

# CFL Newsletter

Issue 2

Winter 1995

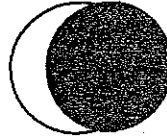
*All things bear the shade on their backs*

*and the sun in their arms;*

*By the blending of breath*

*from the sun and the shade,*

*Equilibrium comes to the world.*



Lao Tzu

The magic of the solar eclipse of October 24th 1995 was the perfect ending to an exciting term at CFL. From dramas to dances to treks to searching for land...it's been busy as usual! Here are the highlights of our term; we hope you will enjoy catching up with us.

## *Curriculum Meetings*

In May of this year, the teachers had their annual curriculum meetings, lasting 2 weeks. We talked about each age group in turn and in a great deal of depth - what are the particular difficulties that children of this age have in academics? - in their interactions with other children or adults? - what are they especially vulnerable to at this age? - what new things are becoming important to them? - what new strengths are they developing? We explored possible changes in the curriculum to address these issues. It was an important and valuable exercise for us all. We have a detailed write-up of the main points of our discussion, so if you are interested in seeing a copy please write to us, we'll be happy to send one. We have new names for the student groups - Sarala, Bilwa, Tamala (5-10 years old); Palasha (10-12); Ketaki (12-14); Parijatha (14-16); Champaka and Sevantika (16-18); and Ashvatha (the Post School students, 18 plus).

## *Saanen*

Soon after school began, three teachers left for a visit to Saanen, Switzerland, to attend the annual Krishnamurti gathering. A friend of CFL, Mr. Friedrich Grohe, who lives in Switzerland, sponsored the trip for our teachers. They participated in discussions, went for long walks in the Alps and met with old friends. One of the teachers, Gopal, stopped at Saanen on his way to the U.S. where he has joined a graduate program in Colorado. In fact, for a while we wondered what would now happen to the active drama program he had begun at CFL. But only for a little while.

## *Drama Festival*

Early in the term, the Madras K.F.I. School announced a Drama/Dialogue festival to be held in August. Several schools were invited to put up plays at the festival, but they had to work with original scripts.

*Enter Keshav, a post school student, from left.*

Keshav (tentatively): Good morrow, friends. I have here a play I wrote for you all to perform in Madras.

Students (eagerly): What play is it?



Keshav (seriously): I've adapted Franz Kafka's "The Trial".

Students (doubtfully): You've adapted who's what?

*Exeunt.*

After weeks of hard work (plus perhaps a few grey hairs on the director's head) they left for Madras for the festival. The play turned out wonderfully well. Invited drama critics appreciated the lighting, stage management, restrained acting and direction. So the rest of us wanted to see it as well, and it was decided to restage "The Trial" at the term-end CFL cultural programme.

### *Cultural Programme*

The Saralas, Bilwas and Tamalas had also been practicing hard at a play called "The Ungrateful Man" by David Horsburgh, to be performed in English, Kannada and Hindi (one act each). As with all junior school performances, whatever they did on stage, whether part of the script or not, was highly entertaining! Of course, the junior school teachers assured us that the real drama was going on backstage, even more hilarious than the play itself! The Palashas danced an Improvisation piece, and the Ketakis followed that with their own dance based on Butoh, Japanese dance theatre. These two plus a beautifully choreographed 'Garba' (a traditional Indian folk dance) were taught to the students by Sunita Amin, visiting dance teacher. The senior students put up an impressive performance with "The Trial", and with that the programme, as well as the term, were over. In a few days, almost everyone in CFL would be off on an exciting 'October Trip'.

### *The Trips*

Our annual school excursions give us the chance to interact with the children on a completely new level, in different and challenging surroundings. The students take on new responsibilities and invariably rise to them. Of course, we all enjoy the contact with nature, with people from completely different backgrounds, the visits to historical or cultural landmarks, the physically challenging activities - but it is also a challenge for us to live without the comforts of home for several weeks! This year, we had decided that as many of the groups as possible would chase the total solar eclipse into North India. The region of totality extended from Rajasthan in the northwest to Diamond Harbour on the east coast. So we'd pulled out our maps and chosen a few places along the line that would also allow for some trekking and sightseeing. It took over two hours to match teachers with student groups with places! The younger groups went on shorter trips to places in South India, but viewed the partial eclipse from wherever they were. Here follow a few words about each trip, written by the teachers who went on them.

Saralas stayed on the banks of the Lingammakki reservoir and experienced the joy of water sports activities like swimming, rafting, coracle rowing, and other camping activities in the rain forest for 5 days. They went on nature walks and briefly interacted with the nature school run by the Adventurers at Honnemaradu, in Shimoga district of Karnataka.

