Joy" school is getting ready to open its doors to the community. We have already selected part of the school staff and we are currently taking admissions. We are also doing regular activities during the week with children in order to let people know what Neohumanist Education principles are about. At the same time, construction work is still going on. Our goal is that in the future, this building will be able to provide quality education for children and training in Neohumanist Education to teachers.

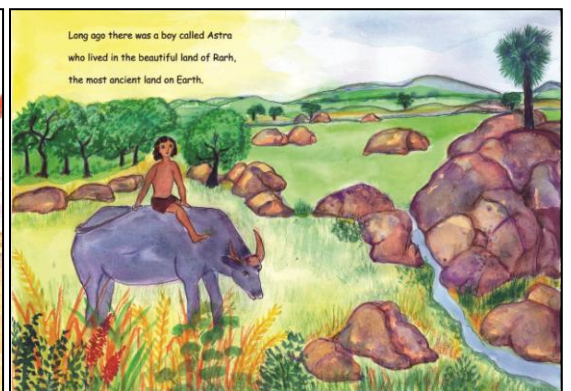
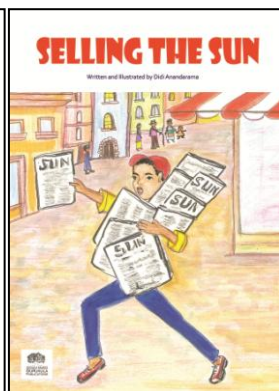
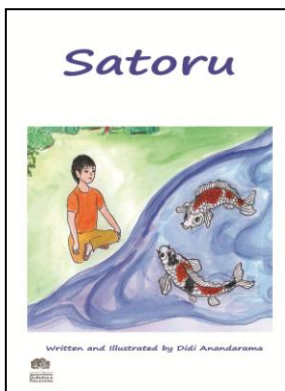
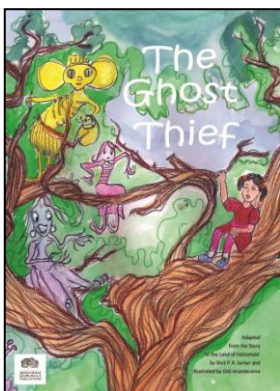
It is very sad to see that many times enormous talent and potential doesn't get the opportunity to be fully developed and utilized. Many parents are not able to provide education for their children and sometimes even if they are, the education which is offered does not awaken the thirst for expanding their minds and knowledge. Instead, it instills in them fear of punishment or humiliation. Our objective is to provide every child with the opportunity to develop themselves in such an environment that inspires them to become assets in their communities. To empower future active members of the community is our biggest concern.

If you are inspired to help us to continue developing this project please contact me at [didivinamrata@gmail.com](mailto:didivinamrata@gmail.com). Any contribution will make a big difference. Much work is still waiting for us; you can help us to make our children's future even brighter.



## Children for a Better World - E-books for Sale

These children's e-books are from the series that has been prepared for the Indonesian project "*Children for a Better World*". They are stories for parents or teachers to read or tell to children in preschool. The stories carry a moral value and are simple with full page illustrations. You can purchase nine stories for \$30US. Available for download at: <http://www.anandamarga.org/store/ebooks/>. Contact [amgkpublications@gurukul.edu](mailto:amgkpublications@gurukul.edu) for more information.





# Nong-Bzanga Junior High School

## Bissiri, Burkina Faso

By Dada Padmeshananda

### Starting a Secondary School in Bissiri

The Nong-Bzanga Junior High School located on the Ananda Viirat'a Master Unit, in Bissiri, Burkina Faso, opened in 2015. Nong-Bzanga, in local language (Mooré), means "Love for all". The school has three grades, 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>, 135 students, 7 teachers and 3 administrators.

Before we started Nong-Bzanga, there was a public primary school in the village, but there had been no accessibility to secondary education in the vicinity. Many children used to discontinue education after primary. There was a deeply felt need for secondary education and repeated requests came from the local community for the same. We were able to construct four classrooms in 2013 with AMURT Italy's aid. We then started this junior high school.

We subsidize the school fees, uniforms, school books and noon meals, and give medical support to the students whenever necessary. A program of sponsorship for children in dire need has been arranged. It is a challenge to run a secondary school in such a remote area, yet the impact is huge and we want to do more – to double the capacity of the junior high school and then extend this program to senior high school.



### Objectives:

A long term vision of this school is to offer the students, in addition to the general Burkinabe curriculum, an education which emphasizes the learning of human cardinal and environmental values through:

- sensitization programs in the spheres of hygiene, family planning, environment, morality, etc.
- self-development programs through drawings, yoga, sports, music, theatre, dance, etc.
- social and eco-friendly activities such as tree nursery and reforestation programs and cleaning of the village surroundings

### Recent good news:

#### Four classrooms under construction

Thanks to AMURT Italy, we found a partner ready to donate funds for building 4 new classrooms in order to double all the classes we have (so to have 2 classes for each grade of the junior high school) and give shelter to the growing number of students.

