



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Love 2 **Sevalaya's News Letter-October 2007** Serve 7 Price-Re.1

Dear Friends,

September 5th, happens to be the birth day of Dr.S.Radhakrishnan, former President of India and a great Philosopher. He rose to the highest position in India, starting his career as a school teacher. So, in India, the day is celebrated as Teacher's day. Sevalaya also celebrates this day every year and we honour all our staff members. Many schools and other institutions do the same. But we have to look at some basic questions like how honourable is the teaching profession today?

It is true that we have 'black sheep' in the teaching community. There are teachers who beat up children, who misbehave with students, teachers who lack knowledge, accountability etc. But is this not true with all professions? Don't we have 'fake' doctors, bad engineers, etc.? In the month of September, when the whole country is celebrating and honouring teachers, we need to look at what happened to one of the teachers in Delhi. The poor teacher was tricked into meeting a 'fake' journalist, and some video was taken and sometime later a TV channel aired the video, totally misrepresenting what really happened. Immediately violent mob gathered in front of the school and created law and order problem. Such mobs suddenly appear from nowhere, on any such occasion! There is enough employment opportunity for such people! The teacher was arrested and put behind bars. Only couple of days later the police found out the truth and released the teacher. Damage done to the teacher and also to the whole teaching community – how to correct this?

The problem is the old belief that 'a child will never tell a lie' is not valid anymore. In the previous

generation, the child was exposed only to the parents and teachers. So anything the child does, good or bad, can be credited to the parents and teachers. As the exposure was less, the child had not learnt to tell lies or think in crooked manner. Now thanks to hundreds of TV channels, coming right into your living room and children watching all sorts of programs, the exposure is much wider. Almost all the Tamil serials are mostly describing how to tell lies, how to be cunning, how to spoil others life, etc.. The children learn from all this. There are many external forces acting on the children and anyone who wants to spoil the name of a good school or a good teacher can simply 'buy' the child or the child's parents and use them against the school and teachers. If someone has a personal score to settle, like what happened in the Delhi case, they can go to press and publish fake videos.

The authorities like police and education department, should look at things more closely, do a detailed study before coming to any conclusion. This didn't happen in Delhi and a poor teacher unnecessarily had to spend couple of days in a prison.

Only few teachers can come up to the level of Dr.Radhakrishnan. Similarly, only a few teachers can go extremely bad. The rest are in the general group, neither too good nor too bad. Let us give them a chance to improve their skills and excel, rather than looking at them always with suspicion. This will be the best way to honour our teachers on Teachers day.

Thanks & Regards
Murali

Many of our donors have shown interest to contribute to the university fund. To make it convenient for you, we now have an option to contribute online for this fund. Please select the link.

<http://www.giveindia.org/give/pledgepage/SEVALAYA>

For other contributions to Sevalaya, you can contribute online using

<http://www.giveindia.org/give/ngoprofile/GetNGODonationOptions.do?ngoid=143>



Camps & Tours

A 2 day Heritage Tour from 3 Century BC to present day was organized for the staff on 22/09/2007 and 23/09/2007. Prof. Swaminathan, Retd. Professor of IIT, New Delhi whose passion is temple architecture was our guide. On 22/09/2007 the party reached Thanjavur Brahdeswarar Temple (also known as The Big Temple). Mr. Kodavasal Balasubramanyam, a doctorate on the Temple and our local patron Mr. K.Muthuramakrishnan accompanied. Mr. Kodavasal Balasubramanyam explained in detail the highlights of engineering technique and architectural beauty of the temple and the philosophy underlying the construction of this Temple. The next spot was Darasuram temple where miniature sculptures depicting the lives of the 63 Shaivaite Saints (Nayanmars) are seen. We then proceeded to 3rd Century BC Jain Caves at Narthamalai and the Siththannavassal Caves and temples of Early Chola period near Pudukkottai. In the Siththannanvasal caves are seen ancient paintings – next only to those found in Ajantha & Ellora Caves. The party also visited the temples at Swamimalai, Thiru valanchuzhi and Srirangam. 25 staff members went on this tour. On their return they spoke to the students in detail about the trip which kindled the interest of the students in knowing about the glory of our heritage.