The Bilwas traveled all over Kerala, taking ferry and train rides and tracking wild elephants.

Tamalas - Todikana, Wynad - Temple, waterfalls, bamboo bridges, silver-gold-blue fish, frogs, leeches, swims in rivers, maze houses, forests, birds, watermelon, orchids, ferns, snakes!

The Palashas saw the elegance of the Lal Kila, the lofty peaks of Kulu-Manali, the wondrous birds of Bharatpur, the splendour of the Taj. And of course, the majesty and immensity of the solar eclipse.

The Ketaki trip had marvelous scenery, pine-scented air, snowclad peaks, glaciers, and an unforgettable total solar eclipse. But ask them the highlight of the trip and they would say - snow! - enough to build a snowman and have a fight.

The Parijathas traveled across the various regions of Rajasthan for the 21 days of their trip, mainly to study its life and culture.

Champakas and Sevantikas trekked through the Western ghats with the Adventurers. It was

Pugmark barkscratch waterfern mudfrog, Raindrop leafall rockmoss fortwall,

Beehive birdnest snakecoil wetlog, Whitewater giantfern birdsong waterfall, for three weeks!

Many of our students visited and enjoyed the hospitality of other schools on their journeys - the Tibetan Children's Village in Dharamsala, Scindia School in Fort Gwalior, Bhagirathi Valley School in Uttar Kashi and Fabindia School in Rajasthan.

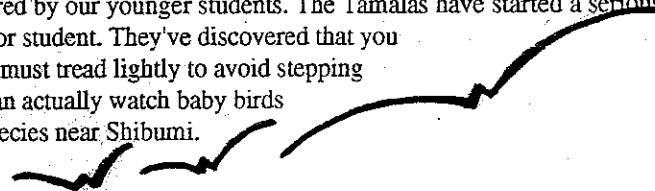
A couple of teachers who stayed right here in Bangalore nevertheless did some traveling to beautiful places - several kilometres outside the city. Their work on these travels has been both exhausting and exhilarating - they are looking for the perfect piece of land that CFL can finally call home. We had always intended to move to a campus large enough for a few teachers' homes with attached hostels, in addition to our regular school buildings. We had also hoped to have enough funds to acquire a fairly large piece (about 20 acres). So we've been excitedly surveying every candidate piece, imagining our students climbing that tree, walking down that path, scrambling over that rock, watching the sun sink behind that hill..... until POP!! the dream bursts and we realise it takes a ton of negotiations and paperwork and time to buy 20 acres of land. However, we seem to be closing in on one or two promising pieces - perhaps in the next newsletter we'll be able to report more on this.

**THE  
SEARCH FOR  
A BEAUTIFUL  
PIECE OF LAND**

*Shibumi*

Even after buying the land, it will take an estimated two to three years for us to establish enough infrastructure there for CFL to move. Meanwhile, we continue to enjoy our present farm location, Shibumi. It is incredibly green at this time of year, and the weather's just perfect, just cool enough to make you look for the sunny spots to sit in. Three new structures have come up for classroom space (Totorum, Aquarium and Compendium), cool smooth cement floors, foot-high walls and sloping thatched roofs.

