

December 2006

An Occasion for Inspiration

By Satish Kumar

At last! It's time for the Human Forum 2006. Have a wonderful time and please share your thoughts and experiences - we'd love to put them in the January issue of the newsletter. Meanwhile, please enjoy these thoughts from Arsenio Rodriguez on the joy of meeting together.

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The Dance of Imagination

A reflection on the Human Forum by Arsenio Rodriguez

This universe, this extraordinary imagination at work, is unfolding all the time, and each one of us is bound to play a role in this evolving theatre of self-discovery. Some in awe, at the majesty of the universal processes, stand back and simply let it be. Others act out their perceptions, share their awakenings: they help and heal and dance. Both groups are the same; they follow the guiding light in the heart - some like the rumba, others the waltz, but we all have to dance! Dancing is the imperative of imagination - rhythms vary, but we all dance.

For me, this is what the Alliance for a New Humanity is all about: a sharing of the awakening. We must take on our role, as we feel it surge within the depths of our hearts. We are a support group, a fellowship of friends, and now, we want to share with all, the good news that a new humanity is coming.

We need not just passively wait for our nightmares to end, because now sweet dreams are being planted! It is our duty to broadcast the good news, to support each other in this first singing, to gather and strengthen the choir of voices that heralds a new dawn. Let us now sing together, and drive away our attachment to the nightmarish scenes, for this is the new cycle scripted by imagination!

The Forum in Puerto Rico is a convergence point. Those who come, come for various reasons, none really for what they think. Deep, deep are the linkages that bind us together.

Our key words

The theme of the 2006 Human Forum is the Faces of Courage

Courage is the precursor and peace the result. Everything else in between we can work on.

Our key words are: Forgiveness, sacrifice, acceptance, vulnerability, voice, valor, satori, strength, foundation, action,

emotion, purpose, compassion, discrimination, tolerance, respect, energy, dignity, boldness, patience, love, take heart, encouragement, farsightedness, pain, will, fire, joy.

Singapore to Help Revive Ancient Indian University

by Kalinga Seneviratne

SINGAPORE, (IPS) - With support from Singapore, Japan and other countries interested in Buddhism, India's ancient Nalanda University, dating back to 5th century B.C., may soon be restored to its past glory as a primary seat of learning in Asia. An ambitious 150 million US-dollar project was unfolded at an international symposium titled 'Reviving Buddhist Cultural Links'. Essentially a joint venture between the provincial government of India's eastern Bihar state -- where Nalanda is located -- and the Singapore government, it envisages the participation of several countries with large Buddhist populations, including Sri Lanka, Thailand and China.

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India: Social Forum Turns Focus on New Issues

by Praful Bidwai

NEW DELHI, Nov 14 (IPS) - What do you call a five-day-long gathering of 50,000 people, which features more than 350 panels, conferences, seminars and workshops on a range of social, political and cultural issues, along with film festivals, musical and dramatic events, and colourful marches by diverse groups dancing for different causes?

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Kenya: Switch on the sun to get cooking

By Joyce Mulama

KAJIADO, Southern Kenya (IPS) - The women in Kajiado were sceptical -- unwilling to believe that cardboard containers lined with aluminium foil on the inside could cook food when placed in the sun.

"I am shocked because I saw the food cooking without any fire. But here it is, really hot and tastier than the same foods cooked normally. This is amazing; I have never seen anything like this before," said 70-year-old Esther Lokuso.

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A far cry from Christmas

"Christmas fuels consumerism and consumerism fuels global warming. Global warming fuels fear, guilt, doom and gloom. These feelings are a far cry from Christmas", writes Satish Kumar.

"We have to replace our quantitative consumerism with a qualitative lifestyle. We need to move away from more and global to less and local; from accumulation of unnecessary clutter to enjoyment of the good things in life like art, music, friendship and free time. We need to shift from waste to frugality, from consuming to making, from illusion to imagination, from desire to delight and from consumption of natural resources to an appreciation of the natural world. If we do that then Christmas will again be an occasion of great celebration rather than an excuse for more consumption."

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Writers and the war against nature

From the latest issue of Resurgence

From ancient times", writes Gary Snyder, "storytellers, poets and dramatists have presented the world in all its fullness; plants, animals, men and women, changing shape, speaking multiple languages, inter-marrying, travelling to the sky and under the Earth. The great myths and folktales of human magic and nature's power were our school for ten thousand years. Whether they know it or not, even modern writers draw strength from the wild side." "How can artists and writers manage to join in the defence of the planet and wild nature?"

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Youth Magazine brings understanding in Middle East

The recent conflict between Israel and Lebanon presented 'Windows', the Arabic-Hebrew Youth Magazine with a dilemma:

"It has not been easy to edit the material which we have been receiving in recent months. We have deliberated long and hard over whether to publish the difficult descriptions of suffering, and have asked ourselves what platform we should give to the feelings of anger, hate and revenge. We debated together with the young members of our editorial teams, both Jewish and Palestinian, and we realized that since some of you indeed experience the reality of the situation in this way, others should at least read and know that, and that we must let you express it and help you cope with the war and its affects on your lives."

Since January 1995, 18 issues of Windows has been published, reaching up to 40,000 readers in Palestine and Israel. The magazine is written by and for young people in Israel and Palestine, reflecting daily life and promoting understanding and reconciliation.

Windows for Peace: <http://www.win-peace.org>

In brief:

Planet Earth Report

The World Wildlife Fund's Living Planet was published last month and shows that humanity's footprint tripled between 1961 and 2003. "It is time to make some vital choices," says WWF Director General, James Leape. "The cities, power plants and homes we build today will either lock society into damaging over-consumption beyond our lifetimes, or begin to propel this and future generations towards sustainable living."

Termite architecture

The termite mounds of southern Africa are teaching architects new methods of designing homes which are comfortable all year round without costing the earth. The termite mounds can be up to 10 metres high, and are built in a seemingly random construction that scientists have discovered is a highly sophisticated mechanism to keep temperature, humidity and carbon dioxide at precisely the correct levels.

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Planting a billion trees

The Nobel peace laureate Wangari Maathai has launched a campaign to plant a billion trees in 2007 – 32 every second – in order to highlight the need to tackle climate change. The Billion Tree Campaign is being supported by the United Nations Environment Programme, and Professor Maathai has herself pledged to plant 2 million trees through her Green Belt Movement.

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In the Hub

Don't work in isolation, join the Hub & "you're invited". The latest Hub a shared workspace and "social incubator" for social entrepreneurs, has just opened in Bristol, UK. Other hubs can be found in London, Johannesburg and Sao Paulo.

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Send us your news!

Are you a change maker? We want to hear from you!

We'd like to share your stories of positive change in this newsletter. If you have a story to tell, email it to Rachel Marsh, editor of The Alliance e-newsletter, Resurgence: <mailto:rachel@thecupoftea.co.uk>