

**FRIENDS OF LAKSHMI ASHRAM****Lone Poulsen, Praestehusene 6, 2620 Albertslund, Denmark****Telefon +45 43 96 13 71 – E-mail: [lone-poulsen@comxnet.dk](mailto:lone-poulsen@comxnet.dk)****Lakshmi Ashram's homepage: <http://lakshmiashram.dk>****NEWS FROM LAKSHMI ASHRAM  
SANCHAR 103**

April 2008

Dear friends,

This time the newsletter brings two articles about the Gandhian Training Programme, one about a Study Tour, one about the Celebration of Gandhi's Birthday and at last a little report of my visit to Lakshmi Ashram in March this year. We also bring the statement of accounts for 2007. The net capital at the end of 2007 is rather big, because the inheritance money is still in Denmark.

As I have told before, Friends of Lakshmi Ashram is now a legal society, which means that we now have to charge subscription to meet these expenses for administration. This money pays postage, printing of the Sanchar, bank charges etc. The charge is 75 Danish kroner (about 10 Euro) per membership a year. As we have done before we will of course send a surplus that may arise from the administration account to Lakshmi Ashram.

And what will this mean to you? It will not be more expensive to be a sponsor, i.e. a sponsorship is 1725 Danish kroner and the subscription 75 Danish kroner (about 230 Euro and 10 Euro) = 1800 Danish kroner as before. Some people send money once a year for a sponsorship, and others divide the amount during the year. Therefore we will put 75 kroner in the administration account first time in the year, when we receive money from someone. This also applies if you send amounts that are not earmarked. So all will pay the same amount a year to be a member and receive the Sanchar. Unless otherwise instructed I assume one membership per household, club, society etc. A membership gives one vote in the yearly general meeting.

Thank you for all the money for sponsorships and other contributions. Any amount of money will be received with pleasure. Contributions that are not earmarked are also very good. The money will be used for educational material, study tours, project in the villages etc.

You can send money by a crossed cheque or by bank transfer to:

Danske Bank – Glostrup Afdeling, Hovedvejen 109, 2600 Glostrup, DK – Denmark

Bank account no: 0270 – 4748312242, SWIFT-BIC: DABADKKK

Lakshmi Ashrams Venner

Lone Poulsen, Praestehusene 6, 2620 Albertslund, DK – Denmark

We have the general meeting this year on 27<sup>th</sup> April, and I will send a summary of this meeting in the next Sanchar.

Best wishes,

# FRIENDS OF LAKSHMI ASHRAM

Lone Poulsen, Præstehusene 6, 2620 Albertslund – Denmark

## STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2007.

### INCOME:

Contributions received	87.667,92 DDK
Subscription: 67 members à 75 DDK (1 member paid only 50 DDK)	5.000,00 DDK
Danske Bank: Interest and yield	9.404,64 DDK
Gift from Lions Club, Søllerød	25.000,00 DDK
Rest of inheritance	131.264,05 DDK
<b>Total income</b>	<b>258.336,61 DDK</b>

### EXPENSES:

Administration	2.172,25 DDK
Paid to Lakshmi Ashram	117.831,37 DDK
To LA from Lions Club, Søllerød	25.000,00 DDK
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>145.003,62 DDK</b>

<b>Net result of the year</b>	<b>113.332, 99 DDK</b>
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## BALANCE SHEET at 31.12.07

### ASSETS:

Danske Bank: Giro	9.355,35 DDK
Danske Bank: 19.015,50 + 407.782,93 DDK	426.798,43 DDK
<b>Total bank deposits</b>	<b>436.153,78 DDK</b>

### LIABILITIES:

Net capital, beginning 2007	322.820,79 DDK
Net result for 2007	113.332,99 DDK
<b>Net capital, end 2007</b>	<b>436.153,78 DDK</b>

Albertslund, / 2008

The accounts have been audited.