CSR Visit by Club Mahindra...

The employees of Club Mahindra as a part of their CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) activity were on a one day visit to Sevalaya on 29/09/2007. They donated 5000 tree saplings to be planted in Sevalaya campus and the nearby villages. They conducted an entertainment programme for the children. They donated pens, notebooks and educational CDs to the students of Sevalaya. The lunch that day was sponsored by them.

Events

Teachers day was celebrated with great enthusiasm

at Sevalaya campus on 05/09/2007. It is the usual norm in schools for students to organize a cultural program to entertain their teachers .But at Sevalaya the teachers put their heads together to make the day a memorable one for the students by organizing a variety entertainment which served a dual purpose for along with the fun and joy were interwoven essential values to be inculcated in the students. The chief guest, Mr. M.Kathiravan (Chief Executive Editor, Tamil Nadu Town news, Ambattur, Chennai), in his address mentioned that the students of Sevalaya were indeed fortunate to be studying in such a vibrant, healthy atmosphere which would surely lead to their scaling great heights in future. The management presented silver coins to all the staff of Sevalaya as a token of their appreciation.

A State Level Free open book exam on Mahatma Gandhiji's Life was conducted by Sevalaya on 10/09/2007. The question paper and one copy of 'My experiments with truth' – Mahatma Gandhiji's autobiography were sent to the schools in advance and the teachers were requested to help the students prepare for the exam. The schools conducted the exam in their premises. The exam was conducted absolutely free of cost, Sevalaya is doing this just to spread the message of Gandhi among the school students. Nearly 23,000 students from 128 schools took part in this examination.

Bharathi, Gandhi and Vivekananda Day & Vinayagar Chaturthi was celebrated on 16/09/2007. Interschool Oratorical, Poetry, Essay Writing and Quiz Competitions on Bharathi, Gandhi and Vivekananda were held at Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School on 03/09/2007, for state board, Matriculation & CBSE schools in three levels VI to VIII std., IX & X std. and XI & XII std. Nearly 350 students from 28 schools in Chennai and Thiruvallur District participated in the competitions. Prizes were given to the winners on 16/09/2007 at a special function held at Sevalaya



BGV Prize Distribution

service centre at Kasuva. Smt Seetha Ravi, Editor of Kalki distributed the prizes to the winners. Speaking on the occasion she lauded the management for the yeoman service being rendered for the benefit of society and the efforts being taken to spread the message of Gandhi, Vivekananda and Mahakavi Bharathiyar among the youth of today. She kept the students engrossed by narrating an interesting story which stressed on the importance of right thoughts, right action and right attitude to overcome all obstacles in life and lead a happy life of joy and success.

5 youngsters from the villages in and around Sevalaya received their offer letter from Lason Software on 22/09/2007 at a function in Sevalaya. Sevalaya in coordination with Lason had arranged a training programme for students who had completed +2. 5 of the trainees were offered employment in Lason. Mr. Rajan (Head, Lason Academy) and Ms. Bhavana (Senior Manager, HR, Lason) distributed the offer letters to the selected candidates and spoke to the students about the job opportunities available to them.

In the media...

An Article about Sevalaya was published in the popular Tamil Weekly Kalki in the issue dated 19/08/2007 and in Ladies Special - a monthly magazine in September 2007 issue. An article on Ilayaraja, an old student of Sevalaya and who is presently a Trustee of Sevalaya was published in Kalki in the issue dated 30/09/2007.

Staff Study Circle

Mr. K. Shanmugam spoke on Quran 26, 27 & 28 Chapter on 01/09/2007. On 08/09/2007 Mr. A.E. Gopi shared what he read from the Bible - James. Mr. A. Palanisamy spoke on - Gita - VI Chapter on 15/09/2007 and - B. Nirmala spoke about Bible - Ephesians on 29/09/2007.



