

MAHARASHTRA REPORT

In India whenever we have an opportunity to speak to the Human Development Training School, or a large gathering of the people of the Nava Gram Prayas or a Council we always begin with a special greeting. I would like to extend that greeting to you today. It is very simple: Namaste....Namascar....Namasgram.. This is a greeting in three languages--Hini, Marathi and Telagu (which is sometimes referred to as the Italian of the East.)

One of the finest occasions in my life was the graduation of the first Training School in Maharashtra two and one half years ago. I was given an opportunity to speak and my opening line was something like this, "My, my, my, my look what Maliwada has wrought!" I had a similar opportunity a few days ago in Maliwada when we celebrated the launching of the 232 village projects. Again, as I spoke to those 600 Indian "strong" auxiliaries and another 400 villagers and guardians and government people that attended the celebration, I began with, "My , my, my, my, my look what you have wrought!"

Now both of those statements are probably inadequate. It is more like, "Look what Being has wrought!" Look at what has been done because of our efforts, and in spite of our efforts; this is what has been wrought. What I would like to briefly report on is just that: what has been wrought by Being in Maharashtra.

It is as though an army has just emerged from a three year battle, appears on the horizon and looks back over those three years in order to face the next five years of battle. What does that army look like? What is it made of? How did it get there? How many weapons does it have, and what kind? What are its ingredients? What are the scars it bears? This is the kind of thing I want to try to express about the 232.

There are 10 things which I believe were dramatic happenings in the doing of the 232 up to the present time. The first one is that a movement, Nava Gram Prayas, New Village Movement, has been formed. In other words, 232 villages in Maharashtra plus countless supporting forces have joined to renew the villages of Maharashtra State and beyond. With them are 600 Indian strong auxiliary. These auxiliary live like the rest of you in the Order. They live in houses. They have a full common life of ritual and daily collegiums. They use manuals that provide constructs for their corporate life and guides for conversations and collegium constructs like the Journal translated into their language. They live in the villages which is a key to the movement of Nava Gram Prayas. As far as I know it is the only movement related to villages in which all the personnel live in the villages themselves, and work shoulder to shoulder with villagers. That has been utterly crucial. And as far as I know this is the first time in the history of the Institute of Cultural Affairs that we have ever had a role in creating a movement other than our own movement as an Order. I believe Nava Gram Prayas is an utterly unique kind of movement in the 20th century for it is comprised of the most common- or local - people self-consciously involved in bringing about human development.

The second dramatic event is directly related to the first. It is the creation of a cadre of giants. The 600 Indian strong mentioned above have all pledged two years of their lives to service in Nava Gram Prayas. Some of them may fall by the wayside. Many of them will go beyond. Fifty of them have now been with Nava Gram Prayas two years or longer. You have seen some of these people here. They represent all the giants that are in Maharashtra. They have been through the thick-and-thin of everything imaginable. They have arrived at a new vocation, and they manifest that vocation to their compatriots, to their colleagues and the villagers with whom they work. More and more of them have become giants as each quarter goes by. I have previously wondered, "If some catastrophe happens to us old hands, both Indians and extranationals, would Nava Gram Prayas be wiped out?" I have now ceased to worry about that. These younger ones are here to stay. At the 232 celebration, I symbolized that by kissing the feet of one of the auxiliary to show that extranational old hands were, in principle, turning over to them the mantle of being Nava Gram Prayas in history. Now you and I know that was utterly unnecessary because we stand globally shoulder to shoulder with people of all cultures and there is no difference in the men of the spirit, whatever their color, education, their sex or age. But for the doubters and those in the process of making the decision, the symbol was important.

The key to the beginning of the creation of the cadre of giants is the Human Development Training School. What a powerful tool that is! Whatever else it does, it is the happening that gives people an opportunity to make a decision. And, it is the only place where we provide extended, depth work in the spirit dimension. The work done with the profound humanness chart alone is amazing, and it continues to sustain people day in and day out. The HDTS has become the foundational, formational tool that starts people on their journey in Nava Gram Prayas. We have had ten of the eight week schools. The last five schools were each three weeks long. Evaluation of the three week school is now in process, and I am sure there will be lively dialogue on the role and merits of each in the future.

