



"ARISE, AWAKE, STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED"

THE HVP HERALD

Newsletter of Hindu Vidyapeeth - Nepal

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Hindu Vidyapeeth-Nepal (HVP) is an Educational Trust run on a non-profit basis by Matribhoomi Sevak Sangh (MSS), a socio-cultural organization. In an age of growing materialism, fundamentalism and intolerance, HVP-Nepal is working to bring up a generation of people who have holistic leadership qualities and clear visions and who can maintain and develop human virtues within and around them such as peace, harmony and love in the form of international brotherhood and co-existence.

NEWSROOM

*Founder Principal **Mr Chintamani Yogi** gives several addresses to a multitude of different organizations in Nepal on a daily basis. His audience ranges from high level government officials at the **Nepal Administrative Staff College**, Jawalakhel, through business entrepreneurs, International Rotary clubs and Interfaith conferences, to promote and encourage other schools to consider the need for value education and to start student based peace clubs of their own. He also has a daily TV slot on the Image Channel discussing issues surrounding spirituality, and frequently gives talks at the community/village level.

*The recently formed **Society for Value Education (SVE)** is led by Mr. Chintamani Yogi and is committed to bringing overall transformation in society through promoting a value based education for all. As such, SVE provides orientation, teacher-training opportunities and modern methodology to the founders, principals and teachers of schools and colleges in Nepal. It further serves as a common forum for like-minded educational institutes to work together to promote value education.

* **Parents' Awareness Programs** were held regarding the role of guardians in the academic, moral and social development of their children. The programs and

workshops mainly aimed to make parents aware of their responsibility towards establishing constructive relations with school for the all round development of their children.

* HVP School was extremely happy to receive some **28 volunteers** over the summer months from **Oxford, Cambridge and Durham**. They were **Vicki Hollyoake, Heather Lucas, Alex Wade, Victoria Hearn, Lucy Hall, Daniel Schwarz, David Ensor, Ania Boyce, Will Rayward Smith, Dan Thomas, Alex Calvey, Graham Prescott, Daniel Heanes, Emma Blackburn, Amy Briffa, Clare**

What's in this issue?

Newsroom	1
Editorial Note	2
Students' Contributions	4
Shanti Sewa Ashram	8
Youth Society for Peace	9
Articles	
Spirituality-the Connecting Link	10
There is Urgent need for Religious	11
The Joy of Giving	12
Christine Russell- Her Life and Contribution	13
Two-Week Tour of Dang	14
The New Peace Home in Parsa, Dang	14
A Reflection from C. M. Yogi's US Tour	15



HVP School Assembly

You must not let your life run in the ordinary way; do something that nobody else has done, something that will dazzle the world. Show that God's creative principle works in you. - Paramahansa Yogananda

Editorial Note

Welcome to the 14th edition of the HVP HERALD, jam-packed with the latest news on the schools and affiliated movements. Though this edition is somewhat late to the 'publishing house', it is not down to lack of materials and events to cover. On the contrary, the ceaseless commitment and dedication of the HVP family to bring lasting, positive change in society ever gives birth to many programs, gatherings, new organizations and future hopes to report to you.

Along with news, several uplifting and challenging articles are included from our many friends, providing a valuable source of inspiration and fresh ideas. To them and to all our contributors we express our sincerest gratitude. In this as in all things, it is the support of our friends and readers that make HVP what it is, and we know that it would be difficult to walk even one step without you.

And finally, as a UK volunteer at HVP- Nepal for 10 months, I wish to offer a brief personal note. I have been mightily impressed by the dedication, tireless endeavour and unrelenting zeal of HVP toward achieving its goals of social betterment. There is no better example of the school motto than HVP itself- and that makes for a movement full of integrity. Yet for all its activity, I have been touched by the simplicity, gentleness and friendliness of the staff here, who in the day to day running of things never forget that it is often the small acts of kindness that mean the most.

- **Damian Woods**

Jefferys, Clare Davis, Michael Taylor, Miriam Laurence, Jade Garrett, Ashley Bond, Rob Morgan, Sarah Percival, Hannah Smith, Josephine Whitaker, Lucy Crehan, Richard Lebon and Selene Gittings. They were all so helpful and made a significant contribution to the children through teaching and through their friendly natures. The school would like to extend a huge THANKYOU to all of them. We would also like to extend our thanks to **Miss Asha Sharma, Miss Jessie Stevenson, Miss Elizabeth Rayment, Miss Lara Atkin, Miss Kirsty Rolfe, Miss Erin Jarvis, Mr Anthony Gomes, Rhodri Saunders, Anna, Amy Feest and David** (all from the UK) who volunteered teaching in 2007. Finally, we would like to thank **TravelAid** for their support of the school.

*A UK volunteer, **Sue Cooper**, has contributed to the school in significant and varied capacities. She held a teacher training program for our female teachers to enhance teaching quality, and is currently teaching several lower school classes, is involved in various promotional activities and in the running of a Children's Creativity Program for Shanti Sewa Ashram. Most importantly she brought her lovely son **Matthew** with her, who has been studying in grade 2 at HVP.

Mrs Sue Danscombe, a UK volunteer, generously helped teaching the children from lower secondary level over November/December. She was recently joined by her husband **Bill** and we have been delighted to have both of them together. During her time here Sue became a true mother to the school, and we are thankful for all her contribution and love.

Mr Damian Woods, a volunteer teacher through **Inter-Cultural Youth Exchange UK** has been working at HVP since August and will be with us until May 08. He has been teaching English in classes 6, 8, 9 and 10. Besides teaching his continuous support to the school's promotion is beyond words. We are so happy to have such a wonderful friend with us. We are all highly impressed by his gentleness and simplicity.

The HVP family extends its deepest gratitude to all of them for their love, support and contributions to the school.

* Two clubs-**Peace Club and Eco Club**- have been formed under the leadership of the students themselves, to maintain peace at the premises of the school and keep the environment neat and clean.

* The **Peace Club**, in conjunction with **Today's Youth**, organized an interaction program with **South Korean Youths** on the role of young people in building peace.

* 2007 saw visits from several **UK Trustee members**. Notably, we were very pleased to have **Aarun Naik, Mark Lobel and Matt Daw** as well as many different friends from all around the world. We hope it is not too long before we welcome them again.

* We wish to congratulate **Mrs Neeti Aryal Khanal**, an ex-student, on receiving a scholarship named **Australian Leadership Awards** granted by AusAid. This year, only 10 people have been granted this scholarship for PHD and masters level, chosen from among 1000 applicants. She will be commencing a course on Women and Gender studies at **Monash University, Melbourne**. We wish her every success.

* **Mr Chintamani Yogi** visited the **USA** in January/March 2007 at the kind invitation of both Nepali and American Friends. He visited the major cities from the east to west coast and participated in different programs giving talks on various social issues, non-violence, peace and spirituality. He gave talks to school children, university students, and different social and religious organizations throughout his visit. Of note among these was a talk at **'the Senators House' in Vermont**. Many who came into contact with him expressed how deeply his vision and wisdom had touched them.



* **New Year Celebrations** were held on 1st Baisakh 2064 (14th April) at school with many friends and well-wishers.

*25th April occasioned the memorial day of the **late Dr Bihari Lal Shrestha**- a senior social worker and founding chairperson of HVP- to commemorate his contributions

You can become blind by seeing each day as a similar one. Each day is a different one, each day brings a miracle of its own. It's just a matter of paying attention to this miracle.

-Paulo Coelho

to the school. During the program **Dr Hari Prasad Pokhrel**- founder and director of **Institute of Natural Health**, Baneshwor- was awarded the '**Rastra Sewa Puruskar**' for his contributions to public health. Similarly, **Mrs Mridu Shrestha**- an old pupil of HVP and founding coordinator of Youth Society for Peace- was also awarded the '**Adarsha Swoyamsevak Award**' for her contributions to social service.

* **Miss Aashrita Satyal**, **Mr Bishal Baaniya** and **Mr Suraj Bhetwal** (all from class 8) came second in a valley level **general knowledge quiz contest** organized by Jayatu Sanskritam.

* Special celebrations for **Buddha Jayanti** and **Shree Krishna Janmastami** were held on 2nd May and 4th September respectively. We were delighted to have **Mr Satyamohan Joshi**- esteemed Scholar, and **Mr Bhim Bahadur Adhikari**- a senior social worker as guests of honour. The occasions marked the birthdays of Lord Buddha and Lord Krishna with wonderful performances by the students in dance, song and drama. Various talks



Celebration of Buddha Jayanti



Girls performing dance on Krishna's Birthday

reminded us all of their messages for Peace, Non-violence and Karma Yoga.

