



*Commemorating 75 years 1932-2007*

# MAYA PUWATH

Volume 3 Issue 4 August 07

## EDITORIAL

Hello everyone!

First and foremost, it is with greatest pleasure I write my first editorial for Maya Puwath August 2007 volume. I am humbled by this opportunity to serve our Alma-mater and MGCAANA. I have to thank the wonderful members of our editorial committee and the other office bearers for the most gracious welcome I was given, and for the support and guidance I have been given during this short time to make me acclimated to this new role. I am proud to be a part of this great organization that strives to achieve one goal in all, to serve our community.

MGCAANA is taking steps toward yet another chapter now with proud three years on its shoulders and a bright future. Even though several of MGCAANA's valuable founding members have taken the side-step and have welcomed the new office bearers to carry forth the torch they ignited, without their dedication, endurance, sacrifices, hard work and contributions, this organization would not have achieved what it has today. I believe we are forever in debt to Mrs. Sujatha Werake and the founding members of MGCAANA. We sincerely hope that you will continue to guide us in the right path.

In this light, I thought of sharing with you one powerful insight I have come to realize myself with passing years. Because it has made a tremendous difference in my life, in how I look at life per se, I wanted to share my realization with all of you. Life is simply about choices and priorities. It is as simple as that and as complicated as that. It is simple and complicated at the same time because; we are always bent down with our aspirations and dreams and desires for how and what our lives should be. Sometimes in the midst of those dreams and aspirations, we forget our priorities. We forget why we aspire and dream for those things; for ultimate simple happiness of life. Therefore, why do we sacrifice simple happiness of life such as sharing a laugh with our loved ones, spending time with our family and friends, or taking time to do a small thing we love, to achieve an unknown happiness, which is actually not out there? Happiness lies all within us. It is in the way we accept challenges and achievements that life throws at us. I do believe so. Today, we are in a world that is exceedingly and ridiculously depending on other people and material things to bring happiness to us. I have come to realize that, by striving not to depend your happiness on things and persons outside of you, we can bring peace and happiness to our lives so easily; by making our choices in life according to our priorities or according to what matters to us most. Do I always remember this realization and live by it? Not at all! I always have to be mindful and conscious in order to remember this and apply it to my daily life. It is a constant, conscious effort, and I have also realized that I am not at all mindful as I would like to be!

Why was this insight important to share with you all in this editorial? Well, it is again about the simple things that makes us happy. I believe all of you are extremely proud and happy about the achievements of MGCAANA. But most of all, you must be happy that you are a part of it; an important link that connects you to the rest of the Mahamayans out there that are making a difference in the world, making this world a better place. I think it is wonderful that we have such an organization to which all of us feel a strong belonging and duty. I urge you to give feedback and share your thoughts and ideas with the rest of us.

Have a wonderful rest of the summer!

**Dakshika Bandaranayake (Herath) - Editor in Chief for current edition.**

## DHAMMAPADA

*"The mind is very hard to perceive, extremely subtle and wanders at will. Let the wise person guard it; a guarded mind is conducive to happiness" ~ Lord Buddha*



Google Images

### SATI

(Expert from *Mindfulness in Plain English* by Venerable Henepola Gunaratana).

Mindfulness is the English translation of the Pali word 'Sati.' Sati is an activity. What exactly is that?

Mindfulness (Sati) is a subtle process that you are using at this very moment.

Mindfulness (Sati) is mirror-thought. It reflects only what is presently happening and in exactly the way it is happening. There are no biases.

Mindfulness (Sati) is non-judgmental observation. It is that ability of the mind to observe without criticism. With this ability, one sees things without condemnation or judgment. One is surprised by nothing. One simply takes a balanced interest in things exactly as they are in their natural states. One does not decide and does not judge. One just observes.

It is psychologically impossible for us to objectively observe what is going on within us if we do not at the same time accept the occurrence of our various states of mind. This is especially true with unpleasant states of mind. In order to observe our own fear, we must accept the fact that we are afraid. We can't examine our own depression without accepting it fully. The same is true for irritation and agitation, frustration and all those other uncomfortable emotional states. You can't examine something fully if you are busy rejecting the existence of it. Whatever experience we may be having, Mindfulness just accepts it. It is simply another of life's occurrences, just another thing to be aware of. No pride, no shame, nothing personal at stake - what is there, is there.

Mindfulness (Sati) is an impartial watchfulness. It does not take sides. It does not get hung up in what is perceived. It just perceives. Mindfulness does not get infatuated with the good stuff. It does not try to sidestep the bad stuff. There is no clinging to the pleasant, no fleeing from the unpleasant. Mindfulness sees all experiences as equal, all thoughts as equal, and all feelings as equal. Nothing is suppressed. Nothing is repressed. Mindfulness does not play favorites.

