

GURUKULA NETWORK



Newsletter of the Global Neohumanist Education Network

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Building a Global Family of Educators



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

Gurukula Network

Newsletter and Journal of Neohumanist Schools and Institutes

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

It is the spirit of Gurukula Network to
encourage a free sharing of ideas and to
stimulate discussion on educational and global
issues facing our world. All articles express the
views of the author.

Gurukula Network is open to any and all NHE
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NEOHUMANIST EDUCATION

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

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

VISION of ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA

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

OBJECTIVES

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

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

Chancellor

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

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

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When some people started advancing, they thought more about themselves and less about others, nor did they think about the animals and plants. But if we analyse with a cool brain, it becomes quite clear that just as my life is important to me, others' lives are equally important to them; and if we do not give proper value to the lives of all creatures, then the development of the entire humanity becomes impossible. If people think more about themselves as individuals or about their small families, castes, clans or tribes, and do not think at all about the collectivity, this is decidedly detrimental. Similarly, if people neglect the entire living world – the plant world, the animal world – is this not indeed harmful? That is why I say that there is a great need to explain humanity and humanism in a new light, and this newly-explained humanism will be a precious treasure for the world.

What is this Neohumanism? Neohumanism is humanism of the past, humanism of the present and humanism – newly-explained – of the future. Explaining humanity and humanism in a new light will give new inspiration and provide a new interpretation for the very concept of human existence. It will help people understand that human beings, as the most thoughtful and intelligent beings in this created universe, will have to accept the great responsibility of taking care of the entire universe – will have to accept that the responsibility of the entire universe rests with them.

Shrii P. R. Sarkar, Liberation of Intellect - Neohumanism

Meditation and Neohumanist Consciousness

Acharya Shambhushivananda Avadhuta



Growing wealth disparities, a preoccupation with sensory pleasures, fast disappearing calmness of nature and an onslaught of disruptive technologies are greatly influencing today's lifestyles. The resulting stress and strains are beginning to take a toll on human health. Human beings everywhere are being forced to look for different cures to cope with the pressures of modern existence. It is well known that yoga and meditation exercises are age-old tested solutions for insulating the mind and provide a coping mechanism to handle stresses of all kinds. Visualizations and breathing are widely employed to aid in stress reduction techniques. Meditation is commonly understood as a daily practice of introversion—a way to draw attention away from worldly thinking and to associate the mind with an expanded thought for twenty or thirty minutes. Medical professionals are even recommending such an exercise instead of over-reliance on pills to deal with physical and mental imbalances.

Meditation in all its variant forms, offered under different brand names, is commonly used for twin objectives: stress reduction (physiological/therapeutic need) or self-transcendence (spiritual/occult need). However, there is a third objective that is of equal paramount importance: utilizing meditation for expanding human consciousness in order to engage with the world with a heightened biosphere awareness. Our day-to-day awareness dictates what we do, why we do and how we do. Our level of awareness, strength of attitudes, and life-style based on rational convictions, determine our quality of life. When meditation is performed to expand our consciousness in order to embrace all living and so-called inanimate entities, it may be called the Neohumanist approach to meditation. Such a meditation does not lead us way from this world to take shelter in caves or serve as an escape. Rather, it prepares us to get established in moral reasoning and fight our daily battles with courage, greater stamina and expanded consciousness. Meditation becomes a tool of compassion—an inspiration to fight against injustice as well as a way to tap the reservoir of eternal inspiration to make the world a better place for one and all. The regular practice of meditation helps us to learn to modulate our emotions and propensities and makes us calmer and blessed to undertake the works of sacred activism. It gives us the time to pause and reorient our thought patterns and actions and start the day afresh with renewed vigor and strength. The secrets of meditation are based on an understanding of the bio-psychological principle of yoga: higher cakras/plexi (and associated glands) control the lower plexii. Meditation teachers (acharyas) utilize such knowledge while imparting appropriate meditation techniques.

As intelligent machines come to the aid of human beings in all walks of life, they begin to erode the space of innate human sentiments. Addictions to machines cloud what was the free space of human consciousness. Today, intuition and imagination are beginning to get overpowered by mechanistic robotic-consciousness. Meditation becomes even more important in these times, to preserve the sweet elixir of human love and stay connected with the divinity that embodies universal consciousness, giving all-embracing love for all entities, animate and inanimate. Meditation allows us to connect our minds to our universal life force within and imbues our actions with universal cosmic sentiment. Meditation, therefore, needs to become an essential component of our daily life today, just as we take a bath, eat or pray. It is important, however, to learn meditation practice from an experienced and qualified acharya, or meditation teacher.

The ideation (subjective awareness of the meaning) of mantras employed in meditation also serves the important purpose of transmuting our consciousness. Certain systems of meditation only serve as relaxation exercises without addressing the issue of ego-transmutation. However, the concentration and ideational components of meditation are crucial elements in a meditation exercise. Realized meditation gurus have helped to preserve mystical traditions through the ages. This is the source, and a treasure trove of love and intuitional wisdom. All human beings should be encouraged to make meditation part of their daily routine and save themselves from the devastating effect of rapidly spreading all-encompassing materialism.

The devotional sentiment is the highest and most valuable treasure of humanity. This element of devotion, the most precious treasure of humanity, must be preserved most carefully. Because it is such a tender inner asset, to preserve it from the onslaughts of materialism, one must build a protective force around it, just as people put up a guard-rail around a small tender plant. Now the question is, what is this protective fence? It is a proper philosophy which will establish the correct harmony between the spiritual and material worlds, and be a perennial source of inspiration for the onward movement of society.

Shrii P. R. Sarkar - The Liberation of Intellect: Neo-Humanism



Why Meditation?

By Amal Jacobson

When I first attended the Progressive School of Long Island, nearly thirty years ago, meditation was a kind of cultural aberration. Looking back, it's incredible to think that decades before meditation became firmly established in the mainstream, children were being led in yoga and meditation on a daily basis in the Progressive School back in the 1980's. And yet—although meditation is now a widely accepted practice in settings as orthodox as public schools—the kind of meditation a Neohumanist Education advocates and practices shares little in common with the “mindfulness” • meditations typically practiced in schools around the country. Rather, the meditation typically taught in a Neohumanist school is far more goal-oriented, sophisticated, and challenging. The rest of the world is slowly catching on to what Neohumanist educators have been teaching for decades – but they're not exactly catching up.

Mindfulness meditation is a simple but powerful practice in which practitioners are taught to focus on their breathing while slipping into a part of their mind that witnesses their experience instead of being absorbed in it. Rather than identifying oneself completely with the emotions or thoughts one has, the practitioner learns to watch the mind as observing clouds. One way of thinking of this distinction would be in understanding the difference between “I am sad” and “I feel sad”. • In the former, a person identifies and associates themselves with the emotion as if it were intrinsic to them, while in the latter, the person reflects an understanding that the feeling they have is an experience that says nothing essential about them.

In itself, there's nothing wrong with such a meditation. On the contrary, I actually teach and practice it with the children at the Progressive School of Long Island. My experience as an educator has taught me that mindfulness is a tool that helps children (especially adolescents) learn to stay centered with their experience and feelings instead of seeking to disassociate from or overly identify with them. But, my experience as an educator has also taught me that the power of meditation can go far deeper than merely being a tool for emotional calibration. Meditation isn't just a tool, but actually at the core of Neohumanist Education – but it requires a meditation that goes deeper, to the very core of our experience.

Neohumanism espouses the creation of a world that seeks to embrace all—regardless of tribe, color, nation, or even species—as the expression of a singular and indivisible Oneness. By its very nature, Neohumanism isn't meant to be an abstract principle, but something to be enacted in our relationships, politics and everyday lives. Such an endeavor is one that demands more than just an aesthetic idea of what's right and what's wrong; it demands that we bring the totality of ourselves to bear, each and every day. It requires something heart-centered. To quote P. R. Sarkar, it requires “a perennial source of inspiration”.

Attending the Progressive School all those years ago, we weren't just taught to focus on our breathing and watch our thoughts as if they were clouds. We were challenged to imagine an ocean of love that we were just a tiny dot in. We were taught to sing and meditate on Baba Nam Kevalam, and were reminded each day that the essence of this teaching was that love was all around, love was all there is, we ourselves were love, and that was the essence of all we were. After meditation, we were taught to enact these ideas by practicing social service and volunteerism in our local communities. We were encouraged to start newspapers and fundraisers for causes we felt passionately about, and we were reminded in our academic lessons just how much one person could change the world. Meditation was not just some eccentric aside that started our mornings, but was the foundation of the comprehensive vision that a Neohumanist Education sought to cultivate in us, each and every day.

Neohumanism, at its core, is a spiritual philosophy – not in a religious sense, but in the sense that it seeks to connect us to the ground of our being, so that we see ourselves in the other and the other within ourselves, so much so that the distinction between “self” and “other” begins to fade. By its very nature, this is a mission that runs counter to the materialistically-oriented, “skills-based” approaches of most pedagogies. Rather, this is a character-based approach. Meditation can be about managing our lives or emotions better, but it can also go deeper – as deeply as we are willing to take it. Regarding education, Sarkar used to say “sa vidya ya, vimuktaye”, meaning that the spirit of education is about teaching the “knowledge that liberates”. Liberation can take on many forms – social, economic, intellectual, emotional, and certainly spiritual. May that urge for liberation lead us to the perennial source of inspiration that Sarkar first pointed us towards.

Amal Jacobson studied at the Center for Neohumanist Studies in Ydrefors, Sweden in 2004. Since then, he has taught and led classes and workshops on Neohumanism all over the world. Receiving his MA from the Philosophy, Cosmology and Consciousness program of the California Institute of Integral Studies, he continues to teach and write widely, with an emphasis on Neohumanism and Integral Ecology. He is currently an educational assistant at the Progressive School of Long Island, where he also teaches a daily meditation practice with its students.



Challenges for Youth - Part 1

On Climate Change

by Prof. Edward McKenna

For the past few semesters I have been telling my new students that their generation will face three critical problems: 1) Climate Change, 2) Growing Inequality, and 3) The Failure of Democracy. While my generation has spent much time talking about these issues, we have accomplished little in bringing them under control. Indeed, each of these concerns has only grown in importance over the past decade. Unfortunately for the younger generations, the time for talk has now come to an end. These problems must now be faced and they must now be solved. Failure to do so will mean cataclysmic change for Earth and for Human Society. Over the next several issues of Gurukula Network, I plan to discuss each of these issues. I hope to show some of the reasons why these problems have proven to be so intractable, why these concerns in fact are interrelated, and how this interrelated nature points to a possible path towards their solution. In this issue I begin with a discussion of climate change.

In one sense, climate change is the result of Capitalism's success. Even Karl Marx praised Capitalism's ability to greatly increase the supply of available goods (though greatly criticizing the exploitative nature of both the production and distribution of these goods). But the driving mechanism of Capitalism is the unceasing attempt to maximize profit and the concomitant drive towards ever greater rates of growth. As Capitalism has expanded the supply of goods, it has also required greater amounts of energy to fuel the growth process. Unfortunately, for much of the history of Capitalism, only fossil fuels have been able to supply the energy needs necessary for sustaining this growth. But as we now know, the expanding use of fossil fuels has also led to the release of greater and greater amounts of CO₂ into the atmosphere, resulting in the climate change that the entire world is now experiencing.

There is nothing inherently wrong with growth. The goal of providing everyone with sufficient resources for leading a meaningful life is one we should all share. One of the essential discoveries of economists is that sustained growth is only possible with technological change. Since technology is nothing more than a body of ideas relating the use of resources to the production of output, technological change simply means acquiring new and better ideas for using a given amount of resources to produce more and better output. The search for new ideas thus provides two benefits: 1) living standards can be dramatically increased; and 2) a powerful outlet for humanity's unceasing creative energies can be established.

Difficulties arise, however, when the dominant motive for growth is the acquisition of greater amounts of profit rather than the flourishing of human society. While profit-seeking has been a dominant characteristic of Capitalism's history, this has become particularly true during the last 40 years as a result of the world-wide growth of an ideology known as Neoliberalism. Neoliberalism can most succinctly be described as the belief that unregulated markets can provide the answers to all problems. The increasing dominance of this belief is directly correlated with humanity's inability to deal with the issue of climate change. For, as it turns out, climate change is definitely one problem that cannot be solved by unregulated markets, as I will now explain.

Capitalism is based upon the idea of individual private property. More precisely, Capitalism is a system wherein individuals possess property rights that are protected by the government. One of the important property rights that people possess is the ability to exclude others from using their property unless they are willing to pay a price for its use. This price will reflect the various costs that are incurred when property is utilized. Thus, the costs that are counted by the market are those that arise from the power of a property owner to exclude others from the use of that property. But the atmosphere cannot be privately owned. (Even if it could be, would we want to live in a world where every person had to pay a price for each breath they took?) And because the atmosphere cannot be privately owned, there is no one who can exclude people from using the atmosphere unless they are willing to pay the price to cover the costs of such use. As a result, these costs are not counted by the market. In effect, the atmosphere is treated as a free good provided by nature and no limitations are placed on the exploitation of this resource. Thus, when industrial and agricultural processes, and vehicles powered by combustible engines, emit CO₂ into the atmosphere, these emissions are not treated as costs even as the accumulating evidence demonstrates beyond all possible doubt that climate costs are growing exponentially.

But there is a second reason why markets are incapable of counting the costs associated with climate change. We have been emitting increasing amounts of CO₂ since the process of industrialization began. And, we continue to do so at ever-increasing rates. But the problems such emission causes are only now beginning to be noticed. And the really serious problems that will occur will take place 10-30 years into the future. How should we evaluate these future costs? The problem that arises here can be illustrated with a simple example. Suppose I offer you the following two possibilities: 1) I will give you a brand-new car today, 2) I will give you an identical brand-new car one year from now. Which will you select? Well, if you are like most people, you will want to have the car today. This illustrates the fact that even though the car is identical at both points in time, you would prefer to have this car today rather than wait one year for it. The future car is worth less to you than the present car. This illustrates a psychological propensity that economists refer to as time preference. Put in other words, any future cost or benefit must be discounted to determine what its value would be today.

Now how do we figure out how to discount the future cost? Here we see one of the purposes of interest rates. Suppose that I tell you that I will lend you one euro today and that you can repay me one euro a year from now, i.e., I will not charge you any interest. Essentially what you are saying is that having a euro today or having a euro one year from now is of equal value to you. Suppose, instead, I tell you that I will lend you one euro today but that you must repay me two euros one year from now. In this case the interest rate would be 100%. But now what I am saying to you is that I would much prefer to have the euro today, and that I will only lend it to you if you pay me a high rate of interest. So the interest rate is a reflection of your time preference. And, the higher the rate of interest, the more you value having something today, which is the same thing as saying you value having something in the future less.

So what interest rate should we use to evaluate the future costs imposed by emitting CO₂ into the atmosphere today, resulting in greater climate change tomorrow? There are hundreds, even thousands of interest rates in the market. Which one should we use?