Lone Poulsen

Albertslund, / 2008

Claus Broskov Sørensen

# Experiences of the 'Sadhana' Training Programme in Practical Gandhian Thought 2006-07

*by Archana Behn*

Action, knowledge or devotion – these have no value in themselves individually. Human life gains meaning through the coordination of the worker's hand, the thinker's mind and the devotee's heart. This is also the message of the Bhagavad Gita (part of the Mahabharata), and this was always the inspiration that guided that great man of our times, Mahatma Gandhi. The understanding of the significance of human life that has been bequeathed to us by Mahatma Gandhi is that it is only the full development of the heart, intellect and hands that is a truly integrated development. Bearing this underlying principle in mind, we have sought through our 'Sadhana' training programme to take the first steps towards such integrated development with our students.

The formal opening of the Sadhana course took place on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2006 in the presence of Radha Didi. The length of the course was a full twelve months. There were ten students on the course, including three students of Lakshmi Ashram who, after having passed their High School exams, expressed an interest to join the course. Seven students from various parts of Uttarakhand also came to join the course. Five of them had passed their Intermediate exams; one had passed her B.A. exams, while the seventh had failed her High School exams.

Coming as they did from different families, social and geographical backgrounds and varying educational levels, working with this young group offered many experiences and was one both of teaching and learning. Each of the girls coming to join the course had brought with them different academic levels and interests, and different objectives. The prevailing current of modernity, even while it might not have ensnared these girls, had nevertheless not left them untouched. They all wanted to find a good job and earn plenty of money, on condition that they themselves might choose how to earn a living, their one objective being that, without making any effort, they should earn money and live a happy life.

During the first two or three months we made use of various methods to build up their theoretical foundation, so that their powers of understanding would be such as to absorb these new ideas, these concepts of living, that underlay the integrated life that Gandhi lived. Whenever we accept any idea on the intellectual level, then our heart is drawn emotionally to it, and we likewise come to express it practically in our actions. This happened with this group of young people. Along with these endeavours, attempts were also made, using various means of presentation, to increase their powers of understanding and strengthen their command over basic academic subjects such as language, mathematics, history, geography, etc. All of this too was an important part of our course.

Radha Didi, Neema Behn, Kanti Didi and other teachers told the students in their classes of Gandhi's thinking on every aspect of life. All this brought about a remarkable revolutionary change in these ten students. Absorbing these ideas at an intellectual level, they came to feel them in their hearts, and today they are trying to put these ideas into practice in their personal and social life.

They sought to learn and understand both the concepts and the practice that underlie the activities of the ashram family. They were also keen to develop spiritually and achieved a lot of



Archana

success for, if there is not equal development of the mind, body and heart, then a true balance in life is not obtained. Efforts were made within the ashram family to achieve this balanced development. An educational study tour was also organised away from the ashram, lasting about forty days. During this tour they were taken to Delhi, Agra, and the Institute of Gandhian Studies in Wardha, Maharashtra. There was provision in the course to take the group to this Institute for one month.

During this period there was naturally an opportunity to compare rural and urban lifestyles. The young girls misguidedly have an attraction for the city lifestyle, but it was seen that their newly acquired powers of understanding put an end to this appeal. They had the opportunity to see and learn about places of historical interest, and in particular had the opportunity to experience seeing for themselves those places associated with events in Gandhi's life that they had previously only read or heard about. The feelings aroused on seeing Gandhi's Sevagram Ashram, one of his main centres of activity, truly touch the heart and give one the inspiration to work with renewed energy. We stayed for almost one month in the Institute for Gandhian Studies and also had the opportunity to see other institutions in Wardha engaged in constructive activities. While staying in there a number of learned Gandhian thinkers took their classes, something that made a great impression.