#### Sport ground under construction

In order to learn volley ball, hand ball and jumping, which will be items on the final exams at the completion of Junior High School,





we are now (thanks to AMURT Italy) in the process of making a sport ground. We will then become one of the very rare schools in the region to have a sport ground. The interesting thing about it is that the students did the estimate of this project (with partnership of the Math teacher!) and now help the mason as he makes it happen. Another interesting thing is that it is quite alternative, local and economic: we are going to mix the local lateritic soil with 4% of cement to make the ground; in French we call this system "fondation en grave".



## Neohumanist Education

As the very basic priorities of the school are now met (buildings, furniture, teachers, etc.), we endeavor to have one Neohumanist "touch" per week since February, so far here are the programs we have implemented:

- Drawing: team drawing with free themes. It was very touching, as many had never had the chance to draw before.
- 2 sensitizations about hygiene and ecology.
- Last week we had a music session; the English teacher had the children learn and understand the song "I love this tiny green island." Later I came to explain about the spirit of the song, and we all sang along with the guitar.
- I am now working on wise quotes taken from diverse sources which we will write on calabashes (local gourds, used as a big plates when dried and polished) and display them at the school. We shall then talk about their meaning with the students. We are making the entrance of the school more welcoming with our logo and newly written "golden rules"
- Work has started on beautifying the place with more trees, bougainvillea, etc.
- Last but not the least, we have started our school's tree nursery program for the learning of love and care of the trees and implementing reforestation in the surroundings, since this whole country is badly suffering from desertification.



## Tree Nursery Program

Along with Rasa, the local in charge, we introduced a tree nursery program in the school, since Burkina Faso is badly suffering from desertification. The idea was to first sensitize in depth (several sessions will be included) the children about the environment, climate change and the need of caring for our mother earth so future generations may enjoy air, water and forests as we do. Note that everywhere, but even more in our remote area where people lack common information, proper communication is the key for the success of any program.

At the end of the first morning session we asked who wished to volunteer to be part of our school's "green team" and learn to nurse, plant and care for trees. Most of them happily volunteered, and the work has already started.

Rasa learnt about agro-ecology from, among others, a great lover of trees, Mr Etienne, who accepted to come to our school and talk before the whole assembly. He will come regularly for follow-ups and teachings.

We will continue with these types of programs, the spirit being to work together for all-round (personal and collective) development. We wish that in the future children shall also get the opportunity to decide for themselves and organize different types of programs.

During the first session of sensitization (4 hours participative talk)

the children were gathered in and out of the classroom, yet very enthusiastic in spite of extreme heat and lack of space. Finally we distributed some simple vegetarian meal. It was such a nice convivial atmosphere.





# Centru Tbexbix

## 10th Anniversary of Neohumanist Education in Malta

By Fabiana Silveira

Looking back at the past 10 years of work, we remember an array of ideas, projects, dreams and realizations which have made Centru Tbexbix what it is today – a project marked by the dedication, passion and hard work of a few visionaries together with volunteers from all over Europe and neighbouring countries, till today counting more than 100, and increasing by about 10 every year.

A good number of education programmes are now firmly established and popular among the Cottonera community, among them Sunrise English Club, Arts & Crafts, Yoga and Sports, as well as Yoga and Art programmes for the elderly which started one year ago.



An all round favourite programme which we chose to write about today, is the Yoga Shoots programme, wherein schools from all over the island are visiting Centru Tbexbix to get a taste of NHE.

Around 30 children from a private or public school attend a morning programme of 3 hours. The children are divided into three groups, and alternate between an hour of yoga for kids, an hour of creative expression and an hour of cooperative games.

During the yoga activity the children are invited to join in a fantasy world where all kinds of animals come across through Asanas. The sessions are planned according to different ages and learning needs. An involvement with a lot of colours, imagination and characters are followed by a happy self-massage and a relaxing story.

At the same time, the other two groups are doing Creativity and Cooperative Games sessions. During Creativity different subjects are presented, mainly related to current cultural fest or just having fun with paper, colour and other media. For this activity

there is always a prototype as a sample but a wide window is left for different perceptions and creative possibilities. All the children are happy to take their masterpieces to their school to exhibit or show to their parents.

Cooperation in games is emphasized. In musical chairs all children are sitting in the end, team treasure hunts and producing sculptures make sure that everyone plays, everyone takes care of each other and has fun. Volunteers and children participate in the action and joy of play and nobody is the loser. Whenever possible, music is included in the games allowing children to express themselves through movement, without limits.

A fourth activity happens only when the age is above 8 years. Volunteers of different nationalities present different aspects of their countries' curiosities, followed by a song and an interactive quiz.

To consolidate the NHE experience, during short breaks between sessions, the children are given healthy snacks based on fruits and vegetables – carrot sticks, cucumber slices, diced apples, etc. It is not the first time that, after eyeing the snacks with a frown, on hearing the repetition of “yummy crunchy orange carrot sticks” and “apple slices for me, apple slices for who?” the trays are emptied in no time.





The success of this program can be measured by the increase in bookings from new schools as well as repeat bookings. This is because, every time, without exception, the children end the programme full of joy and positive energy. Till today we calculate that more than 1,500 children have benefitted from the programme.