The market cannot tell us this, for this is a political question, i.e., it is a question that we must answer as a society and not something we can leave to the market. This exact question arose over a report issued by the government of the United Kingdom back in 2006, a report known as the Stern report. Stern, himself, argued that we should use an interest rate equal to the rate of growth of output, which would be about 1.5%. William Nordhaus, last year's winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics, argued that we should use a much higher interest rate of about 4%, meaning that he was counting future costs at a much lower rate. Stern argued that the future loss of well-being due to climate warming was so great that we should be willing to give up a good bit of current GDP to prevent this future loss. Nordhaus argued that future generations would be much wealthier than current generations, and so we should count the future costs of climate change at a much lower value, i.e., we should give up much less of our present GDP to prevent future climate change.

This is not the place to argue as to which view is correct. Rather, what I am indicating is that there are many viewpoints that can be reasonably argued for, and that we cannot find an answer to this question within the market itself. Human society will have to make a decision as to how we value the present as opposed to the future, and hence how much we are willing to sacrifice today to reign in the effects of future climate change.

But the dominance of the Neoliberal perspective will make it much more difficult for humanity to arrive at a united consensus. The adoption of the belief in unregulated markets has made possible the justification of extraordinarily high levels of income and wealth concentration, as well as an acceptance of an increasing degree of monopolization. In a future article I will discuss the economic effects of economic concentration. Here I simply wish to point out that the growth in economic power has also enabled the growth of political power. And, this growth of political power has enabled the world's top 1% to effectively control the flow of information regarding climate change. Recent studies have revealed the fact that those in charge of the fossil fuel industry have known for decades that the increasing use of fossil fuels has accelerated the advance of climate change. Rather than seeking to mitigate these effects, the leaders of the fossil fuel industry have provided the funding to those seeking to deny that global change is even occurring. And this has immeasurably slowed humanity's ability to slow the advance of climate change.

But the ability of Neoliberalism to foster climate change denialism is coming to an end. Unfortunately, this end is not being brought about as the result of an educated public coming to understand the true nature of what scientists are trying to tell us. Instead, it is being brought about by the increasing costs associated with climate change itself. Super storms that formerly would have occurred once in 500 years now seem to occur every year. Record-high planet temperatures now seem to occur regularly. Disease bearing insects that formerly were controlled by the change of seasons, such as the death of mosquitoes as fall and winter arrived, seem to be growing in numbers, bringing more sickness and death. Perhaps even more alarmingly, climate change is playing an increasingly important role in bringing about social tension, as illustrated by the role that a lack of water played in enabling the war in Syria, and in the role that water shortages are currently playing in fostering the growth of immigration from Latin and South America into the United States. So it is not enlightenment on the part of the public that is bringing an end to Neoliberal dominance. Rather, it is what people are seeing with their own eyes.

But the actual, lived experience of people perhaps provides an opening for the adoption of new, more liberating understandings of the nature of humanity and its relation to the environment. Many spiritual views have always understood the interconnected nature of people and the Earth. And this understanding has fostered an understanding that the Earth and all of its inhabitants must be loved and respected. Perhaps spirituality can provide a new moral foundation capable of reining in the unchecked growth of markets and climate change. But this is by no means a certainty. Those practicing these spiritual views will have to prove that they are capable of making spirituality something more than an abstract, philosophical view. The world's fate waits in the balance.

Ed McKenna, Ph.D., is Professor of Economics at Connecticut College in New London, CT, USA. He specializes in macroeconomics and econometrics. His work lies at the intersection of economics and philosophy. He is particularly interested in the relationship between philosophical conceptions of justice and fairness and economic theories that explain the distribution of income.

Climate Change and a Neohumanist Response

By Dada Shambhushivananda

“Can we reach biosphere consciousness and global empathy in time to avert planetary collapse?” asks Jeremy Rifkin, President of the Foundation of Economic Trends. In his widely publicized view, “The empathic civilization is emerging. A younger generation is fast extending its empathic embrace beyond religious affiliations and national identifications to include the whole of humanity and the vast project of life that envelops the Earth.”

While previous industrial revolutions relied on coal or other fossil fuels, the present digital age is looking towards renewable energies to fuel the new industrial age. Earlier advances relied on the trickledown theory, but the emerging consciousness is clamoring for bottom-up approaches. The old days treated nature as an externality. The new paradigm treats nature as an equal stakeholder whose mute voice must be heard and respected. In a nutshell, the new paradigm is neohumanist in nature where change must take place at all three levels - individual, institutional and ideological, blending economics, society and nature for the collective welfare of all.

1. The first set of changes must begin with individual consciousness and choice of lifestyles that are in harmony with the creation of an empathic civilization. Neohumanist Education makes its core value cultivation of this biosphere consciousness. Today's young people have given a positive nod to this change. Greta Thunberg of Sweden is a notable example of this trend among youth.
2. At the institutional level, structural changes are being sought to minimize the gaps between rural and urban, between the affluent and the poor and between experts and the general mass. Building smart and resilient infrastructures is becoming a necessity in the midst of an increasing numbers of calamities and disasters facing every community. Technology must now become a tool of serving the masses rather than increasing disparities in all walks of life. There is a cry for a new model of economy that protects nature while it secures the future of all living beings. Freedom, Justice (Fairness), Happiness, Abundance and Progress are the goals for every community. Towards this end, the alternative presented by PROUT- a progressive utilization theory, needs serious exploration and examination by global leaders.
3. Finally, visions and dreams are what create reality; the broader the vision, the greater the chance of lasting impact. In order to establish a peaceful society for all times to come, an ideology imbued with universal love is the need of the hour. That is why Neohumanist philosophy is the logical step forward towards a world of expanded consciousness. It provides an eternal source of inspiration for all peoples, for all species and for all times to come. Let the new world see the emergence of a new universal renaissance based on universal love and pragmatic actions, filled with sacred activism.

What do people do to meet their growing needs for agricultural lands, for industries, etc.? They bring about large-scale deforestation, but no one bothers to think about the creatures that live in those forests. So the tigers and elephants haunt the villages, kill the people, and demolish their houses. Why? Out of their instinct for self-preservation. We have destroyed their natural habitat, the forests, but we never bothered to consider any alternative arrangements for their shelter. We have recklessly destroyed large areas of forests without caring to think that thereby we are destroying the ecological balance among the human, plant and animal worlds. And we never realised – and still do not – that this wanton destruction of the animal and plant worlds, will be of no benefit to human beings. Rather it will be a great loss for human society. Rather it will be great loss human society, because each and every living entity, whether plant or animal, has two types of value: one, its “utility value” and the other, its “existential value.”

Human beings usually preserve those creatures which have an immediate utility value for them: for example, cows. Human beings protect them for their own benefit because cows have some utility. But when people are able to prepare synthetic milk by chemical process, they will also stop breeding cattle. That day people will either kill the cows by starving them or they will themselves eat the cows.

Who says that those creatures who have lost their immediate utility value have no right to exist? No one has the moral right to say this. No one can dare to say that only human beings have the right to live, and not non-humans. All are the children of Mother Earth; all are the offspring of the Supreme Consciousness. Most creatures have existential value, although they may not be valuable to human beings, or we may not be aware that their existence has some significance. Oftentimes we cannot know the utility value, or the existential value, of a creature; we wrongly think that it has no existential value. This is the height of foolishness.

...One more thing must be said – that non-human creatures have the same existential value to themselves as human beings have to themselves. Perhaps human beings can understand the value of their existence, while other living beings cannot: this is the only difference. Even so, no one has delegated any authority to human beings to kill those unfortunate creatures.

Shrii P. R. Sarkar, The Liberation of Intellect - Neohumanism



Neohumanism: A Philosophy of Education for the Anthropocene

By Dr. Kathleen Kesson

A significant number of scholars from the sciences and the humanities agree that we have entered the **Anthropocene**, a new era in geological history (GR: *ánthrōpos*, ‘man, human’ + *cene*, ‘recent’).

While debates abound concerning the chronological boundaries of this era, the geological indicators, and the details of the complex dynamics of interacting systems (atmospheric, climatic, geothermal, hydrological and biological), it is clear that human impacts on the earth are causing perhaps irreversible damage to the planetary ecosystem. We are witnessing the “great acceleration” — unprecedented species extinction and loss of biodiversity, increasingly dangerous weather patterns resulting in loss of life and property, and extensive pollution of our waters, air, and soil. New assaults on planetary life come to our attention daily. The question posed succinctly by American philosopher Roy Scranton (2018), is “We’re doomed. Now what?” How do we make the shift from the Doomsday scenario in which we currently find ourselves towards the optimistic future promised us by P.R. Sarkar, in which “Neohumanism will elevate humanism to universalism, the cult of love for all created beings of this universe?”

While action on all fronts is urgent, education is a primary vehicle for cultivating the “new human,” those who embrace this love of all created beings and align their actions with such deeply felt convictions. One scholar notes that

The generation about to enter schools may be the last who can still reverse the negative megatrends converging today. In order for these children to learn the needed new ways of thinking the present generation in charge of society must begin to set up for them a kind of education it never had and arrange to educate itself further at the same time. (Moffett, 1994)

Schooling is perhaps the most conservative institution in all societies, and research tells us that most teachers, when faced with making difficult educational decisions, default to teaching the way they were taught. Parents and communities often have the attitude that “it worked for me so why change things?” So, this task — to set up a kind of education most of us have never had — is a daunting one, and requires us to think philosophically about every aspect of education.

Why we need a philosophy of education

Philosophy is the love of wisdom (GR: *philo*, ‘loving’ + *sophia* ‘knowledge, wisdom’) and education is a very practical activity. A practical philosophy of education, then, should help us to make wise judgements about our teaching practice. Philosophies of education define what it means to be human and the nature of mind and consciousness, and articulate the aims and purposes of education. They explore how knowledge is constructed and how people learn. They help us to clarify our values, and provide visions of the “good life.” For example, the “cultural transmission model” values knowledge of the past, and understands the primary aim of education to be inculcating the values, beliefs and knowledge systems of the existing culture into the new generation. The individual is seen as something of a “blank slate” ready to be molded into the form of human valued by the existing society, or at least by the dominant classes in a society. Teaching methods, in this model, are characterized by a prescribed curriculum, the teacher as an authority, regular testing, and behavioristic methods of control, such as rewards and punishments.

Sometimes radically differing ideologies, values and beliefs give rise to new philosophies of education. For example, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries there was a reaction against modernism, with its mechanistic materialism, science, new technologies, and emerging bureaucratic society. The Romantics, as they were called, did not accept the idea of the human being as a blank slate, rather they believed us to be born with innate powers, or a divine spark, and they thus embraced the deep feelings of the individual soul and its emotional, spiritual, poetic and artistic nature. Romantics bemoaned the *disenchantment* of the world, and sought to reestablish the mystery, magic, mysticism, and myth that had characterized much of human history. Teaching methods, in this framework, lean towards the “drawing out” (LA: *ēdūcere*, ‘lead out’) of the inclinations and potential of the child and of pedagogies that encourage awe, wonder, and the imagination. This philosophy influenced the development of what has come to be known as *holistic education* (for its attention to the whole child).

Pragmatic (or developmental) theories of education associated with such thinkers as John Dewey and Jean Piaget sought to reconcile the contradictions between the emphases on *outer* experience (the cultural transmission model) and *inner* experience (the Romantic model) with the notion of learning as a transaction between inner and outer modes of knowing. Pragmatic approaches to education value democracy as the most efficacious form of social arrangements, and teaching methods in this framework are characterized by inquiry-based and experiential curricula, cooperative group learning, and the cultivation of reflection, logic and reason as primary forms of problem-solving.

Challenges to Pragmatism and Romanticism came with the advent of Critical Pedagogy, a philosophy of education that takes a hard look at the social structures that construct our worlds. Drawing upon a Marxist conceptual foundation, Critical Pedagogy insists that we acknowledge the ways that capitalist relations, racism, sexism and other forms of oppression have limited the full development of human powers, and that we shape an education grounded in the development of critical thinking in order to understand and overthrow these limitations

Neohumanism: A unique response to the historical moment

It's important to note that all of these existing philosophical approaches, the spiritual and the secular, are very much grounded in Humanistic concepts and classic liberal traditions, ways of thinking that place human beings in the center of the picture (anthropocentrism), and which value the autonomous individual with their capacity to gain self-knowledge through reflection and to better understand the world through the application of reason. The old philosophies of European Humanism provided humanity with a vital service by liberating us from much of the superstition and irrationality of the medieval Christian Church and initiating an era of scientific thought and rationality, and the contributions of Humanistic philosophy to individual rights, freedom, and self-determination should not be understated. But just as the ancient tenets of this philosophy are necessary but not sufficient to guide us through the Anthropocene, existing educational philosophies, even the progressive and holistic ones of the 18th, 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries are inadequate to steer us through the era that is upon us. Neohumanism, while drawing upon many of the important tenets of Humanism, emphasizes the “new ways of thinking” that are uniquely capable of educating the “new human” — persons with the knowledge and dispositions to care about the welfare of all the species of the planet and to live in harmony with the ecological constraints that we are only now coming to terms with in the Anthropocene.

Neohumanism and Ontology. Ontology (Greek *ōn, ont-* ‘being’ + *-logy* ‘study of’) is the study of what it means to be human, including the broad categories of being, becoming, existence, and meaning. Neohumanist educators are fortunate in that P.R. Sarkar articulated a comprehensive philosophy of Being to draw upon, a philosophy that encompasses the mundane and the cosmic, which understands the known universe as dynamic, and that defines the human as a multi-dimensional being engaged in a quest for realization and spiritual understanding.

One main idea that profoundly shaped Humanist thinking is the idea of the individual, the “I” as a bounded entity, surrounded by stable substances and objects in space that constitute separate “others” to manipulate, utilize, and transact with. This concept developed in the context of the Western Enlightenment along with the subjugation of nature and the application of reason and logic to all of the problems of existence. This sense of separation, mastery, and control in concert with an economic system predicated on resource extraction, endless growth, and needless consumption has led us to the ecological tipping point at which we find ourselves. Neohumanism requires the cultivation of an ontology that is **relational**, that understands there is no separation of self and other, of knower and known, of subject and object, but rather endless flows of being and becoming in which we are deeply interconnected with everything in creation, visible and invisible, material and molecular, objective and subjective.

In the context of *relational being and becoming*, virtually all aspects of education require reconceptualization: everything from our notions of individual achievement to our valuing of independence and autonomy, from our theories of human development and cognition to theories of experience and academic subject matter. If everything is in process, or relational, then we must awaken to the profound interdependence between the human organism and the environment, the life histories and trajectories of ‘objects’ and our own implication in these, as well as the human connection to transcendent levels of mind. A Neohumanist curriculum would embrace this multidimensionality, the whole of ontological experience.

Essential question: How do we sustain the positive aspects of the individual self – the right to sovereignty over one’s body, the right to discover one’s dharma and engage in personally meaningful activity, the right to be recognized as fully human – while sustaining these rights in a context of relational interdependence, without unintentionally fostering fuzzy cognition or New Age haziness? How do we navigate the tension between *being* and *becoming*?

Neohumanism and Epistemology. Epistemology (Greek *epistēmē* ‘knowledge’ + *-logy* ‘study of’) asks fundamental questions about the nature of knowing. How is knowledge constructed? What are the sources of knowledge? How do we come to know anything? How can we know what is true?