During this time, on the occasion of the death anniversary of Vinoba Bhave, we also went to Paunar Ashram. Vinoba was very deeply influenced by Gandhi, and was known as the first Satyagrahi<sup>1</sup> of Gandhi. Vinoba established Paunar Ashram exclusively for women where, given the opportunity of fully practicing the vow of self-control in their lives, they could develop their lives to the full. It is true to say that, along with the students, I too had the opportunity during this tour to strengthen my personal thinking and also to benefit from the emotional experiences offered. At the end of this tour programme, along with the students I too participated in the ten-day Vipashyana meditation programme close to the city of Nagpur. This meditation is the method that Mahatma Buddha, after a lifetime of arduous spiritual practice, bequeathed as a practical system to mankind. This system presents a totally different way for understanding and living one's life to the full. Everyone was also very deeply inspired by this experience and expressed their desire to make efforts to make it a regular part of their lives. Throughout the Sadhana course, as an integrated way of living one's life slowly revealed itself to the students, I too having overall responsibility continually had the opportunity to learn something new through sharing their problems, suggestions and experiences, and from this I have gained the inspiration and enthusiasm to run the next course in new ways.

At the end of the Sadhana course visible proof of our success was seen in that all the students who had once been inspired to go into one or another kind of formal employment, today have joined various institutions and organisations and, deeply committed to constructive activities, are now actively working for social change through serving the society. This inspires us for our work in the future, and gives us the enthusiasm to work anew. I was extremely satisfied and gained a lot of inspiration from seeing the development of the students throughout the course.

## **My Experiences of the 'Sadhana' Course**

### **26<sup>th</sup> June 2006 to 5<sup>th</sup> June 2007**

***By Tara Koranga***

Numerous kinds of programmes are being run throughout India with the objective of offering a true direction to life that, as well as encouraging personal development, by providing an understanding

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<sup>1</sup> Satyagrahi: a person who carries out a non-violent protest with a political purpose – civil disobedience

of society also teach one how to live within society. A living example of the art of living is seen in Lakshmi Ashram's training programme in "Gandhian Thought and Practice" – the 'Sadhana' course. This course for young women, offering them a new perspective on life, has been running from 1993 to the present day. On 26<sup>th</sup> June 2006 the new 'Sadhana' course was formally inaugurated in the presence of Radha Didi. Three of us on the course were Ashram students who had recently passed our High School exams, while there were seven other students from various parts of Uttarakhand.

During the course Radha Didi, Kanti Didi, Neema Behn and Archana Behn from the Ashram, and Gopal Bhai, Shobhan Bhai, Akash Bhai and others from outside took classes on a wide range of subjects including Gandhi's constructive activities, the Satyagraha leaders, Gandhi's spirituality, his satyagrahas in South Africa, his autobiography, the true way to live one's life and how to put it into practice, language and writing, preparation of reports, the interrelations of Nature and Man; in all these subjects in turn we gained a great deal of knowledge. During this time we also participated in two workshops, in which we gained an understanding about rural culture and techniques of writing for the media.

To further our understanding of what we were learning in class, we brought out handwritten magazines containing our personal experiences, writing about such subjects as 'Hind Swaraj' (*Written by Gandhi in 1909 while returning from England to South Africa*), Gandhi and Spirituality, 'Pahla Girmitya' (*a novel in Hindi on Gandhi's experiences in South Africa, whose title translates as 'The First Indentured Labourer'*), and our news and experiences of Ashram life.

As part of more practical activities aimed at improving our practical skills we spent one month learning the use of the sewing machine, while to get a better understanding of rural life we spent a week carrying out research in various villages close to Kausani. The main subjects of our research were Water, Forests and Land, the attitudes and circumstances of the young people, the state of education and village culture.

A second main objective of our course was to visit various parts of India and to see at first hand the activities of Gandhi. All of us along with our course teacher, Archana Didi, thus went for six weeks to Wardha. During this tour a number of us had our first experience of travelling by train and seeing large cities. We gained knowledge about Gandhi from a number of Gandhians and also saw his ideas in practice. We also went to Paunar Ashram, Vinoba Bhave's ashram, where we took part in a three day conference, where an attempt was made to understand the common ground in Vinoba's thinking and modern-day society's thinking. Near to Wardha is Sevagram Ashram, famous for the hut that can still be seen where Gandhi and Kasturba lived. Gandhi worked there in various ways to serve the poor and improve the conditions of the farmers. The various activities can be seen even today such as animal husbandry, agriculture and the library. On our way back we participated in a ten-day Vipasyana meditation camp in Nagpur.