Teachers are invited to fill in a feedback form, and below are some of their comments:

*"I have been coming here for some years now and it is always a very enjoyable outing for the kids, apart from being educational and fun. Keep up the good work"*

*"Activities were adapted according to our children's age. Supervisors were all prepared, nice and very patient. Children enjoyed fruit and vegetable snacks (more than usual!) Relaxed and friendly atmosphere throughout! Truly an enjoyable experience for all the children."*

*"It is a lovely and fun-filled programme that all the children enjoyed. They learned how to share and work in teams, how to have fun together and to eat healthy food. Keep it up. Lovely place."*

*"A wonderful fun experience for children. Happy people and teachers welcoming them and teaching them things in a loving way. Keep it up. Looking forward to coming next year with my next class."*

*"Very good yoga session, adapted to children's level and explained the different poses very well. The kids just loved it! Keep up the good work! Interesting session about Sweden. There was a very holistic interaction between kids and teachers, very interesting."*

In spite of being a small project, with no possibility to house a proper school, Centru Tbexbix has found a way to utilise its space and human resources to spread Neohumanist Education methods and ideals to hundreds of children and their teachers around Malta. <http://www.tbexbix.org/eng/home.htm>



## 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Kithandur School India

Ananda Marga School at Kithandur was started in the year 1991 in a very economically backward village, providing English based teachings. Almost 50% of the children are sponsored fully with books, clothes and other basic things by individual sponsors, companies, organizations, and partly by the India government.

During this academic year 2015-2016, an annual school day function was organized to celebrate its 25th year with a grand cultural evening with various songs, dance drama, rhyming dance and songs.

This school is greatly indebted to its principal, Ac. Cinmayananda Avt. who has been posted here since its inception. He is responsible for the successful Medical Camp as well as other relief activities and has organized seminars and classes for all-round development.



**CONTINUED ON PAGE 41**





# The River School Turns 21!

**Maleny, Australia**  
**By Kamala Alister**

The Ananda Marga River School in Maleny, Australia is an early childhood and primary school with close to 200 students. In 2015, we celebrated our 21st year in style! It was a wonderful year with tremendous expression of art and creativity, community involvement and increasing recognition of the River School and Neohumanist Education throughout the Australian education community.

## Some highlights of the 21st Year Celebrations include:

- The school has a new, massive mosaic that took all year to create. First the children submitted designs expressing their feelings about the school and NHE. These pictures were integrated by a well-known mosaic artist into a whole drawing. Panel by panel the children constructed the mosaic in the art room and it was finally installed in time for our huge 21st Anniversary Reunion. *(see mosaic back cover of this issue).*
- We had our first school Reunion! This took all year to plan as we wanted to invite all our past students, families and teachers. We held the evening in November and had a wonderful time! There was a welcome by Dada Shuddhacittananda, a school tour (our oldest families were amazed to see how the school had grown), performances by past and present students, a presentation of the school history as a fairy tale with slides, a delicious Indian Feast and the unveiling of the mosaic. When we gathered for a group photo, I started to sing our old River School morning circle songs. Everybody joined and we sang and sang! Finally we walked, singing, to the fire circle, where there was a ceremonial burning of the “wishing tree” parents and students had created and worked on for months. And we kept singing around the fire! The whole evening was held outside under the night sky with special decorations all around. A night to be remembered!
- We held a special day for the children to honour “Our Past, our Space and Our Land.” It was an entire day of outdoor workshops guided by Aboriginal teachers including Aboriginal dances, boys and girls business, adding our wishes to the wishing tree using hand made paper, tree planting and more. At night all the parents were invited for a Cafe Night (we hold these twice a term) with a delicious meal and special presentations by the children. It seemed to me that day the children were happy every minute.

The school also had some wonderful creative and artistic projects:

- We increased the music program so that students could study a vast range of instruments including guitar and bass, piano, marimba, bamboo flute, percussion, violin and cello, plus join choirs and small ensembles. Each Cafe Night for the parents was a special treat. The Maleny High school sees the benefits each year when nearly half of the students in the Music Excellence Program come from the River School.





- The school, under the guidance of a dedicated parent artist, initiated a River School Paper Project. During the year, the children recycled their scrap paper and each class took turns to turn it into new paper which they could use in their classrooms. It is such high quality it can be used in printers and photocopiers! Then, under the guidance of our Arts and Cultural Studies teacher, students in the Media Enrichment group made a video about the Paper Project that went on to win awards!

- The River School Pottery Project was initiated by a parent who is one of Australia's top ceramic artists. She came twice a week and sat with her potting wheel on a veranda at the centre of the school. Children were mesmerised watching her throw pots and make bowls and got a chance to try. Later students were chosen to learn the skills of decorating and glazing the lovely creations. Everything was then sold at a special exhibit to raise the money to pay for the project.

