



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Sevalaya's News Letter

JANUARY - 2006

Dear Friends,

Wish you all a very happy new year.

Last year around the same time, we were not in a mood to wish each other. The massive destruction and loss of life due to Tsunami had put us all in a gloomy mood. All the New Year celebrations were also cancelled and people were even scared to go out, as there were many after shocks in Andaman and Nicobar islands.

In fact the whole of year 2005 has seen many natural calamities. There were heavy flooding in the United States and lot of property and human life was lost. It rained very heavily in Mumbai – record 100 centimeters in 24 hours and again there was a heavy loss of life and property. In Chennai, it has not rained for nearly 10 years – we have been having constant water shortage – and as though nature wanted to clear the entire backlog, it rained and rained in Chennai. There were nine cyclone formations which threatened to hit Tamil Nadu coast, one after the other, causing massive destruction – even though all the rivers and lakes and ponds are full throughout the state, again many people lost their lives in the process and entire agriculture lands are under water. It was also a record for Chennai city to receive 200 centimeters of rain this season. There is also heavy snowfall in south China now.

Like Sachin Tendulkar in cricket, this year nature is going on creating record after record. What is going wrong? It is said that global warming is one reason why there is so much of destruction. If we keep taking from nature more than what we actually need, nature one day suddenly comes back very heavily,

and claims everything back. A good example is in Tamil nadu, many houses have been constructed on river beds, inside lakes etc. We even had a school constructed inside a lake! We had a 'deemed university' building obstructing the flow of a river! All these rivers and lakes were empty for 10 years, but when nature wants its space back, we have seen how much destruction is caused.

Rather than 'irritating' nature like this, I think we should learn to live in harmony with nature. Conducting seminars and lectures and workshops on such topics goes on world over, but we need to see correction at individual level. Only that will make the difference.

Looking for some New Year resolutions? Consider the following:

- 1. I will reduce use of plastic in my personal use**
- 2. I will plant at least 10 trees, in my house or in my street or in any place where I can also water them on the daily basis**
- 3. I will look for ways and means of using renewable source of energy in my home, office etc.**
- 4. I will stop smoking if I am a smoker and persuade close friends to do so.**
- 5. I will try and reduce personal consumption of natural resources to the extent possible**

Thanks & Regards
Murali



Events at the Campus

Dr. Soundram Centenary Celebration was held at Sevalaya service centre on December 4th 2005. Dr. Soundram, hailing from one of the richest industrial family of South India, The TVS family spent whole of her life in the service of the poor, the needy and the destitute.

An ardent disciple of Mahatma Gandhiji, she was the founder of Gandhigram Rural University at Dindigul. Her life of simplicity and compassion for the needy is a source of inspiration for people engaged in social welfare activities and she is a good role model for the younger generation. Dr. R.Kausalya Devi, the Managing Trustee of Gandhigram Trust was the chief guest and narrated interesting and inspiring anecdotes from the great lady's life.

Students from Maharishi College of Management spent a day with the senior citizens of Sevalaya on December 5th 2005.



Bharathi Day was celebrated on December 11th 2005. Mr. Seeni Viswanathan, renowned Bharathi Scholar and Mr. D.Samuel Chelladurai, District Educational Officer, Thiruvallur were the chief guests for the occasion.

With a view to spread the poems and message of Bharathiyar among the youth, every year Sevalaya conducts a unique open Book examination on Bharathi's life and works for all the schools. The question papers are sent well in advance and the students prepare for the exam and write. The toppers in this year examinations were awarded prizes during this function.

Christmas was celebrated with gaiety on December 25th 2005. Mr. D.S.Mathuranayagam, Retired Head Master, Dasar School, Thiruniravur was the Chief Guest on the occasion. His speech to the children about the spirit of Christmas – the need to shower love on all was most inspiring and interesting. Girls from Hoina Hostel sang





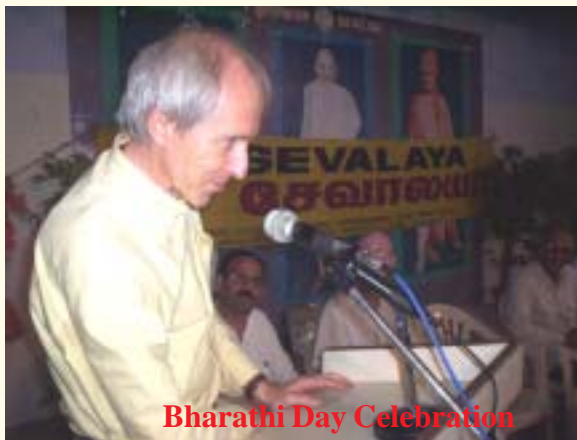
Christmas Carols. The children and the elders alike went into rapture when Santa Claus arrived in their midst dancing his way to the jingle bells and distributing chocolates to all.

