

GURUKULA NETWORK



Newsletter of the Global Neohumanist Education Network

Issue 50 - May 2020

BEYOND *Corona:*

NEOHUMANIST RESPONSES

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

Gurukula Network

Newsletter and Journal of Neohumanist Schools and Institutes

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

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

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

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

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NEOHUMANIST EDUCATION

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

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

VISION of ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA

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

OBJECTIVES

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

- To provide a sound and conducive environment for students
for their physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual
well-being.
- To promote ethical values in individuals and implement these
values in the management of projects, schools and institutions.
- To establish and maintain schools and special academic
institutions around the world as well as a cyber-university.
- To initiate teacher education programs to improve and
upgrade the quality of education on all academic levels.
- To promote Tantra, Neohumanism and PROUT (Progressive
Utilization Theory) as the foundation for building a universal
society.
- To initiate intellectual dialogues and research for all-round
renaissance of society.
- To facilitate the placement of volunteers across cultures to help
build meaningful relationships and to support community and
social change projects.
- To support the building of a global eco-village network (Master
Units)
- 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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...Wise people say that in the past there had been so many crises in the human society. Crisis is quite natural for something moving. Where there is movement there is struggle – struggle against the inertia of the earth. In the past there had been crises in the course of movement, crises in different branches of civilization, crises in the realm of education also. But nowadays, the entire human society is facing the crisis of civilization as a whole and particularly crisis in the field of existence. Now, the human society has to decide whether to live or to die.

...You are the pioneers, you are the vanguard of the human society. So it is your duty to save humanity. Those who are unable to shoulder their own baggage, their responsibilities are to be shouldered by you. You should know that the life of spiritual aspirants is a mission – their entire existence is a mission. And your mission is, what? To save humanity from these crises. I hope, you will be successful. I not only hope, I am sure that you will be successful.

Shrii P. R. Sarkar

Celebrating our 50th Issue of Gurukula Network

By Ācārya Shambhūshivānanda Avadhūta

We are pleased to offer the 50th issue of Gurukula Network to our active readers and the world at large.

We started with a “Gurukula Bulletin” in 1991 immediately after the founding of Ānanda Mārga Gurukula at Anandanagar, India. The small initiative flowered and blossomed into Gurukula Network in January 1996, five years later. It got a boost when the Global Liaison Office was established in Ithaca, NY (USA), under the care of Arete Brim. We are grateful to her for consistently coordinating this publication with the assistance of neohumanist volunteers from all around the world.



All past issues since May 2000 are available digitally through the <https://gurukul.edu> website for record and reference.

The world will never be the same after the COVID-19 global pandemic, which has affected millions of people and has hit the global economy in a big way. It is time to reflect and initiate the new paradigm of living and social organization that the Neohumanist Movement has been advancing all these years. Now is the time to take it most seriously. Let us build a new world with a global neohumanist vision that will provide greater safety, resilience, prosperity and harmony among all species. Let us see the coronavirus as another signal from the Divine to reflect on our excesses and as an opportunity to change a system that neglects nature, rather than a mere challenge to develop a vaccine to kill this virus only to have another rise after a few years. Let it goad us to explore fresh perspectives for renaissance in all walks of life.

Shrii P.R. Sarkar, the founder of Ananda Marga Gurukula and the inspiration of “Gurukula Network,” gave a clarion call over fifty years ago:

“Human civilization now faces the final moment of a critical juncture. The dawn of a glorious new era is on one side and the worn-out skeleton of the past is on the other. People have to adopt either of these two.... You are the worshippers of Life Divine, and hence I call upon you to adorn this crimson dawn deluged with glorious light.”

May Gurukula Network continue to serve and inspire you all to think for collective welfare and protect the interests of all created beings!

AMGK Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic: An Opportunity for Reflection and Change

By Ācārya Shambhūshivānanda Avadhūta and Ācārya Vishvamisra

Our first concern now is for the personal health and safety of all on the planet and particularly all of our students, teachers, staff and families associated with our neohumanist schools around the globe. Gurukula encourages schools and families to practice the social distancing and health rules recommended by the World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>.

The race is on to find rapid testing toolkits, an appropriate vaccine, and antiviral therapeutic drugs to reduce viral overload in persons and thereby counteract the menace of this virus which is characterized by asymptomatic transmission. Many are of the opinion that the post-corona era world will never be business as usual. In order to ensure that there will not be a repeat of mass casualties in the future, we shall have to come together as a globe. We need to develop a global preparedness plan for future tsunamis that makes us resilient in the face of all such dangers. A closer look at how our world systems of political boundaries, economics and environmental conditions impact the all-round health of global citizens could result in system changes that serve people and the planet.

Neohumanist Education and Holistic Health

During the pandemic it is important to emphasize the yogic principles of holistic health at a physical, mental and spiritual level. As taught in our neohumanist schools, the moral code of Yama, caring for others, and Niyama, caring for self, are critically important in this crisis.

Socially and economically we realize that some of our schools and families have the resources to continue providing home schooling, including digital support, and meeting safety and nutritional needs, while others are lacking sufficient resources. It is imperative that local governmental authorities, NGOs, and communities come together to the aid of those most in need at the local levels.

Gurukula's Neohumanist Education Movement is also dedicated to long-term solutions dealing with such global pandemic crises by making communities more resilient, through holistic education that applies a rationalistic mentality to serving the planet and its people.

Opportunity for Collective Change

Every challenge also brings opportunities. We need the wisdom to see the blessing behind the obstacles. Panics, authoritarianism, xenophobia, and spreading dogma or simplified lies are not the ways forward. We must recognize the interdependence of all, irrespective of geographical or genetic boundaries. We must learn to think in terms of collective welfare, and our financial and governmental policies must reflect this collective concern. Here, PROUT, an alternative socio-economic theory, and its spiritual fundamentals can also show us the way. <https://prout.info/>

The Neohumanist “university without walls” (<https://gurukul.edu/newsletter/issue-48/48-neohumanist-college-of-asheville/>), Centers of Neohumanist Studies, and PROUT Centers are keen to foster partnerships among parents, teachers and other stakeholders, in order to develop home study packages for different age groups. All of our institutions are practicing distance learning from kindergarten to adult education to stay in step with our rapidly changing world and to enhance value-based education for everyone.



Beyond the Corona Pandemic: Renaissance or Oblivion?

Ācārya Shambhúshivānanda Avadhúta

A dreaded specter is haunting the world at the moment: a COVID-19 global pandemic that has claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands and has already infected millions of people in 185 countries. The whole world has almost come to a standstill and COVID-19 has posed a challenge that is no less dire than the world wars, economic depressions, nuclear threats, tsunamis and plagues of the past. What is so special about this pandemic is that it has enveloped all people of the earth quite rapidly, affecting rich and poor, young and old, men and women, and created a lot of uncertainty about the future for everyone.

Political leaders, scientists, and researchers around the globe are busy trying to fully grasp the etiology of this pandemic and find short-term and long-term solutions to deal with its spreading, as well as to protect the lives of those who are infected or waiting to be victims. It may take many months before we fully understand how to insulate ourselves from such invisible creatures.

This unexpected visitor is bringing us some important messages:

Message #1 We need a global response to global challenges. We need greater global coordination and preparedness to face such challenges, today and tomorrow. Perhaps the time is drawing near for a world government led by benevolent leaders to be formed in order to face this and other challenges that do not respect national or genetic boundaries. At the least, we need greater transparency and stronger global governance mechanisms to ensure timely response by and for all concerned. It may be the time to go beyond the ‘nation-state’ mindset and look at the entire planet and its predicaments as the collective responsibility of all humans.

Message #2 This pandemic is forcing us to think of the basics: food security for all and health infrastructure for the entire global population. The global economic system, which ignores the rationality of creating economic self-sufficiency for every region, is bound to remain vulnerable in such times of crisis. The sooner we learn to establish resilience at the community level, the lesser the pain to the common people and greater the chances of human survival. Ensuring increased purchasing power to one and all is equally essential.

Message #3 The progress of society is entirely dependent upon its moral development. Science and technology can be a boon or a bane depending on who uses it and for what purpose. The vast potential of digitization, use of robotics, AI, and ICT is just beginning to be recognized now. These technologies and their future development are not our enemies, but gifts of the divine to equip us to collectively respond quickly to any calamity with the greatest human ingenuity. Education is not about information any more. Online learning is becoming a norm now. Home-based work is likely to become more common. The use of machines to replace all repetitive tasks will become the order of the day. The importance of “BEING A TRUE HUMAN” will begin to be recognized too. A developed sense of ethics is as important as the intellectual faculties that make technology possible. Thus, an intellectual renaissance led by a cosmic vision is likely to emerge from the ruins of this pandemic.

Message #4 We should never underestimate the power of the tiny. A small hole can leak all our vital energy. Hence, the tiny is never tiny. Those who are poor or at the bottom of the social ladder doing so-called menial tasks carry the entire weight of the social body. Their welfare is as important as the glamorous lives of the few celebrities, super-stars, or super-rich. Let humans be recognized by their spirit of service and sacrifice and not by their social status or the quantity of wealth that they accumulate by hook or crook. Human happiness does not depend on material accumulation but on spiritual transcendence.

Message #5 Listen to the seers who have taught humanity to treat all as the embodiments of Divine Consciousness. Behind these viruses lies power of the microvitality, the mysterious emanation of the Cosmic Spirit. We must attune our will to the Divine Will through intuition practices, spirit of service and adherence to ethical codes that cause the least hurt to all creatures. A compassionate lifestyle can save us from such epidemics in future also. Let humanity follow the universal instructions of the sages of the past, free from dogma of any kind.

COVID-19: A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

It is also time for global reflection by global leaders. Shall we continue to tolerate a world of inequity, disparity, and institutionalized crimes against Nature? Should we not immediately undertake reforms in order to make our global and national institutions more responsive to the needs of all of earth's inhabitants?

World War 1 led to the Creation of the League of Nations, "to promote international cooperation and to achieve peace and security." It ceased its activities after failing to prevent the Second World War. World War 2 led to the creation of the United Nations, for "establishing peace, dignity and equality on a healthy planet," but with a select few given veto power in the Security Council. At that time, India, for example, was not even a free country and was under British occupation. Tibetans, Hong Kong residents, Taiwanese, Pak-occupied Kashmiris, and Balochistanis, for instance, continue to remain isolated by world bodies despite the fact that they each possess their own unique independent history.

Inequity has continued to grow for many decades all over the world, especially in the western world. The noose of capitalism and communism has become loosened no doubt but is still not allowing the birth of new alternatives like Shrii Sarkar's PROUT (Progressive Utilization Theory), Sustainable Eco-Villages (Model Master Units), or similar alternatives, based on a new paradigm, that embody universal humanism.

Human survival is at stake. The Global World Pandemic offers us an opportunity and a challenge to explore the necessity of forming a stronger, freer, and more transparent world body to ensure the safety, protection, and prosperity of all inhabitants of this planet earth. Can we afford to go on with a business-as-usual approach, after this pandemic is somehow managed or brought under control?

CAN WE? — A CALL FOR ACTION

1. Can we envision a future where the United Nations is reformed and made more egalitarian and stronger to protect the interests of all inhabitants of the earth?
2. Can we envision a world where socio-economics are divorced from global geo-political interests and the power of livelihoods goes back to the people and local communities?
3. Can we envision a world where nature is not something to fight against but to live in harmony with, and protect endangered flora and fauna? Was not Nature here long before we homo sapiens stepped on this earth?
4. Can we envision a world where killing animals for personal consumption is banned and shunned rather than turned into an industry, devoid of moral conscience?
5. Can we envision a world where children and the youth of the world get equal access to high quality neohumanist education in order to create a blissful world for all?
6. Can we envision a world where "arts and sciences" are utilized for welfare rather than for the profit of a few?
7. Can we envision a world where the identity of human beings is defined by their magnanimity and not by race, religion, nationality, or belief systems devoid of rationality?

Raising questions is the first step. Finding answers and arriving at consensus would require "mass awakening" and "enlightened" leadership. That may be the greatest challenge of our time.

Our choice is simple: A Global New Renaissance or Get Lost in Oblivion. I hope it won't be the latter. Let us act now before it is too late.

The Power of Story and the Crisis of Meaning

By Amal Jacobson



Since the time of the Renaissance and the birth of the modern mind, human beings have re-assessed everything we believed in the light of empirical, objective knowledge. The sun didn't revolve around the Earth, but the Earth revolved around the sun. The planets were not divine entities that wandered across the heavens, but masses of rock and gas that revolved around the same star as us. And yet in spite of this profound, unprecedented explosion of objective, scientific knowledge, every single other kind of knowledge has been gradually devalued to the point of near irrelevance.

The modern universe seems to be profoundly dis-enchanted. As much as scientific knowledge ought to inspire awe and reverence, there seems to be a pervasive sense of nihilism and existential malaise. Cultural and moral relativism are the order of the day, and truth is but a point of view. The ecological and political crises we see in the world today are a clear reflection of this self-same crisis of meaning. What should we do with all this scientific knowledge? Science cannot answer these kinds of questions. By using the scientific method we can understand nearly every mystery of the universe, and use those secrets to manipulate them to our advantage with technology – but it will never help us understand what meaning or purpose to take out of that.

It is impossible to escape the need to construct meaning. Scientific knowledge has rendered a profound service to humanity, but it has also helped create a situation in which humans have become a destructive, existential threat to the entire life-support system of the planet. It seems as though our “progress” as a species has continually occurred at the expense of the rich diversity of plant and animal species that share this planet with us, and now humans are in danger of destroying the very host that we have up until now been parasitically exploiting.

The scientific method is one of the greatest tools of modernity, and through its use we have bent the laws of nature to our will through the cultivation and progress of technology. But instead of our scientific knowledge granting us a sense of purpose or meaning, we continue to experience a society characterized more by its sense of isolation than its sense of community, more by its cynicism than its optimism, and more by its nihilism than its sense of purpose. We have powers beyond our ancestors' wildest dreams, and yet don't seem to have anything terribly important to do with it. We have access to all the knowledge of history in our pockets, and we use it more for pornography or self-promotion than for enlightenment or self-growth. As physicist Eric Weinstein has observed, “we are now gods, but for the wisdom.” And so, the destruction of our environment continues, all the while increasing our sense of alienation and existential dread.

It doesn't have to be this way. Knowledge can be wedded to wisdom, but first we have to reclaim the essential necessity of wisdom and make space for it in our discourse and society. Knowledge comes from the command of facts, but wisdom comes from the appreciation of values. Facts come from the things we can measure, weigh and quantify. It comes from the physical world, from all the material we can break into smaller pieces and observe under a microscope, from everything we can empirically verify, from everything we understand from science. Values do not come from facts. They have everything to do with what can't be seen, weighed, measured or quantified – and despite what scientism tells us, just because something can't be measured doesn't mean it's not important or real. On the contrary, everything that makes life worth living is everything we can't weigh or hold in our hands. Wisdom isn't generated through reductive analysis, but through creative synthesis – not through the act of breaking things apart, but through the act of putting things together – not through the act of drawing distinctions, but through the act of making connections. It is, above all else, not about facts, but about narrative. Facts tell us what things are, but values tell us what they mean. Purpose comes from telling a story.

Neohumanism is a new story, and one that seeks to take the gifts of the scientific approach and wed it to a wisdom tradition whose history stretches back millennia. As an educational system, it seeks to effect this narrative shift by re-imagining the role of the human in relationship with the whole. The same self-organizing cosmological dynamics that formed the billions of galaxies also—as cosmologist Brian Swimme points out—ultimately birthed the writings of Shakespeare and the music of Mozart. “We are stardust,” Joni Mitchell wrote, and so it is literally true. We create as only the universe can, we destroy with a violence matched by only the universe itself, and we fall in love precisely because it is in the nature of the universe to do so. A pedagogy that seeks to address the moral, spiritual, and even scientific challenges of the ongoing ecological crises of the twenty-first century must start with such a newly-oriented narrative perspective. Facing these crises means going deep inside our human capacities and finding what can be transformed, deepened, and brought to bear in the service of all the Earth's creatures. A materialistic approach has taken us this far, and it's time to leave it behind.

... materialism is most dangerous when it tries to suppress mental expansion, when it creates obstacles in the transformation of mind from crude to subtle – when it blocks the passageway of human development from the graceful beauty of the mind to the spiritual sweetness of the soul. Shrii P. R. Sarkar

Neohumanism and PROUT: The Way Through the Current Crisis

By Dr. Kathleen Kesson



It is March in Vermont, and a first generation of adult Monarchs, our state butterfly, are coming out of hibernation, seeking mates, and preparing to lay their eggs on milkweed plants. In late spring, the larvae will hatch, gobble as much milkweed as they can, and then in just two weeks, begin their metamorphosis. They will attach themselves to a stem or leaf, and weave around themselves a silken chrysalis that will protect them while they go through the rapid changes that will result in the emergence of the exquisite Monarch Butterfly.



The chrysalis is a space of liminality (*Latin liminalis* – threshold, doorway, entrance) – a transitional moment between what has been and what will be. A space between the ‘what was’ and the ‘next.’ A space of transition, a season of waiting. We have, across the planet, entered a collective chrysalis, a shared moment in time between the familiar and the unknown. A psychotherapist describes liminality as

a kind of dreamtime, betwixt and between knowing and not knowing, neither here nor there—a limbo of uncertainty... that is radically open and full of possibility...a threshold of time, place and consciousness pregnant with potentials for challenge, insight, transformation and growth. (Golden, 2012)

Like the proverbial butterfly wings in chaos theory, which flapping over the Amazon create a cyclone in China, an invisible molecular particle encircled by a crown emerged in China and created a global firestorm. It has thrown our multiple and interlocking global and local systems into chaos. If there is anyone out there who was not aware of the fragile interdependence of our lives before, they are now. The cracks in our systems have been revealed as gaping caverns; as is the case in many crises, the people suffering the most are low income, food and/or housing insecure, or dependent on low wage jobs that demand their physical presence (wait staff, cleaners, clerks). People who are homeless. People who are incarcerated. People detained in border camps for trying to seek asylum. People abandoned by the promises of a globalized capitalist system built on the backs of exploited labor, disenfranchised populations, and the eco-cidal plunder of the natural world.

Many of us have left our “normal” lives behind (one poet describes normal life as “the frenetic, furied rush of illusions and ‘obligations’ that keep [us] from hearing our single and shared beating heart” (Flyntz, 2020). Whether we hasten back to our frenetic, furied rush of illusions when the crisis passes – and it will pass - or deeply engage with personal and collective reflection about where we are headed will determine the transformative possibilities of our experience. Can we change course? Can we make the radical shift from the doomsday scenario in which we currently exist 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?*” Will the cultivation of this expansive love translate into the political, economic and social actions needed to transform the material conditions of the world’s suffering and dispossessed so that all might enjoy the Earth’s abundant bounty?

Here in the U.S., in the face of Federal government incompetence and venality, states and communities have taken on the major burdens of survival. I have been inspired to see so many people acting selflessly to care for others. Heroic health workers struggling to mitigate suffering without adequate resources. Teachers working to reinvent schooling so that children might stay connected to their peers and engaged in learning. Regular folk creating mutual aid societies, ensuring that those who are sick, disabled, or elderly are not forgotten.

We are collectively realizing the many ways that the dominant global economic system, a system that values profits over human needs and the well-being of the entire planet, is at the root of the current crisis and will likely contribute to a much larger tragedy than was necessary. Virologists concur that most of the infectious diseases that have emerged over the past few decades (AIDS, Ebola, and SARS, just to name a few), result from the interspecies transmission of zoonotic RNA viruses (see Vijaykrishna, et. al, 2007). These transmissions occur because humans have encroached on the remaining wild areas of the planet in order to plunder the biodiverse forested areas for timber, metals, and agricultural land to meet the voracious demands of an expanding human population. We are all familiar by now with the unsanitary conditions in the Asian “wet markets” where animals are slaughtered for human consumption and disease is spread. Equally problematic as disease vectors are the CAFOs (concentrated animal feeding operations) that supply much of the meat consumed by the world’s population.