The Ananda Marga River School is developing a strong reputation as a leader in alternative education under the dynamic leadership of Principal Jenny Oakley, now in her third year and school Acharya, Didi Ananda Devanishta. They are supported by an Advisory Committee of local professionals and a Board of Directors who are members of Ananda Marga. Some of the achievements include:

- Our Early Childhood Centre is truly a child's paradise with a large outdoor covered area, outdoor play areas, a special meditation space, an "atelier" where children are free to do their own artistic explorations in many mediums, pet chickens and dogs, a huge sandpit and an inspiring Neohumanist learning program. It was a huge recognition of the staff's dedication to achieve the highest possible rating: "Exceeds Government Standards!"

- Throughout the year we had over 15 student teachers who applied to do their practical teaching at our school. They all loved it, and two are now teachers in 2016.

- In 2015, the AMRS completed a Cyclic Review which is a government process required every five years. It needed massive focus by the Principal and staff. It was so successful that we were chosen as one of only five schools in Queensland to be visited by a government committee in charge of Independent Schools. The Committee loved their visit and asked Jenny to mentor other school principals in the future.

*On our public Facebook page, you can see many of our activities and more photos, even if you are not a member of facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AMRiverSchool/>*



## **CONTINUED FROM PAGE 39: 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Kithandur School, India**

At this school day function one set of clothes was distributed to each student and each member of the teaching and non-teaching staff and prizes were given for sports events of this academic year. On this occasion also, Shrii Nagaraju from Gottahalli village, spoke about service activities throughout Kolar district. We are very grateful to all the parents and guardians who joined to make this event a grand success.

This particular area of Karnataka state is declared a drought affected area. So far we have been able to find a few generous sponsors to encourage several students through our institutions for their education. There are many opportunities to sponsor the education of hundreds of small kids but due to lack of funds, we are unable to adopt as many as kids as we would like. So we make appeal to interested philanthropists to encourage us to serve & utilize our energy to the utmost.

*For people and organizations who would like to donate, here are Bank Details:*

*Name of the account: Ananda Marga School, Kithandur*

*Bank Name: ICICI Kolar branch, IFSC code: ICIC0001852, Acct No. 035701000826.*

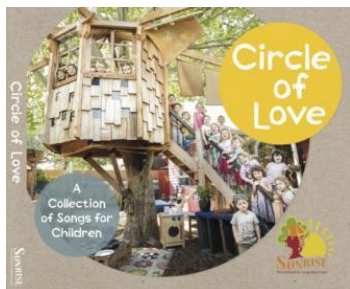
*Contact: Acarya Cinmayananda Avadhuta; email: <[amschool.kithandur@gmail.com](mailto:amschool.kithandur@gmail.com)>, mob: +91-9448310979/9591091046.*



# Beautiful New School Opens in Melbourne, Australia

The Women's Welfare Department of Suva Sector is starting another preschool and long daycare centre this May, the result of many years of hard work and dedication!

This tranquil and bright new centre was built in response to the popularity of Sunrise preschool and Neohumanist Education in the local community. It can accommodate 30 children and will be managed by Didi Ananda Nirupama.



Sunrise preschool celebrates its 22nd anniversary this year, with some second generation students now attending! It is currently managed by Didi Ananda Madhupurna. They have made a CD 'Circle of Love', a beautiful collection of songs for children. It is a result of a collaboration of

professional musician parents and the staff of Sunrise and features an artist well known in Australia.

Circle of Love CDs can be purchased via the Sunrise website <http://www.sunrisepreschool.vic.edu.au/circle-of-love-cd/>  
Cost: AU\$20 per CD. If you purchase 10 or more CDs, the cost is \$15 per CD.



## Mountain Breeze School Opens in Marshall, North Carolina, USA

In October of 2015 the Mountain Breeze School, a licensed preschool, opened in a residence in Marshall, NC, in a wonderful community of open-minded people just 20 minutes north of Asheville. It is situated next to the Ananda Girisuta Master Unit. The preschool occupies 1400 square feet of a residence in the community and is licensed for 12 children, 3-5 years of age. Hours of operation are 8:00am-5:30pm every day.



The Mountain Breeze School is directed by Rachel Maietta and has recently hired its second teacher, Jamie Moshe to work with Miriam Godoshian. Miriam laid the foundation for our Neohumanist curriculum. Jamie is a qualified early childhood education teacher and yoga instructor for young children. She is from the New York area where she taught preschool and early grades. She had also visited the Progressive School of Long Island and has been very attracted to the Neohumanist Education approach. She feels very much at home at the Mountain Breeze School and is fully utilizing the Circle of Love in her work with the children.

They have just completed their new playground and website. <http://www.mountainbreeseschool.com/>





# Community School

AMURT/NHE Lebanon

By Abir Khoder

*“I want you to be persons of the uttama category. You must always think of the goal. Always look to your ideal. By spiritual ideation you can get inspiration to adhere to your principles.” – Shrii P. R. Sarkar*

On September 19th, 2015, we started our Community School for Syrian Refugees in Upper Chouf – Mount Lebanon. Within one month, through outreaching in the remote villages in the Upper Chouf, we got more than 100 children enrolled who were living in bad situations far away from any kind of minimum standards of living. The best choice available for boys was working in a gas station and for girls, waiting for a husband at the age of 12. The few public schools in the area were full due to certain regulations from the Ministry of Education. AMURT/NHE's Community School came at the right time to save these children.



