

Echoes of Eco



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Vivekananda Kendra- nardap Newsletter

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Solidarity of all Life



Everyone is but a manifestation of that Impersonal, the basis of all being, and misery consists in thinking of ourselves as different from this Infinite, Impersonal Being; and liberation consists in knowing our unity with this wonderful Impersonality....It is only through the idea of the Impersonal God that you can have any system of ethics. In every nation the truth has been preached from the most ancient times — love your fellow-beings as yourselves — I mean, love human beings as yourselves. **In India it has been preached, "Love all beings as yourselves"; we make no distinction between men and animals.** But no reason was forthcoming. No one knew why it would be good to love other beings as ourselves. And the reason, why, is there in the idea of the Impersonal God; you understand it when you learn that **the whole world is one — the oneness of the universe — the solidarity of all life** — - that in hurting anyone I am hurting myself, in loving any one I am loving myself.

Hence we understand why it is that we ought not to hurt others. The reason for ethics, therefore, can only be had from this ideal of the Impersonal God. ... What a mine of strength is in this Impersonal God, when all superstitions have been thrown overboard, and man stands on his feet with the knowledge — I am the Impersonal Being of the world! What can make me afraid?... This teaches us not to think ourselves as weak, but as strong, omnipotent and omniscient. No matter that I have not expressed it yet, it is in me. All knowledge is in me, all power, all purity, and all freedom. Why cannot I express this knowledge? Because I do not believe in it. Let me believe in it, and it must and will come out. This is what the idea of the Impersonal teaches.... this idea of the soul is the life-giving thought, the most wonderful. There and there alone is the great thought that is going to revolutionize the world and reconcile the knowledge of the material world with religion.

[An excerpt from Swami Vivekananda's Jaffna lecture 'Vedantism']

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Taking Refuge in Nature



When I said: I take refuge in the prana, prana meant everything that exists here-in that I take refuge.

When I said: I take refuge in Bhuh, what I really said was: I take refuge in the earth, the atmosphere and the stars.

Then I said: I take refuge in Bhuvah, what I said was: I take refuge in fire, the air and the sun.

-Chandogya Upanishad





Wealth and all activities of man should be aimed at not only for promoting the interest of himself, the society and the nation to which he belongs, but also for the successive growth and welfare of not only humans but also all living beings.

-Sri Narayana Guru



• Rameshwaram: Reviving • the Sacred Water *Teerthams*

As part of the 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Swami Vivekananda, VK-nardep has taken up the renovation of the 16 sacred *water teerthams* of Rameshwaram. This is the continuation of the report series of the progress of the project.



Dedicated cleaning of the polluted waters by VK-nardep workers at Nakula Teertham.[above] Nakula Teertham [now]: Renovated and made serene once again after decades of neglect and ruin.



The repeated depressing scenarios of thorny bushes, stagnant polluted water, broken bottles of liquor along with loads of pollutants in the putrefied mud, broken uncared walls almost collapsing - all these are giving way to sparkling water, clean surroundings, walls neatly and traditionally painted along with needed protection.



Participation of students and community: VK-nardep sees the cleansing and renovation of the Teerthams not in isolation but as a part of a larger and holistic movement to organize the people into making Rameshwaram a green clean pilgrimage center. So, even as the teerthams are getting cleansed, **a mass contact programme** has also been launched – particularly aiming the school children and college students. The results have been encouraging. The work is enjoying the support of the people of Rameshwaram. There have been scores of veritable voluntary workers from every section of the society who are giving their time and labor to this work – joining Kendra workers in cleaning the Teerthams. Totally abandoned by the community these Teerthams are now sparking with fresh water and a serene atmosphere. On 25th of last month 25 students from *Jayendra Saraswathi College* Rameshwaram and 2 staff members came to offer voluntary physical labor. On 28th 20 staff members 4 students from *Vivekananda Vidyalaya* offered physical labor in cleaning the Teerthams.