Aside from the ecological dimensions of the crisis, here in the US at least, we have had decades of austerity programs, an upward flow of wealth that has filled the pockets of the corporate elite while depriving many of basic human requirements. The commodification of fundamental services such as health care and education, coupled with the increasing costs of

housing and necessary living expenses have created gross levels of inequality, even in this supposedly richest nation in the world. These inequities have come into stark relief during the present crisis, as we see millions who lived hand-to-mouth suddenly out of work and struggling to meet their basic needs. And we are likely only in the beginning stages of the crisis.

I have been studying Sarkar's ideas about Neohumanism and PROUT, along with the interpretive writings of other scholars, since 1972, when I was first introduced to the work. I have tried, always, to look at these ideas and weigh their merit alongside other current trends in the intellectual and practical worlds, such as deep ecology, eco-anarchism, critical theory, decolonization, and so many other ways of thinking that are consistent with Sarkar's ideas. Taken as a whole, Sarkar's ideas are perhaps more comprehensive than other systems of thought, but I am inspired to see so many movements e/merging that are leading us towards the realization of our "shared and beating heart." Yoga, once considered a "fringe" spirituality, is now a mainstream practice (and yes, it has been trivialized and commodified, but has at least become accepted enough to be taught in many public schools). An environmental movement sparked by Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* back in 1962 and brought to global attention by the climate crisis enjoys growing popular support, despite the criminal rollbacks of regulation under the current administration. And socio-economic-political ideas central to Sarkar's *Progressive Utilization Theory* (PROUT) — worker's cooperatives, food sovereignty, moral leadership, the rights of all people for a decent job, housing, food, health care and education, and the protection of biodiversity and natural habitats (see Maheshvaranda, 2012) — are now being seriously considered as solutions to current social and ecological problems. All of these ideas are vibrating in our collective chrysalis as we look forward to emergence. What will each and every one of us do to give impetus to the turning of the social cycle, nudging humanity into the "bright new day" that we know lies ahead?

Chaos is destabilizing. But chaos theory teaches us that systems re-organize, often in surprising new ways. Our way of life has brought us to a tipping point of which the Coronavirus is only the most urgent evidence. We will undoubtedly be faced with more crises in the future that require us to think in new ways about all aspects of our social life: How do we create strong communities? What do we collectively value? How can we build networks of support so that all are cared for? In terms of our youth, and their education: *How do we create educational approaches that value human development, equity and joy over test scores and academic achievement? What is worth learning and how can we best prepare young people for the actual future that is evolving before our eyes? How can we create pedagogies that nurture the inner lives of children as well as teaching them about the material world? And for us elders: How can we behave more responsibly towards the generations to come? What do we need to learn about making our communities ecologically sustainable? How do we establish more harmonious relations with the rest of the natural world?*



Author and theologian Richard Rohr (1999) describes the space of liminality as "the sacred space where the old world is able to fall apart, and a bigger world is revealed." Will we find the courage to allow this dissolution, in order to make way for the world we hope to create? I believe that we are in the thick of what may come to be understood as the "great transition" — the death of an old era and the birth of the new. Such a birth is not accomplished painlessly, but with extraordinary labor.

Those of us who hold a Neohumanist vision of human potential and a PROUTist vision of a just, ecological and joyful Earth home, along with our many partners across the planet, share a responsibility to be midwives to this birth. Systems demand that we evolve and adapt. The butterfly effect teaches us that small actions can have big impacts. Our collective small actions, mindfully taken, could have important collective impacts, so let us proceed into this new experience as mindfully and compassionately as we can.

For further reading on this topic by Kathleen Kesson:

"Three Scenarios for the Future of Education in the Anthropocene", in the *Journal of Futures Studies*

<https://jfsdigital.org/2020/04/12/three-scenarios-for-the-future-of-education-in-the-anthropocene/>

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The Economics and Politics of Crisis

By Prof. Edward McKenna

The Great Recession of 2008 was both far-ranging and long-lasting. But at the end of the crisis, the world was fundamentally unchanged. The Neoliberal paradigm, which emphasized markets and individuals, still held sway. The crisis we are currently experiencing will also be far-ranging and long-lasting. But with each passing day, it is becoming more apparent that the world may likely change in fundamental ways as we emerge from this pandemic. Not that this is in any way guaranteed, only that the daily experience of virtually everyone on the planet can't hope but foster an understanding that we have been living in a world that greatly overemphasized the importance of the individual, and severely undervalued the role of the community. As this awareness grows, great forces will develop to reestablish the balance between the individual and the community. And this will make possible the development and implementation of new ideas that will serve to foster the development of people within their communal experience.

Part of the reason why the world will change is due to the unique nature of this crisis. In all previous economic crises, the economic problems began on the demand side. Businesses would reduce their purchases of new machines, consumers would reduce their purchases of new houses, and total demand would fall as a result. But this crisis began on the supply side. An unseen virus, whose spread is very rapid, and for which we have no cure, has required all of us to self-quarantine and to engage in social distancing. As a society we are asking those whose work is not absolutely essential for life to remain home. But what this inevitably means is that the supply of output that we will be capable of creating will be severely reduced. In the United States, Janet Yellen, the former chair of the Federal Reserve, has stated that it is quite possible that within a few weeks we will reach Great Depression levels of unemployment, meaning unemployment of 25% of our workforce.

But this act of social distancing means that we are asking one another to share in the burdens created by this virus. For those who will be out of work, there will be great uncertainty as to whether they will have the income to feed and shelter their family, much less be able to provide the kind of education and healthcare every individual deserves. And there will be great uncertainty as to whether there will be a job waiting for them once this crisis ends. For those whom we are asking to work, whose work we have deemed essential for our existence, we are also demanding a great deal. In many cases these people must work in conditions that simply are not physically safe due to the coronavirus. Watching the almost daily outcry from medical workers, who literally put their life on the line and yet cannot acquire even the minimal protective equipment necessary for safety, reveals to us that there is a fundamental flaw in our society. The same is revealed by the factory workers who must work in close quarters without proper masks and gloves. And the same goes for agricultural workers, who provide the food so necessary for our welfare. We are coming to understand that the truly valuable workers are a different group from those we have admired in the past.

We must be clear about the basic bargain that those who are staying home to protect the lives of others and those who are working in unsafe conditions have made. Those who work to produce output must share this output with those who are staying home to bring an end to this virus. This is no individualistic bargain made by unseen workers in a market. This is a decision that our community is making, that is necessary for the communal well-being. Such a decision cannot be left to individuals on their own, it can only be made at the community level, and can only be successful if individuals have trust that those who are making communal decisions are making them in the interest of all of us.

Even the highly individualistic politicians in the United States seem to understand this. In the 2008 crisis, the financial institutions that were responsible for the poor decision-making that led to the housing crisis were completely bailed out. But the homeowners, whose home was often their only source of wealth, lost their homes in the millions. This time, however, we see politicians going out of their way to emphasize that we must pass legislation that will help everyone, from those workers who will lose their jobs, to those small businesses that will go out of existence without help, to those state and local governments whose finances will be in shambles as a result of this pandemic. Of course, we will have to be extraordinarily vigilant to make sure that the politician's words are matched by their actions, already we are learning of the unequal impact that the virus and the ensuing economic destruction are having on various groups in society. Long delays are occurring for workers attempting to receive unemployment insurance, while the Federal Reserve lends to large businesses on a daily basis. But it is not likely that these types of inequalities will go unnoticed or unpunished. The average person knows we are in this together, and not as individuals. It is very unlikely that people will accept the kind of unequal bargains that were drawn in the 2008 crisis this time around. A small, but illustrative, example of this is something occurring in a race for a United States senatorial seat in Georgia. The revelation that one of the candidates had sold stock on the basis of inside information just prior to the growth of the pandemic has led from her going to the leading candidate, to having virtually no support. People will simply not accept that some people can gain and some people lose as a result of this crisis. We are facing this crisis as a community, and we must treat one another with this understanding.

There are other forces at work that are also contributing to our understanding that while we may be individuals, we are individuals within a community. Just recently I was listening to a report on National Public Radio given by the station's national health reporter. This is a person whose entire career is devoted to health issues, and yet he was explaining that he was shocked to learn, as a result of this crisis, how dependent the United States is on the rest of the world for acquiring medical supplies and pharmaceuticals. It is stunning, he related, to come to learn that because China has had to close down part of its economy, that the US suddenly finds it cannot obtain the drugs and medical supplies it requires to fight this virus. I must say, it certainly is stunning, stunning to learn that even experts in the field have been unaware of the degree to which the interconnectedness of the global economy has grown over the past 40 years, the era of neoliberalism. And this has not been an accident. For more than two centuries, economists have extolled a doctrine known as comparative advantage, a doctrine that essentially states that any particular area should specialize in the production of that which it does most efficiently, and rely on trade with the rest of the world to obtain whatever else it requires. So we should not be surprised to learn, for example, that while the assembly of a good such as an automobile might take place in one country, the parts that go into that automobile may come from more than 50 countries around the world, countries that were most efficient in the production of that particular part. This extended supply chain, as economists would refer to it, works fine in an idealized world where interruptions such as pandemics never occur. But as we are now learning, in our actual world, such interruptions can bring production to a halt all over the world. This, in turn, will undoubtedly lead to a more critical view of doctrines such as comparative advantage. Every region of the world must be capable of producing all of those things that are necessary for its existence when crises such as the present one occur. Regions must plan their development in such a way that they have the independent capability of sustaining themselves, and such planning may mean that a region must be capable of producing the essentials of life when extraordinary circumstances occur, even if such things cannot be produced in what appears to be the most efficient manner in normal times. And, this may also require holding ample reserves of essentials to meet extraordinary times, even if the holding of such reserves runs counter to the idea of cost minimization in normal times. In other words, we will have to find ways to balance the irresistibly individualistic logic of the market with the overarching needs of the community, for it is only within a community that individuals can flourish.

While I believe that it is virtually inevitable that we will become more aware of the importance of community as a result of our present experiences, we should not take it for granted that such an awareness will automatically lead to a positive outcome. As awareness of the importance of community grows, so also does the awareness that we have to imbue a community with the power that it requires to act in the interest of all of us. But such power can be easily abused. In crisis times, peoples' heightened fears of catastrophe make them more open to support authoritarian and/or dictatorial individuals whose delusions of grandeur lead them to claim, often quite charismatically, that is only through them that the people can be saved. The study of recent history is invaluable in understanding these dangers. World War I, 1914-1918, was immediately followed by a flu pandemic that, over three successive waves, actually killed more people than died in the war. Less than a decade later, a great depression followed, ending in World War II. One can only imagine what someone born in say 1905, and who experienced all of these events, must have come to believe about the nature of human beings and their place in the world. But it was also during this time frame that we see the rise of Lenin and communism in Russia, Mussolini and fascism in Italy, and Hitler and Nazism in Germany. Each of these dictators emphasized the importance of the community, but they did so for their own aggrandizement, and not for the welfare of the community they claimed to speak for.

So it is that in our own time we find the rise of Trump in the United States, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Orbán in Hungary, and Duterte in the Philippines, each claiming they will protect the community and lead it to greatness. So, as difficult as it may be, given the challenges that we are all facing, we must nevertheless find the strength to speak for the importance of community, but to see its role as important precisely because it is only within community that individuals can flourish. And this means all individuals. Perhaps the heaviness of our burdens can be lightened by the hope that this time we can create a world that is truly different.

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.

Society is like a company of pedestrians going on a pilgrimage. Suppose one among them is attacked by cholera, do the rest go on their way, leaving him behind? No, they cannot. Rather, they break their journey at the place for a day or two, relieve him from the disease and help him to acquire strength in his legs. Or, they start out anew, carrying him on their shoulders. If anyone runs short of his subsistence, others give him their own. Together, they share everything with all. Together, they stream ahead, singing their leading chorus. In their eagerness to go ahead with others, they forget their trifling differences which in their families might have led to negative exchanges and court cases, even down to three generations.
Shrii P. R. Sarkar

We Are All Unschoolers Now

A Message to Parents

By Dr. Kathleen Kesson

Families who unschool, or home school (at least 2 million kids in the U.S.) usually reach this decision after much deliberation, and after weighing innumerable factors: available time and energy, capacity, desire, and finances. Now, overnight — thanks to a global pandemic — hundreds of thousands of young people in many countries have no school to go to. We now have compulsory unschooling.

First of all, some definitions: Home schooling merely suggests that kids are being educated outside the formal school setting. The curriculum of the home school may be every bit as structured as that of the public school. In fact, many schools are making efforts to provide continuity by shifting familiar educational processes from face to face instruction to online learning.

Unschoolers, on the other hand, tend to reject the entire apparatus of school, and the paradigm on which it is based. Unschooling implies an embrace of the idea that children are naturally curious, meaning-seeking creatures with interests and concerns that should be allowed to guide their learning. It's been interesting to read the blogosphere and see how many parents began this adventure with strict home schooling schedules and regimens, then slid into unschooling as the demands of real life took over and they discovered that just possibly, young people can decide for themselves how they wish to occupy their time.

Because of the class divide in this country, some families will manage to cope with the new educational expectations (those with resources for alternative childcare, those who can work from home, those with good internet access and lots of available books and materials), though even such privileged parents will experience difficult adjustments. Many more parents are making painful choices. Do I leave the kids home alone? How will they keep up with their schoolwork? Will they graduate? And sadly, others are dealing with even more grave issues. How will I pay my rent? How will my child get their meals? How can I keep them safe?

Everyone has questions: What will this mean for my child's academic future? How will they learn what they are supposed to learn? And what in the world am I to do all day with the kids? If you are a parent of a suddenly unschooled young person and do have the opportunity to stay at home with them, I offer here some words of hope, some rays of possibility gleaned from the experiences of our family when we chose to unschool.

We were far from privileged when we embarked on our five-year unschooling adventure. Our house was a 984-square foot, Depression-era shack that we relocated onto 20 acres of land in rural Oklahoma. Our income stream was uncertain and often slowed to a trickle, and we had no health insurance for our family of six. There was little cash to spend on fancy educational resources, but we did the best we could with what we had. Actually, duct tape might have been our largest single expenditure (that was the year that my eight-year-old spent constructing cardboard and duct tape swords and shields to re-enact his favorite myths with his younger brothers). Despite these very real challenges, those five years were some of the best in our lives. With no lesson plans, no tests, no grades, no textbooks, and no “do-nows,” our four boys managed to learn a whole lot about the world. But I think I learned even more than they did.

Ten Things I Learned from Unschooling

1) Personalize learning. For the most part, conventionally schooled children and teenagers follow structured curricula with predetermined (often by testing companies) learning goals and anticipated outcomes. Their physical movement is limited, and there is an emphasis on “accountable” behavior (raising hands, lining up, staying on task, not talking out of turn, etc.). They are monitored, judged, and assessed on every aspect of their experience - their academic achievement, their habits of mind, their behavior, etc. In Vermont, where I live, we have legislation guaranteeing that every child has the right to a personalized education, which has been a very promising development. The current enforced unschooling, which is challenging in so many ways, offers an opportunity to interrupt practices that “de-personalize” learning, and give your child a jump start on discovering the interests and curiosities that may encourage them to design their unique and amazing personalized learning plan.

2) If your child seems to crave the structure of completing their internet assignments or packets that their teachers have laboriously put together (bless their collective hearts for caring), by all means encourage them. Whatever gives young people a sense of security and continuity. But as unschoolers have learned, the work required in most classrooms can be done in much less time than it generally takes to get an entire class rolling. They are likely to have time on their hands, even if they meet all their structured requirements.

3) Don't panic if your child complains that "I'm bored." Boredom can be productive. Children are by nature curious about the world and eager to learn new things. Schooling, with its curriculum mandates, lesson plans, pacing calendars, Carnegie units, and assignments tends to eradicate these healthy natural instincts. John Holt, the renowned scholar and educator who wrote the pivotal book on unschooling (Teach Your Own) suggested that children only become self-directed learners after they "de-toxify" from the demands of schooling for a period of time. (If you want to learn more about self-directed learning, see the Alliance for Self-Directed Education – ASDE - at <https://www.self-directed.org/>)

4) Get outside. In our unschooling experience, the most profound moments of learning happened outdoors. Indigenous scholars and educators teach us that the land itself is the best teacher. If you have any access at all to the surrounding countryside or a body of water, go there. Right now. Listen for the birds, watch for signs of spring, feel the wind brush against your face, smell the forest floor. Learn to listen to the trees, and think about the amazing underground "Wood-wide Web" through which these upright relations of ours communicate with each other. The world is facing multiple ecological crises, of which COVID-19 is only the most apparent at the moment. To survive and thrive, young people will need to become attuned to the deep interconnectedness of all species and the wisdom that the land has to offer us.

5) Play is not just for preschoolers. Play is freely chosen. Play is pleasurable. Play is engaging, engrossing, spontaneous, imaginative, self-directed, experimental, improvisational, purposeful, absorbing and transformative. It is a negotiation between the inner world of the child and the environment. In play, we try on the world and see how it fits. Isn't this what learning should be all about? Notice your children at play, how they use language, how they call upon their imaginations, how they invent strategies for coping and how they express what they are feeling about life. Play with them — but only when invited, and on their terms.

6) Tell stories. Unhook everyone from the screen for as much time each day as you can bear. Tell your children stories – stories of their grandparents and their great grandparents, how they lived, the challenges they met. Tell them about your life before kids. What were your visions and your dreams? What do you care deeply about? Look at family pictures, laugh and remember. Relationship is probably the most significant aspect of learning.

7) DO things together. Peel vegetables, start a compost pile, make a cake, plant seeds in pots and put them in a sunny window (spring IS coming), play board games, make board games. Our kids learned many of their basic math skills playing Yahtzee. Fold laundry. Teach your kids to sew on buttons. If you are alert to it, there's a lot of learning that can happen in everyday tasks. Vermont's esteemed philosopher John Dewey taught us that real life experiences should be at the heart of learning. It is only through the "doing" and the "making" that a kid's brain can easily connect to and retain more abstract knowledge. Dig deep and find those connections between life and academics.

8) Take things apart. Have an old alarm clock or typewriter? A broken toaster? Hopefully you have a few basic tools around – hammer, screwdrivers, etc. There's a lot to learn from looking at the innards of objects. Of course, you need to remove hazards like used batteries. Build stuff. Those toilet paper rolls are even more valuable than you thought. Make wind socks, castles, trains. Combined with other items you usually recycle or throw away, your kid can make amazing junk sculpture. Some of our greatest, most ecologically conscious artists nowadays are those using recyclable materials in novel and creative ways.

9) Read aloud. Our whole family once read Hamlet over a couple of weeks. Even the two-year old was captivated by it. Read alone – take some time to enjoy your own novel, or catch up on that non-fiction you've been meaning to read. Seeing an adult enjoy reading is how young people become readers.

10) Value the learning process over the products. We are obsessed with the "results" of learning. But it is in the doing, the making, the questions, the exploration, the mistakes – that learning actually happens. Let go of caring about the end result and focus on the learning itself. Observe your child as they go about exploring and making – you will be surprised at what you learn about who they are and how they think.

Take a deep breath and engage in the moment as mindfully as you can. Your child will be learning major life lessons from how you live into and through this crisis. What's the worst that might happen if your young person leaves behind the race to the top for a time? If they were to spend much of their days outdoors? Breathing fresh air. Looking at the sky, noticing the clouds. Spending unlimited amounts of time simply reading books of their choice. Daydreaming. And OK, watching a few choice documentaries on TV. Young people are amazingly resilient.

It is way too early to reflect on what we grown-ups might learn from this tragedy, but I am hopeful that the resolution of the current crisis will cause us to reflect on what is truly important and perhaps reevaluate our priorities. One of the biggest mistakes we could make from the educational situation is being convinced by corporate interests that online learning is preferable to schools. These folks, and their conservative allies, have been engaged in the struggle to privatize our public schools for decades now, and the pervasiveness of online learning programs and their utility in the present crisis will give that movement a boost. Schools have an important role to play in our future, even though I believe we need to rethink many things about how they are organized, what is taught, how we value young people, and how they connect with the larger community.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

Innovation in the Time of Corona

By Didi Ananda Devapriya

As Corona virus swept around the globe, shutting down whole economies in its wake, our NHE projects in Romania were no exception. Both the Rasarit kindergarten in Bucharest and the Fountain of Hope after school in Panatau were forced to suspend their activities by government orders.