* **Kalyan Mahat** of class 10 was awarded the **late Dr. Bihari Lal Shrestha 'Best Boy' prize**, and **Shriya Karki**



Best Girl and Boy Award

of class 9 the **late Christine Russell 'Best Girl' prize** during a program on the birthday of Lord Buddha.

* An English poetry writing competition was organized on 2nd July in honour of the **late Christine Russell**, an international advisor of HVP. In the competition **Miss Anupa Rija**, **Mr Bishal Baaniya** and **Miss Manisha Tiwari** came first, second and third respectively.

* In recognition of our **best-ever SLC results**, students who passed in the first division with distinction were awarded cash prizes amidst a function organized at school. We express our gratitude to **Mr Kedar Prasad Sharma**- chairperson of HVP Management Committee, for presenting the prizes. The school would like to congratulate all our dear students for their wonderful

performance and we wish them all the very best for the future.

* **Bhanu Jayanti** (13th July), the birthday of an esteemed poet of Nepal- **Bhanu Bhakta Acharya**- was marked with a variety of activities such as poetry, song competitions and a quiz contest.

* **Mr Chintamani Yogi** - chairperson of National Interfaith Coordination Movement - Nepal (NICM) - visited



Dr Yogi addressing Interfaith conference-on AIDS, held in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka to participate in an **Interfaith Conference** organized in August. We would like to thank **Sakriya Sewa Samaj**- a social organization- for coordinating this visit. Mr. Yogi spoke at the conference on the role of religious leaders in tackling the HIV / AIDS issue. He came away with the feeling: "*we should do something very sincerely and collectively to save our human fellows... our Dharma should save their lives who are suffering, and show a RIGHT path to them who are lost or ignored...*"

* Teachers, Mrs Kalpana Shrestha, Miss Shanta Yogi and Miss Meena Manandhar took part in a course on **Teaching English as a Second Language** organized by **Baha'i National Centre** in August.

* Members of the **Eco Club** participated in an **Interfaith Symposium for Children** hosted at Staff College, Jawalakhel on 8th September.

* On **International Volunteers Day**, 5th December, pupils organised several clean-up projects in the local area to mark the day and show a willingness to volunteer their services. They also aimed at raising awareness of the need for hygiene and care of the environment, with the motto: "**Cleanliness is next to Godliness**".

* **HVP-UK** recently re-ordered the committee and appointed new trustees. We would like to extend our special thanks to all our friends, old and new, supporting us through this organization. We hope that we will continue to receive their valued support.

HVP UK Trustees and Committee

Honorary President: **Mrs. Nirmala Shrestha**

Matt Daw, Chairman

Hannah Humphrey-Baker, Secretary

Laura Howlett, Membership

Aaron Naik, Trustee and Sponsorship

Alan Marklew, Treasurer

Students' Contributions

My Time in HVP School, Lalitpur

- Matthew Cooper, Class 2

My name is Matthew Cooper and I am 8 years old. I studied in HVP School for 6 months, in Class 2, and I am going to tell you my story...



One day my mum told me that she wanted to do some voluntary work in a country I had never heard of, called Nepal. "Would you like to come?" she asked. I answered "OK", but I began to wonder what it would be like in Nepal. I wondered what school I would go to, how big the school would be, what would my classroom be like, but most of all, I hoped the children would be nice to me - I was a bit scared!

When I saw the school, I thought it looked big but welcoming. Then I met the Head Master, Mr Yogi, and I thought "What a kind and friendly man", he made me feel confident about the school. I felt calmer, and then I discovered that I was the first child from the UK to study here. I was amazed to hear that, and I began to look forward to going to school - until I heard that you have to go to school for 6 days a week, instead of 5 in Nepal- then I was shocked!

My uniforms (there are two - so that Mum can keep up with the washing!!) were pretty smart! To get them, I was measured in a shop and a tailor made it specially for me. Ghanshyam Sir gave me a *Topi* and belt and I was ready to go! The teachers were really kind to me and explained how everything worked, where my classrooms were, and introduced me to the children. The children were absolutely great, they were happy to have me in their class, and I felt very pleased that they were so friendly. At first they were a bit excited and followed me everywhere - even to the toilet! But soon they got used to me, then I could play with them just like I play with my friends at home.

The school itself is similar to my school in Guildford, in the UK, but the toilets are very different - Nepali style! Also in Nepal they have metal desks and benches - at home we have tables and chairs.

My favourite teachers are Shanta Miss and Kalpana Miss, because they spoil me with lots of hugs, and even fruit at break times.

I have really enjoyed my time at HVP School, thanks to my mum for bringing me, and the teachers and children for being so warm and welcoming. When my friends at home ask me how I enjoyed going to school in Nepal, I will tell them it was great and how lucky I feel to have been the first boy from the UK to have studied here. If any other children from the UK or anywhere else are thinking of coming to Nepal to go to school I would say "DO IT!". I have learned lots of things from the teachers and children, and will always remember going to school here.

Nepal: My Country

- Sirapa Chitrakar, Class 10

Nepal, the land of Lord Pashupatinath and the birthplace of Lord Buddha, is a sovereign independent nation situated on the southern slopes of the mid-Himalayas. It borders with India in the east, west and south, and

with the Tibetan autonomous region of China in the north. Spread over an area of 147,181 sq km, the country is better known for magnificent medieval monuments, Mt Everest (8848m)-the highest point on Earth, and Lumbini- the birthplace of lord Buddha. Besides Mt Everest, Nepal is home to 8 out of 10 of the world's tallest peaks, and is the second richest country in terms of water resources.

Nepal is a country of 40 ethnic groups and 70 spoken languages having their own culture, dress and food. The Newars, who are acclaimed for their unique artistry and culture, dominate the Kathmandu valley, whereas the Sherpas, who are renowned more for their mountaineering skills, inhabit the northern mountains, and their dress is defined by a need for warmer clothing. Brahmins and Chhetris, two of the nation's most dominant communities are almost everywhere, and the Tamangs, Rais, Limbus Magars and Gurungs-the ethnic groups known more as brave *Gorkha* soldiers dwell mostly in the mid-hills. Maithli, Tharu, Bhojpuri and other ethnic communities have their dwelling in the Terai plains.

Nepal is endowed with a wide variety of flora and fauna, meandering rivers, lakes, glaciers, mountains and lush green valleys. A unique cross-section of human culture and natural habitat.

There are mainly two religions in Nepal: Hinduism and Buddhism. Hinduism is made up of thousands of Gods and Goddesses. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are the major gods, but each has a complex tapestry of manifestations and incarnations. Buddhism is the second major religion in Nepal. Shakyamuni Buddha, who was born in Nepal around the 6th century BC is the founder of Buddhism. The great Buddhists Stupas of Swayambhu and Bauddha in the Kathmandu valley are among the oldest and most beautiful worship sites in Nepal.

The main two festivals of Nepal are Dashain and Tihar. Dashain is celebrated in October, and is the biggest and most widely celebrated national festival, lasting for 15 days. The main deity to be worshipped during Dashain is Goddess Durga- the Divine Mother. Red *Tika* with bright yellow seedlings called *Jamara* is a big ceremonial mark on this day- which symbolises the victory over vice. Another important festival is Tihar. Tihar or Deepawali means 'the festival of light' and is celebrated in the month of November. It is a five day long festival celebrated every year in bright blue autumn. The goddess of wealth- Laxmi is worshipped. Sisters also worship their brothers and receive gifts in return. The entire city is illuminated with lights during the festival.

I love my country Nepal because it is a land of nature, culture and adventure. There are many wonders and splendid natural resources like green forests, rivers, lakes, waterfalls, snow-clad mountains, countryside and diverse flora and fauna varying according to the topography of the country. Equally wonderful are the unique and diverse cultural aspects like language, religion, rituals and so on. I feel that the most interesting thing is that the snow-capped mountains and Himalayas offer pleasant walks in different hilly areas, mountaineering and trekking, and the torrential rivers offer adventures like rafting.

These natural resources offer many hopes of development in tourism. By developing the tourism sectors, proper management of mountaineering, trekking, rafting and national wildlife parks can earn foreign currency rapidly.

However, all the natural resources of our country are somewhere a curse. Because, although we have the second richest water resources in the world, we have not been able to utilise them adequately and are facing load shedding problems, and hygienic drinking water distribution is totally imbalanced. No electric supply is adequate for the Nepalese people which is a great issue and challenge for Nepal.