Mindfulness (Sati) is non-conceptual awareness. Another English term for Sati is 'bare attention.' It is not thinking. It does not get involved with thought or concepts. It does not get hung up on ideas or opinions or memories. It just looks. Mindfulness registers experiences, but it does not compare them. It just observes everything as if they were occurring for the first time. It is not analysis which is based on reflection and memory. It is, rather, the direct and immediate experience of whatever is happening, without the medium of thought. It comes BEFORE thought in the perceptual process.

Mindfulness (Sati) is present-time awareness. It takes place in the here and now. It is the observance of what is happening right now, in the present moment. It stays forever in the present, surging perpetually on the crest of the ongoing wave of passing time. If you are remembering your second-grade teacher, that is memory. When you then become aware that you are remembering your second-grade teacher, which is Mindfulness. If you then conceptualize the process and say to yourself, "Oh, I am remembering", that is thinking.

Mindfulness (Sati) is non-egoistic alertness. It takes place without reference to self. With Mindfulness one sees all phenomena without references to concepts like "me", "my" or "mine". For example, suppose there is a pain in your left leg. Ordinary consciousness would say, "I have a pain." Using Mindfulness, one would simply note the sensation as a sensation. One would not tack on that extra concept "I". Mindfulness stops one from adding anything to perception, or subtracting anything from it. One does not enhance anything. One does not emphasize anything. One just observes what is there - without distortion.

Mindfulness (Sati) is goal-less awareness. In Mindfulness, one does not strain for results. One does not try to accomplish anything. When one is mindful, one experiences reality in the present moment in whatever forms it takes. There is nothing to be achieved. There is only observation.

Mindfulness (Sati) is awareness of change. It is observing the passing flow of experience. It is watching things as they are changing. It is seeing the birth, growth, and maturity of all phenomena. It is watching phenomena decay and die. Mindfulness is watching things moment by moment, continuously. It is observing all phenomena - physical, mental or emotional - whatever is presently taking place in the mind. It is seeing how the thing makes us feel and how we react to it. In Mindfulness, one watches the universe within.

Mindfulness is an extremely difficult concept to define in words - not because it is complex, but because it is too simple and open. The same problem crops up in every area of human experience. Mindfulness is a pre-symbolic function. You can play with word symbols all day long and you will never pin it down completely. We can never fully express what it is. However, we can say what it does.

Sent By Priyanka Jayakody

For our **October** issue, we decided to have the theme of

**“Cultural Diversity.”**

**Do you have any interesting stories, articles or any other thing you would like to share with our readers on that topic? If so, send your submission to us soon.**

**Thank You!**

### Recipe Corner PEANUT BUTTER COOKIES

½ cup Butter, softened

1 cup Packed brown Sugar

¾ cup Smooth Peanut Butter

1 Egg

1 tsp Vanilla

1 ½ cups All purpose flour

1 ½ tsp Baking powder

¼ tsp Baking soda

Pinch Salt

Halved peanuts (optional)

In a large bowl, cream together butter & sugar. Add peanut butter, creaming thoroughly. Beat egg & vanilla. In a separate bowl, mix together flour, baking powder, baking soda & salt. Blend into creamed mixture. Shape into balls 1-1/4 inches (3cm) in diameter; place on lightly greased baking sheets. Flatten slightly with floured fork (in one direction or criss-cross). If desired, top each cookie with a peanut half.

Bake in 350F (180 C) oven for 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned. Let cool on baking sheets for a few minutes, and then remove to racks to cool completely. Makes about 40. (Courtesy: *The New Canadian Basics cookbook* by Carol Ferguson).

Sent by Nazrana Caffoor



## Mahamaya Girls' College Alumnae Association of North America

### *Undergraduate & Graduate Scholarship Program*

- This scholarship is intended to provide cost of books and material for a single semester for Mahamaya Girls' College alumnae pursuing undergraduate studies in the United States and Canada.
- Each scholarship award may range from \$250.00 to \$300.00, depending on the availability of funds.
- The scholarship will be awarded to (a) student(s) demonstrating outstanding academic achievements, leadership ability, participation in extracurricular activities, and a significant level of financial need.
- Incoming high school students are required to include *copies* of their school transcript(s) – G.C.E. Ordinary Level and Advanced Level Examination Certificates (if applicable).

#### APPLICATION PERIOD AND DEADLINE:

September 1, 2007 – October 30, 2007

Applications postmarked after the deadline will *not* be accepted.

#### AWARD NOTIFICATION:

On or before November 30, 2007

#### APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- Please visit our website at <http://www.mahamayaalumna.org> to view and download the scholarship application.
- Be sure to read the 'Directions and Requirements' carefully before completing the application.
- If you have any questions about the MGCAANA Scholarship Program, please contact the Scholarship Selection Committee at [Mahamaya\\_alumnae@yahoo.com](mailto:Mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com).