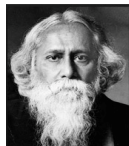


Community Participation: *Mangala Teertham* : Voluntary stakeholders in conserving water and heritage.



Through the renovation of the Teerthams the green awareness is slowly but steadily spreading to the people of the Rameshwaram: particularly to the younger generation and also the communities around.

To know more about Rameshwaram Teertham Project: Contact Secrerary, VK-nardep at vk nardep@gmail.com



To be truly united in knowledge, love, and service with all beings, and thus to realize one's self in the all-pervading God is the essence of goodness, and this is the keynote of the teachings of the Upanishads: Life is immense!

- Rabindranath Tagore



Rameshwaram: Reviving the Sacred Water Teerthams



Hanuman Teertham gets beautified with name board and green pilgrim oath.

Both Mangala Teertham and Runa Vimochana Teertham have been cleansed of the impurities. It has been as ever a colossal task. Today both the teerthams at the entrance of the sacred island call the pilgrims attention to conservation.



Mangala Teertham: Now it is befitting the name: looking auspicious



Runa Vimochana Teertham[above]: with clean water there is healthy fish flourishing forming their own circular living spaces.[below]



The dedication and sacrifice of our workers have to be remembered with gratitude in this sacred endeavor. Each time you see a renovated Teertham at Rameshwaram – remember that they entered the muddied waters so that you can experience the spiritual happiness of a clean watered Teertham.



The team was taking a small tea break while working at the *Mangala Teertham*. The small tea vendor with a big heart started on his own taking care of the plants planted near the *Teertham*.



The team which made what looked almost impossible the possible.

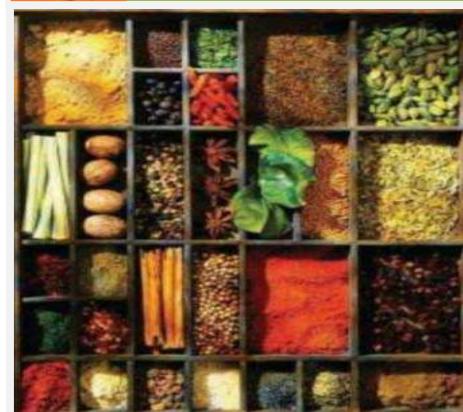
For these pilgrims of Seva the progress continues...



Name board with mythology [above] and Green pilgrim oath in Tamil, English and Hindi [below].



Sustainable Agriculture means...



...Increasing the food basket. Increasing the scope of cultivable edible biomass...

To know more about Rameshwaram Teertham Project: Contact Secretary, VK-nardep at vknardep@gmail.com



Education to be complete must have five principal aspects corresponding to the five principal activities of the human being; the physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic and the spiritual. Usually, these phases of education follow chronologically the growth of the individual; this, however, does not mean that one of them should replace another, but that all must continue, completing one another until the end of his life.– Pondicherry Mother



Happenings this month: **SUSTAINABLE** **AGRICULTURE**



Happenings this month: **Water Management and** **conservation technologies**



Happenings this month: **NET-WORKING & Media**



International conference on "Conserving bio-diversity for Sustainable Development" was held at National Institute of Technology, Rourkela, Odisha from 16th to 18th August. 300 participants attended and Dr.P.Kamalasanan Pillai presented a paper on "Bio input based farming for biodiversity conservation and sustainable farm production; a field success story"

One day workshop on Azolla backyard technology was conducted at TRC, Kalluvilai on 24th of August. 3 persons attended the workshop. The Resource Person was Sis.Premlatha.

Farming Practices workshop was held for the students of St.Xavier's College, Palayamkottai, Tirunelveli Dist. at the Lebo Auditorium of the College, on 31st of this month as part of the STAND Project. 800 students and SHG members attended the workshop. The resource person was Smt.S.Premalatha

Tested water from 14 wells in Kanyakumari Dist. as part of the programme of Central Ground Water Board, Chennai.