Throughout our Humanist history, Western models of education have spread across the planet, resulting in the loss of language, tradition, culture, and indigenous ecological knowledge. Some scholars have aptly called this “**epistemicide**.” In the process of valuing a particular version of scientific investigation and reason over all other forms of knowledge creation, and in the context of conquest, patriarchy, and economic imperialism, ways of knowing that exist outside these contours have been marginalized or suppressed: embodied knowing, contemplative knowing, intuitional knowing, narrative knowing, aesthetic knowing, mythic knowing, and intergenerational knowing. Neohumanist educators need to cultivate an **epistemological pluralism**, while understanding that all ways of knowing are not necessarily equal, and that different epistemologies are suited to different tasks and purposes.

Knowledge is not a “thing-in-itself” that can be transmitted from one isolated mind to another, or from a digitized environment to a human brain via language or image. Knowledge is part of an ever-changing system, a pattern of relations, and is embedded in culture. Language shapes how we perceive and understand the world, and we transmit worldviews and taken-for-granted cultural habits with every word we utter. A relational philosophy asks more of us than that we simply “teach” or “acquire” neutral facts about academic subjects. To truly know anything, in a deep way, we must embrace the occasion of knowing in its temporal multiplicity: understanding the past (how the knowledge was made) the present (what does it mean to me in this moment?), and the future (what are the consequences of this knowing?) We must expand the boundaries of our sources of knowledge: What might it mean to discard a notion of an “us” who think

and a “them” that do not? Can we learn to “think like a tree?” Can we learn to put traditional ecological knowledge (much of which has been exterminated along with the people and cultures who have acquired it) alongside empirical science? Neohumanism, unlike some spiritual pedagogies, does place a value on rationality and critical thinking. Rationality, in its deepest sense, is the capacity to question the sources of knowledge, to be skeptical about truth claims, and to be mindful of the ways in which knowledge has been used to manipulate, subjugate, obfuscate, and render powerless. It encompasses more than simple reason and logic: true rationality must be informed and tempered by contemplation. To speak of contemplation is to open up horizons of knowing of which humanity has only the faintest of glimpses. In this regard, we can say that our understanding of epistemology is in its infancy. P.R. Sarkar refers to *pará vidya* (spiritual, or intuitional knowledge) and *apará vidya* (mundane knowledge). While there are certainly sages and enlightened people who are gifted in the ways of spiritual knowledge, and many excellent educators who are adept at leading young people to deep intellectual understandings of the world, there has yet to emerge a comprehensive pedagogy that seamlessly integrates these two poles of wisdom in ways that do justice to the integrity of both domains. That, I believe, is the task of Neohumanist educators.

Essential questions: How can Neohumanist educators navigate the tensions between reason and intuition, the spiritual and the rational, the material and the ideal, the internal and the external, skepticism and inner knowing in order to cultivate new humans with the wisdom to see humanity through the spiritual, psychic, intellectual and physical challenges of this era? How can we teach in a way that is deeply rooted in the language and culture of specific places, while cultivating a sense of universalism (love for all creation)?

Neohumanism and Axiology. Axiology (GR: *axia* “value” or “worth” + *-logy* ‘study of’) encompasses questions of value, and includes the study of both ethics and of aesthetics. What do we consider to be of worth? What constitutes the good, the true, the beautiful? How should we live? For educators, this extends to important questions of what is worth knowing and what should be taught.

Cultural pluralism has brought about a sense of ethical relativism, and there is uncertainty about what if anything, can be considered a cardinal value. In our late-Humanist society, in which ‘Man is the measure of all things,’ capitalist ethics have become the dominant social value, and the market is the ultimate arbiter of ethical questions. Should we endanger fragile habitat in order to drill for oil? Of course, if profit is the main value. In the relational, process philosophy of Neohumanism, **in which the inherent value of all living things is acknowledged**, ethics are the principles we would use to regulate these many and varied relationships. Sarkar rejects the kind of simple rule-based morality encoded in many traditions, yet subscribes to the notion of overarching ethical principles under the broad umbrella of the question: **Does this contribute to the welfare of all?** The curriculum can no longer be constructed to serve dominant economic and political interests, as it is currently, but must address the deep interconnections that we are coming to understand between and amongst humans and all ‘other’ life forms.

In a Neohumanist curriculum, ethics would be infused across the curriculum; every subject from biology to history would be approached through an ethical study framework. In the study of ethical dilemmas (and we face countless of them in this new era), it is important to cultivate the arts of reflection, deliberation, and discriminating judgment, to invoke, as Sarkar suggests, both reason and intuition. In this way, ethics can become, as he proposes, a facilitator of personal and social transformation – a tool for expansion.

In our modern Western societies, the arts are commodities, with ascribed value based on notions of uniqueness and scarcity. In a Neohumanist world, the arts could serve more ancient and life-preserving functions, involving young people in participatory aesthetic experiences that create and recreate the fundamental stories of our existence – our human bonds, our relationships with plants, animals, sea and sky, and the mythic stories that carry forth and transmit the blueprints of a moral universe (see Kesson, 2019).

Essential question: How do we cultivate an ethical and aesthetic approach to education that highlights our moral obligations to the future, and is thus uniquely relevant to our era, an era in which “the way we live now determines not only how, but *if*, future generations will live on the Earth” (Fitzgerald, 1999).

Conclusion

Neohumanism asks us to reconsider the fundamental aims and purposes of education. Rather than educate so that a tiny sliver of people rises to the top of the global income chain, we need to educate *all people* for the art of living well on a fragile and sacred planet. The new vision of reality is one of relationship, the cultivation of deep relationship with all of creation and between the past, the present moment, and the future. Millions of young people are rising up, shouting out that they will no longer tolerate the destruction of their planet. It is up to all of us who care about these “new humans” to support their yearning for an education that is relevant, meaningful, purposeful, just, and joyful, which nurtures the human spirit and its innate love for all creation, and which enables humanity to create a survivable and “thrivable” future.

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Educating for a Bright Future

A Global Neohumanist Education Conference

Salorno, Italia July 12-17th, 2019

The Global Association of Neohumanist Educators (GANE) partnered with several affiliated organizations, (AMGK, AMAYE, and PRSI) to bring together over a hundred leading neohumanist educators from twenty five countries in order to deliberate on the theme: Educating for a Bright Future. The gathering was filled with sweetness and uplifting, inclusive ideas and further enriched by the beautiful Dolomite Mountains of Italy.



The Mayor of Salorno, at their community hall, inaugurated the program with a beautiful film highlighting the attractions of the Dolomites and the Salorno area. Dr. Shambhushivananda gave a welcoming speech and pointed everyone's attention to four critical challenges facing humanity: Climate Change; Widening Disparities; Technological Innovations and Leadership issues. "These challenges open up new opportunities for educators", he said. Neohumanism provides an optimistic response to deal with the problems and issues emanating from the global crises. The speakers were introduced by Christian Franceschini and Cristina Terribile, the leading local organizers, hosts, and translators, who warmly welcomed all to Italy.

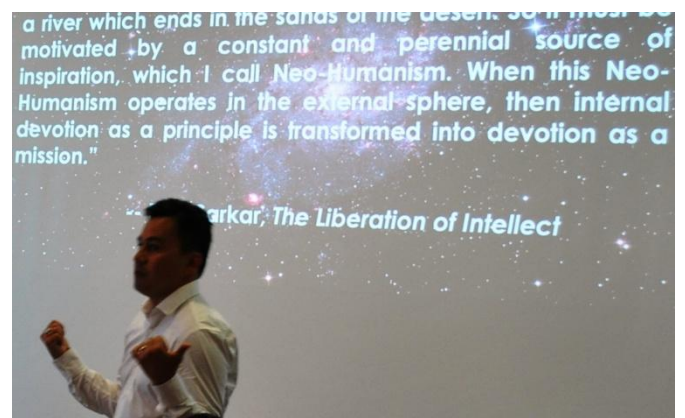


Plenary Sessions

The plenary sessions every morning were theme based and given by experts in their fields. Links to the videos of these presentations are available by writing to: amgk.liaison@gurukul.edu. Summaries of each day's plenaries follow:

Day 1 of the plenary sessions explored *Neohumanist Responses to Global Challenges*. What are the values and new ways of thinking needed to bring about the paradigm shift we now know is necessary for creating a bright future?

Amal Jacobson spoke on: *Neohumanism: Embodying Knowledge for a Better Tomorrow*. This plenary explored what it means to embody and enact Neohumanism. A new world demands a new worldview, but if such a worldview is to be more than just theoretical, then it must be lived and embodied. Neohumanism is unique as such a heart-centered philosophy. Rather than being a mere intellectual construct, it's a roadmap for how to live and love fiercely for universal welfare. Far from being a one-size-fits-all approach, Neohumanism is a deeply personal and ultimately a spiritual journey. By re-imagining the human, Neohumanism challenges each of us to re-imagine ourselves, along with our ultimate place in a mutually-enhancing world.





Kathleen Kesson spoke on: *A Philosophy of Education for the Anthropocene*. This talk outlined the contours of a philosophy and practice of education equal to the immense task before us. We have entered a new era in human existence, the Anthropocene, signifying a growing awareness that we are in a phase of planetary development in which human impacts on the earth may cause or have caused irreversible damage. How do we assist the shift from Doomsday scenarios towards a future in which “Neohumanism will elevate humanism to universalism, the cult of love for all created beings of this universe?” (Shrii P.R. Sarkar). Education is a primary vehicle for cultivating the “new human”, persons who embrace this love of all created beings and align their actions with such deeply felt

convictions. An adapted version of her talk is included in this issue of Gurukula Network.

Day 2 of the plenary sessions explored: *Developing Inner Resources to Prepare for an Unknown Future*. How can we build the inner resources and ecological wisdom of students and teachers to prepare for a rapidly changing world and unpredictable future?

Eric Jacobson spoke on *Neohumanism: from Micro to Macro* and explored the following questions:

How did we get here? What is a human being? What is human nature? How do we define our progress as a species? How does education look under the influence of Neohumanism? What are the three main pathways for neohumanist educators to follow? How does environmental science look now? How does it overlap with ethics? How it is guided by principles? What is best practice?

Notes from his talk are included in this issue of Gurukula Network.



Didi Ananda Devapriya spoke on *Reflective Teachers, Reflective Learners: Weaving permaculture principles into curriculum to develop neohumanist consciousness*. Permaculture at its core is a set of ethics and principles applied dynamically to daily decision making. Didi Ananda Devapriya was one of the three co-authors of the Children in Permaculture teachers manual “Earth Care, People Care and Fair Share in Education” published by the project. Given the great and urgent need in modern society for a fundamental shift in how we relate to our natural world and each other, she explored how education can provide a pathway to accelerate the understanding and application of permaculture principles by mainstream society. She also shared tools that she helped to develop in the CIP project, showing how the CIP materials can be used to lead towards developing Neohumanist “awakened conscience” in children and teachers. An article on this topic was included in the last issue of Gurukula Network.



Day 3 of the plenary sessions explored: *Integrating Science, Spirituality and the Arts*. What role can spirituality and the arts play as vehicles of transcendence, social cohesion, and ecological wisdom in education?

Sucharit Katyal spoke on *Recent developments and future directions in the science of shaping and refining human experience*. At the core of Neohumanist Education is the idea that human experience and the living world are in an inherently synthetic relationship with each other. Here the world and experience are synthetic not only in their interconnected sense, but also in the sense of progressing towards more synthesis through gradual refinement of body and mind by means of spiritual practices. While Shrii P. R. Sarkar, the founder of Neohumanism and Neohumanist Education, presented these ideas at least four decades ago, recent progress in human scientific disciplines is propelling these ideas into mainstream via education research, and, in turn, public policy. Sucharit gave a basic introduction to the two disciplines of cognitive science and phenomenology and their current state of the art, as well as sharing his ongoing work on cognitive and experiential refinement through meditation, in order to provide educators with new tools and concepts for thinking about the shaping and refining of human experience for a bright future.



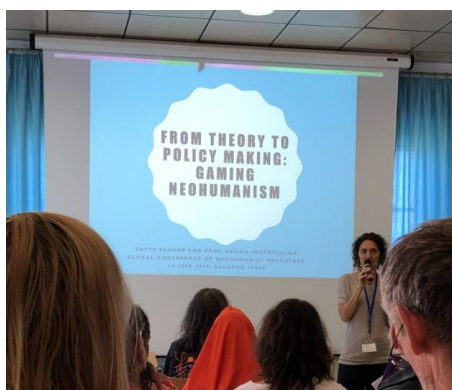
Christian Franceschini spoke on *Bringing Rationalistic Spirituality into Public Schools in South Tyrol*. We are living in an era of science, and thus in many countries, education has become entirely secular. While the separation of church and state in education has encouraged greater intellectual freedom in positive ways, at the same time materialist values have become dominant, and the cultivation of subtler human potentiality is often largely neglected. The eight elements of Astaunga Yoga offers a complete set of systematic and practical tools for holistic human development, and is based on a rationalistic, rather than religious, approach to spirituality. More than just yoga positions, Astaunga Yoga also includes universal moral values, developing and refining concentration, and expanding the heart with love. Christian Franceschini shared his wealth of experience in bringing Astaunga Yoga practices into the public school system of South Tyrol, Italy, over the past 20 years. He also shared the project “Yogasofia” which is already active in preparing educational strategies that bring the very efficient, effective tools of Astaunga Yoga into public schools.



Didi Anandarama spoke on *Shrii PR Sarkar's Aesthetics of Life*. “Beyond the periphery of material mobility, there is the world of aesthetics.” According to Shrii PR Sarkar all beings have their intrinsic sense and drive of creative expression and longing for perfect balance in the physical, psychic and psycho-spiritual realm. In her presentation, she explored the following questions: What are the aesthetic avenues that have been offered to humanity so far? How can we help and contribute in supporting this inherent aesthetic characteristic expression in individual and collective life?



Day 4 plenary session explored: *New narratives and alternative visions*. How can we generate new narratives and visions that lead us towards positive futures?



Satya Tanner led the program: *From Theory to Policymaking: Gaming Neohumanism*. This plenary was conducted in an interactive gaming style, so that insights were co-created and emerged from group discussion. The intended conclusion was that an embodied understanding of neohumanist policy, and a greater and deeper understanding of contending global narratives and the possibility of a planetary shift toward neohumanistic futures. The presentation was in four parts, starting with how the world is changing (hegemonic shifts, technological disruptions, ageing, climate change, the new technologies of the mind, and the rise of global fascism). Second, the group explored the implications of these shifts for neohumanism. Third, they created a neohumanist checklist, as a way to decide what Neohumanism is and what it is not. And fourth the checklist was used to explore policy proposals from the floor. A summary of the program is included in this issue of Gurukula Network.

Fiesta Neohumanista – Showcase of Neohumanist Projects



A highlight of the conference was the Fiesta Neohumanista - a global showcase and networking session for everyone. The showcase included schools, institutes, children's yoga programs, master units, development projects and more. For details please visit neohumanisteducation.org and go to Showcase of Projects under the Educating for a Bright Future events page. Many beautiful interactions took place during this time among the participants.

Workshops, Meetings and Evening Programs

Afternoons were devoted to many workshops, listed here below, to cater to the needs of all participants, as well as meetings for various working groups. Two nights were devoted to cultural evenings.