The third great happening is the creation of the replication structures. I will not take time to go over those in detail, but they include beachheads, strongholds, districts, divisions, state, and continent and Nava Gram Prayas as a whole. Then, circuit teams, division guns, strike forces, division meetings, area meetings, councils, and mass meeting designs. All of this has become so much a part of us in our every day life that we in Maharashtra do not stop very often to reflect on what has been created. The same is probably true for you. You have created and have been a part of this structure and others similar to this before Nava Gram Prayas picked it up. But that similar structure in which you have been participating has been born anew and embodied in Nava Gram Prayas.

The fourth major happening was the creation and implementation of a Community Development Association, or as you know it, the local economic vehicle. We have recast its legal form so it could be utilized in Indian society. It is now that legal entity which gives form to the polity dynamics of village life, that is, the stakes, the guilds, the secretariat (or the leaders) and the community assembly. What a peculiar catalytic instrument this is! As a

formal instrument of responsibility it organizes a village so that the village takes off! It seems to give local people a brand new way to grasp themselves as responsible for the village's total life. It gives them a way to handle their own funds, and it gives them the way to rebuild the village themselves. It plants practical possibility in their consciousness. It has caught hold like wildfire, and wherever we have been working with village community development associations, brand new things have occurred. The community development association is probably one of the great sociological instruments developed in history for it provides a way for the villages to plan as a corporate body for the welfare of all its residents. Then it can be applied to the taluka (the county) and district levels in the same way. Maybe a hundred years from now people will look back and see that instrument as significant as the creation of the panchayat system in India. I believe it has that kind of symbolic potential for India's, and possibly any nation's, development.

The fifth event was launching the modular form of the consult. We altered the regular consult format to a five-day practical design geared toward tactical implementation. Keystones in the tactical system were emphasized to break the village loose. The modular form is flexible and can be used over and over again in various ways and places. For example, we held one day economic and social modules this past quarter for all of the projects. The methods of this new consult are basic and simple. Auxiliaries and villagers can be easily trained to conduct the consult themselves. In fact, during the last three weeks in May we did 76 consults without any help from outside Maharashtra.

Incidentally, you need to know what a great boon it was to us this past year to have the "Maharashtra month-ers" who came from around the world to give a month of time to help us create a highly sophisticated method for doing consults rapidly and expanding the number of village projects. In the process our own people learned to do them. The 76 consults are the proof! There were 40 "Maharashtra month-ers" who came to India this past year. In the last three years 95-100 people have come to provide some form of extended help from a few days to a quarter. What a sign of global collegiality that is. It indicates to me that people are ready to move wherever they are needed, and are willing to leave their own heavy work, and pay for their own transportation to catalyze human development at a crucial time and place. What a happening that was for us! We could not have had the same year without them.

The sixth event was the demonstration of good will and support by the local guardians, representatives of the local private and public sector. They see a vision of possibility on a mass scale. I refer especially to small businesses, local company employees and local government officials. Where ever people in the local situation have seen our projects they are extremely responsive. Our projects have received almost complete support through such a powerful authorization base among local people throughout Maharashtra.

Our advocates and supporters are hungry for ways to participate, and are willing to do almost anything. I would like for you to meet some of them who are here. Dr. and Mrs. Shah, for example, have staffed eye clinics all over Maharashtra, especially in villages near Bombay which they can easily reach on a weekend. They supplement government health care programs with things the government can not do, and the villages are delighted when they come. Not only does Dr. Shah spend his weekends like that but he treats anyone of us who has