Initially, our kindergarten team saw it as a welcome respite to focus fully on catching up the mountain of bureaucratic requirements for accreditation, as the final inspection was scheduled for May. Within a week or so, however, it became apparent that this was not just a temporary closure of a couple of weeks, but something much bigger, without a predictable end in sight. Parents started contacting us, asking for reductions in fees, or pulling out. We also started wondering, how were the children coping with the scary streams of news, and the restrictions of staying inside small apartment buildings?



Innovate and Adapt

It was time to innovate and adapt. I quickly organized crash courses in online meetings for the teachers, and we met on Zoom to discuss meaningful ways we could support the parents and the children. Teachers started out by sending their weekly planning emails, with ideas that parents could do with their children at home. Sorina started to record herself telling stories, using her mobile phone. The children were so comforted to hear her voice, and parents were soon sending us photos or stories of their child snuggled up in bed, listening to her voice.



Online Trial and Error

We then experimented with having an online version of circle time with the children by Zoom. It was a trial and error experience. The children were so relieved and excited to see each other and their teachers that they all wanted to speak at once, which resulted in chaos, of course. We discovered that it isn't so easy to hold their attention from a distance, or to have them wait their turn to speak (even when using the mute options – some got very upset that they couldn't be heard).

Aware that screen time presents its own dangers to the sensitive, developing mind of young children, we didn't want all of our activities to be screen dependent, and we really debated what the best use of the online meetings should be. We decided that its principal use would be for maintaining the social connections between the children and with teachers. We found that interactive games, like "Simon says" are more fun and engaging than trying to hold the attention of the whole group on a story or lesson. Sharing experiences, demonstrating experiments they can do with their parents, singing (if everyone is on mute, otherwise it becomes chaotic as the audio is not perfectly synched and lags), worked well – and some storytelling, though mostly we found that the stories work better if recorded and sent to the parents to use at other moments. Virginia suggested painting on the windows, to children, and some sent back beautiful photos of their experiments.

New emerging talents

Soon the teachers were curious how to make video versions of their stories, with background music and effects, and images. I held another online crash course in how to use a simple free video-editing software (Videopad). Madhavii and her teenage daughter Kalyanii began producing gorgeous stories with images from storybooks. Next we will explore storytelling with puppets and maybe even stop-motion animation.

Who are the teachers now?

In the meantime, we realized that in this period, our role is more that of consultants or coaches for the parents. It is the parents who are actually the ones leading the educational activities, as there is only so much you can do in a short online meeting. Many of our parents are quite overwhelmed with balancing working from home with also having to take care of their children. They seem to appreciate the suggestions and ideas for activities that otherwise they would not have had time to research. It is a real joy to receive photos that the parents send us of the children engaged in different activities that we have suggested, and seeing the children's own creativity as they explore and improvise new, unexpected directions.

Prioritizing socio-emotional support

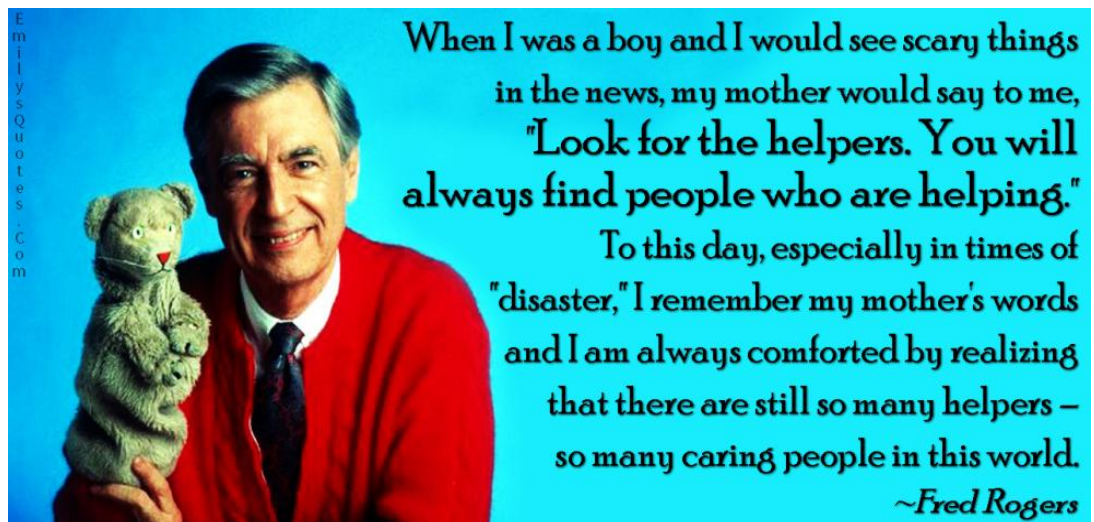
Providing interesting activities has been helping to channelize the children's energy towards positive, interesting, educational experiences. However, we also recognize that more important than ensuring progress towards typical educational goals, is to provide the socio-emotional support as we all collectively navigate a worldwide, historic natural disaster. We have been translating therapeutic stories that our friend and expert Susan Perrow has been publishing for this purpose. Indeed, my experience participating in the AMURT/ EL Child Friendly Spaces programs, after natural disasters and in refugee work, has been very useful. Routines and predictable, familiar structures help to normalize the situation, such as the ritual of meetings with teachers and friends online, instead of morning circles. I have been sharing resources for parents and children on how to use belly breathing to switch off stress and enjoy peaceful moments together. Mihaela will be experimenting with using persona dolls, to help open up discussion about the children's feelings of frustration or sadness in not being able to go to kindergarten or outside to play.



So part of my role has also been to research and send parent's child-friendly, appropriate resources for explaining COVID and dealing with the emotions that may come up. Activities, like making masks, can help to demystify and even make a game out of this otherwise potentially alienating or scary new addition to people's attire. An experiment with glitter can illustrate how germs spread in a fun way: the child puts their hands in a jar or plate with glitter and some stick. The parent does the same – and then they shake hands, pick up things, and notice how the glitter gets everywhere!

Children need honest, but reassuring explanations about what is happening. Parents can reassure children that they and lots of other grownups are doing their best to keep everyone safe. They can highlight the roles of helpers, like doctors, scientists and police in positive ways. However, it is also important to find ways for children to feel actively involved in doing their part, as this decreases the sense of powerlessness and helplessness that is characteristic of traumatic experiences, and increases their resiliency. Instead of simply telling children to wash their hands, parents and caregivers can frame these rules as ways that children can also help protect their communities. They then can give them encouragement and positive feedback whenever they see that they are remembering such rules on their own "You are really being such a great helper to our whole community by washing your hands right away – good job!"

Indeed, in times of crisis, those that find ways to actively help others tend to have greater psychological resiliency, even emerging stronger and more empowered by the experience, than they were before. This taps into our Neohumanist understanding of the core nature of human beings, in particular our deep, innate need to serve those around us. It is one of the keys to a robust, healthy sense of happiness and meaningfulness in life. I found a beautiful Mr. Rogers quote that reflects this same wisdom.



Progressive School Coronavirus Report

By Eric Jacobson



Progressive School anticipated the spread of Coronavirus and prepared a four-phase response plan in February of 2020. The fourth and final phase of that plan is where we stand now -- in a total shutdown throughout New York.

Our program is receiving incredible praise as the leader of all Long Island schools. Hofstra University has stated that with our online learning program we have been able to achieve more than any school up to the university level than they have ever seen. All our content is original and designed to be Neohumanist in nature.

Here is a brief synopsis of what we are offering:

1. Original Video—disseminated via published YouTube links

- a. Prepared recordings of special lessons by our staff and directed at specific age groups, including parents
 - i. Art
 - ii. Music
 - iii. Emotional/Social/Wellness
- b. Recorded Zoom lessons
 - i. For most subjects
 - ii. For learning celebrations (in lieu of parties and conventions)
 - iii. For technical assistance

2. Canvas online learning system

- a. Modules are created for each week within all academic disciplines and at all levels from K-10, and then assigned in an individualized profile for each student. These modules contain:
 - i. Information Pages
 - ii. Downloadable Files with online visibility (powerpoint, doc, pdf, jpg, etc.)
 - iii. Instructional videos
 - iv. Quizzes
 - v. Discussions
 - vi. Assignments
- b. Students responses to Canvas
 - i. Accepted via Canvas phone app: photo and upload
 - ii. Accepted via direct text input
 - iii. Accepted via email to teacher
- c. Grading
 - i. All assignments are graded via points, feedback, comments, complete/incomplete
 - ii. All responses become a part of a child's progress profile
 - iii. Exemplary responses are compiled for a weekly newsletter within a subject

3. Zoom

- a. Lessons in all subjects according to regular school schedule to avoid conflicts
- b. Lessons are recorded for easy access if attendance is not possible
- c. Staff meetings
- d. Online parties, sing alongs, etc.

4. Support

- a. Tech support 12/7 via email, phone, text, Zoom
- b. Computers, printers, ink provided without charge for stressed families
- c. Supplies
 - i. Every two weeks teachers prepare a packet of supplies
 - ii. Supplies are sterilized, placed outside on tables, and pick-up times arranged
 - iii. Supplies include books, tools, manipulatives
- d. Emotional support
 - i. Drive by visits by teachers
 - ii. Correspondence with guidance for anxiety relief, including kiirtan
- e. Delivery
 - i. For families without the ability to arrange pick up, supplies are delivered by staff, parents, or principal

5. Effort to communicate—we leave no stone unturned to reach out to people who are non-responsive, or not participating

- a. Email
- b. Text
- c. Canvas announcements
- d. Phone calls
- e. Personal visit

Examples:

1. This YouTube video is an example of a prepared lesson offered for students and parents on Emotional/Social/Wellness <https://youtu.be/og8NYXgejgA> . The music is by our teachers.
2. An example of an academic module and quiz would be a posted morality tale written for 5th/6th graders meant to teach Brahmacarya (seeing the One in all things), accompanied by a graded quiz that includes a written essay on the practice of Unity in daily life.
3. Exemplary responses to academic assignments are compiled for a weekly newsletter within a subject. An example is the following piece written by a student with learning disabilities in response to a music appreciation course that at the time was examining the 2nd movement of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata:

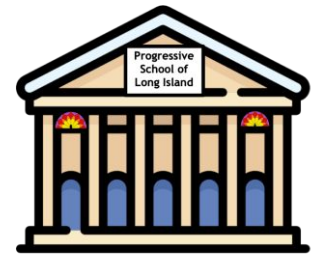
"I was still on the small rowboat. I had opened my eyes and saw the beautiful morning sunshine as I became one with myself. I saw the beautiful daylight. I looked up in the sky and saw wonderful lanterns in every color. I encountered myself with this door to who knows where. I decided to take the risk and discover something new. As I opened the door, there was this shining bright light. At first I thought I was in heaven, when I saw something far beyond all the fog. There was this voice, a beautiful song leading the way through a secret passageway. I quickly followed the voice before it faded away. As I got closer... I felt happy, like I had actually found myself, I had become one with my body and mind, and one with myself. I felt something in my heart--a different mood I have never felt before. It was different, peaceful. I had been relaxed with this beautiful music, and I was happy. I have always had a passion for music. It's like a part of me, it completes me. I have loved music since the day I have been born, and it's funny because tomorrow April 2nd is my birthday. I think that I am very spritely because I am always full of so much energy. I never let anything ruin my happiness nothing can ever let me down. I just have a way of always feeling so happy no matter what and I love it. I am just that kind of a person. I don't know I just feel very different, like I have changed. Whenever I close my eyes and listen to the music, it's like I enter another world of possibilities, and that anything is possible. I also feel happy, more happy than I have felt these past days".

Virtual Art Museum of Student Work

Another example of what we do is as follows: The art teacher prepares a video lesson for 7/8 grade. We share it with a YouTube link. We then call, email, text every family until we get 100% participatory responses. We then compile their work into a virtual museum. Afterwards we share the middle school museum with the whole school. You can view the result here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFQdO7ASea0> or here:
<https://progressivelyli.org/distance-learning-in-art/>

Virtual Museum Tour



More Distance Learning Outcomes for Viewing

2nd grade dino museum <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YznhriVATdc>

5th grade invention convention <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zYC3QaP8jI>

6th grade science fair <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqloXYG93AQ>

Parent Feedback

I just got this comment from a parent who is an educator and education activist:

"I can't say enough about the tremendous job you are doing. Public districts are falling apart in their academics and you continue to shine. The kids are happy, learning, and love staying connected with their teachers and friends. The teachers have been so gentle and accommodating. We are so very happy and have told people all over what a great job our school is doing - not only to other parents in different districts but also to administrators and teachers we are friends with. Having tech geeks at Hofstra set it up was brilliant. Most schools are using google classroom and it's not going so well from what I hear from both parents and teachers. Canvas is fairly easy to navigate once you get the hang of it. After the first couple weeks, the boys have been able to do much of everything on their own. You guys didn't miss a beat and it's been greatly appreciated. More than the academics, though, the staff is always dedicated to the needs and well-being of the kids. You clearly make that the priority. You just get it. It's made this transition less anxiety-producing and uncertain for our kids. We love and appreciate you all so much."

With gratitude, Jihan

Responding to the Covid-19 Pandemic to Build a Better World

By K. L. Chew

In early 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic hit the world. In Indonesia, the early childhood teacher training project, run by AMURT Indonesia, was running full steam ahead when the government ordered all early childhood schools to shut down from 16 March, and instructed people to avoid gatherings.

In response to the crisis, we re-oriented our program of activities, and decided to make combating the dangerous impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic the theme of all our activities for second quarter 2020 and beyond as necessary. These activities include our teacher training, study circle, parenting and community programs covering 30 schools in 21 villages with 1,300+ students and 127 educators (teachers, school managers and school principals). Through 21 Community Care Committees (KPP) in our network of mentored villages, AMURT's potential reach can come up to tens of thousands of people.

Our team of fulltime and part-time personnel immediately realized that this was the time to redouble their commitment to serving the community as far as their expanded hearts and minds could stretch.

The scientific approach was already an important, if less understood, element of the Indonesian curriculum. Now more than ever, it must be brought to the fore. Scouring the internet, social media and other sources, our Program staff compiled or produced educational materials (video clips, posters, jingles, documents, audio recordings, etc.) on Covid-19 and best practices in mitigating the pandemic.

To combat the virus transmission, we initiated a different transmission – one of scientific, evidence-based knowledge that our teachers, parents, children and village activists can act on. The materials include the proper way to wash one's hands, the importance of observing social (or rather physical) distancing, wearing a mask whenever one goes out, how to make masks, eating nutritious meals to stay healthy and boost one's immune system, productive and fun stay-at-home activities for children, life-skill activities, parent-child bonding activities, etc.

We have 2 transmission channels:

1) The Teacher Channel runs from AMURT staff to our Community Organiser Team (7 persons each in charge of 1 sub district) to Educators (127 persons in 30 schools in 21 villages in 7 sub districts) to Parents (1,300 parents) to Children (1,300 persons plus their brothers, sisters and other family members).

2) The Community Channel runs from AMURT staff to our Community Organiser Team to our KPP (Early Childhood Community Care Committees) Network in 21 villages. Each KPP consists of 6 key village activists (usually including the village headman).

To observe social (physical) distancing, all these transmissions had to be done via virtual training/meeting sessions. Since our project area is one without widespread computer ownership and home-based wifi, we had to rely on WhatsApp on mobile phones. Each session became marathon affairs lasting three, and oftentimes, many more hours. To reach 21 villages and 1,300 parents, a superhuman effort was required! By God's grace, we have a superhuman team and a network of people who understand the urgency of transferring to their communities at large, the important information and best practices in mitigating the effects of Covid-19.



Washing hands the proper way



Even baby brother has learnt the proper way to wash hands

At the end of the Teacher Channel, parents share and teach their children (and other family members) the materials received, and send back video clips or snapshots of their children implementing what they have been taught.

For the Community Channel, the end target we are aiming for is that each of the 21 villages will conduct a Village Community Project/Event (obviously with appropriate social distancing) to share the knowledge and combat Covid-19 spread in their villages and surrounding areas. The Village Community Project/Event is an annual event on our project calendar. For 2020, the original schedule was to hold it in November, but we hope to bring it forward to second quarter 2020 to meet the urgent challenge of combating Covid-19.



All masked up and sunning in the garden with Granny for Vit D

Our emergency program is scheduled to run from April to May, and possibly through June 2020. It is early days yet, and we still do not know how our ambitious Covid-19 Mitigation program will turn out. However some of the early results are already coming in from the Teacher Channel which was launched before the Community Channel program. The flood of video clips we have received of children washing their hands, helping in household chores, playing in their household compound to expose themselves to Vitamin D from the sun, eating well-balanced nutritious meals, making Stay-at-Home Agreement Statements with their parents, etc. are a joy to review. Best of all, the exercise is achieving one of our primary project objectives – inspiring and empowering parents to play an active role in their children’s development!



Washing my own clothes - helping mama and learning life-skills during stay at home



Look at the mask my mama bought for me!

In the Chinese script, the character for the word “crisis” is a combination of the words for “danger” and “opportunity”. By Grace, may we seize the opportunity arising from the danger of the Covid-19 crisis to bring about a more neohumanist, proutistic world.



Parents implementing stay-@-home activities with their children – what they had learned from the “online” session with their assigned teacher: helping with watering plants, cooking and folding clothes



Sælukot Preschool

Reykjavik Iceland

By Didi Ananda Kaostubha and the Sælukot Community

*“Childhood is the foundation stone upon which stands the whole life structure. The seed sown in childhood blossoms into the tree of life.”
(Swami Rama).*

Sælukot is a preschool based in Reykjavik Iceland, which is run in accordance with the principles of Neohumanism. At Sælukot we created a daily routine which includes morning circle, in which we sing, chant, meditate, practice a laughing exercise and practice yoga, and dance, just to name a few. After that there is some free play followed by lunch (vegan food is served to the kids), resting time, outside play, snack time and at the end of the day some more free play, some reading, or involvement in other projects. The educators try to employ and embody Neohumanistic ways and thus actively/passively pass them on to the kids.

There were a number of interesting programs that took place during the three months January-March 2020 at our preschool in Reykjavik. The children were learning and performing Neohumanist activities based on different themes every two weeks. The month of January 2020 evolved around the themes ‘The Universe’ and ‘Fire & Stones.’ For the month of February it was ‘Air’ and the month of March included ‘Water’, ‘Stones’, and ‘Rocks & Mountains.’ In accordance to the themes we drew pictures with the kids, performed experiments and had conversations, to help them reflect on each theme in particular and broaden their horizon.

The month of February was particularly loaded with happiness and excitement as it included three consecutive holidays in Iceland, which could be loosely translated as the ‘creamy bun day’, the ‘explosion day’ (minimal to large amounts of bean soup are consumed during that day) and ‘ash Wednesday’, the latter being a day during which the kids dressed up in various costumes.

As we are writing, Covid-19 is taking its toll on the whole globe and of course also our preschool. Since the middle of March almost everything had closed, but preschools and elementary schools in Iceland have still been open. Despite still running, we had to adjust to the circumstances with the help of government guidelines. These guidelines included the formation of smaller groups, restrictions on the use of toys, less physical contact and thorough cleaning sessions after work. One might want to use the term restrictions, but could also see it in another light. Through those restrictions new possibilities arose as well. Not only educating kids about the virus as such and how to treat one another in times like these, but also simply to learn to adjust to circumstances, which is what life often calls for. Smaller groups also help to focus on each kid more individually. An outbreak as such, to put into the perspective of Neohumanism, could be seen as a sign that there are things out there beyond our control, but that we do have the choice how to respond to such events. Such positive response has been seen in our whole preschool community.

At our school:

- The children learn how to share toys with each other
- The children learn how to treat one another, talk respectfully and solve arguments, through the guidance of the teacher
- The children learn about table manners and the value of natural and unprocessed food
- The children are learning about the ten principles of “Yama and Niyama”, specifically through song
- The children are learning ways to reuse paper, plastic and other “waste” and turn those into art pieces by using their creative ability
- The children learn experiments connected to the themes mentioned above and are hands-on with their creative side by using it in art and craft
- The children are learning different ways of meditation; even the smallest kids (about one year old) are exposed to Neohumanistic principles and are performing various types of yoga, meditation and mantra. Each group practices these acts in their morning circles individually, whilst every Friday we have a collective morning circle



Online Teaching Tips

By Ruai Gregory, M.A.