A Workshop on "Recharging of Wells and Ponds" was held at Govt. Polytechnic College, Konnam, Nagercoil at its Extension Centre @Eraniyal on 22nd of this month and 64 students attended it. The resource Person was Shri.V.Ramakrishnan



VK-nardep activities done with DST **core support**



At TRC of VK-nardep Dr.Pillai provides a hands on demonstration of preparing Fish-Amino converting the organic waste into an organic input for sustainable agriculture. Fish Amino is a home-made growth promoter for both agricultural and horticultural crops.



Green Health Home of VK-nardep functioned for 6 days and treated 111 patients.

Sis.V.Saraswathi gave a lecture on 'the life and message of Swami Vivekananda' at "Talent Expo 2013" Tamilnadu Newsprint and Papers Limited, Kagithapuram, Karur held at TNPL Auditorium, from 3rd to 4th of this month with an audience of 500 persons.

One day training programme for "IFAD SHG's Members" sponsored by Collectorate, Nagercoil, Kanyakumari Dist.was held at TRC, Kalluvilai, on 5th and 7th in which totally 71 participants learned new technologies. The resource persons were Shri.V.Ramakrishnan and Sis.V.Saraswathi.



Awareness to green technologies for women SHGs is an assured way to empower them. Shakthi-Surabhi Bio-methanation plant generates a good enthusiasm.

As part of the Technology Transfer (Project work), three students from St.Antony's Higher Secondary School, Kanyakumari learned green technologies on 27th and exhibited charts and models in state level science exhibition





When Ahimsa is said to be the supreme moral law, it is not merely negative abstention from injury to living beings, but positive love for them all. Sympathy and compassion are its expressions.

– Dr.S.Radhakrishnan



Happenings this month: **HOLISTIC & INDIGENOUS** **MEDICINE**



Happenings this month: **BIO METHANATION PLANT &** **RENEWABLE ENERGY**



Happenings this month: **BIO METHANATION** **PLANT & RENEWABLE** **ENERGY**

A workshop on the 'Documentation on ethnic medicine for community' was organized by the VK-nardep at TRC Kalluvillai on 27th and 28th of this month. Dr.V.Ganapathy was the resource person. 54 persons attended the workshop.



A workshop demonstration of the Ethnic Medicine practices in application.

A mass Varma workshop and demo was held on 20th of this month at Madurai for Vaidyas and scientific researchers of the system. A complete comprehensive lecture on the system on Varma anatomy, Varma points and their therapeutic applications were discussed.



'Practical application of Varma Fundamentals': The complete lecture of Dr.Ganapathi was released on 20-Aug-2013 in CD form at Madurai.

Training programme on "Bio-methanation technology" organized by 'Hand in Hand India' as part of SWM Project at Mudichur Village, Kancheepuram Dist, was held on 2nd of this month with 50 participants. The resource person was Shri. V.Ramakrishnan

Training programme on "Bio-methanation - A substitute for LPG" was held at TRC, Kalluvilai on 24th of this month under DST core support programme with Shri.V.Ramakrishnan as resource person. 3 persons benefitted from training.

Workshop on 'Farming Practices – Use of Cattle dung and farm waste by way of Bio-methanation' was held for the students of St.Xavier's College, Palayamkottai, Tirunelveli Dist. at the Lebo Auditorium of the College, on 31st of this month as part of the STAND Project. 800 students and staff attended the workshop. The resource person was Shri.V.Ramakrishnan



Bio-Methanation plant: Introducing the technology to the women.



