



AHIMSA CENTER

NONVIOLENCE IN THOUGHT AND ACTION

www.csupomona.edu/ahimsacenter

NEWSLETTER
INAUGURAL EDITION: WINTER 2007

Ahimsa is nonviolence rooted in courage and compassion, fearlessness and forgiveness. It connotes reverence for all life. It evokes civility and promotes lasting peace and justice in society.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Ahimsa Center Newsletter!

The Ahimsa Center in the College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences at Cal Poly Pomona focuses on interdisciplinary education about nonviolence and nonviolent social change. Its various educational initiatives and programs are designed to benefit three major constituencies: K-12 education sector, higher education sector and the community at large.

Fundamental to the Ahimsa Center's vision and philosophy is the recognition that ahimsa or nonviolence is a force that enriches and ennobles life, while violence corrodes and diminishes life.



Ahimsa is rooted in unity, in oneness, in the integrity of a whole. This sense of unity applies within the individual, to mind body harmony, and also to the unity of thought and

action, and on a larger scale it applies to the indivisibility of all existence. Violence, in contrast, is premised in separation, in divisions. These divisions can be within one-self, between the self and others, between "us" and "them," or between humans and nature.

Ahimsa seeks to transform hearts, to change minds and cultivate a sense of care and compassion, civility and trust. In contrast, violence aims to defeat and exploit and does so by causing harm and hurt. Violence perpetuates hate and mistrust. Ahimsa operates on the basis of conscious and mindful choices. Violence is often committed unconsciously, and many violent actions, such as those in war, are carried

out with a sense of suspended thought, if not altogether without thought and reflection.

Ahimsa assigns primacy to individual responsibility. It is worth noting that Gandhi felt highly skeptical about the idea of inventing "a system so perfect that nobody had to be good." Therefore, individual transformation is not only inseparable from, but is also a precondition to social transformation.

I hope our readers will find the *newsletter* a friendly forum to share their thoughts and reflections and help expand the community of *ahimsakas* (people dedicated to a culture of nonviolence and peace).

I wish to congratulate the guest editor and the column editors for their leadership and efforts to help launch the newsletter.

Tara Sethia is a Professor of History and Director of Ahimsa Center at Cal Poly Pomona.

Shabana Azmi and Javed Akhtar at the Ahimsa Center

Shabana Azmi, an internationally acclaimed activist actress from India, and Javed Akhtar, an award winning script writer for the films, lyricist and an distinguished Urdu poet recently spoke at the Ahimsa Center on "Films, Politics and Social Justice." The event was attended by nearly 400 people including students, staff and faculty of the university, and members of the larger Southern California community.

Shabana Azmi began by making a connection between art and social justice. She noted that artists draw from life experiences of people around them and use their art to express and communicate the social issues arising from their experiences. She has been involved with two projects focusing on women's empowerment and alternate housing for slum dwellers. Azmi regards women's empowerment as a precondition for social justice and emphasized the necessity to work toward equal opportunity for them. Azmi has also led a movement to find

alternate housing for the slum dwellers whose dwellings were repeatedly destroyed by the police. Azmi decried the idea, "Big is beautiful" as it leads to degradation, social inequities and injustices. "The Ahimsa Center," she noted, "is looking at nonviolence with a holistic approach, which includes nonviolent economics." The Center emphasizes education about nonviolence and the relevance of nonviolence to all walks of life, including the economic arena. Nonviolent economics, Azmi mentioned, is possible only with social equality and justice. Accordingly, nonviolence is possible not only on the basis of high moral ground, but because it is the only way that works.



Javed Akhtar focused on communal harmony based on a shared progressive outlook of respect for human rights. Religion, he said, has been used time and again to cover for social inequality, to create divisions and even war. In this manner, religion has aided in usurping the voices of the masses. Akhtar's current project, Citizen for Peace and Social Justice, is aimed at creating harmony among communities.

Their talks were followed by a lively dialogue, featuring numerous questions and comments about films, politics and justice- in particular the politicians' manipulation of fears along the line of "us versus them," the empowerment of women through micro-credit as promoted by Mohammad Yunus, and about the social roles of Azmi and Akhtar as celebrities. **contd. pg 3**

FROM THE GUEST EDITOR



It is a great honor for me to be a participant in the launching of the Ahimsa Center's newsletter. The Center was inaugurated about three years ago at a most historical

international conference I had the chance to attend. The theme of the conference was: "Creating a Culture of Ahimsa: Visions and strategies." I must admit I was a bit skeptical of such a grand goal. I was also intrigued by the Center's emphasis on "nonviolence in thought and action." How can one apply nonviolence to the twenty-first century global world? Would this be a gathering of touchy-feely naive utopians, nostalgic liberal peaceniks or dull academics?

What I found, to my great surprise, were activists successfully engaged in nonviolent means of transforming society. Many speakers had been involved in life and death situations (wars, refugee camps, ethnic clashes) while doing their work as peace builders. They had made many personal sacrifices for public good, including serving in the prison. This group was tough-skinned, impressive, inspiring and humbling.

It is with growing admiration that I witnessed the Center's activities following that extraordinary conference. The Center's newsletter is an essential tool to communicate with the growing numbers of participants in the Ahimsa Center's programs and activities.

Through this newsletter, you are being connected with a rich array of thoughts and actions pertaining to nonviolence. Here you will find specific ideas about how to construct a culture of ahimsa or how to inculcate ahimsa within yourself, or operationalize in the workplace, integrate in educational curricula of the elementary school, the colleges and universities, and promote it the community at large or the world.

All contributors to this inaugural issue and the column editors deserve special thanks for their efforts in sharing their rich and varied perspectives. I will not be alone in finding it appropriate to express here our most profound gratitude to the Director of the Ahimsa Center, Dr. Tara Sethia, who has been an inspiration to us all, a living role model of *ahimsaka*.

Louise Ghandhi, Guest Editor
She teaches at Pasadena City College.

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Editorial Board

Executive Editor: Tara Sethia

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K-12 Education Column Editor: Christian Bracho

Community Column Editor: Pallavi Gala

Higher Education Column Editor: Thienhuong Hoang

Deadline for submitting write-ups for the Summer Issue of Newsletter is March 31, 2007.