For all ten of us students it was the first experience of Vipasyana meditation. Thus these ten days were extremely important to us for understanding our true self. Returning from Nagpur we saw the Taj Mahal, built by Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz, counted among one of the Seven Wonders of the World. In Delhi we had the opportunity to see the Gandhi Museum, Rajghat, the Science Museum and the Red Fort before returning to Kausani and the Ashram. Back here we shared all our experiences with everybody else, and also expressed our thoughts in a handwritten magazine.

The time spent on the Sadhana course was an unforgettable experience for all of us, and each of us has found a new direction for living our individual lives. Today all of us are making efforts in this direction in various ways. The three of us Ashram students are working with the young children and the ashram community at large, putting the understanding that we have gained into practice. These twelve months have proved really memorable and a great source of inspiration.

## Study Tour to Delhi – 15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> November 2007

*By Tara Koranga*

Equal importance is given in Lakshmi Ashram to the practical, intellectual and spiritual aspects, for the all-round development of the children's personalities. Numerous opportunities are thus afforded to the children for the development of these three aspects. As part of this approach, every year the children have the opportunity to go on a study tour for up to seven or ten days. Visiting places of historical interest, these study tours offer the children the opportunity to understand their historical, cultural and natural heritage, both local and national. With this objective in mind this year on 15<sup>th</sup> November a group of 22 people went to Delhi for a five-day tour. The group comprised nine students from class seven, two from class ten, three from class twelve, seven Ashram workers, as well as Lisa, a young German girl who has been staying for some time in the Ashram.



The whole group on tour

At nine o'clock on the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup> we all set off from Kausani, on the way passing Chanauda and the Shri Gandhi Ashram, Someshwar, Ranman, Manan, Hawalbag, Kosi, Almora, Kainchi, Bhowali and Kathgodam, and at three o'clock on the afternoon we arrived at the Shri Gandhi Ashram in Kalavati Colony, Haldwani. From there we set off for the main bazaar in Haldwani to see a Khadi and Village Industries exhibition. People coming from various states had put on a wonderful display of handicrafts in this exhibition.

Returning from the exhibition, we sat together and evaluated our day's experiences. Early the next day at five o'clock, keeping our goal in mind, we set off and passing through Pantnagar, Bhojpur, Bilaspur, Rampur, Gajraula, Hapur and Ghaziabad we reached the Gandhi Peace Foundation in New Delhi, and from there continued to the Chandra Arya Vidya Mandir in South Delhi. Chandra Arya Vidya Mandir is a hostel for children deprived of parental love, established in 1972. Some 400 girls live there, and there are some 150 workers who teach and look after these children. We lived with them for two days.

On our full first day in Delhi we went first to see the Gandhi Museum, where there was a pictorial display of Gandhi's life and work, from his birth through to his death. We then had an

opportunity to see Rajghat, the memorial to Mahatma Gandhi constructed on the site of his cremation. Large numbers of people come to have 'darshan' of Gandhi's 'samadhi'. This ground is so holy that whosoever comes here feels a deep sense of peace within.

From there we went to the Zoo, where we saw numerous kinds of animals – different species of deer, palm civets, rhinos, crocodiles, tigers, elephants, giraffes, white tigers and bears, also various species of birds – green and yellow parrots, crested cranes, macaws, pheasants, eagles, white vultures, etc. At the end we all felt very tired so we sat in the Zoo Park and had lunch before continuing on to meet the people sitting in the Yamuna Satyagraha.