Installation this month:

- 1 cum [1 No]
- 1 cum [fixed] [2 No]
- 0.25 cum [1 No]



Reaching out to 800 participants with green technologies



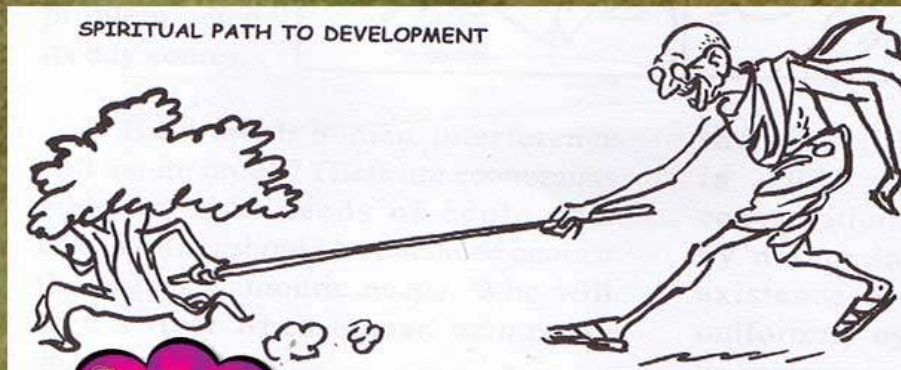
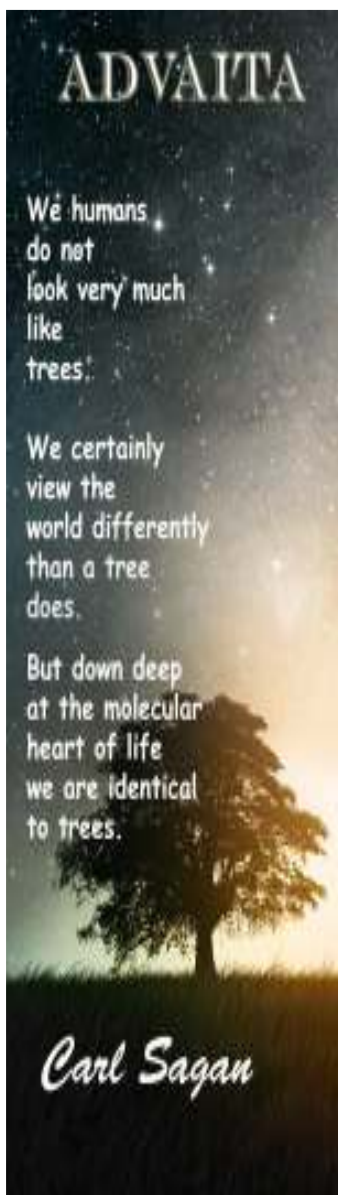
It is this wider view of our spiritual potentialities from which we begin, but we add another stress which brings in a completer significance. We regard the spirit in man not as solely an individual being travelling to a transcendent unity with the Divine, but as a universal being capable of oneness with the Divine in all souls and all Nature and we give this extended view its entire practical consequence. –Sri Aurobindo



From our Publications



In this excerpt from 'Akshaya Vikas' we see how the traditional wisdom encapsulates in it solutions to the modern ecological and social problems we have in the modern civilization. The western industrial model of development suffers from in this innate deficiency in that it lacks the spiritual core which the traditional knowledge systems contain. Gandhi was aware of this. Here we present the spiritual path to development.



Old lamps for new



nor poverty, but enough for my sustenance”.

Richard Lannoy, in *THE SPEAKING TREE*, explores the whole range of Indian civilization and culture. He shows that our traditions make it difficult for us to adapt to the Western industrial system. At the end of it he reaches the fundamental and inevitable conclusion that it is not Indians who need to be squeezed into the Western mould, but rather that the Western system itself is incompatible with life on this planet.

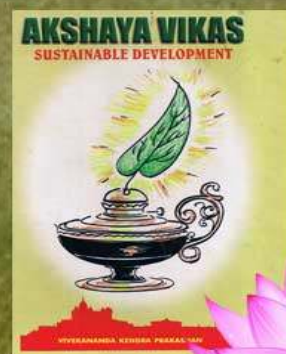
Winin Pereira and Jeremy Seabrook

Old lamps for new



Our traditional wisdom stressed a holistic system, where the independence of all animate and inanimate objects made them one whole and entire being. Union was considered superior to division, the undifferentiated to the differentiated. *Vidya*, true knowledge, gave the ability to see the whole, as one integrated, inclusive universe. *Avidya*, ignorance, denied that ability. *Avidya* has now become the cornerstone of the global “knowledge” system.