Thank you very much for your interest in the Mahamaya Girls' College Alumnae Association of North America Undergraduate & Graduate Scholarship Program, and we look forward to reading your completed application.

Hello!

Here I am once again sharing bits and pieces of my life and still awaiting to hear what's going on in your lives. Hopefully we will hear from you all soon!

As for me I have re entered the workforce on a full time basis after seven years and needless to say the whole house and all of us are a mess. I haven't quite got the balance of home and office and the forward planning bit worked out yet. I am still taking a day at a time.

Our little daughter goes to preschool now. She settled in eagerly at first and then she had withdrawal symptoms. It was very hard to deal with. The mom, dad and daughter were all in tears most mornings. Then dad had to stay home with her on some days to comfort her. Then she settled in perfectly and was eager to go to school. Just as I was breathing a sigh of relief I had calls from her teachers saying that she is straying out of class. So we sat her down and told her that this was a NO NO. We offered to move her to a different school all the while explaining to her that she did not need to run away. She did not want that either and we were at the end of our tethers trying to figure this out. Finally she opened up and said that she did not like the class she spends the afternoon in as her usual friends are not there. "So I thought if I am really really naughty the teacher would say she does not want Iru in her class and send me back to my own class." Mind you she is three and heaven help us when she embarks on her teenage years! As we are sprucing up the house for sale, my better half put in fresh plants in the minute garden patch we have. Iru was caught uprooting some. When asked why she responded, "I want to plant them upside down and want to see if the leaves will become roots and roots will become leaves!" Obviously I had no idea what to tell her as she is the kind of person who wants to make sure for herself rather than believe what anyone says, including the mother of course. The other day I went grocery shopping with her and told her that she couldn't ask for anything as Amma didn't have much money. Iru went, stood by the Candy rack and said to this rather bemused stranger, "My mom has no money, do you have money for me to buy Candy?"

While the dad was away attending a conference our son Meth told many that Daddy was away on vacation and I could feel the raised eye brows of many wondering what kind of a family we were. Dad jetting off on vacation leaving the mom and the kids to fend for themselves!

Meth is getting ready to graduate from preschool and it is a highly exciting time for the whole family. Kind of sad too as this is it. For the next 20 years of his life learning, homework, deadlines, tests will engulf him. Our vacations will have to be planned according to his schedule. What he does and achieves and becomes in these years will lay the foundation for what he will become in adulthood. We hope discipline, self control, integrity and compassion will precede everything else in his life.

Sent by Chathuri Nugawela-Munasinghe

*"When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us."*

*~ Helen Keller*

## Book Corner

We haven't been able to keep up with our Book Corner in the last couple of issues of the Newsletter. We would love to hear from you about books you would like to recommend to our readers. They may range from children's books to novels to biographies to history to fantasy to any other topic that you may want to share.

Here are some novels that I really loved reading.

***A Fine Balance***

by Rohinton Mistry

***The curious incident of the dog in the night time***

by Mark Haddon

***Life of Pi***

by Yann Martel

Dakshika Bandaranayake



Hello everybody! I am Dakshika Bandaranayake (married name, Herath), editor of the August 2007 volume of **Maya Puwath**. I was a student at Mahamaya from 1982 to 1996. Soon after I left school, I went to India to study speech, language pathology and audiology at Bangalore University. How I came to study this never-before-heard-of field is a topic for another time! After completing my bachelor's degree in India, I came to the US in 2001 to pursue higher studies in the same field. I completed my master's degree in speech, language pathology in 2003 at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio, and joined the PhD program at the same university the same year. Currently, I am in the midst of completing the last part of my qualifying exam and starting the dissertation. However, more importantly, I also have taken up another more important degree called Marriage in 2005 and now I am married to the wonderful person named Sanjeeva Herath, who moved to Cincinnati for me! He is currently working as an accountant and auditor at a company called Deloitte & Touche. To commemorate our second anniversary, we are to be blessed with our first baby soon. In fact, very soon! By the way, I like to take time off from my busy school-life by enjoying weekends at home with my husband, reading (Harry Potter and Anne of Green Gables and every one of those T.B. Illnagaratna's books to name a few), decorating cakes (I am Wilton certified and take orders!) and observing Sil at our Sri Lankan temple here once a month to bring some meaning to this life. Although I miss being away from my family back home terribly, one of my two brothers joined me at the same university in 2005, and now both my parents are to join us here in the US to be with us for a while and for the birth of our baby! What more can I ask for!

Editorial Committee : Dakshika Bandaranayake (chief editor), Chathuri Nugawela- Munasinghe, Priyanka Jayakody and Nazrana Caffoor .

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