Write-ups can be emailed to: ahimsacenter@csupomona.edu

**For submission guidelines contact the Center Director, Professor Tara Sethia
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Satyagraha and the Moral and Political Genius of Mahatma Gandhi

Johan Galtung

Gandhi's moral genius was related to his translation of an ethics of thought and speech to an ethics of action, satyagraha (literally meaning "cling to truth"). His political genius was related to his capacity, his soul force, to make the nonviolence of satyagraha work. Gandhi successfully applied his genius to the problem of English occupation of India, thus revolutionizing the method of resistance to colonialism and imperialism.

Satyagraha is a dynamic force which makes a fundamental distinction between oppressor and oppression. The practice of satyagraha applies to both, the 'Self' and the 'Other' under the following contexts or situations.

- There is a threat of direct structural violence which is unjust and intolerable to major groups in a society.
- A constructive alternative has been formulated by the 'Self' and communicated to the 'Other' in speech and writing, and through actions such as demonstrations.
- *Satyagraha* involves a real risk to the 'Self.' In other words, the practice of satyagraha may involve a clear danger that violence of some kind will be used.
- The commitment to nonviolence is communicated unambiguously in all possible ways.
- There are clear demonstration by the self of friendliness and love to others.
- Nonviolent action is used to communicate to 'Other' and to the public, that 'Self' will never surrender to oppression, is willing to face the consequences, and wants a positive relation with the 'Other.'
- Dissociation (non-cooperation and civil disobedience) from 'Other' as oppressor, and at the same time association with 'Other' as person, may change the mind and even the heart of 'Other.'
- If 'Other' meets nonviolence with violence, demoralization of 'Other' when facing the consequences of his violence on nonviolent resisters may serve to change his mind and heart.
- If 'Other' uses long-distance violence, like bombing or economic boycott, to avoid facing the consequences, then outside parties must be mobilized to make the consequences clear to him.
- If the socio-psychological distance is based on dehumanization, then nonviolence may have to include outsiders in a Great Chain of Nonviolence to convey the message of humanity.

Satyagraha can be applied to the current unfolding tragedy of the Israel-Arab conflict. *Satyagraha* may be the only way to begin envisioning a sustainable, positive peace. This would require friendly dialogue between all players going beyond simple mutual recognition.



Johan Galtung, founder of TRANSCEND, a peace and development network. He delivered the Gita and Tulsi Savani Lecture titled, "Gandhi, Nonviolence and Contemporary Conflicts" at the Ahimsa Center.

States in the Middle East must also be woven together in a web of increasingly harmonious and cooperative interdependence to build sustainable peace in that region. The road to secure borders passes through peace with Israel's five border countries, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine fully recognized, Jordan and Egypt. The road to peace passes through a community with free flow of persons, free flow of goods and services. Hence, the concept of a Middle East Community modeled on the European Union may be the way to apply Gandhi's genius in the current situation. Sustainable peace is achievable in the Middle East as India's independence was, if satyagraha is adopted as the favored method.

Azmi and Javed Akhtar (contd. from pg. 1)

Overall, the dialogue was a reassertion of the power of truth and commitment, of compassion and service as embodied by Azmi and Akhtar. It was inspiring to learn how the two of them are using their celebrity status to bring positive social change. Both have received numerous awards and honors for their social activism. Most recently, Azmi received the 2006 International Gandhi Peace Prize and Akhtar received the 2006 Indira Gandhi Prize for National Integration. The event concluded with Akhtar's moving poetry recitation in Urdu - with much vocal approval from the audience - followed by an English reading.

NEWSWORTHY

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE GOES TO YUNUS AND THE GRAMEEN BANK

The 2006 Nobel Peace Prize was recently awarded to Muhammad Yunus, Bangladesh's 'Banker of the Poor'. Economist and founder of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, Muhammad Yunus initiated nearly thirty years ago a successful program of micro credit to the poorest of the poor in Bangladesh-an initiative which has been gaining followers internationally. His revolutionary approach to reduce poverty through alternative banking and micro credit has positively impacted over 6 million borrowers in the last 30 years, 97% of whom are women who have received loans averaging \$130, with a repayment rate of 98%.



Yunus' compassionate approach to banking makes him a worthy follower of the Gandhian tradition. The Nobel Committee stated that lasting peace is unachievable as long as widespread poverty prevails.

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For more information on how you may support the Center, please visit <http://www.csupomona.edu/ahimsacenter> or contact the Center director, Tara Sethia at tsethia@csupomona.edu

NONVIOLENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Editorial by Thienhuong Hoang



Institutions of higher education must serve, among other things, as forums where students learn the art of living together - an art that prepares our students for the real world, which is

rapidly changing and is increasingly diverse. In such a context, what might be the significance of the interdisciplinary learning and teaching about nonviolence as part of the higher education curriculum? Can such education make our students better professionals, more responsive to the needs of our society? Can such education bring about growing levels of synergy between the contents and pedagogies of teaching and learning?

Nonviolence, as Gandhi repeatedly emphasized, is the virtue of the strong. It creates within the self a sense of goodwill toward others and motivates one to seek justice for all. It requires more attention and mindfulness than violence. As such, it takes a great deal longer to realize the benefits of nonviolence. Interdisciplinary education and practical training about nonviolence may be the key creating a culture of lasting peace.

Contributors to the column, Nonviolence in Higher Education, address the role of education about nonviolence in higher education. They represent undergraduate and graduate students and faculty. As the editor of this column, I want to thank all the contributors for sharing their views. I also invite the readers of this column to articulate in the forthcoming issues of the Newsletter their perspectives on major aspects and questions pertaining to the role of education about nonviolence in higher education.

Thienhuong Hoang, the editor of the Higher Education Column, is a Professor in the Department of Education, College of Education & Integrative Studies, at Cal Poly Pomona.



Learning about Nonviolence: Reflections

by Jolene Kladoris, History Major, Cal Poly Pomona

After taking a class, Nonviolence in the Modern World, I find it difficult to condense my reflections on a highly comprehensive concept of ahimsa. Even more difficult is the task of writing about the exemplars of nonviolence without feeling a sense of awe and amazement. In confronting outright violence, social injustices and abuses, these exemplars relied simply on their "soul force," the power of their determination, and the strength of their moral obligations. For just causes, they were willing to die but not to kill.