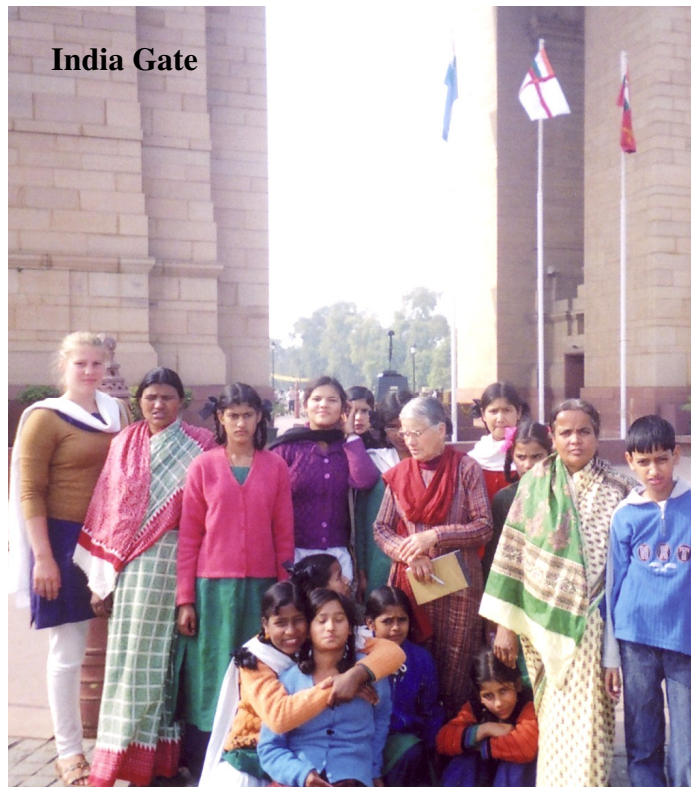
The Yamuna Satyagraha is going on behind the Akshadham temple on the side of the National Highway. The satyagrahis are living in huts that they have built below trees at the side of the highway. Those present told us that the objective of undertaking Satyagraha was that on the banks of the Yamuna River, the lifeline of Delhi, a Games Village is being built. This is a conspiracy of the government – for just nine days the Commonwealth Games will take place on this site, and then this land will be handed over to the wealthy property dealers. The farmers and hut dwellers who were living on this land have been made homeless by the government. The satyagraha is taking place to have land given to those made homeless, and to keep the Yamuna River alive. It will continue until such time as the construction of the Games Village is halted. The satyagrahis, who had been sitting there for the past 109 days, say that trees should be planted along the banks of the Yamuna, and that the Games Village and the Metro depot should be constructed elsewhere.

Having seen the satyagraha for ourselves and heard of its objectives, we turned back and headed for the Delhi Haat, where villagers coming from various states display their handicrafts. Students from Delhi University, concerned for the conditions of the dalits and tribals, were presenting their message through street theatre to the people visiting the Delhi Haat.

The next morning we went to see the Red Fort, built by the Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan. Construction began in 1639 and was completed in nine years. Numerous buildings were constructed within this fort, including the Diwan-i-Khas (Hall of Private Audience), the Diwan-i-Am (Hall of

Public Audience) and the Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque). We saw three museums situated within the fort, the Freedom Struggle Museum, the Red Fort Museum and the War Memorial Museum. Two gates were built to enter the fort, the Delhi Gate and the Lahore Gate. We then went to see the Children's Science Museum. Being a Sunday we were not able to see many of the activities of the museum but we did see a display of children's creative paintings.

At one o'clock in the afternoon we all went to see India Gate, situated at the eastern end of Rajpath. This memorial to those soldiers who sacrificed their lives during the First World War was built under the direction of Sir Edwin Lutyens between 1921 and 1931. Below the centre of the arch are placed a rifle and a helmet. A flame, the 'Amar Jawan Jyoti' (Light of the Immortal Soldier), burns continually in honour of those brave men who had laid down their



lives. The names of the immortal martyrs are also inscribed in English on the arch. After seeing this memorial to the martyrs, we also had the pleasure of going on the Metro train, and enjoying going down by escalator and coming up by lift. As it was the first experience for all of us, we all had great fun.

Later on we visited the Lotus Temple, known to all by this name as it is built in the form of a lotus flower. This incomparable example of modern architecture is built with white marble tiles.