We have hopes that if our country can earn foreign currency through the tourism sector then this will help the government manage the budget effectively and develop. The Nepalese have the greatest hope, but face the greatest struggles for a brighter future. Mainly the political crisis is the cause of diminishing the development of our country. Citizens of Nepal are struggling for the betterment of Nepal and we students also hope for resolutions of the political struggles, and a brighter future for all...

Festivals of Nepal

- Anu Byanjankar, Class 9

Nepal is a multi-religious country. There are mainly four religions which have been followed in Nepal. These are: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. In Nepal, the people following Hinduism often also follow Buddhism. There is more or less religious tolerance in Nepal. Now I am going to explore a few festivals which belong to Hinduism and Buddhism.

Dashain- Dashain is the greatest festival of Hindus. It is celebrated in the month of Ashwin or Kartik. It is celebrated for 15 days by all the Nepalese living all over the world. Dashain is the festival of meditation and patience. On the 1st day of Dashain, *Jamara* (plant of barley and maize) is sown and Goddess Durga (who is the symbol of power to destroy evil) is worshipped and meditation is done in order to gain the same power until the day of Vijaya Dashami- day of victory (on the 10th day, the day of Tika).

Many traditional and cultural activities are done in the days between Gatasthapana (1st day) and vijaya Dashami. On the day of Dashami, youngsters are given *Tika* (mixture of rice, red powder and curd) and Jamara by elders along with blessings. Many people or relatives gather together in order to receive tika from elders and for their enjoyment. Therefore, this festival helps to make close relationships between relatives, people of the family, society and foreigners. The people living far away from the family members get a chance to return and meet their family and share their feelings and company. So this festival has not only religious importance but also great social importance.

Tihar- Tihar is the next greatest festival of Hindus after Dashain. Tihar is the festival of lights and flowers. This festival is celebrated for 5 days. In Tihar, every house is decorated by flowers and lights in order to make the goddess Laxmi (goddess of wealth) happy so that she will enter the house and bless it. The crow, dog, cow and goddess Laxmi, ox and brothers are worshipped respectively for 5 days. The worshipping of cow, crow, dog and ox shows Nepalese have great respect toward animals.

The goddess of wealth- Laxmi- is worshipped on the 3rd day of Tihar in every house. This is the most special day of Tihar. On the day of Laxmi Puja, girls play '*Bhailo*' and they give blessings in every house by playing Bhailo.

They are given special food cooked for Tihar and some amount of money.

On the fourth day of Tihar people worship the soul within themselves. This is done mainly in Newari culture, and is called *Maha Pooja*. On this day, boys play *Deusi* and give blessings to every house. They are also given special food and some amount of money by every house owner. On the last day of Tika, brothers are worshipped by their sisters. Brothers are given many blessings from sisters and sisters are given special gifts by their brothers. Therefore this festival helps in the maintenance of a close relationship between brothers and sisters.

Teej- Teej is celebrated by Hindu women in the month of Bhadra. This is mainly a festival for married women. On the day before Teej, delicious foods are eaten by women which is known as '*Dar*'. On the day of Teej itself all women fast from food. They wake up early in the morning and take a bath (symbol of purification), then they wear new red clothes of Teej and go to the temple to worship Shiva and Parvati for the long life of their husband and children. Unmarried women sometimes worship in the hope of a blessing for a good husband. They sing songs and dance the whole day. There is a religious belief that on the day of Teej, *Parvati* won the heart of Shiva after her long time of meditation. So this festival has both religious and social importance. On the day of Teej, all the married women visit their brother's house. Then they get a chance to meet all the sisters and friends of their childhood and can share their feelings.

Buddha Jayanti- Buddha Jayanti is celebrated on the month of Baisakh. This is that special day when Lord Buddha took birth on the day of the full moon night. Buddha also died on this day. Buddha was that great person who founded the path of light. He is known as the priest of peace throughout the whole world. Therefore Buddha Jayanti is celebrated by all the Buddhists and other people influenced by his teachings. On the day of Buddha Jayanti, many followers visit Lumbini, as it is his birthplace. Most of the Buddhists are from foreign countries like Japan, Korea, China, Singapore etc. They come to Nepal on a meditative pilgrimage to monasteries and Gumbas. Many statues of Buddha are worshipped and religious rallies are also organised by various societies.

My most favourite festival is Dashain. This is because, in Dashain I get a chance to meet all my relatives who return from abroad. If there wasn't 'Dashain' then I'd never get a chance to meet my relatives. Also, the activities done on Dashain such as meditation helps me in making my mind fresh. Dashain is the only festival our school closes for enjoyment. In Dashain every member of our joint family gathers together to celebrate it. This helps in the maintenance of close relationships. Dashain is the only festival when we get a chance to have Tika along with blessings from all the relatives. Its also fun, we are allowed to play cards too. For all these reasons I like Dashain.

I feel much pride toward my culture. The religious and social importance of these festivals binds people together in unity. So it helps in the maintenance of cooperation and respect among the people living in society. And Dashain is the only festival when poor people get a chance to buy new clothes and enjoy delicious foods through the money that they have saved or through charity, as this is a time of good will.

It is true that the mind is restless and difficult to control. But it can be conquered, through regular practice and detachment. Those who lack self-control will find it difficult to progress in meditation; but those who are self-controlled, striving earnestly through the right means, will attain the goal. – Bhagavad Gita

A Rap about the City

- Sanjay Shakya, Class 8

People die to come in city
That's why population has high density
"City is pretty and has beauty"
But that's wrong-to me it's 'crowdy'.
People don't have land to live in
This is the reality we believe in.
There's polluted water, soil and light,
Difficult to think, what's tomorrow's 'might?'
People roaming around for a settlement
Do they think that there is human betterment?
Facilities and services are all they seek
But without some peace the outlook is bleak.
So, city is painful as it's like a hell,
That's the story of the city as far as I can tell...

My Country Nepal

- Shreya Maharjan, Class 8

My country Nepal- pretty and lovely
Also full of much natural beauty.
In Nepal there is poverty
Yet it is decorated with people's honesty.
On this land many a great soul were gifted
Who were very brave and open-minded
Our tradition and culture with diversity
Is our never ending pride and glory.
It's the country where Gautam Buddha was born
Who showed the path of peace to everyone.
We can find here some scenery heart-touching
And hear some stories heart-breaking.
People here live a simple life
Working in the fields day and night.
Our country is small and beautiful
Full of many gentle people.

Motherland

- Mikesh Nemkul, Class 8

The land of Nepal is my motherland
So 'respect' to my motherland!
It is more beautiful than Switzerland
So I love my motherland....
It is the land of '*Brave Gorkhali*'
Who fought for their little- Nepali
It is more green than Greenland
So I love my motherland....
This is the land where I was born
This is the place where we grow corn
In the city the cars 'much horn'
That's why I love my motherland....
The land where we are
Is like many a beautiful flower
There is much beauty and a communications tower!
I love mad mixed motherland....
Many tourists come to visit my motherland
And it helps increase the income of the land
Many people say it is very beautiful
That's why I used to say its colourful
And that's why I love my motherland!!!

My Greatest Two Festivals

- Aashrita Satyal, Class 8

Clean the house and wash the clothes
Everything to look new and fresh
Light covering all the houses
Candle, lamps removing all stress.
New clothes and new other things
Want the blessing from elder
Celebrating Dashain by talking each other
Going the houses of sister and brother
Every garden with flowers
Putting tika with seven colours.
Celebrating Tihar with happiness
Can fulfil our grandest wishes.
Observing festivals with ecstasy
Dressed beautifully as an angel (what fantasy!)
This is a miraculous time
When life seems fit and fine.

Beautiful Nepal

- Sarita Bajgain, Class 8

Mountain, Himals and plains
Decorate my loving mother.
Rivers, lakes, hills and forest
Are like a sister and brother
They give me life
They give me soul
They teach us to love each other.
Name of my motherland is Nepal
It is culturally and naturally blessed
Many foreigners come to visit
And are very much impressed
My motherland is so kind
She gives me food and joy divine.
There are many beautiful temples
Gods and goddesses in my countryside
Is also like a zoo of the world
Where one can see different animals much diversified
Motherland is a temple where all pray
I never forget Nepal wherever I stay.

My Village and Natural Resources

- Nilam Subedi, Class 8

'My Village'

I prefer my village because
it is the peaceful ground where I was born.
Flowers, trees, birds and insects,
foods and vegetables are all grown.
People are honest, kind and helpful,
So I call them very beautiful.
The place is very small but life is good
Please people don't say: "change- we should"

'Natural Resources'

Nepal is the country of natural resources
Full of beauty and greenery
Mountains, rivers, forest and lakes
Are the resources found in our scenery.
Nepal is full of beautiful creation
Natural resources is one important section
Mountains and waterfalls give us pleasure
That's why its known as our greatest treasure.