Some underestimate the power of nonviolence as a way to gain meaningful, lasting change. Many ignore the power of those figures in history who through their dedication to nonviolence overcame the near impossible odds to free people(s) from the suffocating grips of oppression and injustice. The ancients such Buddha, Mahavira and Jesus, or the moderns such as the Mohandas Gandhi, Badshah Khan, Martin Luther King Jr, Rosa Parks, Cesar Chavez or, for that matter, contemporary leaders such as the Dalai Lama, Medha Patkar, and Aung San Suu Kyi are marginally covered (if at all) in the pages of history textbooks. This is surprising given the history of their nonviolent and peaceful struggles for creating positive change.

In the face of increasing violence, way of ahimsa serves to provide a breath of fresh air and hope. Lasting change may be possible if we turn our backs on violence, and increase our reliance on love, compassion and nonviolence.

Ahimsa and My College Education

By Elyse Petersen, Food Science and Technology Major, Cal Poly Pomona

As a Food Science and Technology major at Cal Poly Pomona I thought that it was a bit crazy for me to take a modern Indian history class that focused on Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy and movements. But I needed the units to qualify as a full-time student, so what's to lose? While taking the course, reading Gandhi's autobiography and the Hind Swaraj, and engaging with the Ahimsa Center Conference



and dialogue, I realized how much these experiences enriched my college education. I feel that an integrated philosophy such as ahimsa is essential to college education, no matter the area of study. I will use a few of the



Following her talk, "Gandhi and the Alternatives to Corporate Globalization" Vandana Shiva signs books for students.

events sponsored by the Ahimsa Center to support this argument. No written account can serve justice to the educational value of the Ahimsa and the Quality of Life Conference in April of 2006. Although the speakers were drawn from various disciplines such as political science, history, law, economics, environmental conservation, agriculture, psychology, education, sociology, business etc, they all related their work to ahimsa (as compassion, gratitude, forgiveness, simplicity etc.) and its role in improving the quality of our lives. During the Ahimsa Center Dialogue with Dr. Alan Wallace, the connection of meditation, grounded in ahimsa, with science, especially Physics, was discussed. I learned that inculcating the various aspects of ahimsa through meditation can lead to our material and spiritual well being.

If integrated properly in the discipline based knowledge, education about ahimsa can foster a greater sense of self-awareness among us as human beings and make us agents of positive change. Learning about ahimsa should not just be limited to students of Indian history and Gandhi, but ahimsa must also be integrated in other areas. This would mean, for example, introducing non-violent economics to business students or adding Vandana Shiva's writings about nonviolent agriculture and respect for environment to the reading lists of agriculture and environmental studies students.

As a Food Science student I am extremely happy that I am introduced to ahimsa because it gave meaning to my work as a food scientist and added to the quality of my life.

The first batch of students in the new course, *Nonviolence in the Modern World*.

Using Ahimsa to Pluralize Economics Education



By Amit Basole,
Department of
Economics,
University of
Massachusetts,
Amherst

Economics is generally considered as the “hardest” or most quantitative of the social sciences. However, mainstream economic theory achieves this rigor at the cost of banishing all alternative perspectives. For example, at the undergraduate level, in the name of economics, students are likely to encounter a profusion of graphs and models, all serving to hide an underlying poverty of perspective on important questions relating to the well-being of our society and our planet.

Instead of being about obscure mathematical models, economics should be the study of how we organize the material aspects of our existence, i.e. how we produce goods, how we distribute them, and how we consume them in order to sustain and reproduce. These are all questions that bring us into contact with others and with the environment. Hence, ahimsa - the principle of love and compassion - has a lot to say in guiding our economic behavior.

One way to pluralize economics is to incorporate ahimsa into the economics curriculum. The writings of Gandhi, J.C. Kumarappa, E.F. Schumacher and others provide us with alternative perspectives on the issues of production, consumption and distribution. These perspectives can serve to provide the core for designing an introductory course on the Economics of Ahimsa. If one further includes the writings of religious figures and indigenous peoples of the world on how to live in harmony with the Earth, even more materials are available.

For those interested in further information, I am in the process of building a basic bibliography for such a course.



From Left: Dr. Jasvant Modi in conversation with University President Michael Ortiz. In the back ground are faculty and educators meeting with speaker, Dolores Huerta

POETIC INSPIRATION

Our dreams, drifting in the stream of the vague, stretch their arms to clutch the earth, - their efforts stiffen into bricks and stones, and thus the city of man is built.

Voices come swarming from the past, - seeking answers from the living moments. Beats of their wings fill the air with tremulous shadows, and sleepless thoughts in our minds leave their nests to take flight across the desert of dimness, in the passionate thirst for forms. They are lamp less pilgrims, seeking the shore of light, to find themselves in things. They will be lured into poets' rhymes, they will be housed in the towers of the town not yet planned, they have their call to arms from the battlefields of the future, they are hidden to join hands in the strifes of peace yet to come.

From Rabindranath Tagore, *Lover's Gift*

Higher Education

By Shayna Parekh, Law School, Yale University

The subject of nonviolence in higher education lends easily to thoughts of entertaining and understanding various points of views, regardless of compatibility with one's own opinions. That is, the quintessential “higher education” is looked upon as providing a forum for a wide variety of perspectives. In this environment, remaining entrenched in our thoughts to the exclusion of all others is considered violent, while remaining open is the favored, nonviolent, and alternative. Nonviolence in education, higher or otherwise, requires us to go beyond the intuitive. In that spirit, I invite you to explore with me these alternate perspectives. Perhaps, nonviolence in higher education means:

- Elevating truth above ego, ideas above politics.
- Nurturing our ability to question while preserving our sense of wonder.
- Knowing the difference between criticizing the message and attacking the messenger.
- Truly learning before we act. To quote from Dasvaikalika Sutra, “First knowledge, then compassion.”
- Turning our lessons into action. “After all is said and done, more is said than done.” - Aesop.
- Choosing action over silence. Silence, after all, is a form of support.
- Collaborating and not competing with peers.
- Standing for something, so that we don't fall for anything.
- Apologizing for the tremendous pain that can be caused by our ideas, our words, and our actions; forgiving others for the same.
- Never taking for granted the true gift that is higher education.