Our two day tour of Delhi now being over, saying our farewells to our new-found sisters, the girls and workers in the hostel in East of Kailash, we set off for Haldwani at five o'clock in the afternoon of 18<sup>th</sup> November. Enjoying the journey through the night, we reached Kalavati Colony in Haldwani at half past two. We rested there for some time, and then soon after dawn set off towards Kausani. On the way we stopped to see the temple set up by Pilot Baba, full of various sculptures. In Ranikhet we visited the Army Museum where we saw a fine collection of old and new weapons donated by Indian soldiers, as well as a display of uniforms down the ages.

We reached Kausani at five o'clock where we enjoyed meeting all our friends and sharing our experiences.

This five-day study tour was completed on 19<sup>th</sup> November. Living in the hostel in East of Kailash, we all felt that, despite all the material comforts that they were provided with, the girls there still felt a lack of emotional support. Looking at the buildings and people of Delhi it seemed that while some people were very well provided for, the masses, deprived of the most basic needs, were forced to eke out their lives like scurrying insects. In Delhi we saw on the one hand the illusion of wealth, on the other extreme poverty.

## **Gandhi Jayanti – 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2007**

***By Kanti Behn***

2<sup>nd</sup> October has gained immense importance because of its being Gandhi Jayanti (the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi). Gandhi did not refer to this day as his birthday, but gave it the name of 'Charkha Jayanti', because he had such a close and intimate relationship with the 'charkha', or spinning wheel. And why not! Before becoming enslaved, it was through the spinning wheel that we were self-sufficient. Gandhi understood this, searched out the spinning wheels that for so long had lain forgotten, and transformed them into a symbol of freedom. We can say that non-violence and khadi (hand-spun cloth) are two sides of the same coin. Gandhi adopted them as the chief means of the freedom struggle, and gave their message to the people of India. Recognising the charkha as the symbol of self sufficiency, it was also given pride of place in our national flag. This year the 138<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gandhi's birth was marked in the following ways by Lakshmi Ashram:



**Dawn walk**

### **‘Prabhat Pheri’ (Dawn Walk)**

The 85 members of the Ashram, getting up bright and early, set off, in step one with the other, on the Prabhat Pheri. Almost immediately beginning to sing the melodious chorus of “*De Di Hamen Ajadi Bina Kharak Bina Dhal*” = “*Delivered us to freedom without the sword or shield*”, we climbed down the hillside to the Kausani bazaar. Reaching the centre of Kausani the lines of girls in their green and blue dress raised slogans, “Long Live Mahatma Gandhi”, “Today is 2nd October – Today is the Birthday of Mahatma Gandhi”.

From here we were joined by students and teachers from other schools, so that the lines of walkers became even longer, looking like a rally as it slowly walked up the hill towards the Anasakti Ashram. When the walkers reached the Anasakti Ashram then, taking their places in the prayer hall, the Prabhat Pheri transformed into a prayer meeting. Along with All-Faiths prayers, the tunes of favourite devotional songs of Gandhi filled the atmosphere with his presence. In this charged atmosphere some eminent Gandhian thinkers who were present cast light on aspects of Gandhi’s personality.

### **‘Jhanki’ (Tableaux)**

This year, for the first time, Lakshmi Ashram along with three other schools in Kausani presented tableaux illustrating Gandhi’s political struggles and constructive work. One tableau, ‘From Mohan to Mahatma’, depicted Gandhi at various stages in his life and the ‘Quit India’ struggle of 1942. A second tableau presented the Dandi March (Salt Satyagraha) while a third depicted the Non-cooperation movement of 1921. The teachers and students worked with great vigour and enthusiasm to make this new effort a success.

### **Cultural Programme based on the Life of Gandhi**

Students from several schools in Kausani presented various important episodes in Gandhi’s life through drama, songs etc. Through these diverse programmes a large number of people had the opportunity to gain an understanding of Gandhi’s personality - revolutionary, spiritual, and his spirit of service. Throughout the day, 2<sup>nd</sup> October was immersed in an atmosphere of Gandhi.