any kind of an ailment at any time of the day or the night. Whenever we see him he pleads with us for some way he and Mrs. Shah and others like them can be used more fully. This is the kind of guardians we have in India. Vijay Lokande is another. He is the businessman who has some small businesses in Panvel which is close to New Bombay and also close to the village of Chikhale. Anytime we need anything, we call Vijay. If the need is located in the village he jumps on his scooter to get people or deliver a message or do anything. If we have a problem, we go to Vijay. Vijay means "victory" in Hindi and Lokande means "iron man". What a name! What a character! Mr. Dethe has already been introduced and I will not say too much more about what he does. I remember when we first went to Maliwada three years ago and saw Mr. Dethe. He had had four heart attacks and the doctors had instructed him to take it easy, so he went out to start the Malisada Consult. Since then, he has been always ready to go whether it is in India, Latin America or wherever; all you have to do is call him. Then there is Raminder Wasu who is a guardian for the Sikor project. She always introduces herself as a resident of Sikor. She is one of our newest guardians but most supportive. A brand new local guardian network has indeed burst forth. We tried to launch a guardian network a year and a half ago on a statewide level. Everyone who attended the meetings sat around and made intellectual statements. They were hungry to do something, but they did not know how. The local guardians do know how. We have moved to capture their self-conscious support.

Also, we have begun to see that the repository is locally based. One of our staff ceaselessly remarks that all that is needed for village renewal is Taluka or District based. This may be pushing it a little but it does indicate the local focus of the repository.

The seventh happening is the application of motivational pressure on all the villages of Maharashtra State. You sent us out to hit the beach and immediately expand over all the territory of Maharashtra, to cover completely all 232 talukas. We have done that and what we anticipated has happened. We have begun to put motivational pressure on other villages in Maharashtra. The results are yet unknown, but we have been receiving clues. The first clue came one and a half years ago in January, 1978, when suddenly the Human Development Training School was attended by people who just appeared. One-third of the 200 people who came were not from any of the villages we had visited. They had just come as apart of the ripple effect. And that ripple effect continued through the eight week school held in January and February, 1979. We have a different situation with the three week schools, but the ripple effect is still operative. The second clue is seen in the kind of response villages are making to our projects. Our recruitment technique for the school last fall was to do five Gram Sabbas in five villages in one taluka. The village that responded most creatively would be selected for the Project village. However, the other four were alive and awake and were good recruitment sources for the Human Development Training School. We went to a taluka and selected village X. Villages Y and Z, and A, and B asked, "Why didn't you select us?" We responded, "We can select only one village in the taluka in this round. We can come back next year to you." The villagers then commented, "Alright, we will watch Village X and whatever happens there we will do in our village." That kind of feedback or pressure is occurring. The third clue is the striking response of the selected villages the last six months. We have said from the beginning, "We are not here to do your project; we are here to work shoulder to shoulder with you to give you methods so that you can do the project yourselves." We did not believe it for, practically speaking, we tried to do the project ourselves. We still lived before that story, but practically our whole

being was focused toward trying to bring off the project ourselves. The villagers did not believe us either. They would agree and say they were willing to do the project, but they would stand back and watch us or help us trying to actuate their project. These days something new is happening across the State. Now when we arrive at a new village and give that pitch, the residents believe it, and furthermore, we believe it. These are clues to motivational pressures. They are subtle, but they are present in fantastic ways.

The eighth key event, or happening in Maharashtra is the circuit structure and monitoring dynamic. A district may contain between three and 14 talukas. Within a district we establish a district project and two stronghold village projects. We now have 75 circuits operating in Maharashtra. The circuits are responsible for catalyzing tactical action to ensure the total development of all the villages on their circuit. A circuit is responsible for two to five projects in addition to the base village. The whole tactical life and nurture of the village throughout Nava Gram Prayas rests upon the circuits.

From the beginning we held consults every quarter and launched new projects. Immediately, we were able to supply them with new project directors. Each quarter we added more projects and named new project directors. But in March a gap appeared. I discovered that we lacked trained leadership to provide each new village with a project director. In some cases, we sent out auxiliary staff but that was not adequate, without leadership the staff could not function. We had to create the circuits in order to effectively catalyze tactical action in the new projects. We now have enough people to immediately place two auxiliary staff in every one of the 232 projects and do all our circuits. But they are not strong enough yet. In most cases they are new people. To accelerate their training we have brought them into the strongholds where they will operate until they are assigned into a project as auxiliary. In the mean time they will serve as back-up people on the circuit and be trained in the strongholds. The circuit teams visit each project once every week or ten days depending on how many projects the circuit contains.