University honors Prof. P.S. Jaini and Mrs. Jaini for their gift of the P.S. Jaini Collection of books on Jain and Buddhist Studies to the Cal Poly Pomona Library. Jaini is professor emeritus of Buddhist Studies at UC-Berkeley. From left are Prof Jaini, Provost Morales, Dean Barbara Way and Mrs. Jaini.

Discovering Anekanta

By Steve McCauley, Professor of Physics, Cal Poly Pomona

I have participated in several programs of the Ahimsa Center. At one of the programs, I came across a book, *Ahimsa, Anekanta and Jainism* edited by Tara Sethia. I have been somewhat familiar with the concept of ahimsa. But what is *Anekanta*? In reading the book, I discovered this as a concept representing a pluralistic outlook, an active respect and eagerness to learn the truths in the views of others. I was struck to find that *anekanta* was embedded in ahimsa. *Anekanta* and ahimsa are the two sides of the same coin.

For all of us, students, faculty, staff and administrators, an active willingness to listen to others can enrich our experiences and make us more effective in our work and foster a sense of mutual respect. We keep re-discovering the need to invest time in meeting and listening to the views and information of others. This is a slow and never-ending process, but it need not be painful.

I have enjoyed teaching Physics at Cal Poly Pomona for over 20 years. But another of my great pleasures is to learn from colleagues in other areas, to see the enthusiasm they have for their fields. Ahimsa Center programs have served as a commons to meet others inside and outside the university and to see issues beyond my usual disciplinary and short-term concerns. I hope that others in our university and community will take advantage of the unique experiences available to us through the Center.



Le Ly Hayslip, Vietnamese author and peace activist (third from right in the front row), at Ahimsa Center with faculty and staff.

FEATURED SPEAKERS 2004-2006



A. T. Ariyaratne
 Founder & President
 Sarvodaya Shramdana
 Movement, Sri Lanka



Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
 Director, Quality of Life
 Research Center, CGU



Jack DuVall
 President, International Center
 on Nonviolent Conflict
 Washington, D.C.



Dolores Huerta
 Co-founder United Farm
 Workers of America,
 Bakersfield



Catharine Ingram
 Author, activist and founder of
 Living Dharma.



Mary King
 Prof. United Nations University
 of Peace, Costa Rica



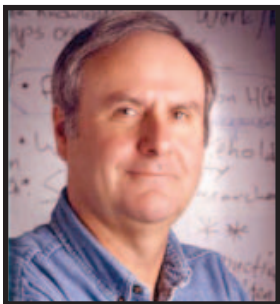
David Krieger
 President, Nuclear Age
 Peace Foundation,
 Santa Barbara



Nipun Mehta
 Founder
 Charitifocus.org



**Satisch Kumar(U.K), Vandana Shiva (India), Bob Suzuki (President
 Emeritus, Cal Poly Pomona)**



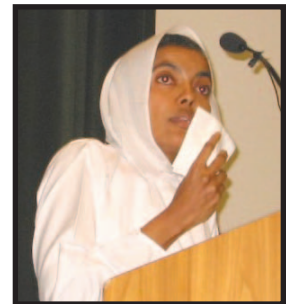
James O'Toole
 Research Professor
 USC and Aspen Institute



Neerja Raman
 Research Fellow,
 Stanford University



**Llyod Rudolph and Susanna Rudolph, Professors emeriti,
 University of Chicago**



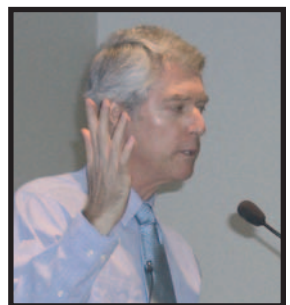
Samani Charitraprajana
 Jain Vishva Bharti University,
 India



**From right: Shailish Mehta, former Trustee of the CSU, Jagdish Sheth, Professor, Emory University,
 Navin Jain, independent Scholar, and Nirmal Sethia, Professor of MHR at Cal Poly Pomona.**



Michael Tobias
 President, Dancing Star
 Foundation.



Alan Wallace
 President, Santa Barbara
 Institute for Consciousness
 Studies

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From left: Bipin & Rekha Shah, Tomás Morales, Prem & Sandhya Jain, Barbara Way, Tara Sethia, Girish & Datta Shah, and Kirit & Pramila Daftari



From left: Savita Mehta, Barbara Way, Nitin Shah, Manilal Mehta, Tomás Morales, Gita Savani, Tara Sethia, Tulsi Savani, Sunila & Harish Daga, Suresh & Vimala Lodha and Ramila Shah



From left: Tomás Morales, Barbara Way, Tara Sethia, Ratan Baid, Pramod & Roshni Patel



From left: Tomás Morales, Barbara Way, Florence Bautista, Jeff Smith from Lunar Design and Tara Sethia. Lunar Design was honored for designing (*pro bono*) the logo of the Ahimsa Center

EDUCATION ABOUT NONVIOLENCE IN K-12

Editorial by Christian Bracho



Christian Bracho is the Column Editor for the Nonviolence in K-12 Column. He is a BTSA 6-12 Mentor for new teachers in the Hacienda La Puente Unified School District

School teachers occupy a complex role in American society. In addition to teaching, they are expected to fulfill numerous other roles: of parents, counselors, mediators, and, sometimes, as reporters of abuse.

When I learned about the Ahimsa Center's Summer Institute on Nonviolence and Social Change, I was amazed to find such a professional development opportunity for teachers to help bring education about nonviolence in schools. In the current global and local contexts of increasing violence, connecting education and nonviolence is indeed critical for teachers in public schools.

The two-week intensive Summer Institute was a transformative experience for us--the thirty educators--who participated in it. We were introduced to the works of well known scholars and activists (even met some of them), interdisciplinary reading materials including half a dozen books, more than a dozen articles and book chapters, and several powerful documentaries to deepen our understanding of the various aspects of nonviolence and nonviolent social change.