External Events

Our students participated in the Athletic Events held at the Police Grounds Avadi on December 2nd 2005.

Bharatham-Bharathi- Bhaaratham – a bharathanatyam programme paying Homage to Mahakavi Subramaniya Bharathiyar on the occasion of his Birth Anniversary was organised by Sevalaya on December 10th 2005 at The Music Academy, Chennai. Ms. Sindhu Ganesh and Ms. Sandhya Ganesh, disciples of Smt. Roja Kannan of Bharatha Natyalaya enthralled the audience with their excellent performance, dancing to the select songs of the great poet.

10 of our children attended the Annual Day Celebrations of Rajasthan Cosmo Club on



December 18th 2005. The club donated clothes to the children on the occasion.

Study Circle

Ms. Kavitha discussed the Tamil Edition of a Shiv Kherra's Book on attitudes determine Life on December 10th 2005. Swami Vivekananda's Book on "Our India- Eternal India" was V.Chitra's choice for discussion on December 17th 2005. L.Anasuya shared her views on the book "How to Achieve" by Lena Tamilvanan on December 24th 2005. The book selected by R.Latha for the study circle meet on 31/12/2005 was "How to Live Happily?" by Mr. R.G.Gabriel.

Temple Visits

Hostel girls went to the Vinayagar temple at Kasuva on December 23rd 2005.

Old Age Home Inmates went to Hanuman temple at Pakkam on December 30th 2005.



Remembering Gandhiji

Gandhiji was killed by a spray of bullets on that fateful day, 30th January, 1948. Since then we did not stop killing him throwing on him the blame for all that we do or do not do. We quote him in context and out of context to justify what we do in our utter self-interest. We question his relevance in the present day context citing the deterioration in moral standards for which we alone are responsible. One refreshing feature is that we stand in silence for a few minutes every year on the Sarvodaya Day-30th January. It will do us some good if we remember during these lucid intervals some of the views expressed by him in the final phase of his life.

On prohibition: People should keep away from drink as they would from poison. Liquor is worse than poison. Poison can kill only the body. But liquor destroys the very soul. Taking liquor, one loses the ability to control oneself. I would advise the government to close down all the liquor shops and replace them by eating houses, where people can get pure and light food. I am sure that giving up alcohol will increase the physical vigour of man and his capacity to earn. That is why prohibition has been the part of Congress Programme since 1920. Now that we are free, our government should redeem the pledge and give up the unholy excise revenue.

On a case of injustice perpetrated on Harijans: Now when the alien rule has gone, we are becoming arrogant: we think we can do anything and nobody can check and correct us. We feel we can even intimidate a judge...what can be done when some people become such tyrants and resort to coercion, refusing to listen? Just because British rule is not there, people cannot behave like that.

On the practice of simplicity to a group of women social workers: How can the refugees have confidence in you and respect for you when you go among them as up-to-date eves decked out in silks? And dressed so, you tell them to wear self-spun khadi, and to do their own cleaning tasks! Only if there is simplicity,

sincerity, and purity within and without, your work will flourish."

On an inter-state conflict: the power that you have today in your hand is that of all the people and it is meant for the uplift of the poor. It will be a selfish policy if Pantji (premier) of the United Provinces says that he will not give seeds to Bengal when it needs them.

On Kashmir: Today the poison around us is increasing. Kashmir has added more to the poison. If there is a war, both countries are going to bleed...I pray to God that He may cure us of folly and madness so that our country may continue to progress.

On a person (Subhas Babu) with whom he differed: Subhas babu was a votary of violence, while I am a devotee of Ahimsa. But what does it matter? The most important thing is that we should learn from other people's virtues. Subhas was a great patriot. He laid down his life for the country.

On M.L.As: Every one...wants to become an M.L.A and those who succeed in getting elected do not work for the country, but for themselves alone. An M.L.A. gets quite a sizeable salary which is quite adequate for more than his necessities.

On corruption: It has now become worse than before. Restraint from it has practically gone. Corruption will go when large number of persons given unworthily to it, realize that the nation does not exist for them to exploit but they exist to serve the nation. This requires morals and extreme vigilance on those who are free from this taint. Indifference will be criminal.

To a question how he was cheerful in the midst of darkness all around: I consider no one as my enemy. I endeavour to serve the whole of creation for I consider everyone to be a part of God. Serving mankind is the same as serving God. It is this thought that lends me unflinching power and always sustains me.

FOR FREE CIRCULATION :

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