Converting a face to face class to the online teaching environment can be a simple and satisfying experience. I have been very surprised by the ease for me as a teacher and the enthusiastic responses from my students. Beginning 15 years ago, when my college department went online, I truly felt it would be extremely difficult and an inferior way to impart knowledge. Of course there are drawbacks, but read on for my hard won tips and preventive strategies!

Organizing Class Material

Most online class platforms (such as Blackboard, Canvas or Moodle) provide lots of options in their templates to create various types of assignments and discussion threads. I have found the easiest way to approach a unit of instruction is to provide three different assignments: discussion, application assignment (practical and theoretical) and journal (self-reflective) question. This ensures student engagement and interest. There are also quiz options that can be used. For example, in a recent class on Creativity, the assigned reading of the week (which also might include a TED Talk and/or YouTube video) looked at “ways to nurture creativity across all subjects in the classroom”. I listed a few learning objectives, then selected a discussion topic: “How have you organized your class environment to best allow children to use materials creatively?” Students must respond at least three times during the week to the discussion.

The application assignment for this unit involved the student providing before and after photos of their environmental changes, along with philosophical justifications and the children’s responses. The journal question asked them to relate the information to their own personal creative goal they’ve set as part of the class experience.

Engaging Students

To have a successful online classroom environment, the students must feel they are a part of it – in much the same way we teachers include and relate to them in a face to face class. There are many great tips for getting them on board, then keeping them engaged. Here are my favorites:

- Send introductory emails.
- Record yourself giving a course introduction and PowerPoint lecture.
- Chime in during the weekly class discussions, with lots of feedback and encouragement, with the aim of student camaraderie. The strong feeling of community that develops is remarkable, especially when the topic is of intense interest!
- Use Zoom or other “Super-Skype” programs to hold live class meetings, for large or small groups. These can be recorded for later viewing, but live is always best.
- Write new course updates on your class home page, with a question, so students must respond. For example, “which date works best for you for our next Zoom session?”
- Give detailed individualized comments on assignments. This is important in any class, but I find it’s especially necessary online. Rubrics are very valuable too.
- Post lots of photos and other visuals.
- Encourage student sharing by having them post their final projects in a discussion, with the task of “peer review”. Training teachers is all about sharing great resources and ideas, so the perfect culminating assignment in any class I teach is the final discussion in which they get to look at each other’s projects.

Of course, there’s more, so this is only an introduction.

Online teaching is not perfect, and doesn’t reach everyone. Yet, one of the surprises for me has been how well the introverted personalities have responded, often pulling much more weight in discussion topics than they ever would in a face to face environment. Providing ongoing support and building lasting relationships is always key in our roles as teacher and mentor.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions. I’m happy to review your class ideas!

Ruai Rekha Gregory, M.A

Early Childhood Education Instructor, Blue Mountain Community College, Pendleton, Oregon USA
rgregory@bluecc.edu

Bio notes: I have specialized in training teachers, primarily at the college level, but also in workshops and seminars, for most of my career. For Gurukula, I assisted in writing and editing the initial NHE certificate diploma program, and have presented workshops at two NHE Conferences. I also presented my Nature Education workshop in Romania for Didi Ananda Devapriya’s programs and in Portland, Oregon at New Day School.

Towards a People's History for a New Earth

By Lesley Whiting

"Yesterday I said something about history; I said that modern history usually deals with certain very common events such as when a certain king succeeded to the throne, or plundered a neighbouring country, or perpetrated atrocities on his subjects, or died, and so on. What benefit could common people possibly derive from studying such useless information? This is why they have no interest to study this sort of history at all. True history should be a faithful record of the entire human life. The recognized definition of history is: Iti hasati ityarthe itihāsah. That is, history is a resplendent reflection of collective life, whose study will be of immense inspiration for future generations. "Iti hasati" literally means, "the glowing example of glorious human dignity." Shrii P. R. Sarkar

After the "coronavirus" lockdowns, as many have pointed out, things will not return to normal. We are living through a transformation, whatever the nature of it, and things will not be the same. The slate is being wiped clean, and is now to be co-created by conscious humans. This applies in the sphere of education as much as any other sphere of life. My particular interest is in the transformation of the method and content of teaching history

That history is written by the victors is a well known fact. I was astonished, whilst teaching at an American school in the Middle East, nearing the end of the Iraq war, to open a brand new student's history book and find a photo of an American soldier carrying an injured Iraqi child. Reading the paragraph it spoke in the past tense about how the Americans had liberated the Iraqi people from an evil dictator and brought freedom, justice and democracy to Iraq. The war had not even ended, yet this was clearly a minor detail of no importance to the writers of US curriculum. "The required version" was already written into history.

For future generations of students, there will be no alternative narrative. No mention of the fact that Iraq never had the weapons of mass destruction (which was the accusation that justified the war), was not involved in 9/11, that the war was based on lies, nor of the million Iraqis died in that bloodbath. The NATO countries were already portrayed as saviours, and 20 years down the line, who will remember the hideously deformed children of Fallujah, the victims of depleted uranium bombs, the millions of dead, the masses of refugees, or the fact that there were no weapons of mass destruction? The dead cannot speak. The inconvenient truths will be erased from cultural memory.

Countless examples exist throughout world history. Certain kings and leaders are elevated to glory, while the fates and struggles of ordinary people have been deleted. Empires and colonialists have written their versions of history, while ignoring or belittling the rich histories, cultures and achievements of the people they conquered, for it does not reflect well on colonizers to admit that the countries they colonized may well have had civilizations, arts sciences and technologies far more advanced than their own. Indeed the whole justification for colonizing a country rested on bringing development" to "backward" or "undeveloped" peoples.

Kings often had their glorious exploits carved into stone for future generations to marvel at. However, if truth be known, not all of them were based on fact, some were seriously overrated and propaganda at best, while the true heroes lie buried under the ruins of the battlefield without mention, in order to avoid unfavorable comparisons.

Archeologists decipher and record these carvings but no-one records the voices of the indigenous peoples, the other classes, the women or the silent heroes of the people. Did they not have a history worthy of recording? Of course they did. It is also well known that women, with a few exceptions, are rarely recorded in history. Queen Hatshepsut of Egypt, after an incredibly tenacious battle to claim her right to rule over Egypt (and save Egypt from the disaster of inept ruler by the unfit) ruled successfully for over 40 years. However after her passing, all of her statues, depictions were systematically broken, defaced or entirely removed. Egypt did not want to remember that the all male line of Pharaohs, had been interrupted by the incredibly successful rule of a woman pharaoh.

The Romans did not give any credit to the darker skinned Etruscans, from whose comparatively advanced civilization they learned architecture, technology, arts and diplomacy

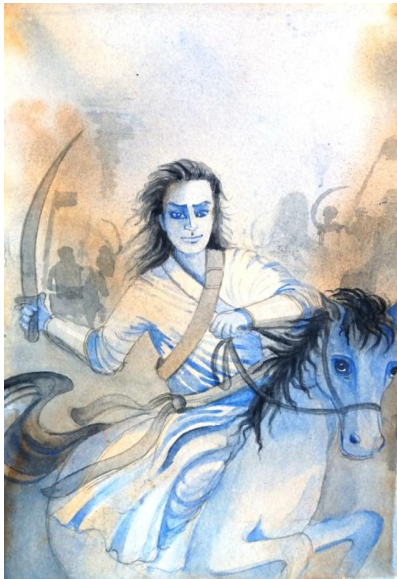
In very recent times entire villages have been razed to the ground and the entire population driven out at gunpoint. Their legitimate rulers demonized, histories deleted and their peoples dispersed as refugees, whilst the new settlers renamed and rebuilt the territory in their own image. Who records the history of those displaced peoples? Whose narratives will the future generations of refugees grow up with?

Sifting out some of these hidden and suppressed histories has become one of my passions, and something I dream of sending forth into the new era of neohumanistic thought and knowledge.

But, I wondered, how should such knowledge be presented? Who would entertain such information and what would attract them to learn more about it?

How could such alternative histories be presented?

“.....only that treatise which increases human beings’ arena of spiritual awareness and thus renders the intellect more subtle, which enhances the knowledge of various branches of art and science – such as literature, fine art, pure science, technology, social science, etc – and which places human beings on a firm foundation, deserves to be called genuine history.” Shrii P. R. Sarkar



Agnimitra, the military general who sacrificed his life to save Magadh)

Didi Anandarama and I decided to collect, write and illustrate as many beautiful historical stories as possible to enrich the neohumanist curriculum. The idea is to take a step toward righting some historic injustices while creating a more inclusive and multifaceted history of humanity. Our goal is to invite students to fall in love with the human story, to ignite their interest and passion to benefit from the deep knowledge of the struggles and efforts of untold souls over eons in order to establish the glory of human civilization in all areas of life. Here are two stories we started with.

A Tale of Ancient Maghad

While searching for the evidence of advanced civilization in India’s ancient history, I discovered numerous mentions of the ancient kingdom of Maghad with Pataliputra (now Patna) as its capital. First mentioned in the Mahabharata, it later became the administrative centre of the great Mauryan Empire. Intrigued, I searched for Sarkar’s references to it and came across an extraordinary story about ancient Magadh. He narrates the story through the anguished voice of a military general of the time, who died protecting his beloved Magadh from invading kings and armies who sought to plunder her glory for their own. The fascinating point is that Sarkar’s narrative turns the generally accepted history on its head, and exposes the shameful neglect of a king whose exploits are generally praised, but who in fact sat by, intoxicated, and allowed Maghad to fall from glory without taking action.

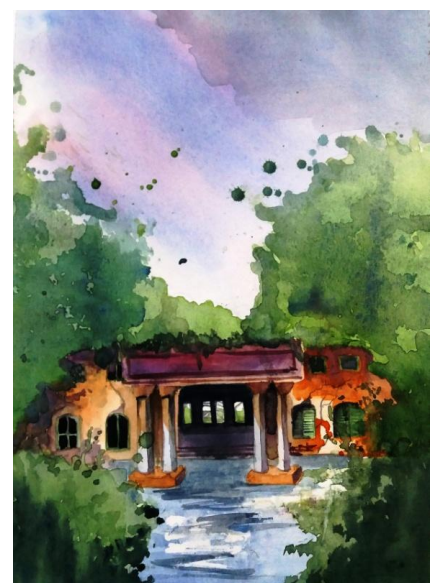
In the course of narrating the story, a wealth of other facts come to light, such as the unique cultural legacy bestowed by the non-Aryan renunciate community, who were averse to the showy rituals of the Vedic priesthood. Sarkar mentions Magadh being the birthplace of Buddhism and Jainism, as well as the place where the Buddha attained Nirvana. Its unique geographical location and abundance of resources facilitated the development and transportation of trade and commerce. He mentions the dignified position of women in a system that was still matrilineal, local traditions and habits, the spiritually and intellectually advanced souls who took birth and bestowed their gifts and teachings on this soil. Magadh was once a great centre of knowledge and learning housing the world’s first successful international university on its soil. Masterfully, a colourful tapestry is woven of a vibrant and thriving centre of politics, culture, learning, commerce and spirituality, spanning the pre-Mauryan era to the Gupta Empire.

As with all great empires, the cycles of time and change flow in their due course and Maghadh also fell on times of great hardship and suffering. At the end, one cannot help but love this kingdom and its pageant of peoples that have dwelt on her soil, and the brave soldiers that gave their lives for their beloved land, while, as usual until today, the leadership takes the credit. Due to having successfully awakened this love for the subject, the information will not disappear easily from the mind of the readers. Stories with a heart stirring, emotional content, are not easily erased from memory.

Indigo: a short story of the Indigo workers of Bengal

The other story of Sarkar for which I have just completed the illustrations is a tale of the author’s being forced by adverse weather to stay in the mysterious and long abandoned house that once belonged to a Niilkar Saheb – a British colonial plantation owner of the indigo plant used for dye. The story is rich with multilayered lessons, from the historical facts of the production of the dye to the bitter struggles of the exploited Indigo farmers and the agrarian revolts, a significant part of India’s war of Independence. Lessons of history, social justice, morality, and the karmic consequences of brutal exploitation of the colonialists are all skillfully interwoven throughout the tale, narrated through the troubled voice of the repentant plantation owner, seeking final release from the unbearable burden of his karmic debt.

The mysterious atmosphere and the drama of the story has a strong emotional content which keeps one suspended. One can’t help but identify in profound sympathy for the tortured lives of the voiceless indigo farmers, long forgotten by



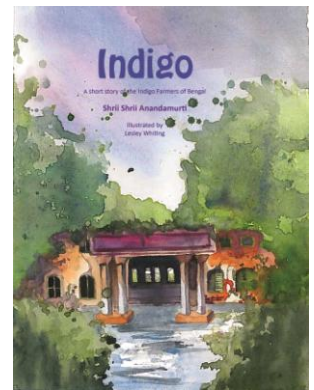
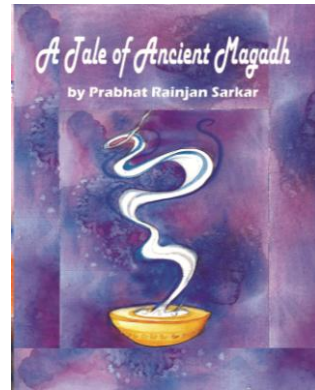
The mysterious house of the Niilkar Saheb (Indigo Plantation Owner)

history. Moreover, and even more strangely, perhaps, is that one finds compassion evoked for the plight of the cruel plantation owner, karmically suspended and bound in utter loneliness and isolation to the place of his crimes for indefinite time, and desperately seeking redemption. The student learns about the British Rule in India, and events that contributed to her independence in an engaging context difficult to erase from memory.

While using the story as the main theme to stimulate interest and emotional participation, a skillful teacher could easily encourage students to research and assemble an entire picture of different aspects of life in a project based approach.

The two mentioned stories are fully illustrated in colour and await publication.

“You people of today are more enlightened. Your intellectual capacity is no less than anyone else’s. That is why you should write a new history of the human race by your collective endeavour. The history that you will write in future must unequivocally reflect such important factors as how human society has evolved through trials and tribulations; what difficulties were confronted and how human beings overcame them and moved towards their goal with firm steps; and how even today they are advancing by solving numerous problems”. Shrii P. R. Sarkar



We Invite Your Participation in the Itihasa Project

Itihasa - stories of educational value that tell about historic events in the past and present for the purpose of education for a bright future.

Stories drive society and carry humanity and civilization over hurdles and struggles towards a better and benevolent future. We invite writers and story tellers to write new stories in the spirit of 'Itihasa'. We are extracting the stories of Shrii P. R. Sarkar from his writings to study and get wonderful examples of what 'Itihasa' stands for. We not only want to rewrite history but also to rewrite it in a way that is delightful to read and therefore we focus on 'Itihasa' the real essence of the times. Litterateurs for children and youth carry the responsibility of depicting the desired future and its idealistic and realistic features. As litterateurs we are in the past, present and future. New stories are needed to help us overcome the difficulties of the present.

Please join us and be part of our Itihasa team to discuss and create new stories. Contact: <didianandarama@gmail.com>

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

We Are All Unschoolers Now

By Dr. Kathleen Kesson

I often return to the prophetic vision of Ivan Illich, the 20th century philosopher and prophet of a “deschooled society.” Bureaucratic schools in a capitalist society, said Illich, are a form of social control that undermine human freedom, choice, and dignity. Illich envisioned a society in which the knowledge and skills we need to live well in a radically democratic and ecological society would be shared through informal, voluntary networks. Instead of conventional schooling, he said, we needed to cultivate the “tools for conviviality” that might enable us to live well together. His vision was articulated prior to the emergence of the Internet; we now have the tools we need to map the assets of our communities and link people who want to learn with people who have knowledge and skill to share.

Schools, in this model, could become true community hubs, places of creativity and invention, where young people as well as adults could connect to mentors who can teach them what they will need to know for an uncertain and increasingly precarious future: organic farming, agro-forestry, mutual aid, tiny house-building, invention, solar engineering, ecological restoration, and of course, those non-commodified aspects of life that bring pleasure and bind communities together: singing, dancing, music-making, story-telling, art, craft, theater, sports, ceremony. We need community centers more than ever, to engage in the social rejuvenation and healing that will be necessary in the (hopefully) not-too-distant future. Perhaps this moment where we have all become unschoolers might reveal the “crack in the cosmic egg” that Joseph Chilton Pearce spoke about, a rupture that might burst open the shell of our current construct of reality and enable a leap in human evolution by sparking our collective imagination towards new ways of thinking, new ways of living, and new ways of learning.



The Flow of Love and Teacher Development

By Linda Baker

For many years I attempted to infuse neohumanist values, curriculum and programs at the public school that I worked in, in the United States. What I discovered in working in such a big system is that the teachers' development and well being was a big factor, in a classroom, that could enhance students' creativity and learning. How teachers perceived their own sense of belonging and inclusion with their own families and other systems and their abilities to untangle from difficult circumstances and fate increased their ability to access resources and love. How they accessed that love and their deeper selves supported their work and catalyzed a deeper knowing about how to work in their classrooms. It helped them increase creativity and a sense of belonging and inclusion in their classrooms.

Almost a bigger influence was teachers connecting and seeing children's parents and families as key in the students' learning. It was also important to understand the difficult circumstances as well as the deep resources families can provide. The result was creativity and well being and increased learning for all.

My journey has moved me to share what I think is essential to our neohumanist message, love for all, in order to transform education and our world. It may sound cliché but it is actually the most important thing for teacher and student development.

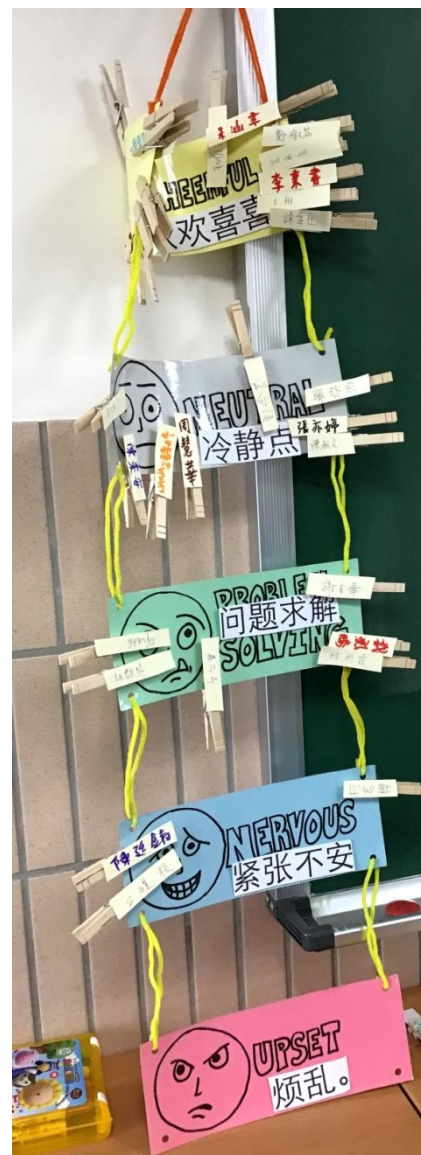
In 2017, I founded *Supporting Systems*, (a consulting service that offers in-person and online coaching, workshops and resources for educators and nonprofit organizations), to support the well being, creativity and learning of all stake holders. After I presented at the Global NHE Conference in Italy in July 2019, I was invited to go to Taipei, Taiwan to give a lecture and a two day workshop to a group of teachers and student teachers at Fu Jen University.

Taipei Supporting Systems Workshops January 17-19, 2020

Let me start by saying the hospitality and care with which I was the recipient in Taiwan was so special.

My lecture at Fu Jen University was on a Friday after school and sixty teachers and students attended. I was honored that so many would attend after a long week at school and work. I had a great translator and it was the first time I gave a lecture with translation. Everyone was so kind and supportive of my efforts.

The next two days I gave a workshop for about 30 teachers at the university. As teachers walked in they were invited to use the *feelings thermometer* (see photo) which helps you to identify how you are feeling. Participants placed a clothespin on the feeling they most identified with at that moment. Periodically throughout the workshops teachers revisited to see if their feelings changed and could move their clothespins.





DAY ONE

We started by sitting in a big circle as I facilitated an exercise called the *container exercise* where each person shared what intentions they came with and what they hoped to get from the weekend. They picked a bead to represent these hopes and placed it in a container which stayed visible for the whole workshop.