Winin Pereira and Jeremy Seabrook





The key to knowledge is within, for it is the awakened soul within that observes, records, sorts out, omits, unites, transmutes, and turns facts and information into knowledge, knowledge into wisdom, and wisdom into the dynamo of right aspiration and action. The spark is indeed within, albeit often obscured by the thick fog of the egoistic prison-house.

-Dr.K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar



Cultural Ecology

Earth is known to all civilizations and cultures as the great Mother Goddess. Predating the Vedas are the figures of Mother Earth Goddess in the form of ring stones. The Vedas dedicate many hymns to Prithvi, the Bhumisuktha being one of the greatest hymns. She is the creator, the sustainer. In the Atharva Veda there is a prayer which draws attention once again to ecological balance and how the earth, like Varuna, is the upholder of the moral order.

Like the river goddess, she represents fecundity. Truth and moral order sustain her. She is the mistress of past and future, giver of the wide and wildlife world of human life. She has high heights, stretches on level ground, reaches to the sea, bears herbs of manifold potency, on whom food and crops grow and animals roam whom Indra from the sky fertilizes, and that earth is invoked as Mother. Man says "I am the son of the earth, the rains are my father, let him, the Lord of the rain, fill the Earth for us. O Earth, protect us, purify us. Let people milk her with amity. O Earth, give us sweet words. The snowy mountain heights and thy forests, O Earth, shall be kind to us and we to them." What could be a more lucid ecological statement of the intrinsic relationship of water, earth, air, sky and sun, and Man.



Natural Education

Every child is an inquirer, an investigator, analyser, a merciless anatomist. Appeal to those qualities in him and let him acquire without knowing it the right temper and the necessary fundamental knowledge of the scientist. Every child has an insatiable intellectual curiosity and turn for metaphysical enquiry. Use it to draw him on slowly to an understanding of the world and himself. Every child has the gift of imitation and a touch of imaginative power. Use it to give him the groundwork of the faculty of the artist. It is by allowing Nature to work that we get the benefit of the gifts she has bestowed on us. Humanity in its education of children has chosen to thwart and hamper her processes and, by so doing, has done much to thwart and hamper the rapidity of its onward march. Happily, saner ideas are now beginning to prevail. But the way has not yet been found. The past hangs about our necks with all its prejudices and errors and will not leave us; it enters into our most radical attempts to return to the guidance of the all-wise Mother. We must have the courage to take up clearer knowledge and apply it fearlessly in the interests of posterity. Teaching by snippets must be relegated to the lumber-room of dead sorrows. The first work is to interest the child in life, work and knowledge, to develop his instruments of knowledge with the utmost thoroughness, to give him mastery of the medium he must use.

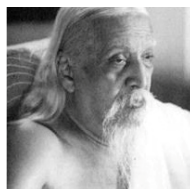


Current Economy

We then come to the question of the utilisation of Natural Resources. In the case of the use of these resources, again, as we move towards service economy from parasitic economy the measure of violence will steadily decrease. That is how non-violence could be promoted. ... The whole economy can now be gauged according to the possibilities of violence or non-violence that may be introduced by resorting to Reservoir or Current Economy in our activities. When goods are in short supply the competition for its possession will lead to violence. Hence if our economic organisation is such that more reliance is placed on resources of reservoir economy there will be more violence. In India the cow has been considered a sacred animal, because it is the centre of our economy. ... Tractor ploughing is reservoir economy. It is made of iron and steel and petrol or crude oil is needed to ply it. The instrument we use in producing goods will ultimately lead to violence or non-violence according to the extent to which we utilize reservoir or current economy....A mud hut with thatches for the roof belongs to current economy. Buildings of cement and concrete belong to the reservoir economy.



Kapila Vatsyayan
Indologist



- Sri Aurobindo
Seer-mystic



J.C. Kumarappa
Gandhian Economist