- Neohumanist Charter with Dieter Dambiec
- Decolonizing Education with Dr. Kathleen Kesson and Suzanne Richman
- Preparing Children for an Unknown Future with Yolande Koning
- The Balyayoga® Method - Yoga for Children and The importance of the Inner Child for Kids and Educators with Barbara Ladisa and Gianni Zollo
- Yogasofia© workshop with practical experience with sound, and, Illustrated Literature for Self-Knowledge and Awareness with Alexia Martinelli and Salvatore Ingargiola
- Cultivating a Cosmopolitan Global Citizenship in Taiwan's Teacher Education Center with Teng Huang
- Teaching from Presence: Staying heart centered and supported while working in schools/organizations with challenging circumstances and communities with Linda Baker
- The Pre-Conditions of Creativity and the Joy of Fantasy, and, Theater in Education with Vishva Shanti Ole Brekke
- Introduction to Meditation, Asanas and Yogic Lifestyle Class with Christian Franceschini and Cristina Terribile.
- Sharing Neohumanist Education Curriculum Projects Around the World - Networking Workshop with Rutger Tamminga and Mahajyoti Glassman
- Validation of Whole Person Education using Open Badges the iCAFS Way with Andrew Langford and Alejandra Leora Adler
- River School - Neohumanism in Action with Ann Donoghoe
- Linking Relief and Rehabilitation to Development with KL Chew
- The Koshas of Asana, and, A Yogic Approach to Anxiety with Dada Vishvarupananda and Sumati Brekke.
- Teaching Meditation to Children with Eric Jacobson and Amal



Jacobson

- Group Dynamics Model for Moving Together: Group Process to Enhance Coordinated Cooperation in Accomplishing Our Goals with Sid Jordan and Monika Misiowiec
- Cooperative Games With Ed Glassman



- New Day School - Evolution of a Green School with Ruai Gregory
- Amazing Kids – Storytelling for Conflict Resolution with Teenagers with Rutger Tamminga
- Adult Education Trends and Best Practices with Satya Tanner
- Awareness through Movement with Elly van Musscher

More workshop details can be found at: neohumanisteducation.org



Our Hosts and Staff

About twenty Italian local volunteers of the Neohumanist Academy prepared delicious meals and provided local logistical support for the conference. Many others also worked behind the scenes to make the conference a success.



Closing and After Conference

The conference ended with a special closing ceremony honoring all participants, organizers and presenters. The conference was followed by a strategic planning meeting which consolidated steps forward to accelerate the growth of the Neohumanist Education movement, and a visit to a Mountain Lake in Molveno.





Humanism to Neohumanism – from Macro to Micro

Notes from a talk by Eric Jacobson at the *Educating for a Bright Future* Conference held in Salorno, Italia

Humanism:

Its birth: Born right here in Italy, humanism tells us that humanity is a family with similar needs across the globe. Pico della Mirandola wrote about humanism, “To man it is granted to have whatever he chooses, to be whatever he wills”.

Tenets of Humanism: Rooted in Christianity, one of the original ideas of humanism was that humans were created in god’s image. Some of the tenets of humanism are:

- Devotion to human welfare
- A doctrine, attitude or way of life centered on human interests or values
- Gives human dominion over other life forms
- Promotes free will to develop “higher” human traits

Humanism in the Renaissance became a rebirth in celebrating and sanctifying the human experience. Instead of a denial of beauty, love, and individual joy, the human experience was being proposed as something divine, something that should not be suppressed. It also had a strong component of promoting free will. Humans had the ability to move towards God by promoting their higher qualities.

Its rise: Humanism had a major rise after World War II. Seventy million people died; half were soldiers, half were civilians. This was quite a shock to the world. The late Dr. Haim Ginott, child psychologist and holocaust survivor wrote:

“My eyes saw what no person should witness: gas chambers built by learned engineers. Children poisoned by educated physicians. Infants killed by trained nurses. Women and babies shot by high school and college graduates. So, I am suspicious of education. My request is: Help your children become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, or skilled psychopaths... education is important only if it serves to make our children more human.”

This sentiment helped give rise to the United Nations, so that we might never suffer this type of catastrophe in the world again. The deployment of the atomic bomb made us realize we cannot afford another war. The authority of the UN has grown painfully and slowly over time, but has been hampered by geo- and socio-sentiments, and by capitalism. It still remains the vanguard and flagship for the humanist movement and strives to set a moral code for the world.

Limitations of Humanism:

Humanism is not a bad thing; it’s just not a complete thing. In writing about Neohumanism, Shrii P. R. Sarkar always begins with something good from humanism.

However, here are some of the ways Humanism falls short:

--Separates humans from the rest of creation: I was taught in school growing up that human beings are animals at the top of the food chain. Anything beneath us we can eat, and anything that could eat us we should kill. This view puts human beings outside of the natural food chain and leads to such horrific acts as the mass murder of the North American bison population for idle entertainment while traveling.

--Unable to overcome limiting sentiments: Humanism has not been able to overcome limiting group sentiments. Our sense of self extended to our family, to our geographic region, and to the social groups we are part of, is natural and necessary. National sentiment can be a very positive step. But it can’t stop there. Humanism has not provided a path to go past these limiting sentiments.

--Progress has been based on technology supplying material need: Humanism defines progress by our ability to provide everyone with material goods, e.g. how many people have a refrigerator, cell phone, etc. With this view, technological progress is valued while our progress as a species is not. This idea can be summed up by this image, “A monkey driving a car... is still a monkey.”

--Sky-kissing arrogance: Humanism’s narrow view is not aligned with universal observations. Any open-minded observation about the universe should tell us that we are not masters on the top, but we are part of an integrated network. It is clear by the climate change crisis today that our decision making has been based on a very limited understanding, or narrow angle of vision of our place in creation. It is estimated that with our senses we perceive less than one percent of the physical waves around us. Yet, we have a very high opinion of our ability to understand and manipulate our environment.

--Commandeered by Secularists: Another problem with humanism is that it has become commandeered by secularists. As mathematicians unraveled the laws that operate the universe, and scientists showed how to predict and manipulate them, a godless version of humanism took shape, placing humans as masters of all creation. A view emerged that the laws controlling this universe are fixed and mechanistic. Any form of knowledge that did not conform to this mechanistic view was rejected as unscientific. As masters of all creation we don’t need God; we think we know how this universe works and we can make it work to our advantage.

Neohumanism:

Shrii PR Sarkar first coined the word in his book, *Neohumanism: The Liberation of Intellect*, in 1982. *"When the underlying spirit of humanism is extended to everything animate and inanimate, in this universe, I have designated this as Neohumanism. This Neohumanism will elevate humanism to universalism, the cult of love for all created being of this universe."*

Note that it starts with the underlying spirit of humanism, that there is something beautiful in humanism... but we need to extend that to everything. When I was in India, Sarkar introduced this philosophy and said about it:

When the sweetest touch of the human heart is extended to all things....

We already know the sweetest touch of the human heart, the inspiration and path for extending it to all things-- that is the challenge of Neohumanism.

Neohumanism is a new vision of humanism. It is humanism re-imagined. For the sake of clarity, I am simplifying Neohumanism into three components:

- Re-imagining what it is to be human: What Am I?
- A redefined view of human progress: What is Progress?
- A new story for life: What is My Story?

What Am I?

We need to redefine and re-experience our sense of identity. We need to grow our embrace and rethink what is the essence of being a human being. Are we only thinking animals, or are we something more than that? When the twin towers in NYC came down all racial differences were put aside; everyone was just an American. But there is a big difference between trying to love everyone as your own, and seeing your very self in them. I want to focus on the experience of growing our embrace, and the perennial source of inspiration for doing so, something that is renewable and sustainable.

I've spent many years talking to learned people about this. Most people will agree that consciousness exists. If you watch the time elapse photography of a plant, you can't but notice its consciousness expressing itself. It is reaching, spreading its arms, shrinking from things. Where was that consciousness before? Consciousness must have been somewhere on Earth at the start of life. It must have been present in inanimate matter. When that matter got compressed into forming a nucleus, then further condensed and focused into the first nuclear cell called life, consciousness immediately began to emerge and express itself. It continued expressing itself more as life forms developed, becoming ever more sophisticated. That consciousness therefore must lie quiescent within earth's factors.... solid, liquid, light, air and space. Since the earth was born from the sun, then consciousness must have been in the sun. If the sun was made from gasses condensing in space, then consciousness must be in those gases and in space. In truth, we are made of stardust. We are connected with all things. We are the result of eons of evolution, the

elements of the universe now able to bear witness to its Self.

The universe was designed for life... it wasn't some infinitesimal accident that happened in one perfect place. This universe was designed for life and we are the living proof of that. If we are the stars, we are indeed connected with all things. If we are connected with all things, we are the universe itself bearing witness to its own existence. It therefore is our destiny to remove all the limiting labels and to continue to expand our awareness of self as the same consciousness that pervades all things. That experience I have only found through meditation. Others have found it while communing with nature. It's not just a concept. It's an experience that will guide your intuition and your intellect to make the right decisions. To make the case in point. I was once an arrogant and selfish person who tried to do service but didn't feel it in my heart until I had a mystical experience which took me outside of my ego. I can see myself in others now. Not just intellectually. The experience of ourselves as a human being needs to change and expand.

What is Progress?

We need to redefine progress as a species instead of as material progress. Instead of measuring how many people have cell phones, how about measuring how much people are learning to care about more than just themselves? Mother Theresa was an advanced human being. Why? Why do we all agree that is true? Her first public act happened when she saw people dying in the Calcutta streets and held their hands so they would not die alone. That to me is progress. We don't even have the barometer to measure such progress in a correct fashion. That's why we have the global climate and other crises, because we are advancing with technology but not as a species. We are many years away from World War 2. Perhaps we are not slaughtering millions of people, but we slaughter 70 million species instead. Have we learned our lesson yet?

Human mind moves from physicality toward the unknown. Too often we measure our life by physical comforts, possessions and basic needs. We need to move in a different direction - intellectual progress and then spiritual progress - away from physical progress-reaching towards the unknown as a measurement of progress. Why do we know how to manufacture a car that won't pollute and will bio degrade, yet we don't do it? Why do we know how to make carpeting without using any cancer causing chemicals, yet we continue to poison? We know how to do many *progressive* things but we don't do them! We don't have the proper definition of progress. We should not be able to continue doing things in a destructive way that we know how to do better. This happens because real progress has not been accepted as a goal for humanity. We would rather do things the expedient way, the instantly profitable way, than to change ourselves. We must change our definition of progress.

What is my story?

In the US, the indigenous people were born into the world with a sense of story... *why am I here? what is my purpose? 'To fulfill the dreams of my ancestors. To protect my tribe. To leave the earth better than I found it.'* Whereas when I was born into this world I was told a different story *'eat drink and be merry because tomorrow I die'*. The modern story is consume and enjoy. We need a new life story:

Individual Story: I am evolving towards something, overcoming labels that have limited me, no longer satiated by only material goods. I experience joy overcoming my past as I fulfill my human potential. I am here to connect with all, embrace all, and make them my own.

Collective Story: We are all moving together, none can be left behind, distinctions must be removed, injustice must be confronted, it is our mission to make ourselves, our society and our ecosystem reflect the unity of its true nature.

Neohumanist Education

Neohumanism doesn't only belong to education. But I am going to focus on how we are going to apply this Neohumanism I have just outlined to education. Neohumanist Education seeks to apply the principles of Identity, Progress and Story to every aspect of schooling. These principles become the three main avenues of expressing Neohumanism in Education. How are we going to apply these re-imagined principles to every aspect of school?

What am I? — Freeing the Mind of all dogma & limited sense of identity.

We need to free the young mind from all limitations and a limited identity. Here are some limitations we should be consciously working to free the young mind from:

- all labels – We place so many layers of labels placed on ourselves. We need to see that there is an essential self that is not labeled. If you can go back to a time before you knew even your name... part of yourself that is continuous without any label... that is a type of identity meditation
- all inherited and imposed bias
- geographical identity
- sociological identity
- physical characteristics
- all isms other than universalism
- imagined impossibilities – These form a big mental wall that says “you can't do that because...” Usually it's because there is some dogma that stops you or because you think it's impossible; for example, you can't travel in space because it takes too long
- materialism – We need to try to liberate our minds from being obsessed with objects. Seeing consciousness in everything then becomes much easier.

- egoistic intellect – Every profession has its own vocabulary to make everyone else feel inferior. PR Sarkar referred to this as intellectual extravaganza: the pride of knowing things that you are not going to share with anyone else.

Freeing the mind has to be applied to every lesson in school.

What is Progress?—Expanding the Heart to embrace all animate and so-called inanimate.

- Widening your circle of love and inclusion
- Cultivating experiences that grow our compassion and connection
- Placing value on developing inner resources
- Emphasizing progress in terms that go beyond physical and academic

When we give progress reports – so much emphasis is on intellectual and physical progress. If you try to say something about the child's development as a human being, there is resistance from the parents. One reason for this is that we haven't made our case for real progress to the public. We need to help the world change its focus when it comes to progress.

What is my story? — Engaging in Society with a spirit of service and sense of justice.

How do I engage in society? What is the story for my life? This is the story that I would like to transmit to my students:

“With a moral code to advise me, I have a mission to uplift myself, those around me, society and all things to a more just and fulfilling existence.”

This can be accomplished through:

- Service
- Teaching a moral code
- Volunteerism
- Promoting social justice
- Applying learning to real world problems

Neohumanist Education Principles Applied in daily classroom practice

Freeing the Mind, Expanding the Heart, Engaging in Society can be applied to every academic and artistic discipline at school. The result is that over time the child becomes more neohumanistic. They become a better version of themselves. Their good tendencies get nurtured; their bad tendencies get discouraged and reduced.

At Progressive School, these three principles of NHE are applied to our curriculum and our methods. Following is an example of how they are applied within one specific topic in science.

Case in Point: Teaching about Photosynthesis

What is photosynthesis? A fact based materialist version would say that photosynthesis is the process by which green plants use energy from the sun to transform water, carbon dioxide, and minerals into oxygen and organic compounds. What can we add to or subtract from the teaching of photosynthesis, in order to **Free the Mind, Expand the Heart and Engage in Society?**

Curriculum Specifics

Here's a good guideline: add **scale, perspective and connection**, and additionally address the **problem of perfection**.

Scale – How much oxygen is produced by a leaf? How many leaves are on a tree? How many leaves are on earth? How much oxygen is produced in the ocean? How big is the protective atmosphere of the earth compared to the earth? Everything the plants are producing is allowing life to exist. Your goal—completely blow our students minds with scale from cosmic to microscopic.

Perspective – Change the perspective from you to the perspective of the plant. The plants are regulating the earth's climate. The sun is not maintaining the temperature of the earth; the earth's temperature is regulated by the plants. It's not some kind of accidental thing. They are reflecting sunlight and producing vapor for clouds and rain. They are constantly changing these outputs to adjust to changes in the sun!

Connection – All life is based on plants making food from the sun. Who else is making food? Nobody else is making food. Plants are the solar food panels for themselves and for all of life. That's what photosynthesis is. Here's a recent discovered fact: Fungi extract the minerals from the rocks that are needed for photosynthesis! Therefore the fungi appeared first on Earth to extract the minerals from the rocks so that plants could use them in photosynthesis.