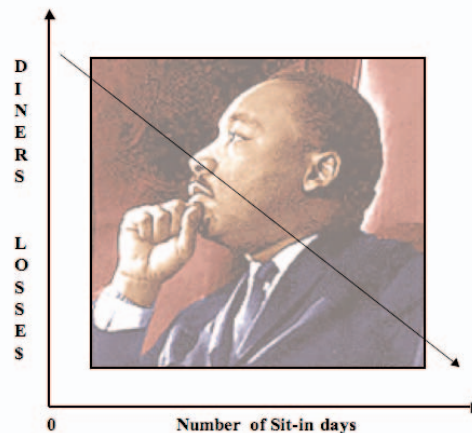
The format of the Institute included lectures, seminars, workshops, technology training, curriculum writing, and extension activities like yoga and film discussions. The interdisciplinary approach of the Institute included topics such as the spiritual traditions of nonviolence, the historical exemplars of nonviolence, the histories of nonviolent social change, the stories of compassion, the songs of peace and social justice, the economic policies of the World Bank--providing the teachers with multiple concrete contexts for connecting the principles of nonviolence to their classrooms. Teachers shared the lessons they developed with the whole group during the last two days of the Institute--a powerful conclusion to what, for many, was a life-changing experience. In the spirit of ahimsa, the curriculum created will be available to all on the Ahimsa Center website.

This Column, Education About Nonviolence in K-12 will serve to provide our readers inspiring examples of how teachers integrate nonviolence in their classrooms. Several members from the 2005 Institute have contributed their powerful stories to this inaugural issue. As the editor of this column, I invite others to send us articles for future issues of the newsletter.

Ahimsa in the Math Classroom

By Johnny Reyes

The old saying, "Life is an equation," holds true when we look deep into the decision making process that takes place everyday. In place of a math problem, individuals are faced with daily situations, which will require them to make decisions based on a desired outcome. In algebra, students are trained how to approach a problem. The initial step is to recognize the order of operations. This is seen in the acronym PEMDAS which stands for P - parenthesis, E - exponent, M - multiplication, D - division, A - addition and S - subtraction. This order of operation is the basis of the decision making process in mathematics. Students will essentially know when and where to start solving a math problem as well as how to solve for unknown variables such as x, y, and z. These variables can represent many factors influencing the decision making process of young people and eventually a truly desired outcome.



The illustration shows how the x-variable, number of days of sit-ins, impacted the y variable, the profits of diners, all led by the powerful leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., one of the most famous practitioners of nonviolence.

A sample lesson connecting ahimsa and algebra would include the substitution of a particular variable(s). For example, the graphing of a straight line on a coordinate plane would require the use of two axes. The y-axis represents the vertical, while the x-axis represents the horizontal. Numerical values are usually used to represent a real-life event creating a line that would represent critical information. A positive trend is represented by an upward sloped line; while a negative trend is represent-

ed by a downward sloped line. For ahimsa, the horizontal axis can represent a nonviolent event and the vertical axis can represent a desired result. As values of the horizontal axis increase, so do the values on the vertical axis. This can be illustrated in the peaceful sit-ins of the civil rights movement of the 1960's. As peaceful lunch counter sit-ins increased, so did the losses being incurred by the segregated diners.

This is just one example of connecting the mindset of ahimsa with the critical-thinking process of mathematics. The math standard is obviously covered in this lesson. More importantly, the lesson is made relevant to an actual event in history. The key is to substitute variables being used in traditional math lessons with variables that are more relevant and understandable to students. Variables can take the shape of a particular students risk taking lifestyle and questions can arise as to why these risks are being taken. Discussions can focus on the consequences of certain actions as well as a truly desired positive outcome.

Johnny Reyes is a math teacher at Diamond Ranch High School in Pomona,

Expressions of Nonviolence

By Andrea Hansen

Through the Ahimsa Center, my students and I have had a unique opportunity to formalize our contemplation of nonviolence. We have explored the lives and stories of some of the people who have changed the world by harnessing the power of nonviolence. We have personalized the message and reflected on how nonviolence can be used by us, here and now. We have explored nonviolence as a tool for self-healing.

In my classroom we created works of art to share this message with others in our community. The lesson I conducted with my students first introduced them to some significant historical figures of nonviolence. We then asked questions to identify what the tools of nonviolence were and how these people used them. We looked at how they were able to have an impact and how we could draw from them connections to our lives.

Some students are still working on their projects, some have yet to begin, and some completed powerful works that became part of a group exhibit at the Canoga Park Youth Arts Center. One of the pieces drew much attention at the show, and was ultimately sold to a member of the community.



Participants from the Nonviolence and Social Change Summer Institute hosted by the Ahimsa Center

This piece was a print developed by, my student, Dylan McRae. When we began looking at the lives of people like Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Cesar Chavez, Dylan had been working on a self-portrait. He delved into the lives of people who changed themselves and the world through nonviolence. He created portraits similar to his self-portrait depicting the individuals he found most inspiring. He created mono-prints of Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, and Cesar Chavez. Each of these prints alone speaks volumes. It was important to Dylan that he represented a wide range of cultures to show that, as he said, "nonviolence is a world-wide universal idea. Through nonviolence we can widen our perspective and learn to live peacefully." Dylan saw this new discussion of nonviolence as a chance for him to broaden his view and inform his choices in the future. Dylan's final work is a six-panel mono-print depicting Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, Rosa Parks, himself, and text which when viewed in a mirror reads "Nonviolence." The piece is titled "Reflections of Nonviolence."

Andrea Hansen is an arts teacher at John R. Wooden High School in Reseda, CA

Education About Nonviolence in Schools



An Interview with Dr. Barbara Nakaoka, Superintendent of Hacienda La Puente Unified School District

By Christian Bracho and Margaret Hesselgrave

Q: As a superintendent what do you believe is the role of teachers in dealing with violence and conflict in schools?

BN: I see teachers as leaders. They are role models who must demonstrate to our students the value of respect, integrity, honesty, and caring. We can be advocates for right decision-making, and teach students to take responsibility and build strong character.