The extra-national staff are clearly a minority. They do not operate in one village anymore; they may have as many as 28 villages to watch over. Because of this, many of the projects never see a white man or an extra-national. When I was in Latin America last winter I discovered that we have assigned ten more trained extra-nationals to those five projects than we have in all of the 232 projects in Maharashtra. As far as money is concerned only the six or seven spotlight projects receive any significant amount of seed money. Since January, each of the 25 district projects has received only \$700 - \$800 to seed program actuation. All the other projects receive about \$30 or \$40 a month for actuation. One U.S. project has just received a \$120,000 gift from the government and another \$80,000 in loans; \$200,000 for that one project. That kind of funding would run the entire subcontinent for four months! I rejoice that Latin America has all those extra-nationals and I rejoice for that U.S. project's \$200,000. That is not the point. I simply wish to paint a picture of the kind of task the circuits have to do. I believe this is the way of the future for the third world countries.

The national staff bears the brunt of the circuiting work. They are relatively new. The people like those you have seen here, the giants, are very few--- about 50. The new people have little practical leadership experience, and most are uneducated. Some are illiterate; some have had a few grades of primary school education; some have graduated from high school; less have attended university; and very few, like K.K. Tupe, have a Master's degree. Most are, however, uneducated. The majority are young- in their late teens or early twenties. Last year, I said that training was the key for the coming year and described how we had learned to train people to be giants in HDTS and on-the-job in projects. I went on to say we needed to teach them to jump out of their skins. Well, I was wrong. It would require four, five, or ten years to train people to jump into a whole new realm. In practical field operation, we cannot ask them to be other than who they are, and that is what we have to work with.

Now, consider the drama. Inexperienced, uneducated youth go to a village and they encounter tough village leaders. The leaders have made it. They are shrewd and intelligent. Many are ruthless in order to survive. Almost all have care within them already or awaiting to burst. They are impatient with immaturity and naivety, and they will not put up with any kind of sham or pretension. Now consider yourself as a circuiter. You go into the village...you have no money, no special skills, not much education, little leadership experience, and you are looked down on as an immature youth. What in the world are you going to do? That is the situation.

We have worked to develop an actuation model for community patterns which has become utterly crucial. Incidentally, I was extremely pleased with what was happening in the Latin American projects in this respect. In the midst of getting all the programs started, community patterns were emphasized. In the subcontinent, Being has squeezed us in such a way that we are forced to take community patterns with practical seriousness. Every village must make the decision to renew itself on behalf of others; no one else can make this decision for them. And every village has to plan how it will carry out that renewal and do its own implementation; no one else can do that either. That is where we must begin--with the people we have.

We have been experimenting six months with a new form of practical application of corporate patterns. Then, last quarter, one of the divisions experimented with this new model. At the June council, we decided that the major emphasis across all the circuits would be this model. We have named our first quarter maneuvers: "Breaking Loose the Power of the 232. (stakes and guilds)" Circuiters begin with short maneuver forms on the stake level and then begin to activate all the dynamics of community organization. They push for effective tactical action. Village action is tied into the circuits as villagers and circuiters attend circuit planning meetings where ruthless accountability is held for their own village implementary plans. Circuits are usually done by two people, an auxiliary person and a project director or a villager from another village. First they meet with the village leaders and then go to the stakes and begin to plan. They have a very simple chart that they use with each of the five stakes. The twenty, thirty, or forty people in attendance fill the chart out themselves. The chart is contentless; it can be related to the consult document, to campaign plans, to the previous month's work, or to any quarter's battle plan. People learn how to fill in the chart very quickly. They are ready to respond, and this form gives them a concrete and objective way to participate. This has become a structure by which the village can become involved in planning for itself. The information from the chart is taken to a community meeting where the three victories from each stake are gestalted into five victories. Then the community

decides what it will do, who will do it, and how they will do it. The next morning the leaders meet with the guilds and tactical action is carried out. This method equips the young circuiter to avoid a confrontation with those grizzled village leaders. The village leaders honor the methodology because they have experienced it in the consult, and know it makes for authentic local planning. They trust it. The method allows the circuiter to dialogue with ordinary, uneducated villagers; he is one of them, though from another village. In the stake meeting he can talk with them and inspire them to work. The results from the stakes' work is brought to the village meeting. The village leaders honor it, because it has come from their own people. This procedure undercuts a lot of the fear or collapse of our auxiliary which has taken place in the past. This is the only model that we have developed which actually works across the whole board, and we are going to bet our life on it this quarter. If it works, it will be the key to our future, and perhaps to replication in general.