Visitors from Bank of America, USA

Students Study Circle

On 01/09/2007 U. Radha reviewed "Search within Yourself" (Tamil) by Valtor Doyal Stabils. R. Yamunarani chose "Ethirmayamakkuvathu Eppadi" by E. Ganeshan on 08/09/2007. On 15/09/2007 M. Kalpana shared her views on the book "You can win" (Tamil) by - Shivakumar and on 29/09/2007 S. Sundaradevi spoke on the book "Indrumudal Success" by Lena Tamilvanan.

Training Programmes

Mr. P. Selvam and Mr. K. Senthilnathan participated in the one week workshop on "Organic Farming" conducted by Vivekananda Kendra - Natural Resources Development Project (VK- NARDEP), Kanyakumari from 02/09/2007 to 08/09/2007.

Mr. R. Vijayaragavan participated in the Training programme Pasumai Padai - a programme on Green Environment arranged by Education Dept., Thiruvallur on 14/09/2007

Mr. K. Shanmugam participated in Training on "Disaster Management" - arranged by DIET, Thirur on 18/09/2007

On 20/09/2007, 15 teaching staff participated in the Seminar on "Global Warming" organized by Exnora International at Vani Mahal, Chennai.

Visit to Places of Worship

On 01/09/2007 the girls were taken to Sivan Temple at Thamaraiykkam. The Boys went to Vinayagar Temple at Ramanathapuram 21/09/2007. The Boys were taken to the Church at Thiruninravur on 14/09/2007 and on 28/09/2007 the hostel Boys went to the Vinayagar Temple at Ramanathapuram.

“Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda”

Many disciples of Swami Vivekananda have reminisced their association with him in a publication “Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda.” One Mr. G.S.Phadke has recounted some incidents that reveal the man that Swami Vivekananda was. This account relates to the year 1892, a year before the Swamiji made his mark at Chicago.

How to encounter an opponent in argument? Swamiji shows the way. It was at Belgaum. A well informed Executive Engineer entered in to an argument with Swamiji. He more than once lost his temper in argument and was discourteous, if not positively rude. Swamiji was not perturbed. . Mr. Phadke’s father who was the host on the occasion, protested, but Swamiji smilingly intervened and said that he did not feel in any way disturbed by the method of show of temper on the part of the Executive Engineer. He said that in such circumstances, the best method to adopt was the one adopted by horse trainers. He said that a when a trainer wants to break colts, he merely aims at first to get on their backs, and having secured a hold on the back, limits his exertions to keeping his seat. He lets the colts try their best to throw him off and in that attempt to exhaust their untrained energies; but when the colts have done their best and failed, then begins the real task of the trainer. He becomes the master and soon makes the colts feel that he means to be the master; and then the course of training is comparatively smooth.

He said that in debates and conversations this was the best method to adopt. Let your opponent try his best or worst, let him exhaust himself; and then when he shows signs of fatigue, get control of him and make him do just whatever you wish him to do. In short, conviction rather than constraint or compulsion must be the aim of a man who wants something more than mere silence from an opponent. Willing consent from the opponent must be the inevitable result of such a procedure.

Another point he records about Swamiji is his views on non resistance. If a strong man deliberately refrained from making use of his strength against either a rash or weak opponent, then he could claim higher motives for his action. If, on the other hand, there was no obvious superiority of strength or the strength really lay on the side of his opponent, then the absence of the use of strength naturally raised the suspicion of cowardice. He used to say that was the real essence of the advice by Shri Krishna to Arjuna. The wavering mind on the part of Arjuna may have been easily due to other causes besides a genuine reluctance to use his undoubted and unflinching strength. Therefore the long and involved argument embodied in the eighteen chapters of the Gita.

In this context, we recollect what Gandhiji says about non violence. It is the weapon of the strong, not of the coward.

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