Q: How can teaching and learning about nonviolence, and historical exemplars of nonviolence benefit public education?

BN: I'm an advocate of teaching and celebrating people who are peace builders. I don't know, however, if students can make true connections to these leaders through films, or video clips, or books only. We must practice service day by day. We must ask the question, "How can I help you?" in order to truly build connections. It takes work!

Q: Do you think education about nonviolence can significantly empower both the teachers and the students and help create a more peaceful society?

BN: Education is extremely powerful. Every single person has the power of influence and persuasion, in that they can push others to ask,

"Is there a better way of handling conflict and violence?" Teachers can empower students and help them deal with conflict.

Q: The Center will be offering a second Institute on nonviolence in the Summer of 2007. This institute will focus on Gandhi. How can schools and school districts take a leading role in collaborating on such projects?

BN: I believe we must offer schools options for promoting nonviolence and conflict resolution at their school sites. The Ahimsa Center's work offers a powerful option for dealing with the issues we face in schools. I advocate action at every school site, action that is effectively implemented and maintained. It's so important that we follow up on our work and not let it die. Schools need strategies for dealing with conflict, and the summer institute on Gandhi and his legacy is one powerful opportunity for schools and principals to engage nonviolence. School districts can help disseminate and share programs like these to encourage school sites to take initiative to deal with violence through education about nonviolence.

Christian Bracho is a BTSa 6-12 Mentor in the Hacienda La Puente Unified School District.

Margaret Hesselgrave is the Principal of Los Altos Elementary in Hacienda Heights, CA.

Building Soul-Force Through Drama

By Teresa Burke

Conveying the spirit of ahimsa to fifth graders can be a daunting task. Most children of ten learn their patterns of behavior from adult behavior that is modeled for them. With this in mind, I searched last year for a way to model the "behavior" of ahimsa in a standards-based lesson. Using original sources, I created a dialogue script that included a famous person the students were already familiar with, and one from the standards for early American history.

The life and words of Roger Williams served as a starting point. Using his writings, I drafted a script between Reverend Williams and an unidentified magistrate. Then using the writings of Martin Luther King Jr., I drafted another between Reverend King and an unidentified sheriff. Enlarging these scripts and posting them side-by-side challenged the students to find connections between the words of the two men. Having triggered the students' interest, I focused on the similarity of the dialogue. Both indicated a willingness to be confined or killed for the truth as they saw it. This personal passion about fairness and dedication to nonviolence stimulated a lively discussion within the context of religious freedom and civil rights. It also provoked thinking about the use of nonviolent means to promote fairness in the students' own lives. A personal commitment to the truth and the consequent willingness to engage in self-less service was an approach that contrasted dramatically to the arguing, bullying and violence with which the students are too familiar. Though the lesson was just one in a series, it generated a vocabulary around

nonviolence that was revisited frequently throughout the year. It also triggered questions by the children regarding the best means for conflict resolution at school and in the world around them.

Teresa Burke is a 5th grade teacher at Howe Elementary School in Sacramento, CA.



Nonviolent Classroom: Why and How?

By Susanna Barkataki

Many students experience harassment, discrimination or criminalization and some even witness the devastation of their families at the hands of racism and poverty. The methods I learned at the Ahimsa Institute provide me with tools to prepare our youth for dealing with problems by finding creative solutions.

When I launched a three-week unit on violence and nonviolence focusing on understanding the causes of violence and devising possible solutions to them, I felt the face of our classroom, as well as the lives of many students, were changed.

We began by analyzing the skills of nonviolent movements such as the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and role models such as Gandhi, Aung San Suu Kyi, Martin Luther King Jr., Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez. After teaching core concepts such as the U. N. Declaration on Human Rights, vocabulary such as "bystander behavior" and "social responsibility" and texts such as O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*, students were ready to become diplomatic actors in their own lives. These non-violent concepts give language and academic credence to the basic human kindness we all feel. By engaging in interactive movement activities in combination with essay writing exercises, students staged a scene of violence (personal, interpersonal, or social) as one way to move through their anger, identify its impact and then discover the power of their empathy and compassion.

Equipped with skills to change their own environment, students called on each other in class, executed peer conflict resolution, and hosted a Human Rights Fair at Cleveland High. Many students express appreciation for learning skills relevant to their lives that also help them to understand broader world issues.

I found teaching about nonviolence provides the framework for students to begin trailblazing their roles as empowered citizens of the world.

Susanna Barkataki is a high school teacher at Cleveland High School in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

COMMUNITY COLUMN

Editorial by Pallavi Gala



I have been associated with the Ahimsa Center right from the start. This has broadened my interpretation of the practice of ahimsa.

Having been born and raised a Jain, the concept of ahimsa has always been a part of my being. As a lifelong student of Jain philosophy, I continue to study the theories of himsa and ahimsa, and try to practice compassion the best I can. However, this has been primarily from a religious perspective. Then I attended the Ahimsa Center workshop by Professor Johan Galtung where he explained his mathematical model of conflict resolution with a win-win outcome. This concept so permeated my thinking that even the dinner table discussions I have with my family have taken on a new meaning for me! And there have been many phenomenal speakers at the Center's various programs, each providing us with his or her unique wisdom and/or experience with nonviolent way of life.

For a suburban mom like me, the Ahimsa Center programs serve a greater purpose of broadening my horizons about compassionate practices, amongst other things. In this way the Center provides an excellent opportunity to introduce this profound concept of ahimsa to a wider and diverse audience, including the practitioners of the ancient philosophy of Jainism, and allows them to see the practice of ahimsa from different perspectives in more contemporary contexts.

There are many ways in which ahimsa can serve a meaningful role in our lives as is demonstrated by the contributors to this column. I want to thank all contributors to the community column for sharing their insights and experiences and invite our readers to submit their perspectives on the role of non-violence in the community in the subsequent issues of the Ahimsa Center Newsletter.

Igniting the Genius



An Interview with Dr. Prasad Kaipa, CEO and President, Kaipa Group, Inc.

Editor: You have been leading a training program, Igniting the Genius Within, for senior executives and CEOs.