May faith and love of God make the followers of every religion courageous builders of understanding and forgiveness. -
Pope John Paul II

Our Festivals

- Jyotsna Maharjan, Class 6

Intro..

Here comes Dashain and Tihar festivals for all
To bring happiness and prosperity come all
All houses are full of lights
Like the stars twinkling in the nights
All play fireworks for enjoyment
To make happy the environment
So come all boys and girls
To enjoy this Dashain and Tihar Festival...

— —
People celebrate Dashain and Tihar Happily
Which is known as Dasahara and Dipawali.
We worship goddess Durga and Laxmi
To get blessing mainly for Diwali and Bijaya Dashami

Dashain falls in September to October every year
But Tihar falls during October to November
Dashain is celebrated for 15 days,
Whereas Tihar is celebrated only for 5.

Dashain and Tihar signify the victory of truth,
And also goodness over evil and untruth.
God and Goddess always achieve their victory
So, Dashain and Tihar are part of our identity.

We receive Tika and blessings from our elders,
Which are given mainly from our family members.
During Dashain, innocent animals are always in a great danger.
But during Tihar, cow, crow, and dogs are
worshipped once a year.

People play cards and gamble with full enjoyment,
And even sell their wife's gold and ornaments!
Children do play with the fire-cracker
And put their life in great danger.
...but mainly it's a time of much happiness...

Tihar

- Anupa Rijal, Class 6

I like Tihar
But I go to Bihar.

The surroundings are clean
Full of beautiful green

Every house is full of lights
And the skies full of kites.

We worship cow, dog, crow with family
And also worship to Goddess Laxmi

Deushi and Bhailo all are playing
To these songs and music I like listening

Stars are twinkling at the night
And many houses are twinkling in light.

I see much happiness and prosperity
For people in our society.

All brothers put Tika to their sisters

And also sisters put Tika to their brothers

Well, have fun all
I say Tihar is best of all!!!

Dashain

- Faiz Azam Saba, Class 6

The greatest of our festivals
Is like the biggest carnivals.
Always celebrated for a fortnight
Among which nobody quarrels or fight.

As it signifies the victory of good over evils
Don't worry about demons or devils
So let's dance with no fear
And help keep blessed for another year

It's the time of happiness
So don't give the poor any 'miseryness'
They also got to be in the midst of such a festival
So fulfill their needs and belly

Get rid of all your tensions
And seek bestowing blessings
Pass the time in merry-making
And enjoy all the foods and meals for baking.

Let's fly the kite up in the air
And leave your hands bare
Send it as a message of love
For all the birds like sparrows, pigeons and the dove

It's the time of showing good-will
So refuse bad things and all 'ill-feels'
Its considered as an auspicious time
So with full confidence utilize it fine!

About our School

- Anjana Rijal, Class 5

All students are good
We live with each other in brotherhood.
Our teachers are very nice
But sometimes they have to tell us to listen twice!
We love our school very much
There is no other school as such.
We give our friends a lot of care
As in everything we always share...

School

- Anisha Aganja, Class 5

When we go to school
There we learn many things
And we read many books
And we have fun in the playground
When we all run round and round
There is something I would like to say:
School is my temple
Teacher is my god
Doctor is my aim
Anisha is my name

Our prayers are always with you

We would like to extend our deepest sympathy to **Mrs Angur Baba Joshi**, who is suffering from cancer. Mrs Joshi is the founding Advisor of the school, whose contribution to the establishment and running of the school has been instrumental. We have been so much impressed by her strength and spirit in facing her current problems, and wish her God's blessings and abounding love.

Religion is one of the most important forces in the world. Whether you are a Christian, a Muslim, a Buddhist, a Jew, or a Hindu, religion is a great force, and it can help one have command of one's own morality, one's own behavior, and one's own attitude. -Nelson Mandela

Shanti Sewa Ashram (SSA)

Shanti Sewa Ashram (SSA) is the result of collaboration between HVP, MSS and several other spiritual and charitable organizations united in the '**Peace Movement Family**'. Originally brought together in the highly successful '**Journey for Peace**' movement, these like-minded institutions and organizations now have the opportunity to exchange ideas, spread information about their work, and benefit from the support of other members in joint ventures and events. **Mr. Chintamani Yogi** is the founder of SSA and his active and dynamic leadership has inspired and influenced so many like-minded people to join hands for the establishment of SSA.

Main Activities

*SSA organizes a **Monthly Satsang** (spiritual discourse) on the **first Friday** of **every month** at **4:00pm**. The *Satsang* aims to encourage people to practice and spread ideals such as peace, tolerance, fraternity and selfless service. Through the Satsang, SSA has aspired to develop the right vision and attitude for the establishment of a much better society – a society free from misery, enmity, hatred and violence. **All are invited to join the Satsang.**

* On 15th Dec, '**Mitramilan Ebam Samajik Jagaran**' ('A meeting on social awareness, focusing particularly on the Dalit community') was organized through the conjunction of **SSA, HVP** and **Dalit Sewa Sangh**. Many found this meeting helpful for discussing the issues

surrounding Dalit discrimination, and for highlighting avenues where change can be brought most fruitfully.

* **Mrs Priti Yogi** has established a **Handicrafts Group** at the Ashram, training women from the local community with the necessary skills. The group makes several attractive handicrafts that go for sale. A proportion of the proceeds go directly to supporting the Ashram, and some to help the women in the group. Many thanks to Priti for starting this wonderful project.

*A **10 day Yoga Camp** was held at the Ashram in the month of June. This well-attended function led by **Laxman Panthi**- a Teacher at HVP, offered an introduction to practicing Yoga for all round physical and mental wellbeing.

Future Project:

SSA has a plan to buy land situated in a natural location somewhere outside the ring road in Kathmandu to meet its objectives. For the realization of these, SSA has many future plans such as running an orphanage, an old peoples' home, a Yoga and naturopathy centre, an organic farm and a vocational training centre. SSA, therefore, makes a sincere appeal to everyone to join this truly service-oriented movement. A small but generous donation from our well wishers will help transform this vision into a reality.

A Celebration of Mahatma Gandhi's Anniversary.....

-by **Damian Woods**

damianjwoods@yahoo.co.uk

Many gathered at the **Shanti Sewa Ashram** in Kathmandu, Nepal, for a special program to mark the life and message of Mahatma Gandhi- apostle of peace. This landmark Satsanga was fittingly organized by the National Inter-faith Coordination Movement – Nepal (NICM). The date-Oct 2nd 07- has only recently been announced by the UN council as **International Day of Non-violence** - a date now established as an annual monument to the message of the **Mahatma**...

The proceedings started as always with a bhajan or two- it always amazes me how such a rich and transporting sound can be made with Hindu style rhythm and melody, a tambourine and a few other simple instruments- perhaps its more to do with the distinctive Bhakti-devotion- inherent in the pulse of Hinduism and shining in the faces and voices that raise to the cyclical beat of the Bhajan- in any case, it never fails to move me.

And yet, true to Gandhi's universal message, this meeting was anything but exclusively Hindu, with constant references and respect shown for all the major religions, the lighting of lamps by representatives of different faiths, as well as prayers and songs of and for Krishna, Jesus and Buddha, and of course Ram and Sita...- a joyous celebration of the essence of all the religions, and a testament to Gandhi's teaching: 'Truth is the trunk and the different religions are the branches of the trunk- all lead to God'.

Though much of the talk given by Chintamani Yogi ji was in Nepali (and therefore beyond my understanding) I still was able to pick out the key words and wisdom

central to the Mahatma's life: **Ahimsa**- nonviolence (I particularly love the Mahatma's famous quip: "follow 'an eye for an eye' and we will only go and make the whole world blind"), God is Truth, God is Love. We are all equally Children of God. These are the spiritual truths taught, but more importantly lived by Gandhi ji: "**My life is my message**".



Mr Yogi Speaking on International Day of Non-violence

His integrity was able to stir even the deadened world of politics, leading ultimately to the freedom of India, and yet he was the humblest and most ordinary of men. But through indomitable commitment to the principles of peace, his life reached such a caliber that it led Albert Einstein to remark: "Future generations will scarce believe that such a man in flesh and blood ever walked upon the earth".

These, along with much more, were the messages of this moving Satsanga, delivered by Chintamani ji with his enigmatic and lively manner- so much so that he frequently burst into lovely songs mid sentence!! The event saw various speakers and singers of a variety of faiths offering their contributions. All were eagerly and

All differences in this world are of degree, and not of kind, because oneness is the secret of everything.