Then we had some *group exercises* to help the participants

experience the systemic nature of the work. In one group exercise the teachers got into four groups organized by experience levels - from most experienced to new teachers. They were asked to stand in those groups in the center of the room inside the big circle of chairs we were sitting in. Each younger group bowed to the ones that were senior and then we all turned back so the younger teachers could feel the support of all those that were senior. The senior teachers expressed their heartfelt gratitude for being seen and respected as there are so many changes in Taiwan right now that they are sometimes seen as being thrown out. The younger teachers expressed that they felt supported in new endeavors which can be very challenging for them at this time in their new careers. The work from then on in groups was a mix of young and experienced with much support, sharing and enthusiasm.

We then had a *stilling exercise* in which we felt our families and their support and then created a circle picture of our family support. We hung the pictures up all tied to a string so our families could be where we could see them for the rest of the workshop.

The afternoon was filled with group work, breathing and stilling exercises, creative fun and art extensions. One highlight was the *inspiration and intention boxes*. For the inspiration exercise, first participants broke up into groups of twos. One person was themselves and the other person represented someone that inspires and "sees /understands" them. After each person had a turn, they shared their experience.

For the intention boxes, we broke up into groups of four or five in which each participant wrote down, in three sections of a piece of paper, short phrases about their work. They wrote in one section about support they have now. Another section they wrote about ways they want to be and the third section was what they want to do. They shared these lists with each other. Next they cut these phrases into strips and then decorated their boxes with these phrases and other designs and pictures. They then shared their boxes with their groups.

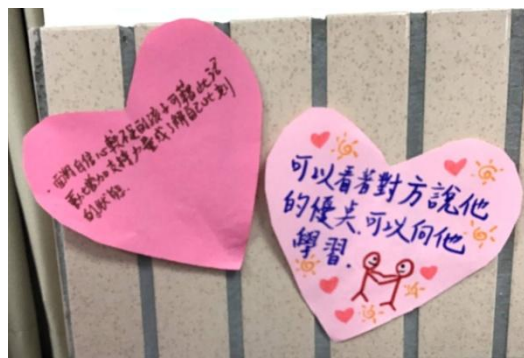
We ended the day with a wonderful time that included sharing our connections with each other and passing and making a *spider web* with the string. We were sitting in a circle. We took a big ball of yarn and the first person shared what connection they had with one person in the group and held the end of the yarn and passed the big ball to the next person. We went on and on until everyone was included. We then, while holding on to our own piece of the yarn, played with the "spider web" by moving up and down and side to side. It was very moving and also fun.



DAY TWO

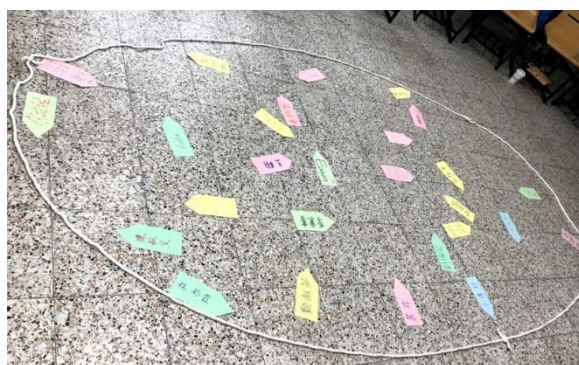


The following day we had a **heart breathing and heart representing exercise** where we got in touch with the feelings of our hearts and shared them with each other. We then created hearts that depicted what happened and put them all over the room. It was quite moving.



We then had fun with a **cooperative drawing exercise** where we broke up into groups and each person took a turn drawing for two minutes while the others watched, and then passed to the next person to continue the drawing while everyone watched. Later they shared what emerged.

After lunch we viewed some slides of different activities that I did in schools with children. We had some demonstrations of a **Belonging Exercise** which can enhance the sense of being included in a group. We created our own hula hoop of belonging. We started with a circle of ribbon on the floor inside the circle of chairs. I ask each person to put their name on the piece of paper shaped like an arrow. I facilitated a breathing and stilling exercise. We then felt where our arrow with our name on it belonged inside the circle of ribbon on the ground. We looked at the names on the ground together to see, feel and sense what developed in the placement and picture of them. We practiced sharing what we saw in the patterns of belonging that showed up inside the circle



Our last big activity was a **Presence Exercise** in which each person stood in the center of the circle and felt, sensed what it was like to be with only themselves and the idea or concept of their future work. The teachers then stepped out one step from the center as a way of being present with what that new work would be like with others. Then they took another step out to experience being present with what that new work would be like with their school, community, or the world. They then reversed the process and stepped back into being present with others and then themselves. We had some lovely music playing during the exercise.



Then each teacher was given a big blank puzzle piece in which they drew a picture about what was present in their exercise. Then they shared their puzzle piece and placed it together with the others and stood to “see” what the whole picture looked like. One person commented that it looked like water flowing through the puzzle pieces towards a heart out into the world.

We ended by sharing what we are taking with us to move this work out into our lives. There was so much poetry and heart and caring and beauty in all the participants' answers. The program ended with the director of education leading a blessing that was from all participants, expressing their love and gratitude to me. It will stay in my heart forever. I hope to return to share more with such a special group of teachers.

Supportingsystems.org
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NOTE: I have continued my work in the current pandemic crisis by adjusting my activities to be used in homeschooling as so many children are now learning from home. You can access these videos and activities by signing up to our mailing list at Supportingsystems.org. You will be automatically emailed free activities and videos.



The International Neohumanist Center in Chandigarh. The adjacent plot was recently purchased for gardening and outdoor activities.

Kids Yoga and Storytelling Seminar

International Neohumanist Center in Chandigarh, and Noida, New Delhi

By Rutger Tamminga

Gurukul, India organized two seminars on Kids Yoga and Storytelling, February 7-9, in the newly constructed International Neohumanist Center in Chandigarh, and February 15-16 in Noida, New Delhi.

The seminars were organized by the Kulapati of Gurukul and attended by dedicated educators from around the country. For me it was an exciting event. Neohumanist Education as a movement originally started in India, but has been explored very actively all around the world. Sharing some of the non-Indian experiences of working with the Neohumanist ideology in India itself and see how it can connect (or not), was something that I looked forward to.

The seminars first introduced the elements that can contribute to creating more ideologically inspired schools. I mentioned seven main aspects Neohumanist Schools can strive for:

1. **Develop a Consciousness Based Child Psychology:** Teachers and management form study groups to develop a more reflective educational practice in tune with inner development.
2. **Character Education:** Based on the yogic moral guidelines of Yama and Niyama, story resources were shown
3. **Ideal Based Curriculum:** Our academic knowledge that we wish our students to acquire is centered on a social or moral ideal. This makes learning not just transfer based but also transformational and inspiring.
4. **Bio-Psychology:** Yoga based sensory integration for health and proper body – mind balance.
5. **Quiet Time Exercises:** Introversions contributes to greater intelligence. The practice of quiet time also helps in self-control and emotional regulation.
6. **Social Outlook:** the integration of local culture and festivals in the curriculum
7. **Community School:** Parental involvement in the school and guidance to parents



The Dakshina School, Noida. Storytelling with the children.



Some of the teachers of Noida's Sambodhi School tell their version of the Pancha Tantra tale of "The Stork and the Crab" with a Kamishibai.

After this short overview of what Neohumanist schools practically can look like, the workshop introduced movements inspired by yoga for body-mind balance. A yoga class consists of many aspects: warm-ups, yogic greetings, breathing, yoga songs, partner games, massage and relaxation. And of course storytelling was part of the training too. The participants did prepare stories and story props which they used to entertain the audience in vivid and dramatic fashion.

Much of the seminar was very practical and experiential. And the teachers participated very well. I think for some it was an opportunity to feel and enjoy the love of learning, rather than learning and teaching as responsibility only.

For twenty plus years I had been giving seminars in Taiwan and China, Malaysia and other south-east Asian countries. The academic focus in all these countries is often on test performance only. While I found that while many Indians are very devotional, the educational practices are also not in tune with this sensitivity. The teaching practices seem to lack the psychological insight that connects the inner world of divine love with the external world of practical living, as if they were two separate and disconnected entities. In this respect Shrii P.R. Sarkar's Neohumanist educational concepts of integrated learning will be of great value.

This is a long term project, but with great potential to impact many people. Currently NHE India has close to a thousand schools. For a country that is geared to become the most populated nation on the planet that may appear to be small. But with a firm and unique Neohumanist inspired education system we can support thousands of other schools as well.

Dadaji Shambushivananda, Gurukul's Kulapati is determined to make this happen and invites others to join this effort.

Personally being in India again, and travelling with Dadaji was a deeply uplifting experience, and the chance to meet wonderful and loving people, who welcomed us into their homes, shared their time and food generously and supported this educational work with all their hearts. Many thanks to them all and I look forward to the next step in this journey of supporting Gurukul in India.



Storytelling and drama (and a little yoga) with participants from Chandigarh, Bangalore and Orissa.



Some of the participants in Chandigarh discuss with Kulapati about issues of Neohumanist Education development in India.

Reflection on the Seminar

We are like candles waiting to be lit!
 All it takes is one human heart on fire
 to ignite the passion in others
 to caste off limits,
 and delight in the little things where miracles, once
 obscured by habit, lie patiently waiting
 to link the thirsty soul
 with that longing for the Great
 that seeds new stories and flows
 toward our inner/outer horizon
 where once impossible things blossom,
 effulgent,
 and release that fragrance
 which is the gift of one intoxicated heart
 to another!

Chandigarh February 9, 2020
 Marcus Bussey

Every Child has an Inner Compass

Networking Event, February 2020

Bucharest, Romania

By Didi Ananda Devapriya

*There is a voice inside of you
that whispers all day long,
'I feel that this is right for me,
I know that this is wrong.'
No teacher, preacher, parent, friend
or wise man can decide
what's right for you - just listen to
the voice that speaks inside.*
- Shel Silverstein



Children growing up today are facing a world of increasing complexity and choice. As adults involved in children's education, how can we support them to be equipped with a reliable inner compass to successfully navigate this changing world and become compassionate, self-aware, fulfilled and confident human beings?

In particular, what types of relationships and guidance nurture the emergence of this moral compass? How do they evolve over time, according to the child's developmental needs? Is morality a socially imposed construct, or inherent to human nature? If inherent, what are the educational implications?

These were some of the questions that over thirty educators, social workers and civil society leaders from Romania, Portugal, Latvia, Serbia, Poland, Bulgaria, Italy, Macedonia, the Netherlands and Bosnia gathered together in Bucharest to explore, in February 2020.

Neohumanist Education Association of Romania and Zonnelicht Early Childhood Daycare and Afterschool Center in Holland had partnered to host this Peer Learning Activity, funded by the International Step by Step Association. According to Liana Ghent, the executive director of ISSA that attended the event, the theme had attracted the most of all of the PLAs they had funded so far, and she was interested to find more ways to continue building on the momentum created at the gathering.

Indeed, there are many complex factors that lead to a child to being able fully reflect our human potential for subtle, noble qualities such as wisdom, altruism, justice, selfless love or courage. While embedding positive messages and values into the content of curriculum or creating clear rules and limits can be some of the more traditional approaches, in Neohumanist Education, our understanding is that there is an innate striving for good embedded deep in human psychology that needs nurturing. Modern neuroscience is starting to confirm this intuitive wisdom, and the key role that nurturing relationships play, particularly in the early years, in encouraging the child's inborn potentiality to blossom.

"Education does not only mean literacy or alphabetical knowledge. In my opinion, real education means proper, adequate knowledge and the power of understanding. In other words, education should impart an awareness of who I am and what I ought to do. Full knowledge about these things is what education means." Shrii P. R. Sarkar



The project developed out of the deep, intuitive clarity that Yolande Koning, from Zonnelicht, has gained over the years, in her direct observations of the development of children's sense of self through the lens of Neohumanist Education philosophy. I wanted to help to articulate these ideas in a way that will make them accessible for other educators. However, my own particular interest in the project was to use it as a springboard for opening up dialogue with others in the field about how to help children that have suffered through abuse or neglect and have not had the adequate nurturing experiences in their early childhood, to recover their often damaged moral

development. This is an extremely relevant and burning problem for my work with the children that come to live in the care of our AMURTEL Family in Romania.

The project began with a series of face to face and online meetings between myself and Yolande, in which we began to create a framework for understanding the development of the child's emerging sense of the self, and how to strengthen and support that process with appropriate adult interactions.

In order to better contextualize Yolande's ideas in relation to other leading thinkers in the field of moral education, I then began a process of researching the existing literature on moral development and moral education of children. I also looked into the moral development of children living in adversity.

The result of this work was a booklet that sought to articulate both Yolande's ideas and my research. An initial version of the booklet was distributed at the event, and since then it underwent re-editing, and will soon be available on www.neoumanism.org. It includes an extensive annotated bibliography of the resources I referenced in my research, including Paul Tough, Paul Bloom, Lawrence Kohlberg, Marvin Berkowitz and others.



Besides presenting my own work and understanding of moral education from a Neohumanist perspective, two other colleagues also shared other approaches and best practices. Afternoons were spent in smaller groups, discussing the practical implications and applications of the ideas presented in the morning sessions.



Nedim Krajisnik from the Center for Educational Initiatives Step by Step in Bosnia gave a presentation about the "School of Values" project taking place in schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Recognising that one of the implicit functions of schooling is to transmit social values, he challenged thinking about which values do we choose to teach to students? Are those values universally understood and who, how should they be taught? How can young people themselves be involved in the process of identifying and developing a set of values for their school? He gave several interesting practical examples of how to explore values with children, through open-ended discussions. He handed out cards that contained values, like friendship, hard work, honesty etc and then invited us to sit in smaller groups and choose 3 that we had received from our families and 3 that were most important to us now. We then had a chance to explain our choices to the group. He further discussed the challenges of exploring values in a post-civil war society, in which legacies of idealizing violence and revenge persist, and the scars of trauma are still felt on a visceral level.

Vera Leal came from Portugal to represent "Learning to Live Together" an intercultural and interfaith initiative for ethics education. It is an excellent material, that I highly recommend, available for free online. It was the result of an intensive process of intercultural exchange, debate and practical application, involving not only religious leaders from many different traditions, but also young people from around the world. Arigatou, the organization that initiated the project, has its roots in Japanese Buddhism and all of the work is funded by Buddhist practitioners as part of their service to the world.



On many levels, it was a very enriching exchange, and I look forward to continue learning from each other and refining our thinking on this topic. I invite other Neohumanist educators to join as the process continues. Please write to me or consult our website www.neoumanism.org for updates and other interactive events which will be taking place online.

The spirit of morality will have to be instilled in human beings from the moment that they first start to learn the lessons of interaction. By interaction I mean social interaction. Viewed from this perspective, the mind of a child is the best receptacle for morality. ...

...Remember, humanity's very existence is based on morality; when morality leads human beings to the fullest expression of their finer human qualities, then alone is its practical value fully realized. The concerted effort to bridge the gap between the first expression of morality and establishment in universal humanism is called "social progress". And the collective body of those who are engaged in the concerted effort to conquer this gap, I call "society".

Children's Camp

Ananda Jyoti, Master Unit, Taiwan

By Rutger Tamminga

Every summer and winter vacation Ananda Jyoti organizes children's camps. The original idea was to let children experience a lifestyle in nature, away from parental oversight, learn some meditation and do team activities, while cooking, cleaning and some farming. Today the camps have attracted parents who also enjoy the same. This winter camp was therefore more a parents and children camp!

The children wake up at six in the morning, start group meditation at six-thirty and then do yoga and storytelling. At seven thirty there is half an hour cleaning of the environment and the observation of silence. Breakfast starts at eight and at nine we go into the forest. There we usually have a playful activity. This time I gave everybody some clay and they made shapes and this way became more aware and connected with nature.

At other times we play in other ways, such as making small mandalas in nature with the leaves, branches, flowers or stones, leaf matching search activities, food web research etc. On another day I asked the children to look for different colors of soil. We used that to make soil art.



Systems Thinking

After about one and a half hours, the children are usually tired and we go inside, where we follow up with a craft. This time we did a very nice activity inspired by the wonderful ideas Linda Baker shared in her Taipei seminar. I gave every team of children pieces of blank puzzle shapes. I asked them to draw on these shapes the things or people they are connected to. Most children drew themselves, their parents, and other family members, and their favorite toys. That was phase one.

After reviewing everybody's work, which basically consisted of five independent puzzles, I asked the children what connects all of these pieces. Suddenly there was a burst of ideas: air, sun, sound, ideas, the soil, music, love, animals, insects..... They drew these ideas on more puzzle pieces and we connected all our little worlds together into one big world!

This idea reflects what Linda's Supporting Systems is promoting. It was very powerful when the children realized that what connects all of us together is actually more important than what we are connected to every day!

I noticed that this experience changed perceptions. At the end of the camp (the third day) the children made a thankfulness wheel. Most of them included, in this, thankfulness for the sun, air, water, soil and animals. Very interestingly, this time the children also included thankfulness for themselves (along with parents, teachers, friends)!



The Twenty-four Solar Terms

This time the camp also introduced the twenty four solar terms, a specifically unique Chinese cultural concept that divides one year into twenty four sections, with each having their own unique farming activities, foods for health and social harmony. For this activity I asked the children to collect objects on their next trip into the forest and use these to make a decoration that reflected one of the solar terms. I gave them a black paper background and I think they did so wonderfully. (See example below)

Cultural Program

It is standard in our children's camp that we have a cultural activity. Usually the children will play a musical instrument, tell a story, sing songs or tell jokes. Sometimes they show magic or play some Chinese tong twisters and riddles.

Closing

On the last day Mohamukta Lin did a final closing circle, which reflected love for the earth, the people and the universe. It was very meaningful and heartfelt.

The King of the Trees

The overall theme of all our camps is trees. We use the slogan: **Planting trees, growing love.** By learning to connect with trees, we connect with all of nature, and by understanding trees we come closer to understanding nature as a whole. Traditionally there are many stories about trees. To close this review I would like to share my story, The King of the Trees:

The King of the Trees:

Once the trees were talking to each other about who should be the king of the trees.

The banyan tree said it should be the king, because it was big and old.

The apple tree started to laugh. "How can you be a king when your fruits are so small. I should be the king. MY fruits are big and loved by both animals and people."

"Hm," said the Coconut Tree, "How can you be king. You are short and your beautiful red fruits are soft and bruise easily when they fall down. I should be the king. I am tall, and my fruits are strong. They travel far across the seas and still, the salty water doesn't hurt them. They can grow in many lands!"

"Look at me." Said the plum tree. "I grow fruits when all of you are still cold and freezing, and haven't grown leaves yet. I am more suitable to be the king!"

The trees were talking and arguing on and on, when a boy passed by, carrying a big book.

He heard the trees' discussion, opened his book and said, "I think you all have a point, and do amazing duty on this earth. But there is one tree that outshines all of you. He lives in the desert, where none of you can grow. He is big and strong and gives shade to whoever can't stand the sun anymore. When animals cannot find water, they go to him, and drink the water stored in its trunk. When they are hungry, they eat its fruits. And he does so happily."

The trees looked up. "Who is that amazing tree of the desert?" they asked.

"It is the Baobab." Said the boy. He is not here, arguing or trying to show he is bigger than any of you. He is out there, where none of you can go, serving those who need him.

All the trees bowed their crowns and said, "Dear boy, write him a letter for us and let him know we would like him to be our king, so we can also become like him."

And so the boy did. And after many days the Baobab sent a letter back, it was a song, the tree song now every tree in the world sings:

*I'll grow, I'll grow
Strong like a tree
Strong and kind
Great and good
When you're hot
I'll give you shade
When you're hungry I'll give you
food
I'll grow, I'll grow
Great and good!*



The children's camps at Ananda Jyoti are becoming very popular. These camps are a very natural way of connecting with spirituality, universal love and each other, and many of the children come again and again!

Viruses and Microvita

By Henk de Weijer

Molecules and their Smartness

Currently, almost everyone on our planet is confronted with the Corona Virus Disease, COVID-19. Small as they are, with their size of approximately 0.1 micrometre, they flatten entire countries. In RNA, nucleotides are compositions of molecules. These single-stranded, very long molecules, are enclosed by a layer of proteins. The poliovirus, with its genome of 8.000 nucleotides, is one of the smallest viral genomes. COVID-19 has almost 30.000 nucleotides and is one of the longest genomes. However, this number does not make it more dangerous. It only means that it has more skill to overcome host resistance.