In that context, do you feel that ahimsa, with all its multiple aspects and dimensions, is an integral part of human genius?

Dr. Kaipa: I feel that ahimsa as an attitude and state of the mind is critical for an executive to run a twenty-first century organization. Considering that human capital is the chief resource and employee engagement and innovation are critical to the success of many organizations, the attitude and the mindset are critical issues. When I offer executive development courses and transformational leadership courses for senior executives, I find that an appreciative, ahimsa-centric approach works well whether the programs are done in India, UK, Belgium, or Singapore. Merely an intellectual approach to reach and inspire the executives with rigid thinking, frozen mindset tends to fail.

Editor: How can a compassionate, caring, CEO (one whose genius in this regard is evolved) make a material and spiritual difference in his or her organization and to the success of his or her co-workers and colleagues?

Dr. Kaipa: The CEO sets the tone in a business organization and influences its organizational culture. A caring, CEO who is appreciative, positive and affirming in his tone and support, energizes the organization and brings out the best in the people. Looking at the genius within us, we have different intelligences. When the leaders pay extra attention and appreciate what we bring to the group, and create a nurturing culture, we respond quickly and rise to their expectations. I have seen many times that the only way to get the job done is through appreciation and acknowledgement. A recent study has shown that control and command approaches are not very effective in making people engage.

Editor: What methods or techniques do you suggest for "igniting" this part of one's genius?

Dr. Kaipa: Some techniques for "igniting" this part of one's genius are: Begin the day with appreciation. Find things that you like and appreciate in others. Catch people doing right things instead of catching them doing wrong things. Every day, find three people that you can genuinely, authentically and timely acknowledge for their contribution.

Reward what works. Ignore bad behavior. Whatever you pay attention to grows. If you pay extra attention to people accomplishing things, then those people want to do more when you are around them.

Help people create clear and meaningful goals

in their work and life. Once you create tangible and measurable goals, you begin to see the gap between where you are and where you want to be and change begins to happen and results start coming in.

Finally, learn to see the glass half full _ not as half empty. Make this a part of your attitude and personality. When optimism becomes part of your being, your ability to succeed increases significantly.

Editor: Thank you!

The Way of Nonviolence

By Eva Malhotra

It was at the Ahimsa and the Quality of Life Conference at Pomona last Spring (April 28-29, 2006) that I made the commitment to become a vegetarian.



It became clear to me during a presentation by Dr. Michael Tobias who showed us video clips and pictures of animals on a large screen.

I had never looked at the eyes and faces of animals the way I did that morning. I had never really seen how much they are like me and I like them. I had never seen nor felt their fear as they are carried away to market, for their slaughter.

I had never understood until then how Jonathan Swift really was talking about piglets, when he referred to rotund babies nursed and cared for so that they could be roasted for the tables of the of those who could afford them. He was saying that babies, some human, some not, but all are of the same family of mammals. I saw my own babies, all the babies of the world, the piglets, the chicks, the calves, and the puppies. I saw the cows, the chickens, the sows, the mothers/myself. I felt the pain in my breast. I felt connected to these animals, to the entire family of living beings.

I felt that we are all on this earth to share of its bounty, of its variety, of its beauty. And I realized that unless we see how we are linked, how we are bound together in the intricate chain of life, we will continue to ravage the earth, its oceans, its skies, its lands and to trample and decimate and alter it until it becomes toxic for all of us, all of us beings. There is only one way, the way of non-violence. The way of recognizing our connectedness to the other beings of the earth, the sky and the oceans. The way of ahimsa. How could I not become a vegetarian?

Eva Malhotra is an attorney specializing in Family Law.



Ela Gandhi (sitting second from the left) with the members of the community.

My Association With the Ahimsa Center: Some Reflections

Anila Strahan

When I joined the Ahimsa Center I wondered how can I practice non-violence in thought and action. Three questions and possible answers-- for which I am grateful to my Buddhist teachers -- came to mind:

1) Why, when we experience a disaster like Hurricane Katrina, do we want to reach out to others?

One response would be that it is only natural to want to help. This is understandable, but I wanted to think more deeply. When we are faced with catastrophic events, we are not concerned whether the person to whom we extend help is good or bad, or what the person's religious, ethnic and cultural background is, or that there may be legal liability. In moments like these our minds connect at a fundamental human level--as one human being to another. I believe that each of us has a deep innate awareness of our true nature--our connection to other beings.

2) So why is it that in our day-to-day lives we think more about the things that separate us?

For most of us, our day-to-day lives are centered upon our self-created little worlds of habits that are conditioned by material wants and needs; our senses are tangled by emotions and fear of losing what we have, or of not getting what we want. The time we spend getting and spending, we tell ourselves, is because we want to be happy. Seeking happiness is natural because no living being wants to suffer; even an animal feeling the hot sun seeks a shady place. Our habits and conditioning keep us on auto-pilot and in a mental fog. It becomes easy to judge others, but it is difficult to look at our own flaws. Our arrogance, envy, hatred and anger allow us to rationalize our differences according to our religious and ethnic backgrounds or our social status, and our false pride keeps us separated from one another.

3) So how could a person like me practice ahimsa?

To practice non-violence in thought and action, I need to become more mindful and self-aware. The sights and sounds of the world are a distraction, and block the stillness and space needed within, to gain clear understanding. Before I take any action I need to ask, "What is the state of my mind?" When I can understand my own motivations, I can strive to subdue the harsh thoughts and words that disturb the mind. When my mind is in touch with its true nature, my thoughts and actions will be imbued by the precepts of ahimsa, and together we will be able to find common ground to tackle the issues that affect us all.

Anila Strahan is doing her Ph.D. at the University of La Verne.



Community Participation in Ahimsa Center Events



Ahimsa in Daily Life

Nitin Shah

Ahimsa is a religious concept that advocates non-violence and a respect for all life. All religions preach nonviolence to some extent. However, Jain religion advocates its practice to the deepest levels. In its comprehensive meaning, ahimsa means total abstinence from causing any pain or harm whatsoever to any living creature, either by thought, word, or deed. Adherence to ahimsa requires a harmless thoughts, speech, and actions all the time and in all contexts.