-Swami Vivekananda

equally received by a congregation that included guests from many organizations, among them women of 'Gandhi Ashram, Manahara, Kathmandu'- women who have come from difficult and underprivileged backgrounds and who we felt graced to have with us.

The occasion was especially blessed by the presence of a world renowned singer and Buddhist monk- **Ani Choying Dolma**- and she amazed all with exquisite recitals of spiritual songs dear to Gandhi. Her voice is

phenomenal- able to achieve subtleties so rarified the notes go straight to the heart, and the silent pauses seem pregnant with pranic energy. She sang several Hindu songs, but also wanted to show a 'gesture of respect to the church' by singing 'amazing grace' in perfect gospel style.

The remarkable event ended with joyous dancing, singing and *Prasad*- the Hindu version of light refreshments!!!

Youth Society for Peace (YSP)

Youth Society for Peace (YSP) was established in 2003 in collaboration with the youth of *Shanti Sewa Ashram (SSA)*. In a society that sorely misses the contentment of a peaceful existence, it is becoming increasingly important that the youth of today (who are the leaders of tomorrow) have access to a community of like-minded peers who will mutually nurture their peaceful vision for the future. In this way, YSP hopes to refine and to promote their vision into the wider world and encourage peaceful practices and a sense of social responsibility.

YSP Activities:

Seeds of Peace (SOP)

The **Seeds of Peace** meetings consist of children from the vicinity who come to enjoy slokas, songs, yoga, meditation, games, public speaking and other character building activities. The children are between 3 and 15 years of age. The group is run by the core members and the volunteers of YSP, each **Saturday** at **Shanti Sewa Ashram (SSA)**, Koteshwar from 8:00 - 9:30 AM.

"Thoughts of Youth" Forum

YSP has conducted several interaction programs called **Thoughts of Youth**. These programs have been run by YSP, with inspiration and thought-provoking guidance of **Mr Chintamani Yogi**. The young people are encouraged to constructively discuss various contemporary issues and the ways they can help. This program is conducted on **every third Saturday** of the Nepali month at SSA, 3.00pm.

World AIDS Day Celebrated

'Those who try to lead the people can only do so by following the mob,' this may be a very old quote by *Oscar Wilde* but we, **YSP Nepal** organized **World AIDS Day** on 1st December at Shanti Sewa Ashram to challenge the Status Quo.

Around 30 young people from various organizations gathered in the Ashram to celebrate the day. Mr Yogi, Patron of YSP, painted the harrowing picture of some African nations who are suffering the miseries of HIV/AIDS. The participants also presented their views and analyzed and explored their thoughts about HIV/AIDS and its victims.

We are very much **thankful** to the volunteers of **STEP-Nepal** that presented the documentary regarding AIDS and played the role of facilitator to ignite the youth to challenge negative views. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the participants and youth organizations that gathered and shared their knowledge.

International Day of Peace Marked

The International Day of Peace was marked in Nepal by various organizations, including YSP who held a three-day program. On the first day (20th September) a **Peace Poetry Competition** was held where members from the Peace Clubs of 15 different schools participated.

On the second day a **Peace Prayer** was offered at **SSA**. Representatives from more than 21 service based

institutions attended. Religious leaders from various faiths lit lamps to symbolize interfaith reconciliation, and share their traditional prayers for peace together.

On the third day a **Youth Conference** took place in which 115 youths from various schools, colleges and organizations participated. **Mrs Mridu Shrestha**, founding coordinator of YSP, highlighted the theme of the day: "**Peace – Our Dream; Our Destination.**" The conference was lively, addressing the shortcomings of materialism, and included yoga, meditation, friendship and intellectual games.

Various peace activists such as **Dr Chintamani Yogi**, **Mrs Indira Manandhar**- chairperson of *Dharma Tatha Shanti Pratisthan*, **Mr Raju Kandel**, **Mr Puskar Shah**- world-cyclist and **Mr Kiran Thapa**- social worker, helped explore the central role of peace in our world today.

New Peace Clubs Formed

Members of YSP have been offering programs at several local schools/colleges helping them to establish **pupil-led Peace Clubs** of their own. In conjunction with this, Mr Yogi often gives talks to promote the value of peace. Once started, YSP continues to offer its guidance and goodwill.

YSP ABROAD

Miss Satyata Shrestha, YSP Member, has received funding to attend the next **World Spirit Youth Council (WSYC)** in **Thailand**, February 2008. Similarly, another YSP Member **Ms Minakshi Yogi** is going to participate in **World Spirit Forum** in **Arosa, Switzerland** in January 20-23rd 2008. Both organizations aim to connect youth globally, and inspire them to be a spiritually active moral force on the world's stage for the care of our world and its diverse people. A huge '**Thank You**' to **Dr Nina Lynn Meyerhof**, President of Children of the Earth, USA and **Sesto Giovanni Castagnoli**, Chairperson of World Spirit Forum, Switzerland for their generous support in coordinating these visits.

YSP APPEAL:

We have to build up the spirit of non-violence and peace today, for tomorrow will be too late. So let us all join our hands and spread the message: 'There is no way to peace, peace is the way'. We need to work hand-in-hand to make the world a better place to live in. Please come and join us! You can reach us at yspnepal@hotmail.com
Jagannath Kandel, Coordinator

Old friends pass away, new friends appear. It is just like the days. An old day passes, a new day arrives. The important thing is to make it meaningful: a meaningful friend - or a meaningful day. - Dalai Lama

Articles

Spirituality – the Connecting Link between Religions and Nations

Excerpts from Speech given at 4th Global Symposium:

"Awakening Planetary Consciousness"
December 7-10, 2007, Lucknow, India

- by **Sesto Giovanni Castagnoli**
Chairperson of World Spirit Forum, Switzerland

I would like to start my speech to you with a statement from a very good friend, the founder of the HVP School in Nepal: **Dr Chintamani Yogi**.

Yogi Ji once told an audience a story about a student who went to his spiritual teacher, saying, "I want to do something for humanity". The teacher said, "Become a good human."

And Yogi Ji noted that it's easy to follow a particular religion, to become Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, etc. But first of all it is more difficult to become spiritual, to become a good human.

With that I agree and at the same time I do not. Why is that?

Spirituality is not a matter of being religious or belonging to a religion. We are born as human without knowing about *different* religions **or even about difference generally at all** but we are already spiritual.

Today's scientists say that one month old babies can differentiate all the vowel sounds of which a language consists of. And they can do this for any language in the world. Even for languages they have never heard. Whether Russian, Chinese or an African language, they have no difficulties in differentiating the vowels.

An infant scientist mentioned some years ago: "Babies as far as language is concerned are cosmopolitans."

But why are we not?

Because between the 6th and the 12th month of life babies lose this extraordinary ability and develop the prototypical vowel categories of their own mother language. My very belief is: **these are not the only human abilities that fade away while growing up.**

When asked by a young Brazilian reporter about the meaning of spirituality I answered with a mental picture:

"Every Child is born spiritual. Coming to mother earth, a child has no limitations yet, imposed by other people. Only with his growing up, there starts this sorrowful process.

Humans surrounding the child start to throw sand on him. It starts even with the parents and siblings, followed by relatives, friends and neighbours, followed shortly after by teachers, classmates, priests, trainers, bosses and managers and work companions. The clear view we had been born with becomes more and more cloudy, we become covered with the sand, and the load of the sand becomes heavier and heavier...

When a person is around 40 years old – some may be 50 or not yet 30 – he is completely overloaded. Most people cannot feel their soul anymore, although yearning for a quietness from within. They start to have burnouts or even worse bore-outs and sooner or later they ask themselves,

"What am I doing here? Why am I doing this?"

That is the time when some of them start to sweep away the sand and try to find their way back to where they have come from."

In this sense we can look at spirituality as something inherent within us, which by listening carefully to it, guides us throughout our whole lives, even back to where we all have come from.

Whatever spiritual path we have, whatever religion we belong to, we are all human and spiritual beings and although we accept everyone with his or her beliefs, we should have a focus on what connects us.

When we look at Spirituality in this sense, there is no need to argue over something which other people believe in. Someone may be Buddhist or Hindu, she may be Jain or Christian, and someone else might believe in nature and mother earth. Why should we argue over something which everyone has anyway within himself?

Therefore there is a large opportunity and challenge before us, and for all religious leaders, priests, rabbis, imams, gurus and others.