Problem of Perfection – Then there is the problem of perfection. This problem of perfection exists within all scientific examination. Scientists say conditions had to be minutely exact in the extreme in order for the universe and life processes to exist. You have to have the exact amount of everything and the perfect conditions for photosynthesis to take place. And they say it is a random event. Scientists say that if the Big Bang were .001 of 1% stronger or weaker there would be no universe. This defines the problem of perfection that they cannot explain through their mechanistic religious outlook.

What needs to be subtracted from the teaching of photosynthesis in order to make it more Neohumanistic?

Watch out for textbook comments like this I found from one textbook: *“Back in the very early days of life, plant*

like organisms unknowingly made way for animal life by filling the atmosphere with oxygen”. On the surface it looks like a statement of fact. Behind this there is an assumption that things are happening accidentally without purpose - there is no design, it's random, and we are just lucky—plants don't know what they're doing. I would like to see a human being try to create a scent that's exactly like a female wasp and paint themselves to look like a female wasp to fool a male wasp. An orchid knows how to do that. That's how they get pollinated. How does that plant know how to do that? You might say the plant is being directed by another intelligence or you might say the plant itself is intelligent. It's a religious belief being fostered in public schools and in STEM or STEAM teaching that science is mechanistic and is here to serve our needs, and help us defeat our global competitors.

Methodology

How can we change our methods to fulfill the three parts of NHE, freeing the mind, expanding the heart, engaging in society? We can do this with **Modeling, Extending** the topic and **Applying** what was learned.

Modeling

Modeling is the single most powerful way to change another person. I say this based on my 45 years of watching people grow up. One of our teachers teaches about ancient forests... he brings a passion to it that all the children get touched by. They want to go to an ancient forest - because he models it. If you can't model your love of photosynthesis, teach them about someone else who had that passion. You can also model through biographies of great personalities.

Extend the topic

Find ways to extend your topic into other subjects – music, art, yoga, poetry, drama, history, current events, morality, etc. Every place has a history you might be able to connect the topic with. You can explore moral questions such as human interference into photosynthesis and engage students in a debate about it.

Include applied learning activities

Field trips, planting, plants in our micro-society, examining personal likes and dislikes, tree hugging, ecological volunteering! PR Sarkar says you haven't learned something until you have put it into practice. Applied learning says I learned about photosynthesis and now what? Let's have a field trip. Let's take care of our plants. Let's include photosynthesis in our micro-society, which is our classroom. If you value photosynthesis in your classroom it will be part of your child's life. NHE is not only a system to make learning neohumanistic but to make learning permanent, through actual applications.

Lessons from the Educating for a Bright Future Conference by Satya Tanner

We adapted it to the Neohumanist education context, and the purpose was to enable participants to become more aware of their worldview and its limitations, as well as understanding how to make neohumanist education policy decisions free (somewhat) of sentiment.

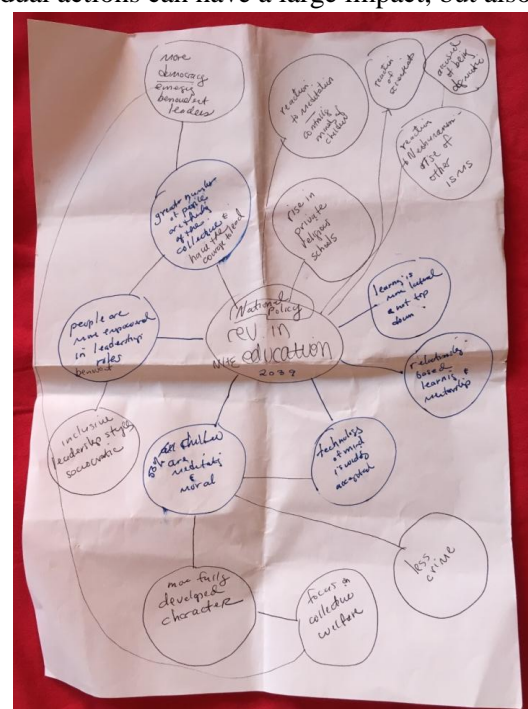
Neohumanism is a worldview based on the ethic of universal love that tries to encompass multiple perspectives, embraces diversity but also attempts to remove inequity. Neohumanist *education* is an approach that attempts to develop the whole self, not just academic skills. Rather it includes character development and ethics (2).

I went on to explain that we are living in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous (VUCA) world (5). The volatility we experience is a period of rapidly increasing time where individual actions can have a large impact, but also it is a time that requires vision and practice to bring alternative futures into our present (6). We began by broadly exploring 5 themes from the perspective of what was emerging, and what new narratives might exist:

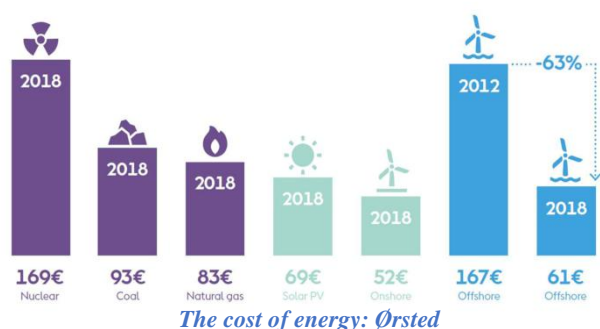
1. Technological change
2. Climate change and the food chain
3. Student driven learning
4. The rise of fascism
5. The rise of women

We said that it was 2039 and did anticipatory mapping on 1 of 6 imagined trends (based on current emerging issues) using the futures wheel. These were:

- The neohumanist education (NHE) revolution – becomes national policy
- The energy shift to renewables – 50% of all homes
- Vegetarian as the new normal – 50% of all food
- The conservative revival – 55% of all adults
- Gender equity – 50% of all boards and positions of power
- Technologies of the mind – 8 million in your region practice meditation (or 36%)



An NHE revolution futures wheel



The purpose of the mapping exercise was for participants to practice thinking through the consequences of policy/trends, to think beyond their worldview and to repeatedly incorporate shadow aspects.

In the education revolution mapping example, we see more children meditating and having a fully developed ethical character leading to more benevolent leadership in society. However, we also see a potential rise in private religious

schools reacting to the rise of meditation. This led us to uncover the disowned elements of the futures we were imagining.

The Disowned Side of Futures

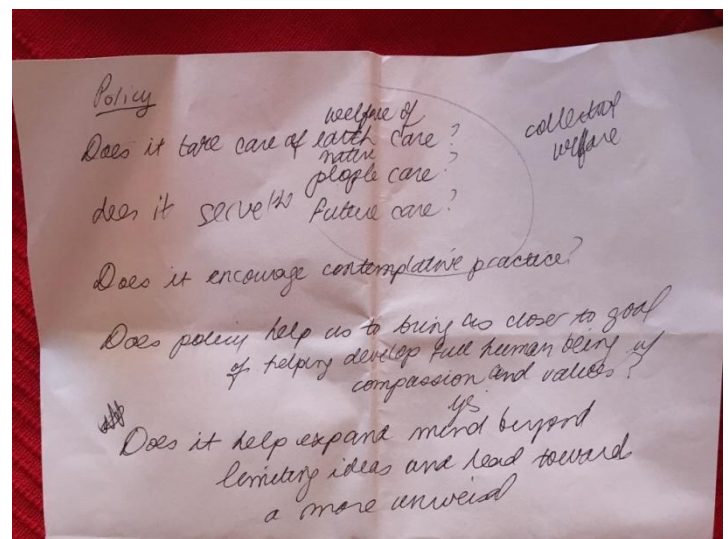
Identifying ‘shadow’ or disowned future of policy decisions and trends helps to prevent utopian thinking and keeps the future dynamic. Of the topics available, the three most popular were Renewables, NHE revolution and Gender equity and their conclusions are described below:

- Participants found that the energy shift to renewables would have obvious benefits (less pollution, less environmental consequences etc) but also bring up challenges such as disposal or competition with agriculture that would need strategies to combat unintended impacts. Renewables as the new polluter was a potential ‘disowned’ side that was acknowledged and needed solutions.
- The Neohumanist education revolution led to all the ideals that make the participants so passionate about the topic (ethical society, full character development, benevolent leadership, less crime). However at what point might Neohumanist education also become a dogma or a fascist version of its original self? Would there be a rise in private schools seeking an alternative from enforced Neohumanist education? What strategies might need to exist to keep it from becoming stale curriculum?
- Gender equity brings greater equality and problem solving capacity in the world, but after a quick lesson in feminist basics with the group (i.e. the negative impact of narrow gender roles on human beings), it became clear that the disowned future within the rise of women lies within their mentality. If the women who are rising are a part of the dominant subordinated/pecking order then it will be more of the same power relationships that we see today. If the mentality of women is one of coordinated cooperation, then we will have a different future to look forward to.

Thus participants became more aware of their worldviews and the limitations of those worldviews. In Neohumanist theory, sentiment plays a role in guiding our decisions (7), therefore the next step was development of a checklist as a tool to help us make a more rational decision.

Developing and Testing Checklists

After developing the futures wheel and identifying the disowned future for their chosen topic, participants reverse engineered and presented a neohumanist policy checklist based on the trend they had chosen. The checklist was harder to develop than anticipated. To move from policy developer to policy evaluator via generic ‘good policy’ principles can be quite difficult. Participants were able to develop checklists for their original topic context quite well, but there was a tension between creating a checklist that was too specific to the policy and one that was too loose to give any meaning. For example a checklist for the NHE education revolution might include topics such as the quality of the curriculum regarding child development, but this doesn’t give any meaning when applied to the shift to renewable energy or gender equity.



an example checklist

In terms of what did work well, one particular group derived their checklist from the Gross National Happiness Domains (living standard, governance, education, health, ecology, community, time use and balance, culture, wellbeing) (8). Others were along similar principles such as inclusion, diversity, caring for future generations, whole ethical development, encouraging contemplative practice and wellbeing.

We tested their checklists for wider applicability on two “test” policies:

1. Tight regulation on meditation education
2. Relationship education for teenagers that includes navigating romantic relationships with robots

Tight regulation on meditation education was voted down because it didn’t allow for diverse ways of teaching or perhaps even diverse types of meditation. Relationship education for teenagers including the complexities of Artificial Intelligence was upheld due to the potential diversity of relationships in the future. However caution was made regarding the quality of the education, and what worldviews and values underpinned the education itself.

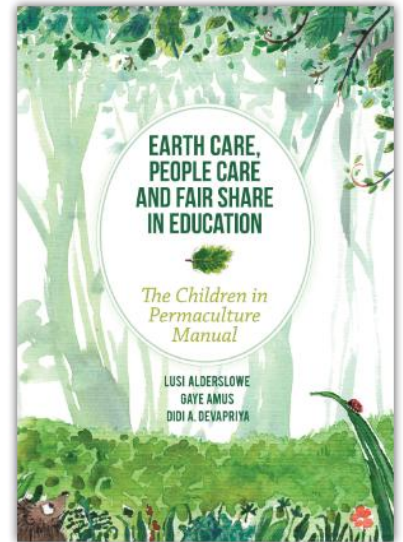
Funding and Politics

Participants were then asked to develop proposals for funding with the Ministry of Education and Lifelong Learning, and then to justify their proposal using their checklists. 3 presenters were picked. The first proposal was for non-compulsory meditation in schools with parental approval and accessibility to all. Key questions from the neohumanist policy checklist included the inclusiveness of the program and accessibility. Another group presented a program for schools that had some compulsory components and some optional components covering a scope that included yoga, meditation, and social service, and was student centred in its approach. The third proposal was for a “children in permaculture” program to be rolled out into schools. Their key questions included the degree of impact on future generations, encouraging compassion, and expanding the mind beyond limiting views.

The Minister for Education and Life Long Learning (role played by a younger woman, who in 20 years time will be approaching the age of a likely minister in 2039) evaluated the proposals. In classic ministerial fashion she chose to award the funding to the proposal that was the most cost effective, replicable and easy to be accepted in society. When comparing permaculture to meditation she said “It (permaculture) is a widely accepted concept”. As such she chose the children in permaculture program.

Her accurate embodiment of the ‘corridors of power’ perhaps left some wondering how they could have better sold their proposals. For others, perhaps they were left wondering how we will educate the next office holders in the corridors of power to be less risk averse. The young woman herself wondered whether there would be capacity to change the strict, repetitive curriculum and teaching methods in her home country, its conservative philosophical basis ironically embodied in her role play as Minister.

And for myself, I was left wondering how peer to peer or decentralised, student-led education might play a role in dismantling the corridors of power. If old ways of thinking gave us our current problems and are embedded in the systems and minds of our current and future policy makers, how will we advance newer, ‘politically riskier’ solutions? But in a time of volatility, small actors with vision can make large changes. Small actors are appearing on our horizon, so I concluded that not only is the future bright, but also exciting.



Conclusions

In summary the conclusions from the activity were:

- Seeing the disowned future in our worldviews is a necessary step in maintaining a truly neohumanist position
- Neohumanist policy checklists are not so easy to develop in a short period of time, but the work of organisations such as the Gross National Happiness Center provide an excellent starting point. Further additions to the checklist included inclusion, diversity, impact on future generations, encouraging contemplative practice, expansion of mind and ethical/compassionate development.
- A good policy is subject to both your ability to sell it, and the political will of the decision makers whose skills are governed by the system they came out of. i.e. a more conservative system will result in more conservative decision makers.

To see the presentation in full you can access it here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_JZODfpUIw&feature=youtu.be

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Linking Relief and Rehabilitation to Development Work

By Kalyanii KL Chew

Details of a workshop given at the NHE Global Conference, Salerno, Italy, July 2019



AMURT Indonesia's Early Childhood Teacher Training Project is a humanitarian project conducted by AMURT-AMURTEL (an NGO engaged in disaster-relief, rehabilitation and development) which combines the spirit of Neohumanist education and Proutist civil society development in an all-round approach to social development.

As a volunteer regional coordinator of AMURT-AMURTEL, I have been involved in relief-rehabilitation-development work since 2005 in Indonesia (Aceh, West Sumatra, Central Java and Sulawesi), Myanmar (intervention after Cyclone Nargis in 2007) and Malaysia (mostly small-scale educational projects). We have moved from disaster-relief to development work, focusing on early childhood teacher training since 2010. From 2013-2018, AMURT Indonesia worked in Muslim-dominant Central Java on a project entitled "Developing an Early Childhood Teacher Training System that is Effective and Duplicable". In that project, we worked with about 180 early childhood teachers from 46 centers catering to 2,600+ students each year.

Our present project entitled "Collaborating with Government, Community and Parents to Develop Quality Early Childhood Education" runs for 40 months from Jan 2019-Apr 2022 and is sponsored by Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ) and German children's charity Kindernothilfe. Also located in Central Java, this project consists of a mentored program where we work closely with 126 educators from 30 early childhood schools in 21 villages catering to 1300+ children. We also work with approximately 1,000 other teachers in 14-20 sub-districts on a non-mentored basis, benefiting about 15,000 children each year. The project aims to support the local government in training teachers to implement the new Indonesian national early childhood curriculum, which is a progressive child-centered curriculum. Our participatory, action-learning training style aims to empower early childhood educators to in turn nurture empowered, happy and caring children of character and resilience who will grow up to contribute towards building a better world. Universal moral and spiritual values, the Child Rights Convention principles and a scientific approach to learning, provide solid building blocks to Neohumanist Education.

