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HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL LEAGUE FOR PRESERVATION

HELP – for helse, miljø og fredsarbeid

Nyhetsbrev nr. 1

Redaksjonen avsluttet: 06.08.2006

Kjære venner i Norge og Sverige!

En stor takk til alle som har bidratt med gaver i forbindelse med åpningen av Siripalas folkehøgskole i Sri Lanka! Vi fikk til sammen over 6.000 kroner, og mesteparten ble overført rett før den offisielle og høytidelig åpningen 28. juli. Tidligere i vår har Ringerike folkehøgskole samlet inn og overført 7.000 kroner som ble brukt til møbler. Takk igjen – til dere alle.

Jeg har nettopp fått et referat fra sermonien, sendt av Siripala på mail. Han har også lagt ved talen som Marie Aukrust holdt, et bidrag som passer fint i denne sammenheng. Hans Petter og jeg sender med dette det første nyhetsbrevet for HELP.

Asbjørn

Report from Siripala

The ceremony started 9.45 am and the monks started to chant Pirith Dhamma¹ (se fotnote). Marie cut the ribbon and opened the main door to the office exactly 9.48 as an auspicious time while the monks were chanting the Pirith.

After all the guests and the people were seated the secretary of HELP invited the guests,

¹) Chanting "Pirith Dhamma" er et vanlig, buddistisk rituale, både i templene og i folks hjem. Munkene synger eller resiterer fra pirit-boka (Pali-tekster), med formålet å velsigne / bringe hell og lykke til landbyen, hjemmet, det nye huset, den syke eller kvinnen som skal føde.

directors and the village committee leaders to light the ceremonial oil lamp. For this occasion over 50 people were presented including:

- our special guests Marie Aukrust, Øyvind and Åsmund from Norway
- High priest in Isipathana Vihara
- High priest in Warakagoda Vihara
- Assistant A.G.A.², Horana
- G.S.³, Horana
- Chairman, "Sanasuma Sundarara Environmental Foundation, Pokunuvita
- Chairman, "Gallena Vihara Environmental Foundation", Warakagoda
- Chairman, "Batuvita Amuna Environmental Organization", Batuvita
- 3 village committee leaders
- With the community leaders of this area.



²) Assisterende fylkesmann

³) Grama Sevaka (Village Headman), lokal offentlig tjenestemann i Horana

HELPS adresse i Sri Lanka:

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HELPS bankkonto: A/C 0000720064 i Bank of Ceylon, 87, Anguruwathota Road, Horana, Sri Lanka

Registrert NGO under Voluntary Service Organisation Act. No. 8 of 1998 No. HDS/S.S.O/11/2001

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Bankkonto: 2020 32 12187. Swiftkode: SWEDNOKK

IBAN-nr.: NO83 2020 3212 187

The welcome speech and introduction and the objectives of the ceremony was explained by Siripala Gamage. Other speeches: High Priests in Horana, High Priest in Warakagoda, Marie Aukrust from Norway, Chairman, “Sanasuma Sundara Environmental Foundation”. Thanks giving speech was given by the secretary of HELP Mohan Perera. In the end everybody got tea with many different kinds of sweets prepared by the villagers.

Siripala Gamage

I include here a statement from Marie to the friends in Sri Lanka.



Fra åpningssermonien i det nye senteret

To my dear friends in Sri Lanka

I was in Asia for six months in 1982. I worked within Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka, and here I met Siripala for the first time in Deniyaya.. Afterwards I worked with Mother Teresa in a hospital for dying people and also a hospital for children in Calcutta in India. As a biologist, I also got the possibility to join an ecological expedition in Nepal, leaded from a Swedish University.

It was in many ways a shock for me to do the different experiences I did during those six months, but also a kind of shock to come back to Norway. To really feel all the poverty and the gap between people living on the same earth.

Coming to Sri Lanka in 1982 I in many ways felt like coming home, meeting so many friendly people to whom I felt a close relation in the way of thinking and living, in the moral-philosophy of Buddhism. I also enjoyed the

nature and the climate very much, and I realized the great natural resources your country really have, and how colonialism and bad governing has destroyed and exploited and made the conditions difficult for people.

I grew up on a farm in a family where my parents and other people really also strived, and they lived in a near relation to nature and also the spiritual world as an entity. They tried to do the efforts of keeping a harmony and a balance in life. I think I also got all those values integrated in my life, and I always have felt it important for myself to seriously try to live like that in my own everyday-life. I feel it bad when there is a great discrepancy between what people proclaim as their belief and thinking and what they really are doing.

I have in my mind had the dream of coming back to these friendly people and the wonderful country. Although I have not had contact with Siripala through many years, I knew in my mind that the meaning was that we would meet again, and that I would have more to do with Sri Lanka. So, last year we met again, and I heard about the important work you do in HELP, also about your good way of working, so I also wanted to in a way support your good work. Now I am very pleased and grateful to have got the possibility to come here once more with two of my sons in 2006.

It is a great pleasure for all of us to stay with Sriyani and Siripala, and feel how they take care of us, and how we really feel to be at home. Also how they involve us in their own lives, we enjoy their food, and we have been guests and met so many other lovely people from their



families and friends, and also traveled around and seen the variety of nature and natural conditions.