If there is this level of acceptance, among religions and spiritualities, with each accepting others views, whether religious or non-religious, there is freedom for all involved, thus, bringing people again to listening to the words of God/Allah/Mohammed/Jave/Joshua and others.

The challenge is to reach them with simplicity. With their own, easy to understand words, which most of the time are words from the heart: of love, compassion, awareness... and believing in a *conscious* life.

In this way we see every person as a brother and sister and not as a Muslim, Jew, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, or other believer or non-believer.

Let's have a look now at the aspect of the nations.

We have this same possibility in terms of political and economical points of view. If we start to see each other not as members of different nationalities, but as one human being like all of us, then we have reached the point where the human being is important, not a person's race or culture, but the person is valued in and of herself or himself.

And again, the spirituality, the voice within us, is crucial and important for this open minded approach, with an inner, internal stability we can start to share our knowledge, accept others beliefs, listen to them, exchange and learn, and in the least we will become a holistic person.

It doesn't matter if somebody is getting his balance by praying, meditating or just by being in nature or out participating in sport, for his soul it is fine if he applies the practices he feels within himself.

Here I would like to give you a prayer from Saint Seraphim of Sarov:

"Acquire inner peace and thousands around you will find salvation."

This starts with each person.

Let us enjoy together our mother earth and be careful with this wonderful gift we have received. May I wish you and all humans on this planet a wonderful, peaceful future. Thank you.

In the sky, there is no distinction of east and west; people create distinctions out of their own minds and then believe them to be true.
-Buddha

In a letter to HVP School dated 20/11/2006, Shree Jagadish Gandhi expressed his feelings as follows:

"I am in receipt of your newsletter, "The HVP Herald" of September 2006. The articles of prominent personalities and the write-ups of your students published in the newsletter have impressed me very much. The articles published in the latter portion of the newsletter are of high quality standards and most readable. This written material shows the high standards of your school. A small county, but huge intellect! This is a most gratifying development when sincere efforts are being made for advancement of education in Nepal.

It would be interesting to you to know that the City Montessori School established in 1959 follows the same ideals of peace and 'no war situation' in the world. In pursuance of these ideals the City Montessori School has launched 20 international events, the underlying aim of which is to foster the feelings of oneness among the participants taking part in them from all over the world.

In furtherance of mobilizing world unity ideas among the people of the world, the undersigned has also started World Unity Satsang held every Sunday in the school's campus. The excerpts of the talks delivered by the undersigned at the Satsang are also telecast by some Indian TV channels. An article based on excerpts of one such talk is enclosed with request to you to see if it would be worth publishing in your newsletter. I hope you shall kindly consider it and decide its publication in your esteemed newsletter."

**- by Jagadish Gandhi
Founder-Manager
City Montessori School, Lucknow, India**

And here is the article by Mr Gandhi...

'There is Urgent Need for Religious Harmony in the World'

These days we are often hearing the word 'Jihad', which seems to have annoyed many people on the earth as it is being brazenly used by those who are openly advocating violent means to coerce people into submission. Therefore, it has caused much consternation among the peace loving people. But Jihad, to the best of my knowledge, was a call made by Prophet Mohammed against those who were indulging in *unlawful* activities, against those who had no sense of proportion in perpetrating injustice and persecution against women and children in those barbarous times when he lived.

Since his call for Jihad was made with motives of purity, he was always successful in waging them. Truth always triumphs. This is proved by the fact he never met a failure in his Jihads. Any movement launched on the principals of truth and fair play would be successful in the last. The Jihads launched by Prophet Mohammed were waged against evil and evil forces. Unfortunately the Jihads launched by the rulers many centuries after his death were motivated by territorial or pecuniary gains. Therefore, they had to encounter numerous problems in achieving their objectives. The present day call for Jihad by underground terrorists has the nasty intention of dividing the global society and therefore it is a matter of serious concern. The destruction of the World Trade Centre in New York in 2001 and the recent plan to destroy

passenger planes in mid air over the Atlantic Ocean are events that are definitely alarming.

Lord Ram's attack on Ravan's Lanka may be interpreted as ancient Jihad, war against the evil and the evil forces. Similarly Mahabharata was another Jihad against the evil doings of Kauravas. **Any war waged to restore justice and truth may be termed as a Jihad.** But the Jihad of the fundamentalist forces is different as it has religious overtones. In my humble opinion, no one should try to foist one's faith on others by use of force. If it is done the people would definitely resist with equal force which would create animosity and bad blood between the followers of different faiths. An unnecessary suspicion or even hatred would be generated against one another's faith. This kind of situation would lead to unnecessary bloodshed and would also revive memories of olden days when religious wars were fought with devastating results.

When religious wars were waged during the Middle Ages, people knew very little about each other's faith. Then the faiths were in their initial stages and were learning to adjust to the changing times. Somehow the zealots had caught a strange fancy for increasing the number of their followers. Therefore, it was merely a number game that motivated them to wage religious wars. But now that people of different faiths have come closer and are working together in every field, this old fancy is anachronistic and must be abandoned for the sake of peace and harmony in the world. After all, **all religions have been bequeathed to humanity by one and the same God at different periods in different places suiting to the needs of those times.** The scriptures of these different faiths also carry common teachings. These religions are like different streams which all mingle with ocean at the end of their journey. They have common points of virtues and morals and can hardly be differentiated in theme and ideal. A mere difference in language should not be a reason for animosity between them.

As far as I understand every religion emphasizes God realization. The different paths for achieving this goal are time tested and should not be questioned as to their efficacy. If God has no reservation on the different paths adopted by different faiths why should man have? I think a Hindu should not have any objection if a Muslim goes to a mosque to offer prayers or the Muslims should have no objection if a Hindu goes to temple to pray. Similarly prayers offered by a Christian in a Church or by a Sikh in a Gurudwara should not evoke any protest from other faiths.

The solution of this controversy lies in the prayers of all religions. I think the time is ripe for all the prayers to be heard and sung together. Such joint prayers should be held at public places so that people begin to respect all religions equally, reverently and forsake prejudices on this account. Religious heads may also call all religious conferences where the differing viewpoints may be discussed in detail and a common settlement reached once for all. But wars for religious conversions would be suicidal. It would be a foolish misadventure.

If the human race wishes to have a prolonged and indefinite period of material prosperity, they have only got to behave in a peaceful and helpful way toward one another. — Winston Churchill

For me **Ram, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus Christ, Muhammad, Guru Nanak and Bahau'llah are one and the same in that they all represent God** and were sent by Him to restore faith and fair play in society. To fight against one another in the name of these representatives of God would be an act of ignorance and an act against humanity. As I see, the world is fast heading towards a united political entity and any activity that tends to obstruct it would be tragic. Unreasonable calls would only bring a bad name to the faith for whose aggrandizement they are made.

"The Joy of Giving"

Reflections on a speech given by Mr. Chintamani Yogi at a Rotary Club Convention

- by Sue Cooper, Volunteer, UK
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On 30th November 2007, an intercity meeting of the Rotary club was held at the 5 Star **Soaltee Hotel**, Kathmandu, Nepal. The Soaltee was a grand venue for such a meeting, and it was attended by some 300 Rotarians. Dr Chintamani Yogi was invited to attend as Guest Speaker, and I, along with **Mr Kiran Thapa**, a close friend of Dr Yogi, was fortunate to be asked to attend too. I am visiting Nepal for eight months as a volunteer teacher in Hindu Vidyapeeth-Nepal. My son Matthew, who is 8 years old is also fortunate enough to be the first western student of Dr Yogi's school, and has hugely enjoyed the experience!

A welcome address was given by Rotarian **Mrs Jaya Shah**, President of the Jawalakhel District, and Host of the event. Various other speakers followed, including District Governor **Anirudha Roy Chowdhury** from India, and District Governor **Dr Tika Man Vaidya** from Nepal in which they detailed the manner in which funds raised are used to help peoples in real need, in Nepal and indeed worldwide. The Rotary Club, as I understand it, has three main areas which funds are distributed to, namely, encouraging Peace, eradicating Polio and education by means of scholarships. The Rotary club's efforts however, are not restricted to only fundraising - they are also committed to improving the lives of people in their own communities.

I learnt a lot of interesting facts from both the presentation, and also afterwards, talking to various members. The beliefs and declarations of the Rotarians to "serve communities locally and internationally" and to declare their shared ideals and commitment to humanity, reminded me a lot about the words and work of Dr Yogi. Dr Yogi has been serving humanity for the past two decades. His contribution is substantial towards culture, education and social service, particularly in Nepal. Dr Yogi was born in Dang, Western Nepal, in 1963 AD. He is an internationally renowned philosopher and orator, has travelled to UK, US, South Africa, India and many other countries of the world. He leads with vision and firm commitment to humanitarian goals. He is the founder Principal of various organisations (for further details visit www.cmyogi.org), and his philosophy of "serving humanity through

spirituality", has touched and inspired many, many people in many, many countries.