A virus cannot be called a living organism because it can only reproduce at the expense of a host. That certainly does not mean that a virus is stupid. Once it has invaded a host, it can multiply for days without waking up the immune system. Viruses observe, select and remove modified pieces of RNA. Also, they mutate constantly, allowing them to respond quickly to a potential host's defence mechanism. Viruses are smart.

Another example of smartness: Kite flying is an interactive game with the forces of nature. Without enough wind or in the opposite situation, during a storm, the game remains a dream. What makes kite flying possible if there is enough wind? Not its components, paper, wooden bars, rope or tail. These are undoubtedly important, but controlled flying also depends on the intelligence and know-how of the maker and the skill of the player.

Viruses are heterogeneous compositions of atoms and molecules. What makes them so smart, dangerous and parasitic? Could it be that, just like with kite flying, also a smart component is included? Are viruses "complicated molecular machines" or biological beings with a rudimentary mind? If unicellular organisms, and with them viruses, don't have a brain, what explains their ability to observe, read, translate, and then respond appropriately?

Microvita and Mind

In the previous paragraph questions were asked about a possible carrier of intelligence in uni- and multicellular organisms. Humans are made up of unicellular organisms and equipped with a body and a mind. Their Last Universal Common Ancestor LUCA at the beginning of evolution, must have been a unicellular organism or even groups of organelles. Did the ultimate human mind come out of the blue, or did it evolve from the smallest imaginable mind in LUCA to the current human mind in the current human body? If it is possible or even probable, that mind is something that can evolve, what is the substance of that 'something'? A similar question also applies to viruses. What is the breeding ground, the substance for their cleverness? Shrii P.R. Sarkar (May 21, 1921 - October 21, 1990) approached the quest for clarity in a whole new way. He indicated that the universe is a composition of two components, of which consciousness is the material factor and Cosmic energy the operative principle. Consciousness is all-pervading, while energy is not. Energy is required to perform any action. Energy, the blind force, cannot do anything in a systematic order, unless and until it is supported by intellect.

Now, look at some ideas that he mentioned about 'microvita.'

- 1 - There are entities which come within the realm of both physicality and psychic expressions, which are smaller or subtler than atoms, electrons or protons, and in the psychic realm may be subtler than ectoplasm.*
- 2 - Billions of microvita produce a single carbon atom.*
- 3 - Regarding these microvita of crude order, which may come within the scope of a microscope, people give them the name "virus." They say, "This disease is of virus origin." But virus is a vague term. The better term will be microvita and not virus.*
- 4 - A mind is associated with every structure, either in manifested form or in dormant form.*
- 5 - Various kinds of negative microvita which have, up to now, been called a "virus," damage human beings.*
- 6 - These living creatures, with their mysterious movement, create minds and bodies.*
- 7 - Collective good thoughts can check the flow of negative microvita.*
- 8 - One category of subtle microvita functions within the mind.*

Some Findings

- Microvita are granular entities and much smaller than protons.
- Their substance is either consciousness or energy. They cannot be particles of energy, because it is a blind force and microvita at least have contact with intellect. The blind cannot lead the blind, which here means that microvita are not particles of energy but consciousness. Consciousness has two forms. Its first form is ubiquity; the second is granularity. In other words: it is both non-local and local, which explains entanglement and shows that empty space does not exist.
- Microvita are present in body and mind. They are also permeated by non-local consciousness.
- Every structure, whether concrete or subtle, has a mind that can be manifested or remain dormant. Hadrons, e.g. are compositions of quarks, which means that they can be structures with a mind but maybe in an inert form. Viruses have a structured body composed of small and huge molecules. They don't have a brain but still have a mind that is composed of crude and subtle, negative microvita. These microvita do explain the crude behaviour and cleverness of viruses.
- The word "virus" first appeared in 1898. The Latin word "virus" means "slimy liquid" or "poison." This word does not even hint at the parasitic nature of its reproduction.
- How can the current COVID-19 disease be controlled? Collective good thoughts can do this. At present peace has returned to many cities. People feel more involved and behave accordingly. This almost automatic increase of good thoughts can undoubtedly influence a decrease of negative microvita. Calling that reaction "a practical solution" goes a long way, mainly because economic worries are increasing at the same time.

Dr. Rudolph has been giving a series of talks on Microvita and the Coronavirus Pandemic, starting on March 11th, which can be found here:

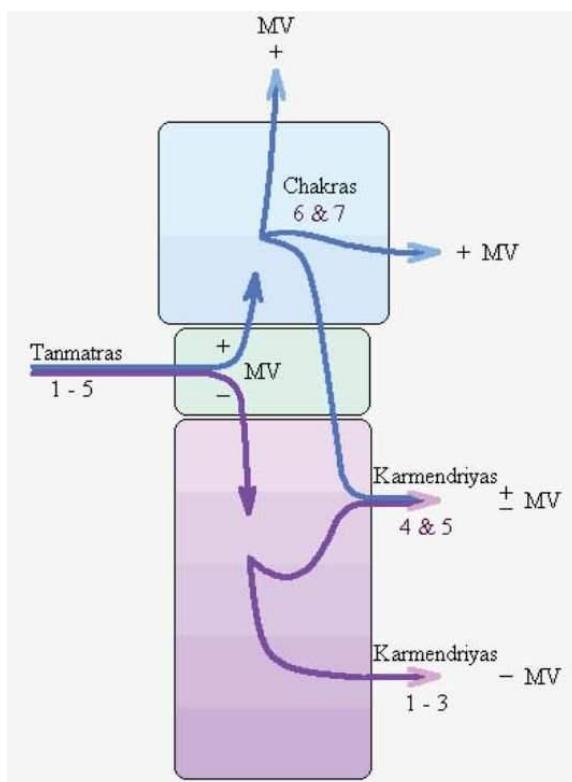
<https://ina-fu.academia.edu/HansJoachimRudolph/Talks>

Microvita and the Coronavirus Pandemic

by Dr. Hans-Joachim Rudolph , Microvita Research e.V.

Since the beginning of this series of talks (March 11th), the number of confirmed cases of Corona virus infections rose more than 10 times. In the same period, the number of deaths from CoVid-19 reached almost 83,500 (according to CSSE at Johns Hopkins University); and the curve of case counts outside China is still rising steeply.

In public discussions, the health-damaging effects of the novel virus are, of course, in the center of all reflections. It is to be acknowledged, however, that this pandemic is related not only to our physical health; rather other aspects of life are also severely affected. But let us start with physical health:



Physical Health

In my first talk, I had already emphasized the importance of standard hygiene measures. In the second talk I had additionally referred to a regimen that was recommended by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti on the occasion of an infectious outbreak in Ahmedabad/Gujarat back in 1989. And thirdly we had talked about the medical measures that are necessary to check the severe courses of the disease.

Emotional Health

But, except for the impact on our physical health, there are also damaging effects on our emotional health. Particularly, I had referred to 3 types of fear, which are, according to the Ananda Marga system of biopsychology, located in the second, third and fourth Chakra: First, there is a fear of sure annihilation, combined with a pain due to obsessive thoughts of losing one's existence. Then there is the ordinary fear, resulting from an apprehension of danger or pain. And thirdly, there is a state of worries and deep thinking about various fatal outcomes. On top of that, a mental state of numbness might occur. All these emotional disorders are maintained and worsened by negative Microvita, entering our system through the Saora Mandala. The best way to balance these conditions is to increase the flow of positive Microvita, which will neutralize the aforesaid, particularly by strengthening our hope and conscience.

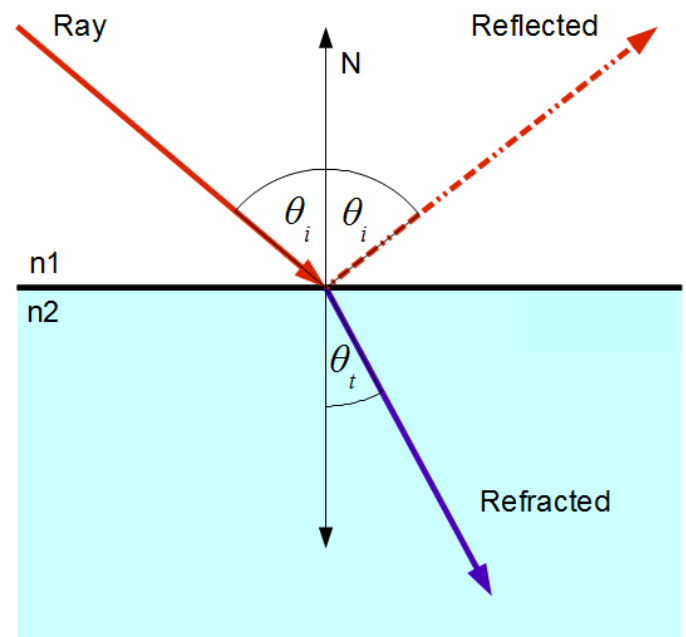
Mental Health

Actually, conscience is already related to mental health, which includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. During this pandemic mental health is, however, not only affected, because some of us are fearful or uninformed; rather it is so, because many of us are exposed to organized disinformation. There are, indeed, agencies that have strong interests in the destabilization of our countries by propagating disinformation. This is done by a constant flow of verbal and iconic memes, which are viral in character, and which are able to multiply and transform their hosts. A list of such campaigns has been prepared by the European Community. It is related only to pro-Kremlin disinformation. Rather, agencies from other countries are also engaged in such activities. Among pro-Kremlin sources, EUvsDISINFO identified 33 campaigns since the beginning of January 2020. Most of them claimed that CoVid-19 is actually a biological weapon, produced by the West. The second most of them claim that the Corona pandemic is a fake. And the third group resumes miscellaneous campaigns. It is obvious that Chinese sources are also running similar campaigns of disinformation.

So, what are our possibilities to maintain mental health in face of such assaults?

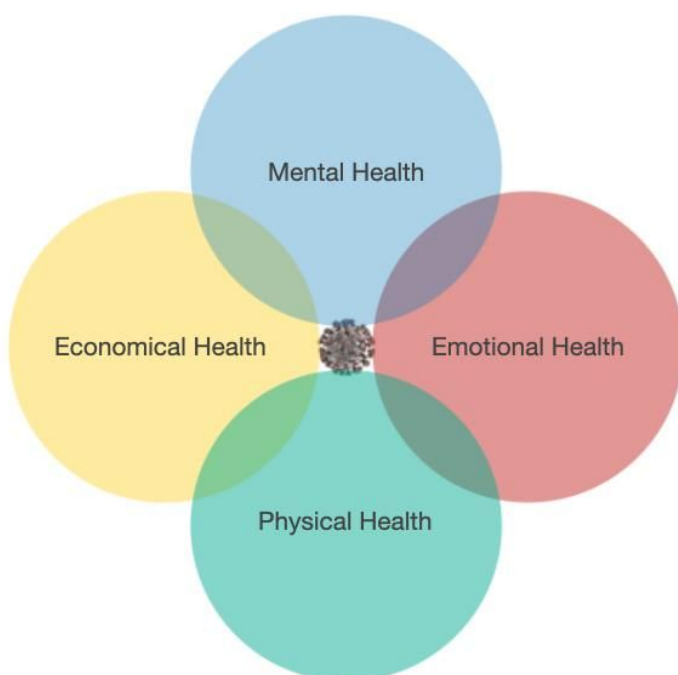
1. There are the laws of reflection and refraction, which are summarized in the following figure. They show that it depends on the medium, whether an incident ray will enter or not, which means, applied to our situation, that it depends on the density of our minds, whether such disinformation can enter our thoughts and feelings.

2. The ability of discrimination resides in the sidereal plexus or Anahata Chakra. It is improved by positive Microvita, which can enter our system through the Saora Mandala. Such “emanations of cosmic factor“ can be in-vited by Kiirtan as well as meditative practices. They will certainly help to overcome the effects of the aforesaid attacks on our mental health.



Economic Health

Last but not least we arrive at the economical effects of the Corona Virus pandemic. Meanwhile, these amount not only to fear, but also to real economic damages, including the rise in unemployment, bankruptcies and allusions to the Great Depression of 1929. In this respect, it is important to keep cool and to stay up-to-date, so that good choices and decisions can be made in the near future.



All in all, we have learned that much of what is required to cope with the pandemic depends on the influence of positive Microvita:

Positive Microvita will help us to get and to spread good ideas; they will help us to promote all types of research, to maintain a good sense of community and to remain compliant with hygiene regulations. Furthermore, they will enable us to cope with numerous everyday problems like acting fearlessly, maintaining the ability to discriminate between real and fake news, avoiding to believe in gloom and doom scenarios, avoiding to discriminate minorities, and enduring separation as well as financially hard times.

All this is possible by applying positive Microvita onto a multidimensional field of possibilities. None of these measures are directed against the coronavirus itself. SARS-CoV-2 is just a phenomenon of nature; it is neither good nor bad. But we have to cope with it, and for such aims, more and more research on positive and negative Microvita will be most useful.

PS: In our view, a focus on the viroid itself is misleading. In particular, incantations, curses and exorcisms are completely pointless (=> Kenneth Copeland on COVID-19: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSIrQBGFUtw>).

Experiences of Naturopathy Training in the AM Wellness Center

Cebu Island in Maharlika, Philippines
by Mirjam Koskela of Finland

This year's annual naturopathy training course took place in late March 2020. As in previous years, the program offered instruction in and firsthand experience with their detox program, yogic treatments and remedies. I heard about the training from my friend who had done it before. So I knew that the training and teachers would be very good. I still didn't know how practical and helpful it would really be for me. Especially considering that I have been working for years as a hospital nurse. I thought I had a very healthy lifestyle and understood treatment -- but still I learned so much!



The training was 30 days. Dada Dharmavedananda, who is very experienced in yoga and naturopathy, gave theory classes. Charito Rada-Dael, medical in charge, explained how to do all treatments and how to deal with any detox effects and make the journey of detoxification an enjoyable and happy experience. The staff was kind and always ready to help and assist. We learned easy and tasty recipes from the kitchen staff. We also learned how to use probiotics and that steaming is the best way to cook and takes only a short time.

We practiced everything that we learned. We did treatments to ourselves and other trainees indoors and in the garden. Everyone had a personal program. I used to fast regularly but I had never experienced long fast before. Other trainees also used to fast and some of them didn't, some were not vegetarian and some had experienced long fast. We were all different and all from different countries.

We learned how to guide a detox program for others; indications and contraindications for each treatment. Theory was based on naturopathy and Shrii P. R. Sarkar's book "Yogic Treatments and Natural Remedies". It was fascinating and eye-opening for me to experience those treatments, like baths, water drinking, sun-bathing and mud packs. In the Cebu center, they have successfully helped people for so many years using these methods. I did sun-bathing many times because I live in cold Scandinavia. I feel it has given me a lot of positive energy.

The idea of the training is to learn how to stay healthy forever. Usually it is the lifestyle that causes our problems. So it means that when you have a health issue it is a sign for you to modify something in your present lifestyle. You can always do something which helps. Natural methods are practical everywhere and easy to do when you know how. During Dada's theory classes we discussed about everything and Dada encouraged us to use our common sense for solving problems. He shared inspiring experiences that happened to him or his students.

Our daily schedule was optimized so we had treatments twice a day, theory class, cardiovascular exercise, and three to four uplifting kiirtans and meditations daily. We had free time and in the evenings we watched a documentary or funny movie or we danced. Basic detox program included 4 days pre-cleansing diet, 5 days juice fasting and 6-9 days for breaking the fast. Most of us did a longer liquid fasting part. I did 17 days with lemon-water and sometimes I had fresh coconut-water.



Through experience we learned when detox is going at a good speed and when there is need to slow down. Mindset is the most important also when fasting. If one's mind goes low during the detox program, it will impact the body and the detoxification process.

We spent the days learning new fascinating things, like the fact that skin can be constipated! We also had a few free days when we went to the beach to swim in the ocean and relax.

That month was remarkable in my life. I feel that living a healthy yogic lifestyle has made a great impact on me and I'm inspired to keep a healthy lifestyle in my everyday life. I will definitely find ways to share this knowledge with others for

the rest of my life. I will always remember the inspiring company of the other trainees. The company of yogis and yoginis always feels like a blessing.

Stress Management

Prabhata Samgiita and Music Therapy

By Prof. Mrinal Kumar Pathak, Department of Architecture, BIT Misra, India

In this article I want to draw the attention of the readers to using music, and particularly Prabhata Samgiita, over five thousand songs composed by Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, as a way to manage stress in life. The different expressions of human life are explored through the power of the melodious journey of symphony and the power of music, or samgiita, consisting of a variety of bháva (idea), sur (melody), chanda (rhythm) and bhaśa (lyrics).

Stress arises when a situation is not in our control. There are two types of stress, local stress and permanent stress. Local stress is temporary, for example, “I am stuck in a traffic jam and am running late”, “I don’t remember where I put the keys” etc. But this stress is solved soon, like when one finds the keys or finally arrives for example. However there is also permanent stress, for example “I was late to work and my boss fired me, so I have no more job, and then my wife left me”, etc. When stress becomes a part of our lifestyle, it becomes very harmful to our health. Therefore management of stress is an important issue in today’s world.

Now let’s play a little game and write the word “MANAGEMENT”. Now remove the letter ‘t’ from it. You will obtain “manage-men”. Family, friends, colleagues, boss - if you can manage them you will be happier and said to be a good manager. But how to manage men? Now remove the letter ‘n’, you then have “manage me”. So if I can manage me, I can manage people, and in the end I can enjoy the t (tea).

Let us define what “Me” is. Me is a very powerful word. I am, I exist, I have consciousness. When you encounter multiple Mes, when talking to someone who has his own me, communication happens. There are four types of communication: Intra- communication, Inter- communication, Group- communication and Mass-communication. Intra-communication is when communication happens inside, with Me to myself. Inter-communication happens when Me is talking to some other Me (person). Group communication is communication between more than two Mes (persons), for example between a teacher and students. Mass communication is when one is talking and others are listening, for example a political leader’s rally where a person with a microphone addresses the crowd. It is mostly one sided.

Now if you consider the above model of communication there is always a chance of noise or miscommunication as in Figure 1. Even for intra-communication we have the same risk. If this Me (inner self, will) is strong, confident and has conviction, expression will be better, smoother and there is less chance of conflict in Intra-communication but the question is How to communicate with this Me ? There are so many ways, like yoga, meditation... but it is not easy for everyone to take that step. It may be fulfilling, but it may also appear dull or difficult to concentrate at first for some people. To minimize this risk we use or apply? the fine art of expression for better expression of inner self. Here, MUSIC provides a joyful alternative.

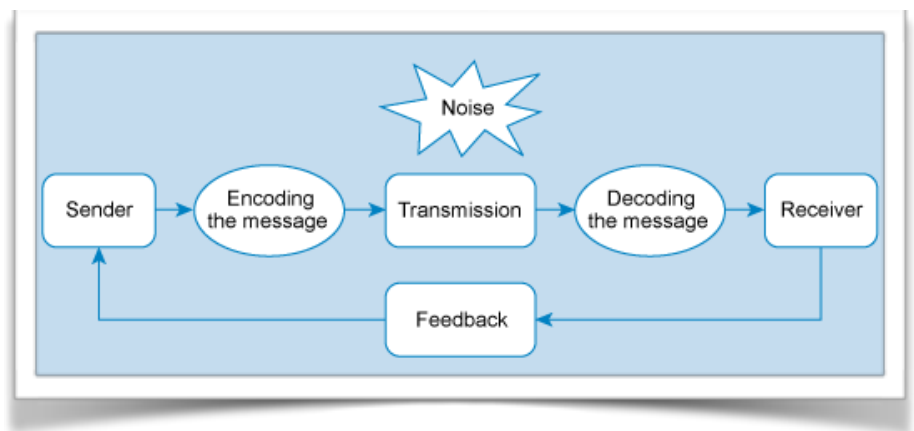


Figure 1. The process model of communications

Courtesy: <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=65953>

Music is something related to our inner consciousness and expression. Communication happens through music. Music by definition is a combination of notes, rhythms and beats. Analyzing a particular arrangement can lead to the fine art of understanding sound. It is very beautiful and very deep. Understanding the music and the vibrations of a particular song sung by a particular singer with a particular melody with its definite structure is also a very pleasing exercise. Ancient Indians realized the importance of music and its effect on mind and therefore developed a whole science. We find reference of it in Sama Veda, one of the four Vedas dedicated to musical compositions.