The Community School consists of two classes for teaching a Basic Literacy and Numeracy program BLN (61 children), two KG3 classes (67 children) and three sections of grade 1 (88 children). It is registered with the Lebanese Ministry of Education and High Education (MEHE) and will get a certificate at the end of the school year. Most of our 216 students will be registered next year in public schools.

Teachers are well educated and are receiving training from Didi Anandarama in Yoga for Children and Neohumanist Education, among other educational trainings. Recently, Ole Brekke gave AMURT's staff a ten-hour workshop on Theatre in Education (TIE).

The goal of our Community School is to provide psycho-social support for these traumatized Syrian children, who have suffered so much in the war, while giving them a good education. These 216 children had no chance to enter any public school this year, so AMURT has provided a clean environment to grow and perform, while protecting them from early marriage, child labor, physical and verbal abuse and many other problems they may face in society.



Concern for the dignity of these children and their rights of being equal with any Lebanese child made us work so hard and, with Grace, our students have access to the National Library in Chouf (Youth and Children Library) where they can borrow any book or story for free. Also, we had a special day prepared for our children where the principal of the Youth and Children Library, Madam May Okalii, read them a story about protecting trees. Then the children expressed their feelings through their drawings. After the visit, the principal and the workers in the library expressed surprise at the smartness, politeness and very good behavior of our students.



This photo shows the motivating certificates children received after passing a dictation competition of 50 words in Arabic and English Language. Many of these children had been out of school for two to three years.



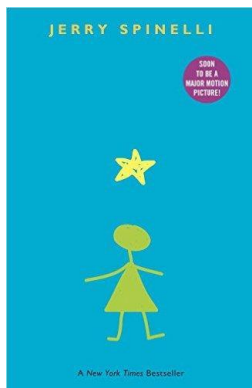
In addition to that, we recently had a performance party for our students where 40 children graduated from the BLN program. They are still in the school, either in KG3 or Grade one (the high achievers).

Also, the children prepared their mother's gifts from recycled materials. Here is a photo of their lovely exhibition.

Didi Anandarama, visits regularly and offers training. She has this to say:



*The teachers, assistants, school staff and director have developed a close family feeling with each other. The teachers have grown in their confidence working with these children who have troubled backgrounds. The children demonstrate good academic achievements, joy of learning and have improved very much in their social-emotional well being. With lots of work and hard efforts this project is quite excellent and exemplary.*



## **Book Review** **By Eric Jacobson** **Stargirl, by Jerry Spinelli, ages 10 and up**

Stargirl has made it onto the list of core literature for 7th graders at Progressive School due to its exploration of two themes key to NHE, service and meditation. Written a little over a decade ago, the book explores familiar territory in an unfamiliar way. Author Spinelli manages to delve into young adult themes in this little gem without ever getting mired in crudity.

While there are many non-conformist coming-of-age stories, few contain such a mystical central female character as Stargirl. She is hard to pin down, polarizes her peers, and vacillates between hero and goat without warning. While it is a story of the triumphant permission to accept one's eccentricity, it is also a scathing commentary on teenagers, which makes its popularity with them all the more interesting. Spinelli himself says, in an interview printed in the back of the book, "the character is intended to raise dust in the corners of credibility, to challenge our routine ways of seeing ourselves."

One of the most interesting aspects of the book is how it explores the meaning of service to others. Stargirl has raised service to an art form. I won't be the spoiler, but suffice it to say that it leaves the reader with many questions over the real value of service to both the giver and the recipient.

In my favorite passage from the book, Stargirl teaches a friend how to free his mind: "Sometimes I try to erase myself. I imagine a big pink soft soap eraser, and it's going back and forth, back and forth, and it starts down at my toes, back and forth, back and forth, and there they go – poof! – my toes are gone. And then my feet. And then my ankles. But that's the easy part. The hard part is erasing my senses – my eyes, my ears, my nose, my tongue. And last to go is my brain. My thoughts, memories, all the voices inside my head. That's the hardest part, erasing my thoughts... I'm not outside my world anymore, and I'm not really inside it either. The thing is, there's no difference between me and the universe. The boundary is gone. I am it and it is me."

To enjoy the full context of this passage, read Stargirl with your favorite teen.





## NEW YORK SECTOR



### Progressive School of Long Island News New York, USA

Progressive School publicly emphasizes values and states that academics are secondary. There is no testing preparation. Even with this, last year, Progressive School was ranked against every private and parochial school in Nassau county, 71 schools. Here are the results:

English Language Arts	Grade 7 2014/15	#1
Math	Grade 7 2014/15	#2
English Language Arts	Grade 8 2014/15	#2
Math	Grade 8 2014/15	#1

### Rap Song written by Jayden McMillan and Mitchell Krasnopolsky

Two boys did a rap as a part of a vaudeville routine celebrating early American entertainment. It was entirely their idea.