The ninth happening was the formation of a base for a social revolution. We are not out to do projects. We could care less whether we do 100 projects, 232 projects, or 2500 projects. We are out to do replication. In doing replication we have established a network of villages that visit each other, work with each other, share expertise, plan together, and act together. That network is engaged in awaking new villages, and has pledged itself to renew all other villages in Maharashtra. That is something to take seriously. These projects, wired together in such a way, are going to profoundly affect the social fabric of the society itself, especially as they grow to number 2500 and beyond. We need to watch carefully because this movement of village renewal is going to take off far beyond us. When you imagine hard-headed village leaders gathering in the villages across a taluka, shaping plans to release new life and to bring economic and social sustenance to that taluka, you know something is going to move. When interchange takes place across talukas and districts, a village movement takes off in a brand new way. The question that faces us with new intensity is how will we be the ordering dynamic and the catalyst in the midst of that?

The tenth key event was initiation of projects in each taluka of the State of Maharashtra. This is documented with statistics: 31 Global Women's Forums, 296 Gram Sabbas and 234 consults. We have actually initiated 235 projects. We have heard the number 232 so much that we get tired of it. But this story is such an unbelievable thing to the ears of society in general that people do not know how to handle it. Their imaginal context is not equipped to appropriate it. I remember a meeting with a committee of the State government in the fall of 1976 which could not see the possibility of replication. They said, "Well now, you are doing a project in Maliwada, and you plan to do four more, okay?" They nodded at that. When we went on to discuss 25, they just stared at us. When we got to 232, they could not even hear us! It just did not compute. What they could not see was that we are not after projects being started, but after the renewal of 35,000 villages in Maharashtra. In this context the projects represent one step toward statewide village renewal.

The three additional projects which make the total 235 are Nadlapur, in Andhra Pradesh, Sikor, in Uttar Pradesh, and Chainpur in Bihar. They are what we call buffer projects. Although they lie outside Maharashtra, they are as integral a part of the replication process as the projects within the bounds of Maharashtra. They buffer in the sense that they protect the replication process from all of the swirls of life in the surrounding geography. At the same time, they are vanguard projects, for through those projects replication can move to other states of the continent.

The celebration of the 232 in Maliwada was a great happening. First of all, it provided great absolution. The coming together of the hundreds of people to celebrate was a profound stamp of approval on all that had been done. Second, it provided a great vision for the future. At the conclusion of the Maliwada Consult three and a half years ago, Lela Mosely presented Chokibaba, the 80 year old Harijan leader with an "Iron Man" picture. The picture of that presentation is well known to all of us. This year at the celebration, Lyn Mathews, on behalf-of the global Order, presented Chokibaba with a plaque of Maharashtra commemorating the completion of the 232 and laying the State out before us. What a celebration!

In closing, I would like to say two things about the future. One is that our replication model calls for 2500 more projects this year. In principle this is no problem for we have learned how to initiate projects coming and going. The challenge is wiring together the projects and catalyzing the remaining villages in each taluka so that new life will explode across the geography. To do that we will need strong circuiters and auxiliaries in each of the 232 to succeed. Next, what we need to watch for in the future is a brand new break loose in the spirit...new life in Nava Gram Prayas. And, if you would allow me to prophesy on our behalf, precisely that is going to happen in a fantastic way. Our increasing ability to put the power of the villagers back into their own hands and the power of renewal to their disposal will do something to us. That power will eventually explode back toward us. And when that happens, we are going to experience a brand new surge of life. I do not know what it will do to us, but I prophesy it will do something great. We need to watch for it out of the corner of our eye. I don't know how soon it will come, but it will come.