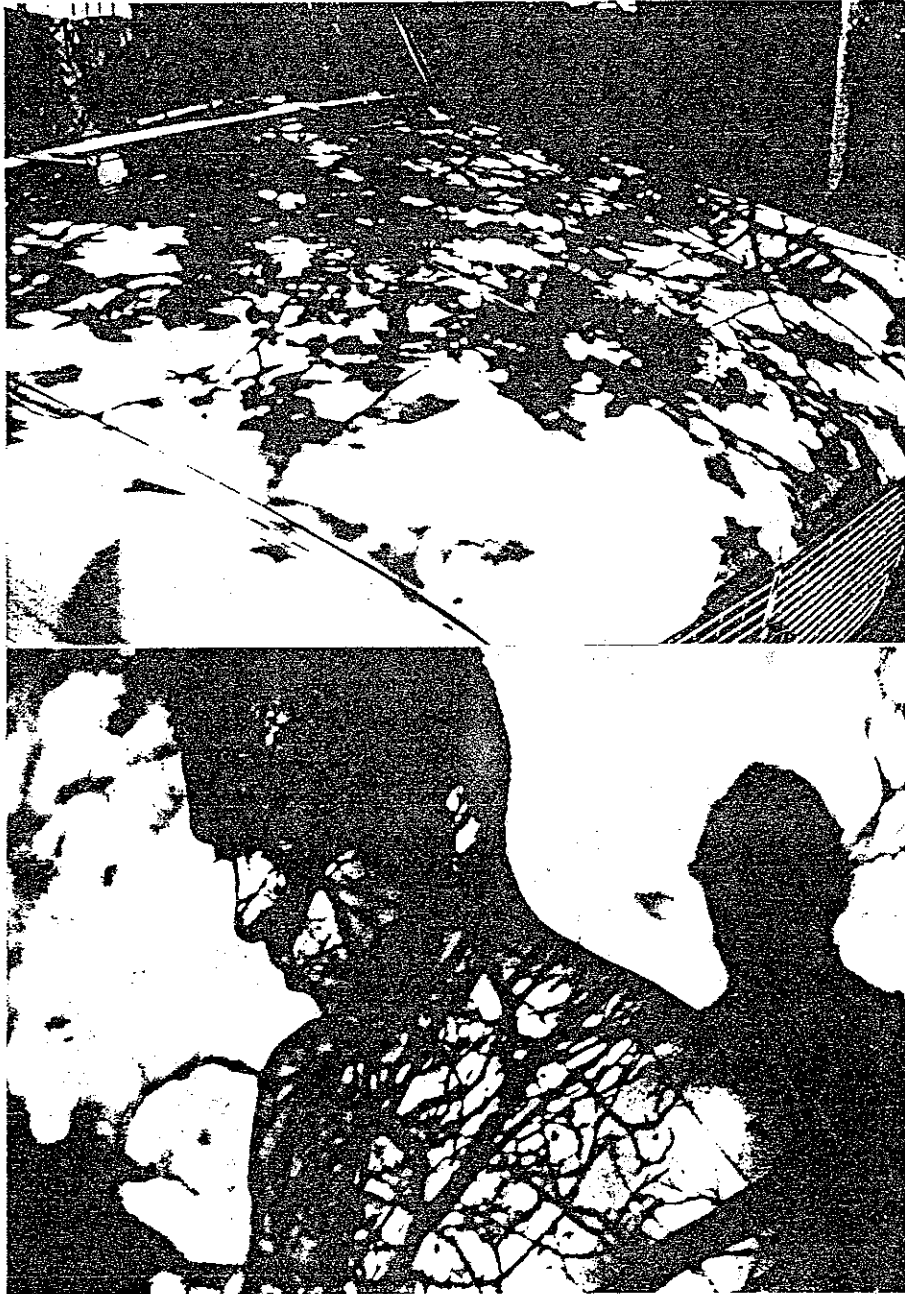
The area around Shibumi is being further explored by our younger students. The Tamalas have started a serious birdwatching program with an experienced senior student. They've discovered that you have to walk very quietly to spot birds, that you must tread lightly to avoid stepping on some birds' nests, that if you're patient you can actually watch baby birds being fed. In all, they've identified around 25 species near Shibumi.



This year we've been happy to welcome a young Japanese student to CFL, Ryouhei Kazikawa. He came here to learn English for a year, and has ended up doing a lot more - dancing, origami, hiking and eclipse-watching. In just 6 months, he's learned a lot of English, though the rest of us have learned almost no Japanese. Sunita Amin, an ex-Valley School student, is also here for the year. She graduated in dance from Oberlin College, Ohio, and is taking a year off before returning for a Masters. She's teaching traditional and modern dance. Arya has been here for the term as an apprentice teacher-in-training with the junior school. As some of you may know, Kabir Jaithirtha is on a two-year sabbatical from teaching.

*Post-Schoolies*

Each of our post-school students has been busy with projects and/or academic coursework. They've also done a bit of traveling - within the country and outside. Sirish spent 3 months in England's Lake District at Yewfield, learning to work on the land. He later visited a youth camp near Sochi in Russia as Vladimir's guest, then went to Holland as Maryan's guest. In these various places, he has hiked, mountaineered, almost lost his fingers to frostbite, rode wild horses, met a professional killer, and other such routine matters. Venku spent 3 weeks in a Buddhist Meditation Centre in Sri Lanka. He has decided to get a diploma in English Literature from the London University. Keshav traveled to Ladakh in June, drinking in the mountains, with occasional sips of butter tea at Ladakhi dwellings. Amol, Arjun and Avinash spent time in the Andamans this year. They all continue their work with professionals and teachers.



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