The subject of Dr Yogi's speech: "The Joy of Giving" was therefore very appropriate. Dr Yogi's style is both traditional, including reference to bhajans (spiritual songs) and prayers, but is also up to date and poignant, referring to day to day stories which we can all relate to. I have been fortunate enough to be present at several of Dr Yogi's speeches, and I am always impressed (even when he speaks in Nepali and I cannot understand him) at how he relates to every single member of his audience. I have witnessed him speaking to groups of mixed ages (a whole village on one occasion!) and throughout his oration, his charismatic manner and wise words have touched every member of the audience - which is obvious through their smiles and nods of agreement at various times throughout his presentation. The Rotary Club Speech was no exception! You could have heard a pin drop throughout the whole of his speech, which lasted some 40 minutes. He referred to the fact that we who are lucky enough to live comfortable lives have become "hoarders" of our wealth and possessions. He pointed out, it is not ours to keep, in fact, but "loaned" to us through Gods virtue and kindness, and that we should be giving, giving, giving it back. "Joy" is the emotion that we feel when we follow these ideals - not something that "a man who has a million dollars in the bank, but no cheque book in his hand" can comprehend! Appreciation is another emotion that one receives as a result of giving - when else does a person truly feel appreciated? It is a gift that the person receiving can actually give back, and in this way, the "transaction" becomes equally satisfying.

'Thanks' too, is an emotion that both participants can experience in the 'joy of giving'. The giver can give thanks to God that he *can* give, and the recipient can give Thanks to the giver and to God.

What though, if you don't have enough money to give? One of Dr Yogi's stories illustrated this situation perfectly. He referred to a story when a child apologises to a Sadhu (Holy man), telling him that he is so poor that he is unable to give him anything (as is traditional) - even though the Sadhu has given him a blessing. The Sadhu replies that even if you have nothing, nothing at all, you always have a smile - and it is always yours to give.

Finally, what is the answer to "How much should you give?" Dr Yogi asked us all this question, and after giving time for personal deliberation, he helped us realise that the question itself is not about how "much", but rather "how" should we give. And the answer to that, of course, is with love, generosity and compassion. If we give with these sentiments in our hearts, how can we fail to give the correct amount of whatever is required?

The speech and following discussions at the end of the program resulted in an audience inspired. Rotarians and non-Rotarians, all were excited by the fact that we *all* have the capacity to give what we can, when we can. We all have individual capacity, but if we all "join our hands together" in our efforts, we can develop a sense of universal brotherhood, co-existence and mutual understanding, helping us all to truly live a human life with each other.

If a man has a living faith in him, It spreads its aroma like the rose its scent. He doesn't need to preach. -Mahatma Gandhi

Christine Russell - Her Life and Contribution

30th August 1940 – 2nd July 2006

- by David Hitchin

Christine Russell was perhaps the only Friend who owed her spiritual awakening to Hindus in Nepal.

She attended Edgbaston High School, and while there she went on an exchange visit to Germany where she stayed with a family with whom she formed lifelong friendships. She studied French and German at Cambridge, and then taught these languages for many years, first at Bedford and then at Eastbourne. She also provided individual coaching for students who wanted to take A-levels which were not on the school's syllabus, and in order to do so she taught herself economics, ethics, philosophy and other subjects.

When she was 50 her uncle died and left her a legacy which permitted her to retire early. She continued to live simply but comfortably, working for a while at the Pestalozzi International Village at Seddlescombe and on wildlife conservation projects.

In 1990 Christine found a new enthusiasm in working for the GAP projects for 17-25 year-olds who wanted to serve overseas. She volunteered to help with a project and she was sent to Nepal to get GAP registered as a NGO, dealing single-handedly with British Council and the Nepalese bureaucracy. She described those proceedings as worthy of Kafka, whose works she had studied for a thesis. She found ways of making contact with local politicians and the British Council in order to set up a working local structure, and she recruited and trained local workers.

In Nepal the poor had access only to rudimentary government schools, while the rich could afford western academies motivated by profit, and which promoted the excesses of an affluent western life style. Christine lived with two Hindu families which, with minimum resources, had set up an HVP (that is Hindu Vidyapeeth) school. Their vision embraced some aspects of the conventional, modern western style of academic education together with a respect for the traditional culture of Nepal, with an emphasis on open-minded thinking, global awareness, tolerance and the value of selfless service to society. At first the schools were small and poorly equipped. They were staffed by teachers on very low salaries, and by others who did not need any payment. Christine bought land and provided the money for extensions and new buildings. As one of the teachers wrote, she is "a lady who is an example of true living, who gave the ground and roof to our children." When she returned home she was active in HVP UK which supports and raises funds for the Nepalese schools, she acted as Treasurer and registered the organisation as a charity.

Religion had meant nothing to her before, but she had encountered something completely new in the lives of the Shrestha and Yogi families. They told her that she should not attempt to become a Hindu, but should seek within the traditions of her own country. After investigating Buddhism she came to Quakers, where she found her spiritual home. She explored religious writings from Julian of Norwich to Bonhoeffer and beyond, but

the writer who meant most to her was the German mystic, Meister Eckhart. This required a new way of thinking, and she was both open-minded and ruthlessly honest with herself.

She wrote, "I decided to stop agonising over who or what God is, what I do or don't believe, and to think about the ways in which God participates in my life, how my life would be different if I did not feel that God played a part. So I made a list of all the ways in which I feel my life has changed since having a 'God dimension' and was surprised at how comprehensive and positive it was."

One of the important way stations in the latter part of Christine's spiritual journey was Woodbrooke. She first arrived there in October 1998 when she was an attendee in Lewes Meeting. The meeting encouraged her to attend a course there to experience what our Quaker Study Centre had to offer.

She chose a three-week Applesseed course called The Heart of my Mystery, consisting of a focus on Shakespeare's Hamlet, using arts activities to explore personal responses to the themes of the play as these related to the inner life of each participant.

Christine was dismayed to find that argument and discussion were reserved for breaks and free time, and the main emphasis was, as usual in an Applesseed course, on personal discovery through simple art work and subsequent worship sharing. Despite a strong desire to give up the course, she persisted, and by the last week found she had changed her mind about this way of learning.

Openness to something new and challenging was characteristic of Christine; and it led to her attending some 14 more Applesseed courses over the next six years. It also led to her undertaking Woodbrooke's Equipping for Ministry course. This exposed her to a wide range of courses, with an ongoing tutor to guide her through her choices and responses to them, plus two residential weeks.

The changes Woodbrooke brought about in her spiritual journey were amazing to witness. Christine was a modest, reserved and self-effacing woman, and this did not change. But the more she opened herself to new ways of learning among others on similar journeys, the more she learned to share what was happening for her, and the more she became her true self – loving, talented, loyal, deeply serious, with considerable spiritual insight, and with a strong sense of humour. Her tutors have written that they felt privileged and not a little awestruck.

Close friends knew that behind Christine's confident exterior there were inner uncertainties. When she was three years old she had severe peritonitis at a time when her mother was ill, so she spent several weeks in hospital alone, in pain and feeling abandoned. Her parents were not communicative people and never expressed emotion. Christine's actions were always loving, and many people loved her, but for much of her life she was unable to feel this. She had always felt that she had to be successful in order to be loved, and she



Christine Russell

You have read - 'Look upon your mother as God; look upon your father as God.' But I say. The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted - let these be your God. Know that the service to these alone is the highest religion. - Swami Vivekananda

had always feared any failure which might result in her being rejected.

When she became one of the Lewes Quaker Community she was astonished to find how openly people spoke of their feelings and of the atmosphere of complete trust that existed between people. This was a revelation to her and although it was difficult she found that it was possible to relate to people in a new way. She found at last a complete sense of security and complete acceptance, and she saw herself for the first time as others had always seen her, entirely acceptable because of what she was and not just because of what she did.

In terms of practical service to the Quaker movement, one of her most valued contributions was her service as a member of the House Committee at the Bernhard Baron Cottage Homes, which she visited each week, befriending the residents, visiting them with Joe, her intelligent but not always obedient dog, at her side, and taking many of them out for small social outings. She also edited the Lewes Meeting Newsletter for several years, always beginning with a quotation, and thoughts on it which reflected her experience and which were evidence of her growing spiritual maturity.