As the title of my workshop topic "Linking Relief and Rehabilitation to Development" suggests, my presentation focused on disaster relief work as an entry point into development project work. I also shared important lessons learnt over 14 years of project work, and how partnering local governments in implementing the progressive, child-centered Indonesian national curriculum enabled AMURT Indonesia to scale up the project's reach. Empowering early childhood teachers (99% women) = developing grassroots community leaders = developing civil society = laying the foundation for sustainable development. In this way, we combine the enlightened values of neohumanist education with the passion of social activism to plant the seeds of all-round social transformation in implementing development work.



(Footnote: Didi A. Haripriya, Usha YC Chang and Kalyanii KL Chew form the core AMURT team in this project.)

Lily Kids and Yoga Center, Vietnam

A Charming House for Nurturing Children

By Ly Hoang

In Vietnam nowadays education is considered to be a key factor in helping the country develop and catch up with the world. The government is

giving more freedom to the private sector with the aim to boost up the system. However, it looks

up to the West with the belief that all progressive values of mankind lie there. Every Vietnamese parent living in the cities dreams that their children could go to study abroad in an economy-advanced country one day. Many international schools or local schools with adaptive curriculum have been established to serve that purpose. Children are pushed to study from a young age so that they can realize their parents' dream. In that situation, Lily Kids & Yoga Center was born to have children experience their childhood happily and beautifully. With a neohumanist approach, children feel and learn many intangible and unique values such as love for other people and species, internal self exploration through quiet time and yoga, and they are encouraged to express their opinion etc. The education in Vietnam traditionally teaches people to bow down, listen and accept. Here children can speak up and say they want to study or what they think and how they feel. Dinosaur lessons or making a robot or an airplane were set up because they wish to do so. We wish to nurture children growing up to know how to think for themselves and think for others, not just to follow the stereotype or bow to the ruling authority. In the center, children learn basic skills such as English and Vietnamese in a fun and interactive way. For math, they learn through math worksheets designed to cater to each child's ability. We also have an extra-curriculum hour for children to do what they want to do or what we want them to explore. Last summer, we took a trip to a mountain nearby for star gazing at night and another trip to study the ecology of the mountain. We were amazed that after the trips, the children have expanded their horizons about the world, the universe and their feelings towards the animals and plants.

In Lily center, we also pay attention to the relationship with parents. Regular communication with parents has been done to co-ordinate nurturing at home and the center. Parents have participated in helping out during the outing trips or extra-curricular activities. Some have joined the asana classes for adults after they see their children study in the center for a while.

The center has officially opened in a new building for 6 months by now. It is located in a new area of Danang City, Vietnam. We have 6 primary and 3 kindergarten children studying 3 times/week. From the experience of children and parents with the center, we hope to slowly show the community another way for all-round development of a child, which will contribute to guide people and society back to the dharmic road.

We welcome volunteers to come anytime to help out. You can teach children English, your culture and any expertise you have. Please write to us at: <lilycenter.dng@gmail.com>.



Ecological Outing Trip



Children creating art projects



Stargazing trip

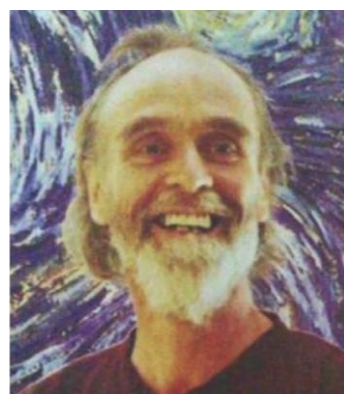
International Neohumanist Centre Chandigarh, India

The Neohumanist Education and Relief Welfare Trust (NHERW) initiated a project in collaboration with Ananda Marga Gurukula to establish Neohumanist Centre in Chandigarh. The current building provides a place for international guests and a large hall for local activities and regional or national seminars. The adjacent plot is being acquired to further its outreach activities. A physiotherapy service is also being established to provide medical relief to those in need at a very nominal cost.



Dr. Pashupati Steve Landau, MD and yoga acharya inaugurated the centre with a three day ***“Yoga Instructor Basic Course on the Science and Art of Yoga”*** from November 1-3rd 2019, with 25 participants from all around India. Dr Landau has integrated yoga and meditation in his practice of western medicine for the past 40 years. He is currently the advanced trainer of yoga teachers and Director of Shiva Dancing School of Yoga in Greensboro, North Carolina. A graduate of Harvard University and Temple University School of Medicine, Dr. Landau has treated patients both from western medical perspective as well as utilizing yogic treatments and natural remedies. Anju Sakthivel, from Vellore, Tamilnadu, a renowned Yoga Therapist, attended the program and shared her knowledge of yoga therapy.

Additionally Dr. Landau gave a lecture on ***Yoga through the lens of Western Medicine*** combining the discipline of yoga and medical science, at the National Institute of Technical Teacher Training and Research (NITTTR). Another lecture was organized by the Center for Swami Vivekananda Studies at the Panjab University. Dr Shambhushivananda also spoke at the Chandigarh Technology University and ITI, Chandigarh on the ***Science of Yoga***.



The Blissful Child

On February 7-9, 2020, Rutger Tamminga from the Netherlands/Taiwan will conduct a weekend teachers training course on Neohumanist Education at the Neohumanist Centre called Inner and Outer Ecology. The seminar will incorporate storytelling, yoga for children and innovative ideas about education and a workshop on herbalogy by Dr. B. D. Sharma, a national authority on herbs. It is open to parents and teachers who interact with 0-10 year olds. For the past twenty five years Rudramohan Rutger Tamminga has been active in Neohumanist Education and is a popular lecturer, travelling regularly to China and Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippines for teacher training and parent-children workshops. He has also published many books for teachers and children.. In 2018 he started a Gurukul Mountain Retreat Center in Shimen District, near Taipei where he is responsible for developing a Gurukul Teacher Training Center.

Seminar on Spirituality

Dada Shambhushivananda conducted a weekend seminar on Spirituality in Today's World. Over 50 local members participated in the seminar which was held at the local Jagriti/Neohumanist Center.



NHE Early Childhood Curriculum Development for Ananda Marga Schools in India by Didi Anandarama

After working for many decades at the grassroots level, the regional AMGK of West Bengal is overseeing more than 600 schools from Nursery to High School. A local AMGK team assisted by Dr. Sunandita Bhowmik who made her thesis in Neohumanist Education and who works as Assistant Professor, Dept. of Education, Coochbehar Panchanan Barma University (CBPBU) crystallized the following elements of NHE curriculum operating in various degrees or aims to implement in these schools:



Shishu (Nursery) and Parambhik 1 and 2 (KG 1 and KG2):

1. Morning Circle: this includes a combination of morning songs, action songs, exercises, warm ups and stretches, yoga, marching or parade movements, Sanskrit slokas reciting, Prabhat Samgiita, Kiirtan, meditation. The Morning Circle is partly the collective school assembly in the morning and partly each class continues it in their classroom with storytelling, discussions and leading into the theme work.

2. Monthly themes for 8 months

Shishu:

1. Who loves me? 2. Home sweet home. 3. I am good. 4. I like to help. 5. Neat and clean. 6. My garden. 7. Friends around me. 8. My beautiful world.

For Parambhik 1:

1. I am kind. 2. I am smart. 3. I am happy. 4. My school. 5. People around me. 6. I like to travel. 7. The six seasons. 8. Tiny Green Island.

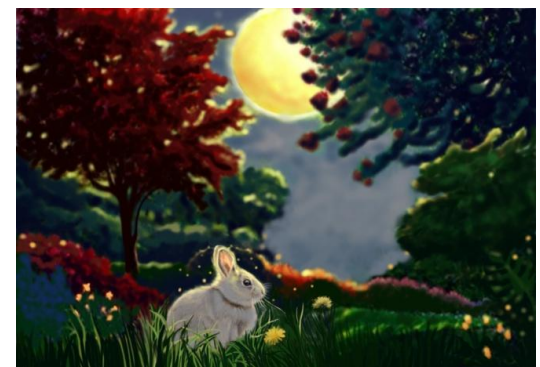
For Parambhik 2:

1. Paramapurusa is Love. 2. Space. 3. Air. 4. Fire, 5. Water. 6. Earth. 7. Great big circle of Love. 8. My circle of Love.



3. Learning Corners. The classrooms will have six learning corners:

1. Language Arts - books, letters, puppets, anything that promotes language.
2. Manipulatives - legos, puzzles, duplos, magnets, anything that can be manipulated. 3. Blocks - 3 types (larger than 4cm) 4. Dramatic Play - play kitchen, store, dolls, anything that promotes theater- dress up. 5. Art - water colours, crayons, colour pencils, cutting, pasting, clay, play dough. 6. Outdoors for gross motor development through the playground that has something to balance, climb, play ball, run, skip, hop, jump, sand and water play.



4. Textbook – each level will have a workbook printed by AMGK that each child uses at home and at school. It will be an integrated workbook with exercises, short stories, English and Bengali/Hindi languages, early Math, cognitive exercises and theme related poems, songs and art activities.

5. Storybook – each level will have a story book with five or six illustrated short moral stories that convey Neohumanist ideas.

6. Tara Bandha Chara – a booklet of rhymes composed by Shrii PR Sarkar, founder of NHE for Early Childhood.

The pictures included here are from the new textbooks and story books illustrated by Didi Ananda Carushila.

Sawa Project - Nile River School Kindergarten – Egypt

By Suzi Balaban



The Nile River School (NRS), a Neohumanist Education project, was established in 2011 as an informal learning space in the village of Baharwa near El Ayyat, Giza. It is located right on the riverbank in a beautiful outdoor setting for children to learn through exploration, play and art.



The local community has a population of around 2000. There is a high level of unemployment, illiteracy and poverty in the village which lacks even basic infrastructure such as running water and sanitation. There are no government facilities such as schools or clinics. The closest government schools are 3km away, which is a hardship for the children, leading to absenteeism and high dropout levels. This has resulted in high illiteracy rates even among the children attending these schools.

NRS is served by volunteers, both Egyptian and international, who come to work with the children, playing, engaging in art activities, helping with schoolwork and literacy. Also, volunteers and donors have helped the villagers with medical expenses and worked on projects such as painting and repairing homes, supplying water pumps and septic tanks.



A local Egyptian NGO, Manahyaha, who volunteered at the school, and were inspired by Didi Anandarama's work, embarked on a project to build a small community school which opened in 2016 to provide progressive primary education close to home for the village children. It has one class for each level from primary 1 to 3 at the moment but plans to expand to cover all six years of the primary stage. This is an official school approved by the Ministry of Education.

Partnership with MKA

In October 2017, NRS started a partnership with Masr li Kull Ahlaha Foundation (MKA) to establish to establish an official pre-school class to prepare 4-6 year old children for entry to the government primary school or the local community school. Two trained teachers were employed, and 24 children were enrolled. After the first year of operation, the decision was taken to invest more in the project.

The Sawa Project

The Sawa project ('sawa' means 'together' in Arabic) encourages the involvement and participation of families and the local community in the school. The parents are invited to parenting sessions delivered by a professional from Cairo who visits at weekends. These sessions focus on positive discipline, responsive care giving and the importance of the early years in a child's life to learning outcomes and success in adulthood. We believe that school should be an extension of home, not a separate alien world.



Teacher Training

There are many challenges, notably the culture and experience of both the teachers and parents who are accustomed to traditional rote learning, repetition, copying and sitting still, backed up by threats of violence and actual violence (even at KG level). We have delivered training sessions to the teachers and arranged visits to well-known nurseries in Cairo for observation, yet changing mindsets is a long-term process. Recently we employed a kindergarten consultant from Cairo, who has experience in Montessori methods. An assistant, a young girl from the village, was also employed. The intake of children rose to 26 in October 2018 then reached 32 by May 2019.

Curriculum, Training Materials and Outreach



The learning approach of the kindergarten is a mix of learning styles including some Montessori principles. The focus is on the individual child and her/his needs and desires. We foster independent learning, learning through play, exploration and discussion. We have been developing our own curriculum and teaching materials throughout the year, to make learning more fun and engaging for the children.

We plan to produce a robust, progressive kindergarten system, curriculum and training package, based on the development of social and emotional skills, fostering creativity and knowledge production. We hope to expand our

reach by promoting this 'package' to other kindergartens, private or run by NGOs, as an alternative to the harsh traditional methods that lead to the poor outcomes we see today in our society.

We can judge our success from the enquiries we have received from families in surrounding villages as our reputation spreads for our kind, gentle and joyful methods. We give priority to the local families, but we have accepted three children from outside the village this year. We also have a waiting list of around 8 children. The capacity of the school is around 28 children during our morning session. We are looking into building an extra room, and making better use of the outdoor space to expand our capacity in future years.



AMAYE, an Association with a Plan!

One year ago, Dada Vishvarupananda and Sumati Brekke were discussing the need to bring together Ananda Marga yoga educators around the world, and decided it was time to team up and make it happen. To do so, in collaboration with Dada Shambhushivananda, they revived the existing structure of AMAYE – the Ananda Marga Association of Yoga Educators. AMAYE is one of the newest additions to the Gurukula family. Many Ananda Marga yoga educators around the world have been rendering fruitful service since the early 1960's. Now, their contributions are becoming well recognized, and they are starting to share their experiences and knowledge through this global association. We encourage every AM yoga educator to join AMAYE soon. Registration is easy: just fill in the sign-up form at:

www.amaye.org/join (in case of difficulty, write to info@amaye.org)

At the Global Neohumanist Education Conference 2019 in Salerno, Italy, the AMAYE team had the excellent opportunity to connect with the wider community of neohumanist educators. There were several meetings on various organizational matters with the overall feeling that AMAYE is becoming well integrated within the Gurukula structures. One such meeting was on the last day when the AMAYE team presented the association's journey so far and their strategic plan, getting useful feedback from those present.

In this first year, the association's focus has been on mobilizing members from all around the world (82 so far!), setting up communication infrastructures and channels (e.g. online newsletter, updates, discussion group for members, website), reviewing yoga teacher training manuals and standardizing the steps of practice of Ananda Marga āsanās, and – most importantly – coming up with a good and sustainable plan.

We wanted to develop the association in a systematic way from the very beginning, have fun and not get stressed out in the process. Therefore, we came up with a strategic plan in 4 phases against which we can continually check our progress and revise our priorities. We are now half way through Phase 2 and will continue to pursue our targets in the working areas of: 1. Setting up the association (organizational development), 2. Developing the network and community feeling (membership benefits), 3. Technical infrastructure (communications and knowledge exchange), and 4. Research and development (new resources).

We also hope to hold a Yoga Educators Conference in the coming years.

If you would like to stay tuned, you may read and subscribe to the newsletter AMAYE Voices at:

<www.amaye.org/newsletter>. We encourage all members engaged in yoga therapy, kids yoga or yoga education in general to regularly send their photographs and news of activities to the editor of AMAYE Voices. For any further information, please write to info@amaye.org.



Fast-forward to the Future for Romanian Teenagers

By Didi Ananda Devapriya

In March 2019, the "I am also in the Community!" Project, which ran in partnership with CPE (Center of Partnerships for Equality), and was financed by the "Fund for Social Innovation", successfully concluded. The project offered interactive civic engagement activities to 223 sixteen-year old youth from five disadvantaged urban high schools in Bucharest.