Before we came here we really did not know so much about the plan about what to do here in addition to do something for HELP, but we are all very satisfied with what we have got the possibility to experience to get a little more understanding. I feel sorry that I did not have in mind that we perhaps also got invitations to be guests in other families than Siripalas, so I did not bring any gifts with me for occasions like this. But then I feel perhaps the most important thing I can say and do is to give all of you this writing, where I tell you that I keep you all in my mind and in my heart. And that I see my own personal responsibility to in different ways doing my best for perhaps contributing to a better mutual understanding of the challenges we all face to make a better world, and how to do that in our lives.

I believe also that we can have an important role when we come back to Norway in trying to bring a little more knowledge and perhaps of understanding about the things I have mentioned here. All throughout the world, both in poor and rich countries, there are good and bad things to face. The tasks are many. I think a lot of people, also in the young generation growing up in western civilian populations with all privileges are losing the hope for the future for the world, and they feel serious depressions and anxiety. The reasons are many and complex; threat of terror and conflicts, environmental problems, consequences of globalization, increasing violence and using drugs, a more inhuman society because of materialism and loose of moral and spiritual belief.

One of my projects in Norway is trying to help the less fortunate people who are using drugs and are living outside also in the cold winter to get a new possibility to another life. That is difficult, also to get money. So, I think mankind has to pay a price also for the consequences of wealth. I know that perhaps many of you have the dream of coming to a country like Norway, but I am not sure that you would be happy there because of stress and pressure and the mentality

of many people. Mahatma Gandhi expressed that “if you are an owner of more than five things, then the things are the owner of you”. That means that we become slaves of many things. Money is necessary, but not the importance of life.

In Norway we have our freedom to express our meanings and to go everywhere, we live in peace, and we have a beautiful nature. But I mean a lot of people do not really value all these privileges we have in a country that indeed is one of the best countries to live in. So, I think many people should come to Sri Lanka and experience the reality of living here, to possibly change their mind and attitudes and see their own responsibility.

The responsibility of each of us in our thinking and doing, although we are living in Norway or in Sri Lanka is important and necessary for a better understanding and a better world. Doing our best in realizing this, we can all see a hope for the future. I think HELP is doing this. Nobody can do everything, but everybody can do something.

All of you are welcome to our country and our home, and we then have a desire that you will feel home like we do here because of your hospitality. We wish all the best for everybody of you, for HELP and for your wonderful country. We never will forget you.

With love from

Marie, Øyvind and Åsmund Aukrust



Åsmund, Marie, Sriyani, Øyvind og Charika

Tanker om framtida

Etter at administrasjonsbygningen / bygdahuset / folkehøgskolen i Dolahena er åpnet, melder tanken seg om en link mellom HELP og folkehøgskolen i Norge med større tyngde.

Denne direkte-kontakten har vært fraværende noen år; nå synes vi at det er på tide å gjøre et framstøt for å etablere slik kontakt igjen. Dette er også en del av Siripalas plan med nybygget, at det skal fylles med ivrige folkehøgskole-elever og -lærere, som skal lære om broderfolket i Sri Lanka gjennom aktiv deltakelse i det daglige liv og arbeid. Hvordan skal vi få til en slik kontakt?

Vi spør dere som deltakere i Venneforeningen om gode tips og idéer. Hvilke folkehøgskoler / personer tenker dere på i denne forbindelse? Eller er det andre skoleslag/grupperinger som kan ønske en slik forbindelse til en handlekraftig økologisk bevegelse som HELP? Send oss deres tanker om dette.

Interfolk

Mandag 14. august er det styremøte i InterFolk, folkehøgskolenes egen bistandsorganisasjon. Asbjørn og Hans Petter er innkalt for å drøfte kompendiet om InterFolks historie, som de har fått tilsendt fra oss. Dette blir et interessant tilbakeblikk på fortida, men kan også gi perspektiver på framtida. Vi vil nevne muligheten for en folkehøgskoleavdeling i Sri Lanka, så får vi se om det er noen interesse for dette. La oss håpe på en utvikling i saken!

Dersom noen er interessert i Interfolks (Verdandis) tidlige historie, så kontakt med Asbjørn, og vi sender denne.

Om givertjenesten

I omtalen av givertjenesten i forrige brev skrev vi følgende:

1. Gi et beløp når det passer, til prosjektkonto 2020 32 12187.
2. Forplikte seg på et fast månedlig beløp kr. 50.- eller mer. Hver og en av dere avtaler med sin egen bank om månedlig overføring til prosjektkonto.

Huttetu, tenkte jeg den gangen; dette blir vanskelig. Avtale med banken krever telefoner og møter og avtaler og godkjenning etc. m.m. og sånt noe. Men det er såre enkelt, iallfall for dere som har nettbank:

- Gå inn i nettbank; trykk på Betale.
 - Du får flere alternativer; trykk på Faste betalinger.
 - Fyll ut rubrikkene for Start dato og Stopp dato og Beløp. Vips, så er det gjort!
- Med dette håper vi å få flere faste betalere. På forhånd takk!

Hans Petter



Illustrasjon: Kari Mjåtveit

Forsiden: Flybildet på 1. side viser et utsnitt av landsbyen Dolahena. Det nye senteret ligger over "O" i FOR, mens hjemmet til Sriyani og Siripala har rødt tak og ligger over "U" i LEAGUE.