Practice of ahimsa is so much more important today when violence is crossing all the boundaries, religious and geographic alike. We have become very intolerant, we get upset over little things, our expectations have no limits, and we have become egoistic and power hungry.

The Jain concept of ahimsa constantly reminds us to respect the views of others, as there can be many truths and many ways to achieve those truths. We need to listen to others and offer suggestions but not insist on them. When we have a disagreement, it is important to give benefit of doubt to the other person. We need to remember to think before we speak and try our best to reach a consensus with people in every matter. Respecting all living beings, not just humans, is the precondition for the practice of ahimsa.

Nitin Shah, MD is an anesthesiologist by profession, and President of the Anekant Community Center in Los Angeles.



University honors community leaders: From left, President Ortiz, Bipin Shah, Prem Jain, Uka Solanki, and Dean Way.

ABOUT THE AHIMSA CENTER

Mission

The Ahimsa Center in the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona is focused on interdisciplinary teaching and learning about nonviolence and its practical applications at various levels: personal, familial, communal, national and international. Educational and outreach initiatives of the Center facilitate an understanding of ahimsa as a positive force informing the ways of thinking as well as living.

Programs and Activities

The Center's perspective on nonviolence encompasses both the domain of "thought"-drawing upon philosophical, religious and cultural traditions from around the world, and the domain of "action"-drawing upon the history of political and social movements spearheaded by leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Badshah Khan, Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez, the Dalai Lama, and Aung San Suu Kyi. Accordingly, the programs and activities already under-taken by the Center since its inauguration in 2004 include:

Nonviolence Curriculum at Cal Poly Pomona

Two New Courses Launched. Nonviolence in the Modern World (HST 433) and *War and Peace in Literature* (ENG 235).

Minor in Nonviolence Studies. Proposal for this interdisciplinary minor developed collaboratively by faculty members from several departments is currently under review by the University.

K-12 Initiative

Nonviolence and Social Change. Summer Institute for K-12 Teachers. July 16-30, 2005. Twenty-five teachers participated in this interdisciplinary program. The curriculum produced by the participants will be made available for wider dissemination via the Center's web site.

Gandhi and Nonviolent Social Change. 2007 Summer Institute for K-12 Teachers. Open to teachers from schools all over US.

Biannual Conferences on Nonviolence

Creating the Culture of Ahimsa: Visions and Strategies. May 14-15, 2004.

Ahimsa and the Quality of Life. April 28-29, 2006.

Rediscovering Gandhian Wisdom: Building a Peaceful Future. Forthcoming 2008.

Public Lectures

Johan Galtung. Gandhi, Nonviolence and Contemporary Conflicts: Washington-Al-Qaeda and Kashmir. November 21, 2004.

Catherine Ingram. Awakened Intelligence and Nonviolence. October 16, 2005.

David Krieger. Building Global Peace in the Nuclear Age. November 12, 2006.

Workshops

Johan Galtung. Nonviolent Conflict Transformation: The Transcend Approach. November 23, 2005.

Satish Kumar. Soil, Soul and Society. April 30, 2006.

Dialogues

Dwarko Sundrani. Nonviolence and Social Change. July 17, 2004.

H. R. Nagendra. Ahimsa: the Foundation of Yoga. December 18, 2004.

Satish Kumar. Three Dimensions with Nonviolence. April 24, 2005.

A. T. Ariyaratne. Building a Nonviolent Cooperative World. October 10, 2005.

Alan Wallace. What Makes Life Meaningful: A Contemplative View. July 16, 2006.

Shabana Azmi and Javed Akhtar. Films, Politics and Social Justice. Nov. 28, 2006.

Symposium

Ahimsa and Aparigraha in Contemporary Contexts, held in conjunction with the JAINA Convention, Santa Clara, CA. July 3, 2005.

AHIMSA CENTER ADVISORY BOARD 2004-2006

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UPCOMING PROGRAMS OF THE CENTER

Gandhi and Nonviolent Social Change: A Summer Institute for K-12 Educators July 15-28, 2007

Gandhi's significance lies in his uncompromising reliance on nonviolence as a moral force to question, reform and transform the unjust establishments of authority by mobilizing the largest nonviolent mass movement known in world history. Gandhi called this force satyagraha--an active pursuit of truth through love and nonviolence.

Gandhi's ideas of truth and justice have contributed immensely to the development of moral and political thought, and his demonstrations of positive and revolutionary power of satyagraha has had world-wide impact. Satyagraha became a source of power to the powerless and of hope to the hopeless as Gandhi became a catalyst for nonviolent campaigns dedicated to social change in scores of regions around the world.

This two-week intensive residential institute, open to all K-12 educators, will focus on understanding Gandhi's contributions to human civilization and the relevance of his life and legacy for our times. The program will be the basis for innovative K-12 curriculum connecting Gandhi and nonviolence to social change, the pursuit of social justice, communal harmony, gender and race relations, and the environment.

Balancing the Heart and Mind: A weekend Retreat with B. Alan Wallace August 10-12, 2007

During this retreat we will explore in theory and practice two methods for meditative quiescence, or shamatha. The achievement of shamatha or "settling the mind in its natural state" is widely regarded in the Buddhist tradition as an indispensable foundation for the cultivation of contemplative insight (vipashyana), and this retreat is designed to provide the participants with a sufficient theoretical

understanding and a basis in experience to enable them to proceed effectively toward this extraordinary state of mental and physical balance.

In addition, instruction will be offered on the cultivation of the "four immeasurables," namely loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity. They are so called, for the development of these qualities of the heart that can break down all barriers that are created by attachment and aversion, opening our hearts boundlessly to all beings.

Lectures and guided meditations will be interspersed with periods for group discussions, focused on the practical applications of these practices in daily life.

For more information, including registration fees and details, please contact the Ahimsa Center at ahimsacenter@csupomona.edu.

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE AHIMSA CENTER TODAY!

The two-year membership will include admission to regular public events and to a world-class conference on Gandhi in 2008, plus discounted admission to special events. For more information, visit the center web site:

www.csupomona.edu/ahimsacenter or call 909-869-3868, or email ahimsacenter@csupomona.edu.