I designed a series of innovative tools to give these 16 year old students a chance to "Fast Forward" into the responsibilities and challenges of adult life, as well as to discover and practice ways to become engaged, active citizens that are empowered to be part of solutions rather than contributing blindly to the problems of society.



There were four main modules of the project: "Fast Forward - Managing Resources and Happiness", "Youth can change the world - addressing social injustice", "Activist tools for civic engagement" and "Social enterprise - can business change the world?".

As an ancient Chinese Confucian philosopher, Xunzi, said "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand." Within the project, I developed several original simulation games and exercises designed to teach practical life skills in a fun, interactive and memorable way. The simulation games that were used in the modules were complex, engaging and fully immersed the learners in experiential learning.

In the "Fast-Forward: Managing Resources and Happiness" game, the youth had to manage several variables that reflected real life, adult responsibilities. They received a salary in play money with which they had to pay bills and rent, buy food to have enough to eat every day, as well as face unexpected surprises they pulled from the bag of "destiny". A few examples of destiny cards, "You forgot to pay your bus ticket, and receive a fine of 100 lei." "You buy new clothes for work – 300 RON" or "You go for a

walk with your friend in the park." Destiny cards often required spending money, but not always. Money wasn't the only variable that they had to juggle, as destiny cards also often had either smiley faces or sad faces on them. The young people had a score card to accumulate the stickers symbolizing the happiness or stress associated with the destiny cards.

The premise of the project was that many of the most disadvantaged youth in Romania, have parents that live off of meager welfare allowances, and have never held a steady job, had a savings account, or made a budget. As these skills and behaviors are not explicitly taught in school, and there is a lack of modeling in the family, such youth are at high risk of simply perpetuating the cycle of poverty, as they know no other alternative. However, during a simulation, youth have the opportunity to identify with the role of a doctor or lawyer, and experience what it is like to manage such resources. One of the most important aspects of the game was the reflection process at the conclusion, in which they had a chance to observe if there was a correlation between happiness and money. Usually there was not, to their surprise! However, when they thought about it, it made sense. During the game, all of the participants were very happy to get cards that had no price-tag attached, that only brought them happiness stickers such as "You spend time playing with your child", or "You volunteer at a local soup-kitchen." Indeed, when I designed the destiny cards and the game, I purposefully embedded positive values and messages within, to help them to experience, for example, that there is more to life than money. I also designed in common pitfalls that I have witnessed youth from AMURTEL's "Vistara" (transitional apartment for youth leaving protective care), such as gambling their money or spending too much money on cigarettes.

In another of the games, the youth entered into a diversity of roles regarding a controversial issue in a fictional village. An oil company wanted to buy land from farmers, to be able to drill. Some of the youth were landowners that would benefit from the high price the



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company was offering, others were mothers worried that the oil would poison the well waters. Some were activists for an ecological non-profit and some were from opposing political parties. They had the opportunity to gather support for their position from other community members, and at the end of the game, an election was held. This was again a rich opportunity for discussion and de-briefing following the experience, and allowed them to experience themselves taking a stand in society for their convictions. A few of the groups really dazzled me by spontaneously coming up with very progressive ideas about how they need to protect their local economy from the invasion of the corporation which would not really provide any true benefit.

After the conclusion of this successful pilot project, I hope to attract more funding to be able to expand the project and bring it to more schools in the country. In the meantime, I already did training in the method for the team in Lebanon that is doing vocational and life-skills training with youth, and I introduced some of the tools at the PROUT Convention in Copenhagen.

Yogis Academy, Italy

Inner Peace of the Individual in Society

In October, Yogis Academy conducted classes in 2 macro-regional seminars, in Parma and Pescara, Italy. Christian Franceschini, Dada Ranjitananda and Dr. Sid Jordan, gave workshops on the Inner Peace of the Individual in Society.

On the first day Dada Ranjitananda began with a review of the practical and holistic practices of yoga that contribute to individual peace of mind and social benevolence. Christian reviewed how ego centered, matter centered, dogma centered and God centered philosophies play a role in the disruption of peace for the individual and society. He then explored the practice of meditation including the science of sound involving mantra and cakras.



On the second day Sid Jordan presented the topic of Awakened Conscience as a neohumanist strategy for attaining peace and benevolence for the individual and society. The participants were introduced to the steps of applying rationalistic mentality that involved study (practice), evaluating pros and cons (collective mind) and deciding what served the general welfare (social equality) as applied to the immigration policies of Italy. In Pescara more time was devoted to participants working in small groups to determine what actions they could personally undertake to improve the lives of immigrants. Two groups focused on how they could advocate for the government to exert more control over the immigrant selection



process, insure proper care of immigrants and support the expansion of a volunteer service. The other two groups chose to become more directly involved by inviting immigrants into their homes and volunteering to assist with teaching the Italian language and employable skills.

Somatic Yoga

Sid Jordan also taught a somatic yoga course in Pochi, where the 2019 summer Global AMGK Conference was held, for the class of Cristina Terribile. This class taught the Hanna Somatic Education approach that diagnosed chronic muscle contractions and offered somatic exercises and Astaunga Yoga postures that isolate these contractions. During the somatic and yoga exercises the participants were instructed to become aware of the sensory feedback associated with consciously releasing the contractions that have been sustained by unconscious spinal reflex. They were encouraged to repeat the exercises daily to consciously observe the release of contractions to overcome the return of the unconscious reflex that maintains the contractions. The yoga exercises that complemented the somatic exercises involved larger sets of muscles that generalized to the release of related sets of muscles. All of the participants reported some degree of success.

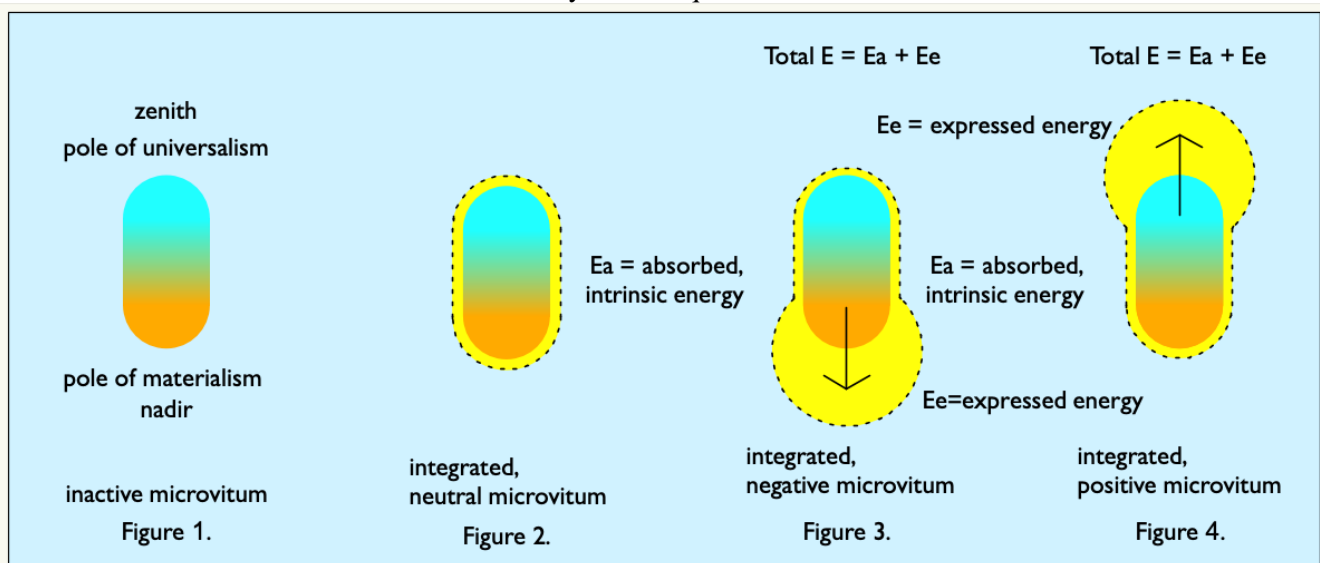
About the Substance of Forms

By Henk de Weijer

All forms are compositions of something, of a particular substance. A saucepan can be made of stainless steel, a waterfall is a collection of moving water molecules, and a fire is a chemical process that involves materials like wood, oil or gas. These forms and events can be experienced with our senses, but what about space? We live in it, are surrounded by it, and until now can only conclude that what we perceive are natural or human-made objects. Nevertheless, it would be absurd to deny the existence of space. Someone suggested: "Perhaps we cannot perceive it, but we conclude its existence." If that is correct, we may accept that space exists, but the question of its substance remains unanswered.

Whatever that substance is, it must be something very subtle. But beware; it is not the only subtle form. Descartes concluded that a person consists of two non-coherent substances, which means matter and mind. Therefore a mind is not nothing, but something and immediately the question arises: "What then is the substance of mind?" Due to extensive development of neurological equipment and research, the duality 'matter-mind' has been replaced by 'energy-consciousness'. Science defines energy as the ability to do work or heat objects, while consciousness is seen as a property of energy, as being conscious. Theistic Samkhya philosophy in India analyses the principles of God, Purusa (consciousness), Prakrti (energy), substance and atoms, but does not discuss these principles in detail. The substance of the mind is not described.

Physics has done a lot of research into the now-known granules of energy, that is, into the subatomic, elementary particles we call quarks, photons and electrons. These particles are considered to be the substrate of all forms. The existence of mind is accepted, but only as the equivalent of the brain. This restriction has a nasty consequence. The human body has evolved from single-celled organisms without a brain, and even now it is made up of large numbers of such cells. How and when those minds originated and evolved remains unanswered. Multi-cellular organisms such as microbes, viruses and plants also have no brain, while research over the past ten years clearly shows the existence of at least intelligence in them. A definition of consciousness is still so far away that the question of its substance is not even asked.



In 1986, Shrii P.R. Sarkar named the existence of as yet unknown elementary particles, which he called "microvita". Just as subatomic particles are grains of energy, microvita are catalytic, creative grains of consciousness. At least three categories exist, positive, neutral and negative microvita. In Shrii Sarkar's words: "In principle, negative and positive microvita are the same, but their field of activity is different." (see *Microvitum in a Nutshell*, Chapter 7.) The work direction of the positive microvita is ultimate universalism and the optimal expression of consciousness. The work direction of negative microvita is the development of matter and materialism. Now new questions arise. "If microvita are pure grains of consciousness, they can only be inactive. (Fig.1.) How can they generate new ideas?" Every designer knows that a lot of energy is needed to come up with even one coherent idea. The same applies to microvita. Once they have collected enough intrinsic energy, they can be called integrated, neutral microvita. (Fig.2.) After that they will be able to use that extra energy towards materialism (Fig.3.) or universalism (Fig. 4.) and become negative, respectively positive, microvita.

Microvita do not work individually, but in structured large and dynamic groups (many billions of microvita). If individual microvita can only work in one direction, in a mature mind, the three categories of microvita mentioned here may occur but also crude and subtle ones. It is good to realise that as more energy is being spent on a specific work direction, the result increases. On the other hand, if more cooperation develops, that is, if more energy is being used, it in itself attracts extra energy, and more thrust is developed in this way.

YAMA NIYAMA:

Yogic Ethics for a Balanced Mind

By Avt. Ananda Tapasiddha Ac.

To understand an idea, it is always necessary to grasp not only its appearance but also its inner spirit. Upon this a proper conceptualization of the given topic can be gained, and for this one must know the context in which it sits. To realize the purpose and meaning of the guidelines of behaviour which Yama-Niyama are, the same must be applied. In fact, one of the points of the Niyamas, 'Svādhyāya', suggests exactly this: that one must read with proper perception, not only what is literally being said, but of what is implied, of the essence of the words. This small book is an attempt to explain the teachings of Yama-Niyama in such a way, prompting a process of self-reflection which can serve towards the deepening of our ethical, emotional and spiritual lives both individually and collectively.

Yama-Niyama are basically a set of ten 'ethical guidelines', divided into two equal parts: the 'Yamas' and the 'Niyamas.' The five points of the Yamas are designed to establish a balanced relationship between the inner and outer worlds, the subjective and objective, and are distinguished from the Niyamas in that they cannot be implemented without an external object to be acted upon. The Niyamas are internal attitudes which can be cultivated without the need of a second entity. Originating in the Indian subcontinent, the Yamas and Niyamas are well known for being included in the yoga sutras of Patanjali, but like many other ideas in that whole book, by no means originated there. Similar and also other somewhat different versions can be found recorded and interpreted in numerous ancient texts, and were surely taught orally, as was the system of basically all Indian spiritual traditions before and also after having been written down. The explanations given in this book are based upon the teachings of Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, the twentieth-century founder of the socio-spiritual organization 'Ananda Marga.' His original thoughts can be found in the book titled: 'A Guide to Human Conduct.'

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti states in the very first lines of his book that morality is not in itself the final goal of life, and that Yama-Niyama are principles designed with an objective beyond themselves, based upon another more deeply underlying recognition of the purpose and value of human life. They are not based upon fear, desire for personal gain in the present or future, or the self-assurance of 'righteousness.' They are, in essence, a recognition of the special human capacity of self-reflection and the desire to convert separation into unity, or the impermanence of individuality into the infinite and transcendent. This is the base of the Tantra Yoga propounded by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti: that there is a universal consciousness reflected within each human being, indeed within the whole creation, and it is the process of experiencing in ever deeper levels this consciousness that gives peace and happiness in life. Parallel to this we are transformed into better people through the amplification of our empathy and the sense of social responsibility that arises through the experience (and not only theory) of interconnectedness. Yama-Niyama are the base upon which this development can occur. They are, in a sense, an ethical formulation 'informed by our 'sense of spiritual potential', a practical reply to the recognition that:

The impulse to bridge the separation between the small-self and the Spirit has tremendous consequences throughout all the levels and quadrants of human existence. It is as central to any description of humanity as gravity is to a description of the physical universe. (Towsey, 'Eternal Dance of Macrocosm.')

In order to bridge this separation, or even to develop a clear awareness of this impulse living inside of us and how it affects our lives (more often than not unconsciously), a certain calmness of mind is needed. The principles of Yama-Niyama are a codified explanation of observations as to how the mind works and the attitudes and conduct which will provide the individual with the mental balance needed in order to realize the inspiration of the infinite within their self and in daily life. For this reason they are considered as the foundation of any meditation practice, without which attempts at concentration will be akin to lighting a fire with wet wood: a lot of smoke, little warmth, and increasing frustration. This idea will become clearer as you proceed throughout the book.

Alongside the recognition of the human search for the transcendent, Yama-Niyama incorporates equally a dose of relativism, never forgetting that each and every situation in life is unique. One must apply discernment in every case, not less so but perhaps even more so than if one were to live without any particular code of ethics. Yama-Niyama do not provide the specifics of how one must respond to any given situation, rather the onus is on the individual to reflect, take responsibility and then decide the best approach to take. What Yama-Niyama do is create the perspective, sensibility and psychic 'design' though which one is able to make decisions fully aware of one's conscious and subconscious intentions.

