

Dr Nirmala in the Philippines, 20-29 July 2014

After a year of facing serious challenges as a country due to natural and human induced catastrophes, the Philippines recently benefitted from a ten day visit by Didi Nirmala, who toured provincial centres in the cities of Baguio, Manila, Davao, Tagum and Cebu from 20-29 July, 2014.

DAVAO & TAGUM

In Davao City, Didi Nirmala visited smaller class locations and tied rakhi to BK students. In Tagum, a city in southern Philippines, she celebrated the class' third anniversary with the BK gathering and guests. She gave a talk on "Meditation as a Medicine" for a group of doctors and nurses who took a lot of benefit.

CEBU

In Cebu, there was a get together of VIPs and government officials. They met Didi Nirmala, had meditation and listened to a talk on "Stability". Didi also tied rakhi to the BK students there.

BAGUIO

2004 was the last time Didi Nirmala visited the Baguio Centre. This visit, from 19-20 July, was filled with one day of service to VIPs and one day was a retreat and reunion with the Baguio BK family.

On Saturday 19 July Didi Nirmala gave a talk titled "The Heart of Well-Being" to an audience of 60 VIP guests who were leaders of various sectors of the city; education, medical, political, art and religion. The essence of Didi's talk was how well-being starts in the mind and how meditation empowers the mind to live a positive life and therefore ensures one's well-being. After a brief question and answer session guests were served with a light yet filling dinner.

The next day, Sunday 20 July, the Baguio BKs had the auspicious chance of celebrating Raksha Bandhan with Didi. The morning started with a class on how weaknesses can turn into strengths, followed by a welcome program. After a light breakfast, the Baguio family had their Rakhis tied. New students had a short class from Didi on the value of Rakhi and the blessings that come with a spiritual life. All students sat in blissful silence and gave their written pledges as they received their Rakhis.



Didi at Inner Space with Narda and Wilson Capuyan and Sister Salud, Baguio Centre Coordinator (L-R)



Didi with Baguio Centre's Sisters

It was a lovely reunion of Didi with the old and new students as the next part of the retreat was a Question and Answer session with Didi. Many questions ranged from Brahmin practices to questions about attending classes and receiving sustenance. Having Didi in the Baguio centre was an auspicious opportunity to harmonize personalities and create a service event that benefitted many. More importantly, it was a reminder and an affirmation of a loving and very personal connection with Didi, Madhuban and God.



Didi with Baguio Center's Brothers



Class at Baguio

After lunch and personal meetings, Didi left for Manila and the National Retreat. Before leaving the city, Didi was able to pass by Narda's where the sub-centre, Inner Space, is housed. She tied Rakhi to proprietors Wilson and Narda Capuyan.

QUEZON

On 21 July 2014, the Department of Education National Capital Region (DepEd NCR) Project SMILE (Serve with Meaning In Lifelong Education), in collaboration with Brahma Kumaris Philippine Foundation Inc., Quezon City, invited over 100 Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents and key Education Leaders in charge of 16 cities from Metro Manila, to "Happiness at the Workplace", A Caring Conversation with Dr Nirmala Kajaria.

Dr Luz S. Almeda (Regional Director, DepEd NCR) assisted by Dr Ponciano Menguito, (Asst. Regional Director NCR) warmly welcomed everyone by personally giving each one a long-stemmed white rose. Both leaders likewise offered bouquets of flowers to Didi, Sister Rajni Daulatram (Philippines and Japan Coordinator Brahma Kumaris) and Sen. Leticia Ramos Shahani (President Brahma Kumaris Philippines Foundation, Inc.) who gave the introduction of Dr Nirmala. Also present were Dr Corazon C. Rubio (Schools Division Superintendent, Manila), and Dr Serry C. Vargas (SPED Supervisor, DepEd Quezon City) companions of Dr Almeda when she visited Mount Abu in India last February.



In her talk Didi pointed out how thoughts, attitude and perception of our work and co-workers create or destroy our happiness. She suggested staying positive and empowering the spiritual self via a closer connection with God. She explained to the mostly Christian crowd how we understand God as the Supreme Father of Christ, Buddha and all other religions, and that a connection can be stabilized by with Him by regular focused time in prayer or meditation. Sister Rajni facilitated an experience of silence through meditation towards the program's end. Picture-taking and the traditional sweets properly capped the unique event. An interview with Dr Nirmala and Dr Almeda by the Educnews DepEd National paper for the 16 division followed after. A year-long program in partnership with Brahma Kumaris Philippines is foreseen as a fruit of this initiative.



HAPPY FACES of BK guests and participants at “**Happiness at the Workplace**” program with Dr Nirmala Kajaria 21 July 2014, Quezon City, Philippines.

Front row L-R: Sen. Leticia R. Shahani (Pres. BKWSU Philippines, Foundation, Inc.), Dr Luz S. Almeda (Regional Director, DepEd NCR), Dr Nirmala Kajaria (Director Gyan Sarovar, Mt. Abu), Sr. Rajni (Philippines-Japan Coordinator BKWSU), Dr Ponciano Menguito (Asst. Regional Director, DepEd NCR). Behind them are DepEd NCR Philippines Education Key Leaders of 16 cities.

MAKATI

Special Concert: Dancing in the Light

Greenbelt, Makati, Manila; 400 people attended the program and Didi gave a talk on "Integrating Values in Life". Marge Enriquez, artist, performed a multi-media dance based on Dadi Janki's book “Companion of God” on different values.



Learning dance with sculpture by Impy Pllapil



Didi Nirjala with designer chair at Dance Concert

TAGAYTAY

Didi's Philippines visit culminated in a one and a half day national retreat held at the Centre for Spiritual Learning in Tagaytay City, with around 140 BKs experiencing "Being with the One" through classes and meditation. Songs and dances depicting happiness, contentment and gratitude welcomed the retreat.

Morning classes intersected with other classes given by Didi Nirjala who focused on the themes of purity, contentment and keeping our aim of being free from the influence of negativity. Practical points to check the remaining habits of body consciousness were outlined during one class, which had everyone reflecting deeply on their current stage. Subtle vices and their manifestations were also described in detail and enabled each one to realize the importance of constantly checking themselves.

Didi gave reminders of the aim that BKs should maintain, which is of being fully content and free from desires. "A life of spirituality", she said, "means being disinterested in the old world, practicing detachment from the body, simplicity and renunciation. By sharing the treasures that we have received we show spiritual love and acceptance to all. These include time, thoughts, words, money, breath, happiness, virtues and blessings. Sharing increases them and by giving happiness to others we will be happy".

Prior to the rakhi tying ceremony on the evening of 26 July, the Philippine family listened to a message from Dadi Janki who emphasized that "Through knowledge and yoga that I have been able to bring virtues into my practical life and do service." Dadi also said "don't think about what others are doing, we must keep a stable state of mind through silence and bring unity to the family."

Rakhi was tied amidst an atmosphere of sweet silence and love in the flower-bedecked hall after each one had written the promise they wanted to make on that auspicious day of God showering love and protection.

Question and answer sessions complemented the spiritual 'jewels' of understanding that participants took from the classes, providing an opportunity to further clarify points of various subjects. Everyone went home with renewed commitment, energy and plans of how to sustain and intensify efforts for self-progress.

9 August 2014