*Yeah... uh huh uh huh uh huh (2x)*  
*The name's Jonnie Mac, my grades ain't whack*

*Been here nine years and I'm still commin' back,  
I carry all my homework in my yellow backpack,  
I'm a very good student and I never ever slack*

*Yeah... uh huh uh huh uh huh (2x)*  
*When I walk through the doors, it's time for meditation*  
*Eric's music hit the air-- I feel the vibration*  
*It's like I'm taking a brief Mental Vacation*  
*After that is finished, I'm the calmest in the nation*

*When I say BABA NAM, you say KEVALAM, BABA NAM!  
KEVALAM! BABA NAM! KEVALAM!*

*Walkin' down the halls in the Progressive School*  
*Goin' down to Science, lookin' real cool*  
*Treasuring intelligence, like a shiny jewel*  
*Swimmin' in smarts, like a knowledge swimming pool*

*All of the teachers that are here are really nice*  
*Teachin' us good things, like goin' on "freerice"*  
*Show us the right thing to do like we're little mice*  
*Always givin' us the perfect advice*

*We will remember your advice for as long as we live*  
*We will cherish the lessons that to us you all give*  
*We will live our lives in the best way we can*  
*We when leave, don't worry, we will be back again.*

### Ananda Girisuta Master Unit, Asheville, USA

We have a new kitchen manager, Sydney, for the Prama Institute and Prama Wellness Center. She has just returned from over one month in Sangklaburi, Thailand, where she worked at our Baan Unrak children's home, established in 1991 by the Neohumanist Foundation. Didi Ananda Usa and a host of volunteers, including Sydney, are doing extensive spring planting on the WWD-F land and in the hydroponic green-house, that can supply the local community and service projects with abundant vegetables. Pictured is a trellis built on WWD-F land by Jivanmukta to support vines producing kiwi.



The Prama Institute (PI) is keeping its yearly schedule full and is mostly scheduled now for the year 2017. The programs there now reflect 30% PI programs that include Conscious Cooking and Silent Meditation repeated several times a year, Science and Practice of Yoga, Prout Conference in July, and Kiirtan retreat in November. We are developing a 25-acre campus for Ananda Marga Gurukula next to the MU under the banner of Neohumanist College. We will develop an education department on this campus to train Neohumanist teachers as well as participate with our global online Neohumanist College with a variety of courses as different faculties of Ananda Marga Gurukul contribute.

A Prout Strategic Planning Seminar will be held at the Prama Institute on the Ananda Girisuta MU May 6-8, 2016 Asheville, NC. Thirty people are registered for this event so far.

# GEORGETOWN SECTOR

## Argentina and Chile



The annual course of AYAM Argentina (Academia de Yoga of Ananda Marga) was completed for the students in Chile. All fifteen students graduated. Pramitii and Raul took sincere initiative to invite us for the course. The students are enthusiastic to bring what they have learned to the public. They are already offering weekly philosophy classes, regular group meditations and other functions.



## Venezuela

### Water Filtration in Aristides Bastidas Municipality By Eugenio Mendoza

Venezuela is a land of hope. Its educational framework aims at a balance within nature and human spirit. Here there is a fertile soil for Neohumanist Education to grow up.

We continue working on our many projects to develop a master unit, Ananda Yara, in the spiritual heart of Venezuela, near the mountain of Sorte where Maria Lionza's inspiring spirit is said to reside. We do as much as our capabilities and resources let us. And sometimes we ramp up some activities with a little help from our friends: Thanks to a generous donation by the Baker Family, who sent us funds through Amurtel in the USA, we are developing a project to supply water filters made with local resources which will impact a population of approximately 16,000 people. How is it possible?



Using sands from the river beds in the area, some tubing and plastic materials, charcoal, and moringa seeds with applied knowledge and work, we make a filter that improves water quality in a significant way. We have been using this method at home for the last two years but had not been able to promote its construction due to the lack of funding.

It has taken just 350 usd to make a filter for every school in the county, Aristides Bastidas, where we live. That's 25 filters for 30 school sites and one base of missions. There are 6,193 students in the county. We have conducted 25 workshops, with students of several grades as well as teachers, school workers and parents to explain how filters are made and how they work, so they can develop more and better ones. We started already with three deliveries and are in the process of making and delivering the rest of them. We expect to finish by the end of the school year in June.



We want to share this experience with the rest of Gurukul because it has been a very satisfying task to improve water quality and resources utilization in our community. In case you would like more information about this project, write to [infoprout.org.ve](mailto:infoprout.org.ve). You may also be interested in these sites:

1. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristides\\_Bastidas\\_Municipality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristides_Bastidas_Municipality)
2. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MariaLionza>





## MANILA SECTOR

### Gianyar, Bali By Maya Pagandiri

We are in the process of building a new Center in Gianyar, Bali. It will be a yoga center and an afternoon school where children can learn English, Arts and other subjects which they will not be able to study in the public school. Our main objective is to create a safe space for children to feel happy and relaxed and get introduced to things that will help them see the world in new and mind-expanding ways.



An octagon sided meditation hall that will not be used for anything else than yoga and meditation is being built on the land. Beside the meditation hall, we have a house in traditional Indonesian style that will serve as the classroom, dining hall and bathrooms. The CNS (Center for Neohumanist Studies) Bali office will be accommodated in this house.