This act of taking responsibility for one's subconscious is part of what makes Yama-Niyama work, as you will see when you read, for example, the section on 'Satya', which explains the interactions between the conscious and subconscious mind, and how these interactions properly guided create will-power and courage. This psychic strength is in turn the source of mental and emotional balance.

.... Peace of mind, within this scheme of things, is not an anaesthetized state of calm in which one avoids the processing of difficult and transformative life-experiences, nor an escape from the responsibilities of daily life. Rather, one is even

encouraged to make special effort to place oneself in challenging situations in order to confront one's fears, contradictions and mental complexes. In this context, what is the meaning of 'mental equilibrium'? It is the state in which one has the strength and composure of mind to maintain a balanced and unbiased perception even when surrounded by disturbing forces. This capacity derives from one's integrity of intent, which in turn derives from the awareness of one's unconscious thought patterns, and of consciously working to integrate into these patterns a sense of universalism: of interconnectedness and thus of empathy with the entire created world.

The effort of self-reflection and actualization of its results which Yama-Niyama demands produces a kind of mental friction, which, as a flour mill grinds wheat into flour, refines the perceptions and emotional state of a person. Each time this effort is made, the mind gains in strength and thus equilibrium, and what begins as a conscious effort is gradually integrated into the subconscious mind to become a natural state of being:

It cannot be said that the ultimate aim of human life is not to commit theft; what is desirable is that the tendency to commit theft should be eliminated. Not to indulge in falsehood is not the aim of life; what is important is that the tendency of telling lies should be dispelled from one's mind. The sādḥaka (spiritual practitioner) starts spiritual practices with the principles of morality, of not indulging in theft or falsehood. The aim of such morality is such a state of oneness with Brahma (infinite consciousness) where no desire is left for theft; and all tendencies of falsehood disappear. (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 'A Guide to Human Conduct')

In this sense, Yama-Niyama also serve as a link between the relative and absolute, and a tangential point upon which 'fact' (information derived from the objective world) and 'meaning' have the chance to cordially meet:

A comprehensive account of ethics requires accepting that they are both constructed by humanity and prior to humanity... they have both relative and absolute origins. On the relative side, ethics are socially constructed to help us survive in a contrary universe - they assist the viability of autonomous systems. On the absolute side, ethics are informed by our 'sense' of spiritual potential which first manifests... in the Archetypal mind. It is the level of mind where archetypes such as virtue, beauty, truth, justice and love first differentiate from Spirit and thereby give multiple kinds of meaning to our lives. (Towsey, 'Eternal Dance of Macrocosm')

Human beings have a tendency to search for absolutes: in beliefs crowned as 'ultimate' truths; in perfect systems; or, equally so, in materialistic reductionism. The problem with this arises not because the desire of the possibility of transcendence is faulty, but because we look in the wrong places and try to convert relativity into this absolute (be it as absolute peace, certainty, etc) that we so desire. This is paradoxical, as by doing so our mental processes and world view are crystallized into dogmas, and human creativity is stifled as our unconscious or misunderstood 'thirst for the infinite' is converted into its opposite.

Literature offers no shortage of dystopian novels which vividly demonstrate this point: that human happiness is not to be found in an externally imposed stability and certainty; nor in having our moral and emotional dilemmas solved effortlessly by artificial means; nor even by the simplification of life through the continuous provision of indulgent pleasures.

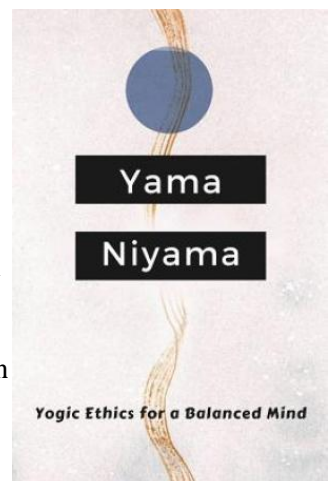
Inspiration in life comes from the dynamism produced from the friction of opposing forces and the growth and conversion of the unknown into the known that this produces. That we can learn to appreciate this point and enjoy the process involved in it is made possible through a feeling of love for something greater than one's self being realized within one's self through the process of growth.

The biologist Humberto Maturana, describing how interactions of love effect the evolution of humanity, defines love as 'the domain of those relational behaviours through which the other arises as a legitimate other in coexistence with oneself' and explains that it is love, by creating a space of cooperation, trust and undistorted relationships, that opens the possibility of the liberation of intelligence:

Love is visionary, not blind, because it liberates intelligence and expands coexistence in cooperation as it expands the domain in which our nervous system operates. Love expands the domain in which our nervous system abstracts coherences from our living. (Maturana, 'The Biology of Love')

Love may have many contextual expressions, but its essence is the same, and spiritual love is the 'spontaneous experience of expansion of love' in which 'there is an opening to the total acceptance of the cosmos in unity with oneself.'

What does Yama-Niyama do for us, finally? It creates the balanced state of mind, possible because of the strength gained from clarity of intent, which permits us to have empathy beyond ourselves, towards those known or unknown to us, loving them as expressions of that which is universal within all of us. Thus every aspect of creation is legitimate and does not need to justify its existential value, but does need to be treated according to our best judgment in the given context. Yama-Niyama is the base upon which we become able to expand our love from individual to infinite, through meditation as a spiritual practice and in all endeavours of daily life.



This book is available in almost all online book-stores worldwide, and currently work has started on a Spanish translation. Anyone who would like to translate it into their local language is welcome to contact the author. (a.tapasiddha@gmail.com).



DELHI SECTOR

Rajasthan, India

A charitable hospital dedicated to the sacred memory of Shrii P.R. Sarkar was recently inaugurated near Bharatpur, Rajasthan. Here, Dr. Shambhushivananda is seen here with Medical Director, Dr. Sankarshan Pani, Research Scientist, Dr. Uttampati, and Acharya Dharmapremananda, at the site of the 21 acres campus of the proposed Medical College, Hospital and P.R. Sarkar Research Institute for Health and Future Medicine. The out patient clinic with all basic equipment is already functioning now.



Khairachatar

Ananda Marga Residential High School to the west of Anandanagar has a current enrollment of 800 students with about 40 students in the boys and girls hostels. Gurukul Public School established recently in Jharkhand near Bokaro also has an enrollment of over 600 students.

Choupal

Dada Shambhushivananda was the chief guest at the annual day celebration of AM High School in Choupal (Himachal Pradesh, India) held on October 16th, 2019. Prizes were also awarded to the children who showed excellence in different areas. A cultural program was held in the newly

renovated facilities of the school campus.



Kulu High School

The campus of the AM High School in Kulu (Himachal Pradesh) has also recently been upgraded. 130 students are enrolled in the institution. Rutger Tamminga (Taiwan) is scheduled to conduct a teachers training workshop in February, 2020.

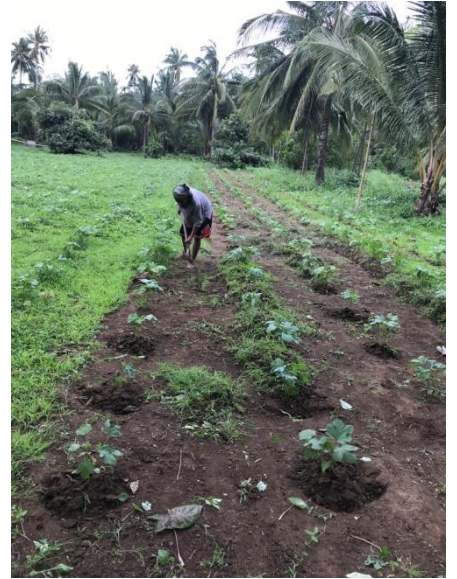


MANILA SECTOR



Philippines Ananda Kuranga Master Unit Brgy - Wakat Nagcarlan Laguna

The Ananda Kuranga MU in the Philippines has a coconut plantation and vegetable garden. The total area is 14.2 Hectors. They have planted 980 coconut trees, 230 Rambutan, 175 Lanzonis, 35 Lamon, 35 Guavano, 22 Mango trees and many more other local fruits trees. They are also growing growing vegetables including Okra, String beans and Pechai. The products support the MU school, called the Neohumanist Education Centre. They are also working to start a vocational center for local youths.



Thailand

In Thailand Dada Shambhushivananda attended the Global Asia-Pacific Networks conference, ASEAN 2030. Dada gave a workshop on “Meditation, Intuition and Futures”. Futurist and Neohumanist, Sohail Inayatullah gave a keynote address on ASEAN Futures for 2030.



While in Thailand Dada also met with research scientists at Cellenium HQ in Bangkok: Dr Placido Spaziente; Dr. Kanyarat Holasut; Dr Suradit, Dr Piriyaathep and Khun Krisada Kampantsanyakorn.



Hanoi, Vietnam

Dada Shambhushivananda paid a third visit to Hanoi and led a spiritual retreat giving some very uplifting and illuminating classes on Prama, the Spiritual Journey, Neohumanism and the Gurukula System of Education. A partnership has been developed now with the local ethnic community (Thai Hai) who were introduced to Neohumanist Education, yoga, kaoshikii, tandava and other spiritual practices.

Seeds of Love - By Trần Thúy Ngọc

We have been sowing the seeds of love with our humble efforts to establish Neohumanist Education here, for a bright future. Signboards and posters were installed at our various Yoga Centers in different districts of Ho Chi Minh City to attract the public to a physically and mentally healthy yogic lifestyle.

Yoga acaryas made regular tours to other provincial yoga centers in Vũng Tàu, Mỹ Tho, Cần Thơ, Hậu Giang, Long Xuyên. Training, fasting and meditation camps were organized. Classes on Ideal Farming were held weekly with practice at our quarters, based on Shrii P. R. Sarkar's book "Ideal Farming." Shrii P. R. Sarkar's discourses and inspirational story books such as "Ashutosh Baba", "Divine Experiences" were translated into Vietnamese to inspire us.



Farming Practice at Didi's Master Unit, Phước Tân, Biên Hòa

Kids Yoga Teacher Training courses took place not only at Yoga Daily Academy in HCM City but also at the Lily Kids & Yoga Center in Đà Nẵng, as a preparation for the future. Vegetarian cooking classes were organized occasionally to promote a sentient diet. Students then could practice their cooking skills of different vegetarian dishes at various HCM retreats. AMURT Saigon charity services kept going on monthly to address the pain of less fortunate people in various provinces of Bến Tre, Xuân



Bali Cultural Program performed by Aratu and Savitri, two students from Narayan Seva Children's Home at Tiền Giang Retreat

Lộc, Hàm Thuận Bắc, Cái Tắc, Bảo Lộc...

Along with our domestic affairs we are participations in global movements such as those helping to end the Amazon forest fire in Brazil, and support for Narayan Seva Children's Home in Bali, Indonesia, with donations, visits and invitations to its best students to attend our spiritual lifestyle courses, Kiirtan tours, retreats...

In our work, we bear in mind that the important thing is not only what we do but also how we do it – properly, sincerely, seriously, and of course lovingly .



International Children's Day June 1, 2019 at Narii Kalyan Yoga House, Vũng Tàu



Fasting Camp, March 30, 2019 at Baba's Quarter HCM



AMURT Saigon Charity Service for poor pupils at Cái Tắc, Hậu Giang, July 28, 2019



Sadhana, a local Volunteer of AM Association of Yoga Educators (AMAYE), is seen here leading Yoga Day celebrations and introducing meditation to youth in the Hanoi area.

HONG KONG SECTOR

Taichung, Taiwan

The Neohumanist Centre in Taichung is almost ready for occupancy. An inaugural exhibit is being prepared by Dada Premamayananda titled: “PR Sarkar—the Renaissance Man of the 20th Century”. Gurukul Association in Taiwan will be managing the exhibition space located on the ground floor of the newly constructed Neohumanist Center. The office room for Gurukul Association, and PRSI (P R Sarkar Institute) involved in archival work of Gurukul, will be located on the first floor of the five-story center. There is sufficient space for holding teacher training, yoga classes and other events in this newly constructed space.



Hsinchu

Dada Shambhushivananda visited a retreat center established by Yun Lisi in the mountains outside of Hsinchu where training of Gurukula volunteers is being planned.



Dada also spoke at a robotics company SETEC in Hsinchu, Taiwan on Meditation and Neohumanist Consciousness

Yami Mountains, Taipei

He also visited Neohumanist Center in the Yami Mountains, run by Liao Shufen where Dada led the collective meditation with 25 persons and spoke on Spiritual Equipoise.



Tainan

In Tainan, Dada met with Dr. Hong-Chu Chen, the President of Chia Nan University of Pharmacy and Science to explore collaborations between Taiwan and India. Dr. Chih-Hsiang Liao, Dr Ti-Lin Kuo, Dr Li-Lin Kuo and Dr Peter Siao hosted Dada's visit to Tainan. The University has 14,000 students and is currently engaged in innovative research on smart health care and emotional and physical well being, with a focus on health, compassion, refinement and excellence.



GEORGETOWN SECTOR

News from Ánanda Náráyaña, Argentina

New Construction:

We had begun raising the walls of our third house setting up first the laboratory for essential oil distilling and medicine herbs processing.

Ánanda Náráyaña in WWOOFING:

Since last month the project was included as an option for worldwide volunteers to come for a certain period of time engage in the various works and activities that goes on such as gardening, maintenance and constructing homes. There are volunteers signed from 7 different counties from October onwards.

<https://www.woofindependents.org/user/533907>

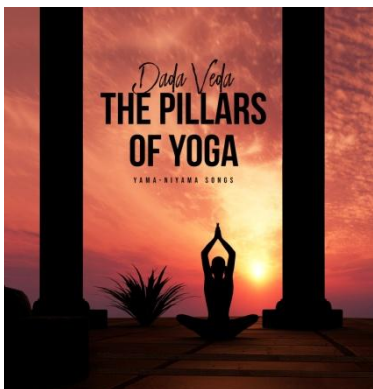
Organic Market:

Continue participating in regular basis at the Organic Market which is organized weekly in Villa General Belgrano. During our stay at the market we share the importance of organic growing and producing as well the development of the project and healthy lifestyle habits.

Solar Water:

Thanks to a submergible water pump run by solar energy water is plentiful since last August. On sunny days we lift 1,000 liters/hour to an altitude of 20 meters and a lineal distance of 150 meters. As a reservoir we had constructed a 27,000 liters tank that stores water which supplies houses, gardens, trees and other needs.

We were blessed to be part of the International Gurukul conference organized in northern Italy, sharing and presenting our project inspiring people to embrace a more natural way of living and the need to focus in MU work.



New Album

The Pillars of Yoga: Yama- Niyama Songs By Dada Veda

On this album Dada took up the task of describing the basic ethical principles of yoga in song. Each of the Yamas (guidelines for getting in harmony with the world around us) and the Niyamas (guidelines for reaching inner harmony) have been expressed in catchy folk songs. Dada is joined on this album by guitarist Nick Rudd, singer Shasta Homel, and producer, bassist, and percussionist Cayden Wood. To order visit: <dadaveda.com>

Yama Songs (Harmony with the World)

1. Be Kind to Everyone
2. The Light of Truth
3. Don't Take It
4. I See Your Smile
5. Do I Need It?

Niyama Songs (Inner Purification)

6. Squeaky Clean
7. The Secret of It All
8. I Know I Must
9. Make It One With You
10. The One True Love

Neohumanist Education



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