Christine said that the two things she needed to learn before she died were how to let go, and how to ask for and accept help, and she learned those lessons to perfection. In 2003 she had an operation and chemotherapy for breast cancer, and after a checkup early in 2006 she learned that it had recurred. It soon became clear that she had an inoperable brain tumour, and problems with vision, balance and co-ordination made it necessary for her to enter a nursing home where she stayed until her death.

In the last ten years her knowledge and love of music had grown. She had met a student and a teacher from an international music gathering which brought together players from countries which were in conflict, so that they could learn that through playing music together they could transcend the hostility between their countries and recognise their common humanity. She sponsored their activities, and later provided scholarships for Palestinian music students so that their lives could be centred on music rather than violence and despair.

Near the end, when she knew that she might lose all of her faculties, she said that she would still be content as long as she could still hear her music. In each of her increasing limitations she saw the opportunity to become more free for the things which were really important to her.

Two-Week Tour of Dang

- by Chintamani Yogi

I want to share my feelings with you all about my tour. We had great fun in Dang, especially at the Children's Peace Home that has added a new dimension. I'm happy to let you know that I stayed in my home village Parsa after 5 years away. Spending time there in a very tiny village is just magnificent.... it's so spiritual.... so harmonious... so uplifting.... so cool.... so peaceful.... and

it's the place where Mother Nature speaks softly and yet deeply: I felt it as another heaven on earth.

I remember a saying of my friend: "rich people live in the countryside and poor people live in the cities". It is true that people are materially poor in the villages; they have no proper food, roof, clothing and their physical condition is so miserable. Yet when I see their eyes I feel a great encouragement as they have a deeper kind of satisfaction, love and joy for life. What a great mystery! How to define? Who is rich or poor?

Yet I fear that as the times are changing quickly, it is important to safeguard the village simplicity against the lure of materialism which promises so much but robs even more. Let us help them not forget connection with the earth, finding a balance whilst maintaining their own roots and simple lifestyle.

Another great blessing of this tour was the wonderful company of my good friends **Mark Lobel, Johnathan Unger, Sue and Matthew Cooper, Katie Lee, Barbara Adams, Guy Banim, Frankie Hewitt and Poppy Shields.** I always feel that good friends are like a gift of God, because they nourish our hearts, they hold our hands, they shape our life, they create beauty around us, they share the feelings of joy and grief.

We all enjoyed taking Yoga classes led by **Bhola Nath Yogi** every morning in such a peaceful environment. Likewise, having *Satsang* in the evening was a blessing and grace for all; the songs, prayers, *Bhajans* and dances were refreshing to everyone.

A special occasion for me was receiving *Tika and blessing* in *Dashain* festival from *Aama-* mother. As the values of family life, social harmony and community living fade nowadays; this tour was a hearty and touching moment for all of us in realizing the importance of such festivals in bringing us together, and helping us *stay* together.

I want to thank all of my friends who joined this spiritual journey and appreciated the village life so deeply. And I want to invite all my other friends to visit this part of the world- a tiny village *Parsa* where you will feel that the nature speaks to you silently, and the soul sings the songs of joy and peace, and prayers for humanity....

The New Peace Home in Parsa, Dang

- by Hannah Humphrey-Baker
HVP-UK Secretary

I returned from Parsa and the Peace Home there. I already miss the noise. Not the noise I am used to of busy people with busy lives; arriving, leaving, worrying about what has been done and what needs to be done. I miss the noise of *the now*; nature talking, people working hard, the noise of a peaceful world.

I was taught not to want and yet I want to rest here. I want to live amongst the people that love. They love each other and they love the home in which they are living and learning. The children here are grateful. They appreciate all they have. And so I have much to learn from them. I should be more grateful.

In this place I relish in the simplicity of life. I come here not just to breathe the clean air, walk bare foot and listen to the noise. I come to learn. I come to be taught. I come to remember.

Those who see all creatures within themselves and themselves in all creatures know no fear. Those who see all creatures in themselves and themselves in all creatures know no grief. How can the multiplicity of life delude the one who sees its unity? -Upanishad

Mr Bhola Nath Yogi tells me stories each day. Sometimes about the traditions of the culture here, sometimes about the philosophies he has studied, sometimes about Yoga. I listen with interest. And most of the time he tells me about what he feels about God. And everything he says to me I feel is coming from my heart. I realise that I am not alone. I remember that I am connected to this world and everything in it. I remember that as a child I wanted to love and serve God. I remember that this is all there is. And I feel deep strength. And I smile at how beautiful the world can be.

Mr Yogi has shown me the true meaning of love and devotion. He has shown me this through his teachings and through the life that he has made for himself. He runs a home. He runs a home for children who have come from hardship. Many have lost their parents. Many have suffered. Yet these children live under one roof in harmony. They work hard. They want to please. They want to serve. They smile because they are happy. They sing. They dance. They pray because they are thankful. I am reminded to be thankful.

What we can say in words is limited. Some people I have met here I have not said more than a few words to, yet kindness and love can still be expressed. This is what really makes us happy. The children sponsored here have been given a chance to grow up in a place where love is in abundance. These children not only study hard in school, they are also learning day to day how to live in the world; to respect others, to serve, to love, to be thankful. Indeed I have so much to learn from them.

Children's Peace Home

The **Children's Peace Home (CPH)** based in Dang has been serving orphans, war victims, destitute and homeless children of Nepal by providing them with free education, food and accommodation. At present the Home has 25 children from all backgrounds including children from *Dalit* communities. They are all fully sponsored, and receive value based education at **HVP Dang** along with training in life-skills. Situated in the very natural and peaceful countryside of Parsa, Dang, the Home has a plan to house around 50 children.

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A Reflection from C. M. Yogi's US Tour

-by Sue Rose

Longstanding Board Member of CPL

www.purposeful.org

During his **March 2007** visit with the **Center for Purposeful Living** (CPL) community in Winston-Salem,

NC, USA **Mr C. M. Yogi** shared the following insight: **"Spirituality is finding out your own true nature"**. For 21 years CPL volunteers have been committed to a simple path, one of moving towards becoming more selfless in our service. Through providing the local community with tens of thousands of hours in 'hands on' service projects, CPL volunteers encountered endless opportunities to discover aspects of their 'true nature'. Individually and as a group, they revealed the spiritual essence of life. Eight years ago, CPL began offering the **Transformation through Service** (TTS) spiritual training program consisting of full-time service, meditation and study as a group. TTS provides a structure for "seekers" to go deeper, transform old habits and limiting beliefs, and express their spiritual potential more fully.

During a Sunday evening presentation, C.M. Yogi was asked: **"How do you go about teaching values at your schools?"** After a brief pause, he said: "We do this in three ways: **Self-reflection**...this transforms values; inviting **spiritual thinkers** to come and interact with our students; and through our **Youth Camps** where children learn to live and serve in community." This was yet another instance where the parallels between CPL's spiritual training program and C.M. Yogi's value-based educational endeavors stood out.

In all of his interactions with members of the CPL community, CM Yogi demonstrated the magnanimous and generous demeanor of a great soul, sharing his thoughts and his caring with each person he encountered. He amazed everyone with his ability at recall and remembering everyone's name in an instant. When CPL volunteers shared their observations about his innate goodwill and altruism, he shrugged off the comments as if it was no big deal: **"In Nepal, that's just what you do!"**

We were inspired to learn how C.M. Yogi and his colleagues incorporate the value of community and family into their schools. It's as if staff and students comprise an extended family; their relationships are grounded in respect and everyone knows they are valued and loved. Their educational program includes intellectual training, of course; but it gives priority to physical development and spiritual education as well. Quoting Gandhi and others who have influenced his development, C.M. Yogi stated: **"We are spiritual beings first."**

The inclusiveness of his vision, based on a deep respect, was both inspiring and affirming. **We are grateful that C. M. Yogi chose to visit CPL** for several days during his US pilgrimage.

OM to the inspired work he and his colleagues are doing in Nepal.

OM to vital connections of goodwill he is building among service-minded people around the world.

OM to the Joy of awakening in the knowledge of who we really are.

Do not consider any act of kindness insignificant, even meeting your brother with a cheerful face.

-Muhammad

And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
-Old Testament Prophet Micah: 6:8

MANY CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR DEAR STUDENTS FOR YOUR EXCELLENT ACHIEVEMENT IN THE 2063 SLC EXAMINATIONS !



The school is so proud for the 100% pass-rate that you attained and we wish you all lots of good luck for your further success. A special thanks goes to all the teachers and parents for their help and guidance in achieving these wonderful results.

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What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow: Our life is the creation of our mind. -Buddha