Activities will be done in collaboration between WWD Bali and Ananda Marga Gianyar, supervised by Didi Ananda Samprajina and the bright team of the Gianyar unit.

We would like to invite volunteers to come and work with us here, especially in the education field, starting year 2017. Please write to: <mayapagandiri@gmail.com>.

### Vietnam Service in Saigon by Tran Thuy Ngoc

We started the Lunar Year of the Monkey with two charity trips in January to Củ Chi, a suburban district of Ho Chi Minh City:

1. Cooking lunch for 500 poor patients at Củ Chi General Hospital.
  2. Donating New Year gifts to 100 poor, old and Orange-affected people at Phú Hòa Đông Commune.
- Additionally, 3 bicycles were given to 3 poor pupils.



Thirty volunteers joined this trip, from Ho Chi Minh City. We ate breakfast on the bus, discussed the general program and took assignments. Upon arrival we carried the food from the bus to the kitchen to prepare lunch including rice, pineapple soup, braised miscellaneous vegetables, and sweet green beans for dessert. Lunch was served at 10:30 to the patients. After serving we ate a quick lunch before leaving for the second destination.



It was heart-breaking to see the Orange-affected children and the poor old people. They were happy with our little gifts including: rice, instant noodle, soya oil, soya sauce, blanket, and old clothes. The People's Committee there gave us an Appreciation Certificate for our good acts. On the way back home, we reviewed our experience and made plans for the next trip. The service will go on every month as long as we have the good heart to do it.



### Manila, Philippines

Ananda Marga Special Academic Institution participates in Children's Day Celebration.





## HONG KONG SECTOR

### Gurukul news from Taiwan & China By Rutger Tamminga

Gurukul in Taiwan has traditionally been mainly active in Kids Yoga teacher training, Special Needs Education service and storytelling. Now we see a new and exciting interest from the general public that is the transformation of family life based on yogic principles and practices. This shows the increasing acceptance of tantric ideas and their application in personal life and the desire of parents to train their own children as little yogis.



From our side, we have promoted four general ways of integrating yoga into family life: Quiet Time Exercises, Hatha yoga and massage, sentient diet and service. Over the past six months Gurukul Taiwan organized the training of 100+ children's yoga teachers, both for the foundation course and the intermediate program. This was done in Taipei, Taichung and Taiyuan. In Dalian, a city in northeast China, we also conducted a similar training program for 25 teachers. Many of these trainees are integrating Kids Yoga either at home or in their classes. In China, those who previously attended Kids Yoga training, are still active and conducting Kids Yoga picnics, have storytelling yoga classes, toddler yoga programs and so on. As I cannot visit them regularly, I often feel amazed at their dedication and sincerity as they tell me through messaging applications how they practice with their children, and how their children cannot sleep without listening to Baba Nam Kevalam kiirtan music.

At Ananda Dhara, we continue to organize regular outdoor kids and parents yoga activities, which are quite popular with 40 to 50 participants every time. Now we organize each program according to the season and we just completed the Spring Parents and Kids Yoga Day. Actually we see that parents and kids yoga programs such as these in Taipei (where this program has been running for over ten years on monthly basis non-stop!) are a wonderful way for people to learn about yoga, as there are still many misconceptions about what yoga really is. For January we had an adolescent yoga adventure camp, but unfortunately the weather was not good and it got washed away! Now we have planned another three-day activity for September!

To support this expanding interest, Geeta has opened a Gurukul center in the proximity of Taiwan National University and has regular classes, study groups, and collective meditation. This way the core group of Gurukul organizers is steadily expanding. As the number of Gurukul related activities is increasing we are planning to restructure the way we conduct public programs, with some of the senior Neohumanists offering the basic NHE introductory courses.

### Some More Taiwan News - By Geeta Li

A Study Circle for NHE is held monthly on every second Saturday. The targets of our Study Circle are:

1. To collect education-related materials on Yama and Niyama;
2. To publish an NHE manual;
3. To increase the ability of workers in educational services;
4. To expand the impact of NHE.



An AMGK Spiritual Education Seminar was held on February 5, 2016 and Dada

Shambhushivananda gave a talk on the "Five Kosas of Spiritual Life and an Introduction to Ananda Marga Gurukula."

A "Parent-Child Yoga" class of play with yoga takes place every month on the fourth Saturday.

A basic-level course on Children's Yoga Teacher Training was held in March. Yoga teaching and training staff learned how to enhance the balance of physical and mental growth of the children and promote living joy with yoga-related activities. They also learned about curriculum design, and classroom management.





## BERLIN SECTOR

### Italy - The Balyayoga® approach- Yoga for Children

Recently affiliated with Gurukula, Balyayoga® yoga for children is a new methodology of teaching yoga to little ones. Having been inspired by Shrii P.R. Sarkar's Neohumanistic philosophy, Gianni Zollo and Dr. Barbara Ladisa have created this approach aimed at children, using games to develop all the different levels of the mind. Balyayoga® intends to be exactly this: a new way of doing yoga through a process and method of specific teaching that both "nourishes" and lovingly supports the physical, psychic and emotional growth of the child, in order to facilitate the discovery of self.