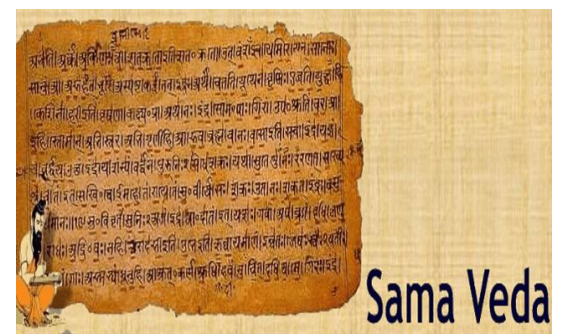


Fig 2.Sama veda

Courtesy: <http://themodernvedic.com/mythology/immortal-vedas/introduction-samaveda/>

It consists of a vast description of melodies, chants and their respective effect on the human mind, body and soul. It also contains various verses from Rig-Veda in a musical manner. Samaveda is believed to be the origin of Indian music. It gives us knowledge of various chants that have a divine effect on our body, mind and soul according to different times of a day.

In Rgveda, there was the science of metre (Chanda). There were seven metres viz., gayatrii, usniik, tristup, anustup, jagati, brahati and paunkti. Shivá, about 7000 years ago, invented the musical sura-saptaka (the oriental octave) and made the world of rhythms sweeter and more delightful. This was a fundamental contribution to the science of music. Ra'ga and Raginiis is a gift of Sada Shivá to the world of music. Based on close observation of sounds of animals, Shivá invented the science of phonetics. Phonetics depends on the science of breath, on inhalation and exhalation. Lord Sada Shivá laid the foundation of Indian music through his inventions of svara-sha'stra. He established harmony between rhythm and dance, and added mudra to them. Shivá observed that in the bodies of different creatures, the various glands were either over-active or under-active, either over-secreting or under-secreting. As a result, these creatures expressed themselves in different ways. Thus, Shivá invented the science of mudra. Each and every mudra affects certain human glands in a particular way and thus influences the human minds accordingly. The introduction of mudras to the world of dance elevated it to the status of classical dance. Therefore, the knowledge of music and its effect on the human body and mind existed since ancient times.

Now if we see all this sound and melody through the windows of applied sciences we know that everything in this world has a resonating structure. If this resonating structure is met, something can be worked on in it, and energy can be transmitted; either taken or given.

Now considering the above fact, pictured in fig 3, our glands also have resonating waves and if we match them we charismatically can deal with the secretion of hormones through the particular gland. The philosopher Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar also said *"it is through sound, one of the five senses, that positive energy (microvita) is the best carried"*.

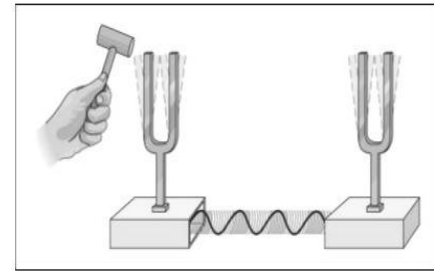


Fig 3: When one tuning fork is struck, the other tuning fork of the same frequency will also vibrate in resonance. The periodic "driving force" here is the sound

Nowadays we understand that most diseases are caused by stress. And stress comes mainly from our thought process. Now, how to work on our thought process? There are some medicines that work on the mind, but although they can be a temporary help they are taking care mostly of the symptoms rather than the source, and in a drifty way that can cause other problems and dull or numb the mind further. To work on thought process, a psychologist or maybe a psychiatrist can be of great help as well; the main point is you need to retake contact with yourself, take a bridge to you and your consciousness with inner communication. And here comes a very useful thing.

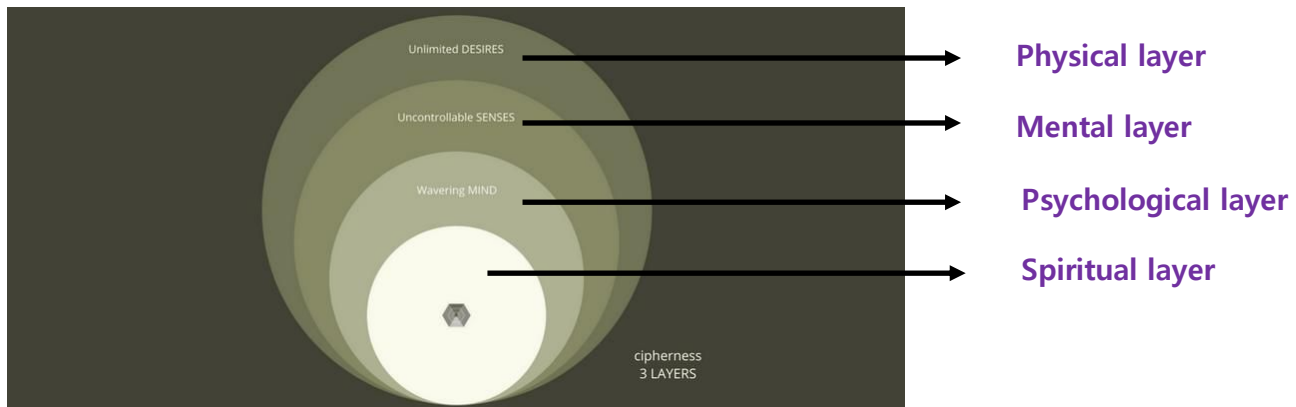
Every human body and its glands have a resonating structure and resonating mental state according to the situation, time and place. So, as the inner communication grows deeper, the music starts its therapeutic action. Now let's take an example of a song (lyrics +melody+instrumental music and rhythm). It is made of words and understanding of an expression. 'Love' has the energy that is conveyed with its meaning. If I say 'hate', 'pain', it has a different energy. If I say 'happiness', it has another different energy. It has an impact on your mind.

So here we see 'words' work as a boundary in a song, it constricts and limits the thought process hence moods are created. For example a patriotic song will make you feel patriotic, a love song will make you feel love, a sad song leads to pain or sadness, same with devotional songs etc. That boundary is called physical because from physical it is going to the mental world through the different layers of mind. (see figure 4) Lyrics take us from the physical to the mental, because each lyric also carries some idea (bháva). Now this is the journey of words. Rhythm in lyrics also imparts joy to the mind. Like we use mantras to take higher vibrations to the mind and strike directly on the glands (chakras). Now, the wonderful property of music is that it enhances these vibrations. Music boosts the strength of mood in literature just like a motor takes you much faster than just your feet.

Now with music words take you much faster because you are hearing and listening to the melody with resonance and there comes the third layer of mind, psycho-spiritual. There you need a methodological meditation to experience the spiritual part fully, but before that, music took you so far already; this journey throughout the three layers was done with music so easily.

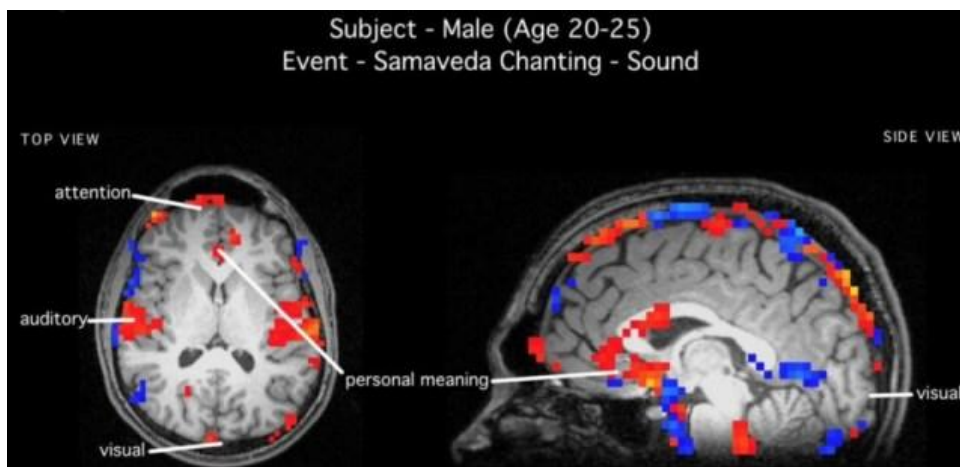
Now as human beings we have likings, my thought process, my environment, my personal condition etc. Some people like some songs, other people like some other songs. Some will like Celine Dion, someone will love deep classical etc. Everybody has differences. Even while growing our likings change, and choices also mature. What does it mean, choices grow, what is mature music? It means understanding music in a deeper way. When you do so, you go deeper

Fig.4 journey in layers of minds
 Courtesy: <http://cipherness.com/cipherness-three-layers-of-inner-system/>



towards your heart, towards your consciousness. It isn't always easy to understand it. But we have a shortcut for that. Suppose you have a feeling, sometimes you need to express it, right? Music can be the medium; it can help you do this expression. Today, psychology researchers have established the importance of feelings, acceptance and expression, and music comes very handy here; it indeed helps greatly, whether it's pain, happiness, love, sadness. Through words, emotional expression happens.

Fig 5: The image shows the impact of different receptions and their impact in the different places on the human brain.
<http://themodernvedic.com/mythology/immortal-vedas/introduction-samaveda/>



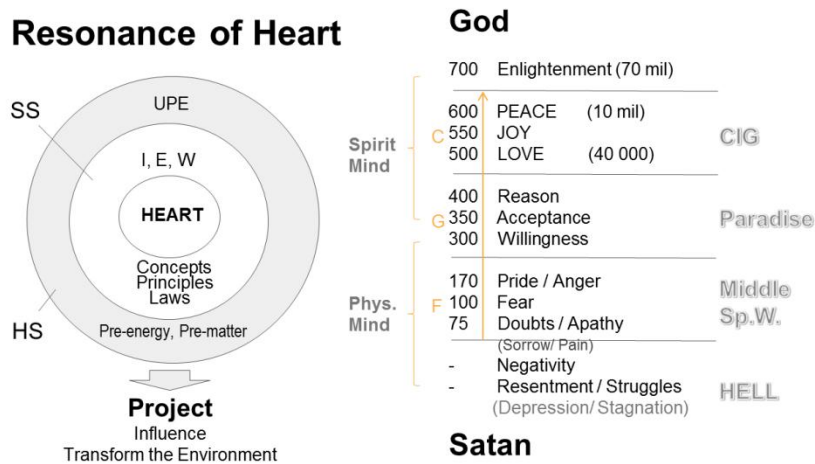
After looking towards the different segments and parts of music, let us have an example which practically can be practiced in the easiest form as music therapy. There are different feelings which give you the soothing state of mind like respect, love and devotion etc. Here devotion is one of the beautiful expressions of gratitude and affection towards the supreme and there are so many poets and musicians that wrote and sang like Narsingh Mehta, Meera Bai, Swami Haridas, Rabindra Nath Thakur and many more. Considering the fact that they all were great devotees and what they wrote was their expression of their personal realization, so their song goes in a particular manner and feeling.

Now we have a question, do we have a collection of songs which can be considered as a whole in terms of emotion and variety of melodies with full of positivity? Do we have such a school of music? Here comes the answer “Prabhata Samgiita”, also known as Songs of a New Dawn or Prabhat's Songs, are the collection of songs composed by Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar. Shrii Sarkar composed a total of 5,019 songs, including the lyrics and the melody, over a period of eight years from 1982 - 1990 in 8 languages. These songs contain many musical styles like Indian Classical Ragas, Gazal, Tappa, Jhumar, Qawali, Jazz, Blues, folk songs from different parts of the globe.

Prabhata Samgiita are so beautifully written that the collection of words and the literature prepare a mindset towards the most positive direction. Hopefulness and blessedness (physical-mental sphere) and composition and melody enhance the mood so greatly, they become so powerful that the emotion drives one to the inner circle of mind so easily (mental - psychic sphere). Even when not in pain, they can give strength. We feel like, oh, I wanted this feeling, this expression, and it is getting me even deeper. It is exceeding my expectations. Words are carefully chosen. You can easily find a Prabhata Samgiita that matches your emotions. Then we feel relaxed, we feel satisfied, because that ‘ME’ has got an expression. And by expressing these feelings, 50% of the self-work is done. Prabhata Samgiita can help us to express, go deeper, go closer to the supreme consciousness and get remedies from it.

To express these feelings more effectively Shrii Sarkar composed many of the songs on different Indian ragas that work on the resonating structure of the human mind.

Fig 5, courtesy :https://3.bp.blogspot.com/-VuG_mqE-Drg/VtSrAmExZ5I/AAAAAAAAAE_M/ZmCuHX9P8_s/s1600/Resonance-of-Heart.png



We also should take care of environmental energy, the energy that surrounds us. Sun heat, positivity, negativity; we receive this energy every day. We also create a part of it. Knowingly and unknowingly we are getting this energy, this flow of vibrations from outside to inside. For example in the morning people mostly tend to like soothing music, while at night they will go to discotheques, dance clubs etc. Certainly, playing drums near someone who is asleep might get us beaten, because his mental energy is not so charged, it is relaxed, as the environmental energy and stimulations are lower at night; we resonate less. And as we grow with the day, energy builds up, therefore we go to bars discotheques etc.

Conclusion:

As a music therapist, I can say that exhausting your energy in discotheques etc. is like losing your money in casinos, with only shallow satisfaction. Businessmen don't waste money in casinos, they invest it, so there's a higher chance of good return. To become happier, it's best to invest on a path of felicity; the path of spirituality. And with music and Prabhata Samgiita, one can reach that destination much more easily.

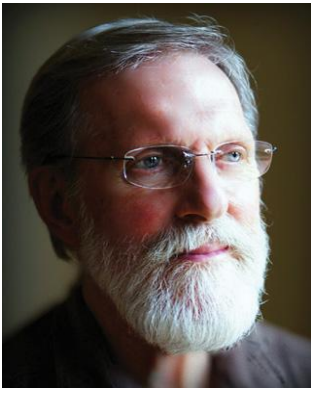
That is why, to go back to what we said, stress management begins with ourselves, and music (Prabhata Samgiita) can be really helpful to us. A happy man or woman can spread this happiness to others and with the collective approach and understanding of melodies, expression of spiritual longing becomes easy and your spiritual goal becomes attainable.

**Sarvetra sukhinā bhavantu
Sarve santu nirāmayāh
Sarve bhadranīi pashhyantu
Na kascid dukhamāpnuāt**

**Let everybody be happy.
Let everybody be free from physical ailments.
Let everybody see the bright side of everything.
Let none have to undergo suffering due to the pressure of circumstances
or due to defective social or economic order.
May everybody be blessed!**

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Balancing Care for Self and Others in Stressful Times

By Dr. Sid Jordan

Many people who attend meditation and wellness seminars offer that their motivation for participating is related to hitting the reset button and taking better care of themselves. In these times of crisis many of us own that we are overworked and overwhelmed with caring for others. Some are going through extreme demands of being at home with the entire family everyday or being isolated due to the pandemic lockdown. Upon a closer look many reveal that they have been in denial of their own needs, physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. The need to hit the reset button and find a new normal for caring for yourself and others has never been more relevant as we all face the coronavirus pandemic.

When we examine where to begin, we realize that first we must slow down and listen to our bodies and inner dialogue. Programs with yoga and meditation create a space for an introspective process that enhances self-awareness on many levels. The body and mind awareness achieved with yoga exercises helps us reconnect with our feelings and needs. Regular meditation practices connect us with our intuition, which reveals what simultaneously best serves the common welfare. The decision to attend online meditation and yoga courses is often supported by a friend or family member. This is a gift we can offer others and ourselves in the midst of this crisis.

Many of us may not have yet fully embraced a program of self-care. Our busy culture and demands of the current crisis may not support taking care of ourselves and we may view self-care as selfishly motivated. Where is the balance between care of self and care of others? The analogies of balancing care of self and others need a more expansive metaphor. Perhaps first “know thy self”.

The golden rule, “treat others as we would have them treat us”, presumes we know what others and we need. Henry David Thoreau once said that, “If people are coming to help me, let me know in advance so that I can hide behind my wood shed.” Thoreau’s caution is particularly true now with our mandate for social distancing. If we are first clearer about our own needs, then we might be better able to discern what others need.

To combat the stresses associated with the coronavirus pandemic there are many online seminars to meet our needs for balanced care of self and others. Many programs offer improved physical and psychological immunity through healthy diet/herbs, yoga exercises, meditative practice on and off the mat, and communication skills such as Marshall Rosenberg’s Nonviolent Communication. Tantamount in this effort to better care for everyone, in this time of imposed “social distancing”, is the need for “distant socializing” to maintain, at the same time, the needed social support and a healthy physical distance.

Yama and Niyama Applied to the Pandemic

Paradoxically, caring for one’s self invariably means caring for others as well. It is part of our human nature to care for one another. To neglect caring for ourselves is to neglect being able to properly care for others. Our individual mental and emotional wellbeing is inextricably intertwined with our collective wellbeing. Thus we need a set of guidelines that supports this interconnectedness of balancing care of self and others. In the yoga community this set of guidelines is Yama (care of others) and Niyama (care of self). The current pandemic brings home the need and opportunity to serve the common welfare. Yama and Niyama give us non-dogmatic guidelines to serving each other, plants, animals and the environment based on time, place, and the entity to be served.

These guidelines escape the dogmatic dictates of “never think, say or do this” or “always think, say, or do that”. This is illustrated in the yama called “ahimsa” that supports not to consciously inflict harm on anyone by thought, word or deed but not to avoid use of the necessary force to protect yourself and others when threatened.

The yama called “satya” espouses that to speak the truth benevolently requires different thinking and phrasing depending on the people, place and timing for those involved. An example would be the way you choose to share the news of an illness or death in the family for different people based on age and closeness to the ill or deceased one. This discriminating use of the truth serves everyone. While we need to eventually embrace the “whole truth” half-truths may help protect the innocent until the full truth finds its moment for revelation.

“Asteya”, non-stealing, can mean being attentively present when others are sharing their story. Active listening is extremely important in this time of crisis so as not to **mentally** take the other’s valuable time and or discount their feelings. “Not listening” may be the largest example of stealing with which humanity could be charged. While not taking other’s personal property is a **material** form of asteya this principle involves not even having the thought of stealing.

The yama, “aparigraha” or living simply means taking and utilizing only what you need so as not to deprive others. This principle is especially important during the pandemic when shopping for groceries and supplies. More broadly this is an ecological principle that encourages maximum utilization of all natural resources, physically, mentally and spiritually, especially when supplies are threatened.

The last yama, “Brahmacayra” or “Madhuvidya” (sweet knowledge), is applied in the ideation that “the actor, the act, the recipient of the act and the results of the action” are all part of a unified field, Oneness or Divine Presence, depending upon your cosmology. From another angle “to give is to receive and to receive in to give.”

In serving others the yamas honor the simultaneous benefits for the served and the server.

Likewise the principles of Niyama’s while concerned with care of self also reflect serving others. The principle of “tapah”, that involves making some personal sacrifice to serve others, reflects that self-integration requires taking care of others physically, mentally and spiritually.

The principle of “shaoca” stands for the cultivation of cleanliness, both physically and mentally. Our physical cleaning rituals during the coronavirus pandemic require great care to protect everyone. The mental practice of shaoca involves combating tendencies towards selfish and greedy thoughts.

“Santosa” or contentment is achieved by developing “a state of mental ease”. To develop this state of mind we can remind ourselves when feeling overwhelmed and stressed that behind our anxieties and tensions we have a vast reservoir of creativity to solve problems individually and collectively. The obstacles we face with the corona virus can be seen as opportunities for positive personal and collective transformation.

The next principle, “Svadyaya” calls upon us to integrate our intuitive and rational minds through a deeper study of spiritual literature and keeping good company. We become like the news, literature and company we imbibe. Down time at home during the lockdown can afford a valuable opportunity to read inspiring spiritual literature and do some distant socializing with old friends you haven’t been in contact with for a while.