## **Short Report of Visit in Lakshmi Ashram March 2008**

***By Lone Poulsen***

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March Ruth Sillemann and I left Denmark by air to Helsinki and from there directly to Delhi. We arrived in India after midnight, and after managing some formalities we went by taxi to a hotel and got a good sleep. Next evening we went by night train to the mountains. A taxi was waiting for us at the terminus Kathgodam, and the next five hours we drove up in the mountains of Himalaya, and we reached the village of Kausani at noontime. Now the last thing we had to do was climbing up the hill for about fifteen minutes to Lakshmi Ashram, which is situated at about 2000 m about sea level.

We got a very nice room with attached bath in the rebuilt historical building – the place where Sarala Behn started her school for more than sixty years ago. We had about five days before we should lead a two days workshop for all the teachers and workers about Appreciative Inquiry. It was very nice to stay here and feel the atmosphere before the course. We were hard-working every day preparing the workshop. But we had of course also time to enjoy the Holi festival, which lasted for three days. Holi is falling on the Full Moon in the month of Phalgun, this year in March. It is celebrated throughout India. This is one of the major festivals of the year and is celebrated with great happiness and joy. The girls are really happy for these days, and they were dancing and

singing, but the main thing was that they had the opportunity to throw coloured water over one another. They also got a lot of different sweets. In the morning they were doing all the practical work, but the lessons in the afternoon were cancelled.



### **The Workshop**

Sunday and Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> March were the days for the workshop – each day from 9-12 am and 2-5 pm. Of course we were a bit anxious when we on the first morning waited for the participants in the prayer room. Twenty teachers and workers, among others some young people, gathered. After a welcome, a short explanation on the purpose of the workshop, an introduction of the programme and the participants and a beautiful song we started the introduction of Appreciative Inquiry. During the course the participants got through many different tasks to try the principles themselves, e.g. interview tasks two and two, storytelling, making themes in groups of five participants with the headline “the good learning situation”.

On the second day we started with a rain game. It was very relevant, because it is very dry in the mountains these days. It has neither been raining nor snowing since the autumn, and the previous evening we could see a forest fire on one of the mountain ridges in the area. The groups should now make a drawing, which should illustrate the themes from yesterday’s programme. They were extremely good at presenting their drawings. New groups were formed, and they were going to make five “possibility statements”. At last we had twenty statements. In plenum they chose the five best statements, and the last and most difficult task was now to find out how to implement these in Lakshmi Ashram. It turned out very well in spite of the language barriers, but it demanded a very strict management from Ruth. The important thing is to make the proposals as concrete and practical as possible.

It was some very nice days, and we experienced an incredible engaged group of participants. David Hopkins did a very great job as an interpreter. A few days after the workshop we were sitting together with Neema, who translated the evaluation papers for us. It was exciting, interesting and instructive for us. It was a success. Here is a little, but also meaning selection from the evaluation:

- We learnt to find out our positive way in looking, thinking and understanding, try to find out how we can put our understanding into action

- We learnt about what we want to do. Normally we start with the problems, but not with the good quality
- I experienced how to see the future dreams the right way
- I understand what is the benefit of positive thinking
- It applied for everyone. We learnt the skill how to develop the good life
- The force and activity of the training are matching with the ashram system
- In total everything has been very joyful, and it was very good to be in the groups and sharing the presenting
- It was most interesting to know myself and express my thoughts – the dreams of making the ashram better
- Appreciative Inquiry is most surprising. It gives life to the human system.



Many other things are happening in the ashram. These days they are discussing the academic education a lot, and maybe this is the start of a new era. The government in Uttaranchal says that they won't allow students from private school to take their examination in the government schools. So now Lakshmi Ashram will try to be a member of National Institute of Open Schooling. That means that they could get a certificate from there. They had a parents' meeting about this one of the last days of our stay. Everything is quite new, so we may hear news about this later on. They have also started the excavation for a new kitchen. It is a very big work. About fifteen Nepali workers were really working hard when we were there.

We enjoyed our stay together with everybody in the ashram, and we left again on 28<sup>th</sup> March. Thank you for some very nice days!