Our workshops involve children from the ages of 3 to 13 years old, from all types of public schools in the city of Bari, in the south of Italy. Since 2010, Balyayoga® has also been a method of training people all around Italy who would like to become teachers of yoga for children. Currently, more than 300 teachers have been trained in this method, adapting an approach based on Neohumanistic principles. The purpose of this method is also to systematically study and research the link between pedagogy and yoga, in relation to the most recent studies in Neohumanist Education.



## DELHI SECTOR

### Bangalore, India

#### Prabhat Research Centre

Prabhat Research Foundation in India, managed by S.S. Goenka, has opened a Centre in Yelahanka managed by Ananda Marga Gurukula. This centre will facilitate research work on Shrii P.R. Sarkar's ideology as well as contributions in the field of Prout, Neohumanism, Microvita, Yoga, Medicine, Education, Tantra, Prabhat Sangeet, History, Psychology, Bio-psychology and various other fields. In addition, it will encourage propagation of practical meditation classes and yoga lessons.



Henk de Weijer recently visited the Prabhat Research Foundation Centre and led the discussion on Microvita on March 19, 2016.



#### SJB Management College

Dr. Shambhushivananda spoke to the faculty and students of SJB Management College at Bangalore on the theme of "Self-Realization".





## DELHI SECTOR - India News - continued

### Kolar, India

On 22 Mar 2016, Dada Shambhushivananda and Henk de Weijer met with Dr Patil, head of Integrative Medicine at the local medical university in Kolar and got a tour of their Dhanwantri Herbal Garden. Dada applauded the construction of the AMGK Teachers Training College Extension Building at Anandanagar.



### Chandigarh, India

Dada Shambhushivananda addressed yoga enthusiasts on several occasions by Sukhna Lake in Chandigarh. He explained the secrets of good health and peaceful mind and spoke about the challenges of building a spiritual society.



### Delhi, India

Dada Shambhushivananda met with Dr. Uttam Pati (JN University), Dr. Kaushal Sharma and Dr. Gunjanji of Delhi University & Mr. Pawar on 31st January, 2016, in New Delhi. Dr. Kaushal Sharma & his team have successfully completed a five-year rural development project for 50 villages in Uttarakhand. Dr. Uttam Pati is actively engaged in microvita research and its popularization. He recently spoke at Kurukshetra University on “Challenges Facing Microvita Research”.

### Pune, India

The faculty and students of Bio-Technology Institute of Bharati Vidyapeeth in Pune invited Dr. Shambhushivananda again to speak on the “Secrets of Yoga” on January 13, 2016. He also gave prizes to students for the essay-writing competition.



He also gave an evening seminar to about 40 spiritual aspirants at the newly established meditation centre (Jagriti) in Naya Gaon behind PGI campus in Chandigarh.

A lecture was held on January 22, 2016, at the Dhanwantri Ayurvedic Medical College, Chandigarh. The Principal of the College requested Swamiji to help them start a regular yoga-training for the benefit of students and faculty of the College.





## Mumbai, India

The University of Mumbai invited Dr. Shambhushivananda on January 19, 2016, to share the spiritual practices as given by Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji.

This talk was a follow-up after the National Seminar on “Contributions of Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji to Philosophy, Language, Music, Literature, Science, Education and Economics” held at the University of Mumbai.



## Khairachatar, India

Girls and boys of Khairachatar Residential High School gave public speeches during the Republic Day Parade and informed the general public about the historical significance of the Indian Republic day. Oratory skills of the children were put to the test.



The rally was followed by an elaborate cultural program which was attended by about 1000 dignitaries and invited guests. Currently, the enrollment of the school has increased to over 650.

Recently Henk de Weijer of Gurukula also visited Khairachatar and gave necessary guidance about future development of the project.

## Gurukula Resource Exchange Initiatives

### Noida, India



Snehalata Ko of Gurukula Taiwan recently visited Noida Ananda Sambodhi School and led several initiatives to help the school become a model Neohumanist school. The students and teachers were very receptive and cooperated very much in order to create a clean and loving environment for joyful learning. She also shared many

math games with the children. On her visit to Chandigarh, she visited the People for Animals project and visited their animal shelters. Indian schools are keen to learn from Neohumanist educators worldwide. Interested skilled teachers may write to [admin.india@gurukul.edu](mailto:admin.india@gurukul.edu) for possibilities and opportunities for sharing.



### Vientiane, Laos

Dr. Jareeporn Naksamrit of NERI Thailand and the Thai Teachers From Somdejya Community Learning School in Thailand, visited the Sunshine School in Laos and were warmly welcomed by Director Didi Ananda Gaorii and her team. They observed the KG, primary school and secondary school and also visited a project outside of the city called Sunshine Playschool. The place is like a Master Unit, with land for planting, and a small house with many KG children from the local village.





# Neohumanist Education



Mosaic Created by the Children of the Ananda Marga River School, Maleny, Australia. (Story Page 40).

Gurukula Network  
146 Honness Lane  
Ithaca, New York 14850  
USA