The last principle of niyama, “Ishvara Pranidhana” means meditation, the key to the integration of all the yamas and niyamas. The focus on the mantra in meditation unites us with our universal benevolent Spirit. Meditation is a “science of intuition” that guides us to discriminating choices that serve the general welfare. Social lock down affords the time for many of us to deepen our meditation and contemplative practices.

Caring for the External World as an Extension of the Self

Where did the coronavirus come from? What is our responsibility towards the plant, animal and inanimate world? How could better care of these elements of the environment serve them and us better? This appreciative inquiry from a moral and scientific point of view might bode well for the general welfare of all beings animate and inanimate.

It has become well-understood that we are interconnected with all elements of the environment, but we don’t seem to adopt a life style that follows what we rationally know about these connections. We continue to destroy the forest and oceans’ vegetation that provide most of our oxygen. We slaughter animals for consumption that are fed growth hormones, have a high acidic nutritional content and may be the source of many virulent viruses for humans. We pollute our water resources with fracking and oil spills. To cap off this irrational behavior we pollute the air we breathe with uncapped carbon emissions. As one French scientist put it, “We are drowning in our own waste.” We choose competition for inequitable economic gains over choices for a healthier more cooperative life that honors humans, plants, animals and the inanimate world. The so-called inanimate world consists of the chemical elements of the living cells of our biological being, the calcium of our bones, the iron in our blood, the oxygen we breathe. The self that we inhabit is an extension of all these elements of the environment. Throw in the pandemic and it’s time to scream “Overload!” Enough of the problem; what can individuals do to combat the stress of it all in their smaller circle?

Your small circle is a microcosm of the big macrocosmic circle. My spiritual mentor, after telling me to, “Do something great for the suffering humanity,” sees how overwhelmed I am with this request and holds his right thumb and forefinger close together and tells me that “Something small can be great.” Then he leans forward toward me with his thumb and forefinger and pushes the corners of my mouth up saying, “Smile a little.” (This was long before the pandemic demand for social distancing.)

So, the question is what can we do concretely to serve all beings in this time of crisis and beyond? Depending on your level of energy, time available, and individual gifts, you may choose something small, medium or large to offer to yourself and others. These opportunities are in front of us. Adopt a stray cat. Water your plants. Compost everything you can. Eat healthily and slowly until comfortably full. Feed the homeless. Conserve water. Give all the stuff you will never use to those who need it. Start a garden and share what you grow with the community. Dance and sing with others online. Start a support group online for the sole purpose of support; let everyone define it together. As Bucky Fuller says, “The next step in evolution is learning to live together.”



DELHI SECTOR

Ananda Nagar India

Dada Shambhushivananda visited Anandanagar and the Gurukula Headquarters currently under construction. The Cakradhuri (headquarters building) Entrance Area is currently being upgraded.



A two-day workshop for youth was conducted at Ananda Marga Gurukula Fine Arts College near Chitmu in Anandanagar. Over 60 young students participated in the workshop. Dada Gurudattananda and Dada Shambhushivananda were present on the occasion.



An international group of twenty persons from Russia, Ukraine, UAE, and France participated in a one-month workshop on “Prabhāta Saṁgiita, Dance, and Oriental Music.” The workshop was conducted by Prof. Mrinal Pathak and his colleagues.

They also visited Ananda Marga Gurukula headquarters (Cakradhuri) campus along with Dada Shambhushivananda who also gave a class to them and escorted them to the Cakradhuri Hill along with Dada Anirvanananda.

The international group also visited the Tantra Piithas (sacred spaces) while at Anandanagar.

Service Activities at Ananda Nagar Recognized as Best Practices



Service activities at Ananda Nagar were selected as best practices (NGO) by the Indian Social Responsibility Network (ISRN), a division of the Ministry of Culture of the Government of India. On 12 February, Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu unveiled a book titled “A Vision of Antyodaya” at New Delhi in his house. Dada Narayananda from Anandanagar, attended the ceremony. The book features a collection of 927 practices (NGO) out of which 408 were documented as best practices (NGO) from various states from different remote areas. With the collective effort of about 60 Antyodaya fellows in the field, 150 social institutions and mentors, and 50 ISRN team members, this study saw its transformation from a proposal to a full-fledged pool of knowledge. Our practice is featured in the book (page 188 Volume 1) and now recognized at the national level.

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MANILA SECTOR

Thailand



Dada Shambhushivananda spoke to the Faculty of Engineering, Khon Kaen University in NE Thailand, on "Building Resilience in the Age of Artificial Intelligence". Prof. Kanyarat Holasut was the host and the talk was shared via live-streaming with entire university on January 21, 2020.



A Visit to Baan Unrak Children's Home Sangkhlaburi, Thailand By Trần Thúy Ngọc

Together with volunteers from Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, a group of us from Vietnam visited Didi Ananda Devamala's Baan Unrak



Children's Home in Sangkhlaburi, Thailand, October 18-22, 2019, attended a Regional Yoga Conference, and explored surrounding areas. Besides the conference, we had the opportunity to attend various activities of the Baan Unrak Foundation such as collective meditation with the children at the Microvita Center, and visiting the bakery as well as the sewing and weaving center. We also participated in a community relief program at Baan Master Unit. Living, learning, meditating, working, and playing with the orphan children, especially boating together for fun on the vast lake, was a wonderful experience. Some of us applied for future volunteer work.

Danang, Vietnam News from Lily Kids and Yoga Center by Ly Huang

In February, there was a workshop held by Lily Kids and Yoga Center with Dada Liilananda for the community in Danang, on the topics "What is the purpose of life?" and "Yoga Meditation". Twenty people attended. Dada first discussed the questions "What is life? What is death? What makes life happen?" and how the body and mind work together in order for life to exist. Pranah (vital energy) acts like glue to connect them. The development of mind was explored, from unicellular to multicellular to complex minds like we have now. Dada also introduced the concept of dharma (characteristic) and the dharma of animals, the dharma of human beings and the nature of mind which comes from pure consciousness and seeks to journey back to its original cause; thus human dharma is longing for infinity.



Dada explained the system of yoga asanas and meditation for helping the mind reach its highest goal and how yoga asanas help to heal the body and make it possible to sit still in meditation. Since the mind cannot think of infinity, a symbol system has been developed as a bridge to lift up the mind, and that symbol is "Mantra". "Man" means mind; "Tra" means "liberation". Mantra is a sound that, once recited, can liberate the mind. Mantra has 2 parts: reciting with the breathing and its meaning.

The two day workshop was inspiring, fun and relaxing. Students attending the workshop had some time off from their daily life to reflect on themselves and their lives. It was also the beginning activity of Lily Center for the year which will be continued with more yoga courses focusing on yogic lifestyle. We hope to organize more and more activities for the community in Danang and Vietnam.

Neohumanist College of Asheville USA By Sid Jordan

The construction of the Neohumanist College of Asheville (NHCA) has had to pause due to funding issues and



protecting workers from the corona virus pandemic. We have recently completed the plumbing, insulation, heating, and air for the two domes and their

connector (see photos). If construction can resume within a month or two we can still complete construction in the Fall.



In the meantime the online learning team is working on the development of the online learning management system (LMS) for the NHCA. This team has been greatly aided by the addition of Theodore Feitshans, the university professor who created the LMS that serves North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC and more recently developed the LMS for the University of Mount Olive in Mount Olive, NC. He teaches there as a professor of Agriculture in the Department of Agriculture and Biological Sciences and manages the university LMS. The team is putting together all the tools for a LMS along with a budget for these tools and equipment needed for a distance learning laboratory that can produce content and videos. The next steps will involve developing a course for teachers to learn how to teach online. By the beginning of next year we hope to be able to teach this online learning course to the instructors who will be offering online Neohumanist Education courses to our teachers around the globe. Additionally the NHCA will offer training in online teaching to our teachers and students, pre-k through college, in every country, to accommodate the growing demands to harness appropriate technology for education in the classroom and at home.

The current pandemic brings home the need to have a vibrant Neohumanist College online to offer a Neohumanist Education to our teachers and students worldwide. Gratitude goes out to parents, teachers, staff and administrators in our Neohumanist schools and all educational institutions who are devising ways to keep children up with their studies at home as well as furnishing families with nutritious meals. We can make this crisis an opportunity to work together to build a stronger Neohumanist Education for all ages.

Prama Institute and Wellness Center Update

The Prama Institute and Wellness Center, like many other organizations, has shifted its programs to an online format to accommodate the stay-at-home demands of the Corona Virus Pandemic. We were headed toward more online activity but everyone now has a big push in that direction.

Much of the initial thrust has been to offer more free activity like our Wednesday Wellness Meditation with a suggestion of any donation anyone is inspired to offer.

This of course doesn't compensate for the fact that our employees, like others throughout the nation, are not drawing a salary and yet working hard to make the shift to online activity. Fortunately our base of regular attendees is coming to online programs we have offered for smaller fees and many are donating for the free programs such as the meditation. Additionally most of those who have signed up for postponed programs are not asking for a refund and are waiting to attend these programs when we can resume in-person activity. The big unknown for us all is when and what will we inherit as our new normal?

Online programs offered by the Prama Wellness Center have included Stress Relief and Immunity Support for the Corona Virus Pandemic. This workshop began with Roar Bjornnes's presentation on diet, herbs, graduated fasting and yoga asanas to support physical immunity. Sid Jordan then guided exercises for stress relief that included breath control, meditation, benevolent communication skills and yama and niyama applied to the care of self and others during the pandemic (see article in this issue).

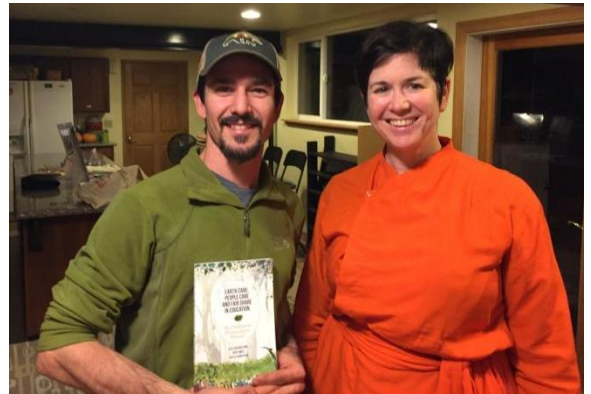
Along with the development of additional online programs on meditation and healthy yogic lifestyle we are developing more online content and blogs. Many of these blogs deal with the message that caring for yourself and others, as has been magnified by this pandemic, go hand in hand.

Bringing Children in Permaculture to the USA

In November 2019, Didi Ananda Devapriya gave a workshop at the Progressive School of Long Island, introducing the “Children in Permaculture” approach to ethics based ecological education. Indeed, the Progressive School already has a strong focus on ethics, and connecting permaculture to the simple ethics of “Earth Care, People Care and Future Care”, helped teachers to be able to connect to it more easily. Indeed, some were surprised that the workshop was not just about gardening techniques, but rather a way of thinking and living. The director, Eric Jacobson, was interested in continuing to explore how to bring more outdoor learning, and practical permaculture experiences into the curriculum.



A few days later, Didi gave another intro workshop in Portland, Oregon at the Kailash Eco-Village. Only two people attended, but one of them was Matt Bibeau, who founded the Institute of Permaculture Education for Children. It was a very productive exchange of experience. A few days later, Didi also visited the site that he runs with his wife, offering experiential workshops in permaculture to children.



Didi is available to give introductory workshops, or full Children in Permaculture trainings to NHE schools around the world. Please contact her directly at didi@amurtel.ro

The book can be read online for free at www.childreninpermaculture.com It is currently available in English, Romanian, Italian, Czech, Slovenian and is being translated into Dutch, French and other languages. In Europe, the book can be ordered online at <https://www.permaculture.org.uk/>

There are also currently a limited number of English copies available in Oregon, that can be shipped to anywhere in the US much less expensively.

GEORGETOWN SECTOR

Argentina Volunteers at Ananda Narayana (Campo Divino)

The Divine Land ("Campo Divino" in Spanish) volunteers program offers a lifestyle and various work tasks to encourage volunteers to pursue sustainable living. Staying at Divine Land is an opportunity for self development through spiritual practices taught in Divine Land.

These past few months have been focused on the bio-construction of the third house of Divine Land (mud bricks, wood etc.). Volunteers participated in the lifting of walls, plastering, and the paving of a floor. The construction of a third house was necessary in order to welcome more volunteers in the near future. Furthermore it was absolutely necessary to have a proper laboratory dedicated to distillation and the storage of medicine. In the laboratory space, it will be possible to dry and distill plants and herbs in order to produce more medicine. The herbs are harvested directly in the garden and their essential oils are extracted. Some of the essential oils and aromatherapy mists are sold on the weekly market, some are being gifted to visitors and the rest is used by the Divine Land family.

Living at the farm revolves around sharing time together and maintaining all the areas of the land. This includes a lot of watering for all the plants, herbs and fruit trees on Divine Land. The volunteers also help to take care of the gardens by seeding, weeding and planting crops, as well as harvesting plants when the time is right. Some volunteers come to Divine Land with a little bit of experience in gardening



or construction but others learn everything here by doing it. Indeed, volunteers are offered an opportunity to learn and to participate in everything, including the maintenance of infrastructure (water pump and reservoirs for instance). Cooking is also a shared task and it is therefore possible to learn how to make bread, granola, cakes...

The creators and permanent members of the farm practice yoga and meditation based on a complete lifestyle. Volunteers are offered the possibility to learn about these practices and to experiment with them during their stay at the farm. The spiritual journey proposed at the farm includes early morning practices of yoga asana postures and meditation. The idea is to elevate oneself spiritually and to practice full consciousness at all times. All practices can be done alone or collectively, it always depends on everyone's intentions. Divine Land's environment is the ideal place to question oneself spiritually and to share your reflections and progress with likeminded people, your family at the farm. Some collective practices include singing mantras before lunch and promoting a healthy lifestyle by cooking accordingly. When coming to Divine Land, all volunteers know the importance of spirituality here and it is their choice to participate and open themselves to it or not.



email : ananadanarayana.earth@gmail.com
 website : <http://www.campodivino.com.ar/>

BERLIN SECTOR

Ukraine Russia - By Didi Ananda Cetana

New Kindergarten Site: A land owner, 500 kilometers from Kiev in Ukraine, offered a 400 square meter building for a new kindergarten, as the area is in need one. The building is only cement bricks and roof right now. We need \$60,000 for completion. It is surrounded by a garden space. The owner is a psychologist who wants to be a teacher, and in addition we already have a second teacher.

Parent Videos: We made 42 short parent videos. They are being translated into Russian and being edited now. We will also be adding in Montessori demonstrations.

Math Made Playful and Inexpensive: We have been making playful and inexpensive math materials for young children. If you would like to learn how, please write to: [<didianandacetana@gmail.com>](mailto:didianandacetana@gmail.com)

NAIROBI SECTOR

West Africa Update by Didi Ánanda Guñamayá Lotus Children Center – ACCRA, GHANA

For one month the children benefited from the wonderful volunteer work of Ariana Volio. Here are some of the contributions she made.

As a lover of African Dances she passed it to the children and teachers teaching them a choreographed dance from Guinea. The children performed it successfully to their parents at their graduation.



As a Pilates instructor, she introduced yoga asanas for the creche. Before only students above 4 years were practicing yoga asanas but she could adjust it to the youngest also.

She helped the teachers by reinforcing brain gym activities. We had introduced brain gym in the curriculum in 2012 when Bibi Ahmeed from Australia visited us. It helps children with motor coordination in a very fun way!

She suggested new fun ways to introduce reading to the kids.

In other news, the teachers decided to paint the front of our school. It was a spontaneous volunteer project coming from their heart. None of them had the experience of painting but Didi guided them how to do it. We also gave a well received talk on vegetarianism to 20 parents of our students

For more information on this project, please visit:
<http://www.lotuschildrencenter.yolasite.com>



EJURA - Neohumanist School at Ananda Madhura Master Unit
 Shankar, now 80 years old but still active, and Didi visited the school to teach principles of morality and NHE to the teachers. Didi also explained in detail psychological ways to impart these to the kids.

CENTRAL REGION OF GHANA Path of Joy School Update



We received donations from overseas for building the library and school, and we were able to build the veranda and the fence wall. Some of the library activities and improvements are



pictured here.

We need to complete the last classroom for the ground floor now. Funds and volunteers are most welcome! Please contact Didi: <didigayatri@yahoo.com>

PR Sarkar Institute and Centenary Celebration



P.R. SARKAR INSTITUTE

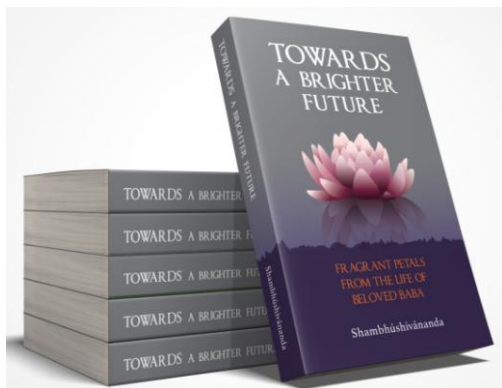
The P.R. Sarkar Institute was inaugurated on the birth anniversary of Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar in 2015, so this year marks our 5th anniversary!

Resources on the website (www.prsinstitute.org) continue to be added on a regular basis and announced on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/PRSarkarInstitute

The main work, however, of PRSI for this year is the preparation of on an exhibition, documentary film and book on the life, mission and teachings of Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar to celebrate his centenary next year. The work is progressing well. More about that in the next issue.

The “P. R. Sarkar Exhibition Centre” is now ready for exhibits in Taichung, Taiwan. Mr. Tamminga and Mrs. Lin began operations at the International Neohumanist Center on May 7, 2020, the 99th birth anniversary of Shrii P. R. Sarkar, the founder of the Neohumanist Movement

NEW BOOKS



Towards a Brighter Future: Fragrant Petals from the Life of Beloved Bábá By Shambhúshivánanda

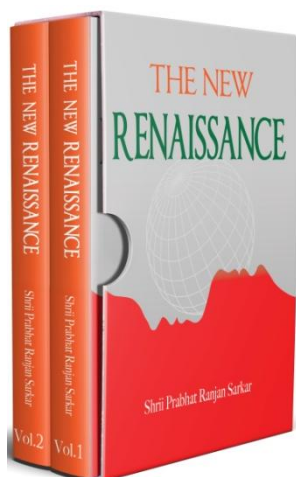
“Towards a Brighter Future: Fragrant Petals from the Life of Beloved Bábá is a comprehensive depiction of the life of a Renaissance Man of

our times. It offers rare glimpses of the person behind a movement for global socio-spiritual transformation.”

Dadaji Shambhushivananda has narrated simple anecdotes from a long joyful association with Sadguru Bábá, his spiritual Master. He unhesitatingly shares His love and blessings with us, so we too may be touched and transformed by that Love-Divine.

The new generation is preparing for a better world: more spiritual, more ecological, more sustainable, more compassionate and cooperative, more dynamic and more selfless. May the life-struggle; visionary teachings and exemplary life of Bábá provide us inspiration, hope, strength and encouragement to keep moving forward for a brighter future for all species on the planet earth.

Published by A.M. Gurukula Publications
Available through: <amgk.glo@gurukul.edu>



The New Renaissance By Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

Shrii P. R. Sarkar founded the Renaissance Universal (RU) organization on January 25, 1958. Volume 1 of "The New Renaissance" contains the presidential speeches delivered by Shrii P. R. Sarkar from the platform of Renaissance Universal between 1958 and 1990. In these groundbreaking discourses, he expounds on diverse topics ranging from the essence of spirituality to the future of human civilization. Volume 2 extends the ideas introduced in Volume 1, and opens many new vistas in human thought.

In this exclusive collection of his RU presidential speeches, Shrii Sarkar does not hide his stances on diverse issues behind the veneer of diplomacy or false adjustment with the status-quo. Through his discourses, he inspired a movement for global renaissance based on spiritual humanism.

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Available through: <https://ampspublication.com>
Or write to: <ampspbook@gmail.com>

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SAVE THE DATES

NHE CONFERENCE

Depending on how things unfold
around the world in the next year,
we have tentative plans for a
Neohumanist Education Conference
scheduled in Bali or an alternative
Cyber Conference

July 6-11, 2021



Neohumanist Education



Children enthralled with storytelling magic by Rutger Tamminga at the Noida School, India - see article page 27

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