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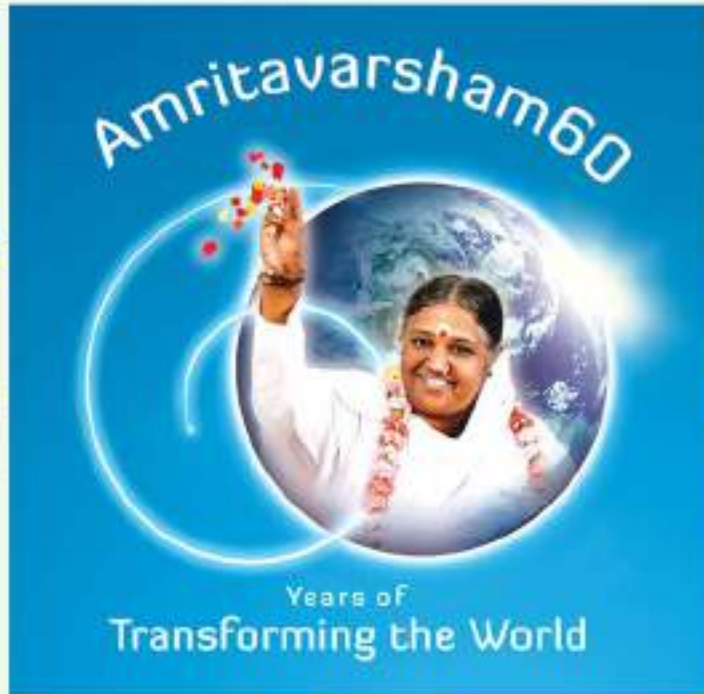
The Amritapuri Campus Newsletter

Live the Ideal, Love the Change

समवेद



The Quarterly Newsletter September 2013 Vol-1 Issue-3





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Note: Any possible omission of news items since they did not reach us in time is regretted. Our student & staff editorial assistants in the various departments are requested to be alert to avoid recurrence of such a lapse in the future. Thank you all. (Please send feedback & Article to samved@am.amrita.edu)

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From Amma to Us (and ALL humanity):

Satsang on the Eve of Amma's Birthday



Anxiety is the worst enemy of modern-day mankind, leading to not just waste of time over pointless thoughts, but adding to a defeatist attitude among people. Far too often one finds people fretting over matters that never took place nor are likely to happen.

Anxiety is the result of a gross misuse of the power of our imagination. It is a thief to whom many of us willingly hand over our most precious possession – our inner strength and precious time to be stolen away right in our presence, as it were. We have all become experts at triggering ourselves off into unnecessary anxiety. We take for granted that only the worst will happen in any situation with not one single valid reason to justify such a conviction. This is in spite of the fact everyone is certain that merely fretting over them can in no way resolve any situation. Like an

old man in a rocking chair, anxiety keeps us moving without ever taking us anywhere. But while the old man my possibly find some comfort and sleep, anxiety only makes us lose sleep and all peace.

When we analyze the cause of our anxiety, we see that it typically arises either from our fear of the unborn future or from thoughts that dig uncontrollably at the graves of our past. Immobilization at the hands of ceaseless waves of thoughts – that is what anxiety is. It is like one coming forward eagerly and voluntarily to pay interest on a loan which has not even been applied for, leave alone approved.”

It is true that people are prompted to desire success and happiness in life. At the same time, all of us phase, without exception, also face problems. These problems vary with the individual. For

some, the source of their problem is their relationship while for some others, the want of it. For several others, the problems are pecuniary. There are others whose problems are health-related. However, the one problem that is common to every one of us is anxiety.

Acting with an understanding of this in mind and the sufferings of other people is the true service we can render. The whole world is ever yearning for such a service without distinctions of any kind. The first thing needed to extend this kind of service, we should be able to see ourselves in others and others in ourselves. We should be able to understand the frame of mind of the sorrowful and reach out to them. May all Amma's children be blessed with the capacity to make space for each other in their hearts. May we see the world with a vision of oneness, understanding and compassion. ■

TAP Energy, July 4 - 6, 2013.



Here was a Call to Make Use of Renewable Energy Sources!

“The era of dependence on fossil fuels is coming to an end. For mankind to survive, we have to resort to maximum utilization of renewable sources of energy, without causing detrimental effect to the environment,” stated Dr. Chandramohan, Chairman, Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, addressing the delegates at the Amritapuri campus during the inaugural ceremony of the National Conference on Technological Advancements in Power and Energy (TAP Energy).

The keynote address was delivered by Dr. VK Damodaran, Director-General, International Non Governmental Cooperation Organization for Renewable Energy (INGCORE). Speaking on technologies to power the future, he also had encouraging remarks for Amrita. “This university has been created to make a difference in the field of education and become a

model for academic institutions elsewhere.”

Expert talks, technical paper presentations and panel discussions marked the rest of the conference proceedings. A panel discussion on the last day examined the role of power electronics in distributed power generation.

Distributed generation can be used most efficiently with renewable energies and also the relatively lesser polluting fossil fuels, such as natural gas. But energy transfer needs power electronics. “Power electronics engineers will need to understand very large-scale integration, that is, the process of creating integrated circuits by combining thousands of transistors into a single chip,” panel members observed.

Over 70 research papers were received from all over India. These were reviewed by peer experts in two rounds. About 32 papers were chosen

for presentations on several research topics including power quality and smart grid technologies.

Pre-conference sessions addressed challenges in maintaining power quality in renewable energy systems and energy management considerations in industrial load scenarios to enable research scholars gain insights into potential research problems. "It was a good experience to be a part of such an innovative technical conference; valuable insights were received," shared Ajay Ingle, MTech student at Fr C Rodrigues Institute of Technology, Mumbai.

"I am very lucky to learn so many new things. Also the underlying theme of many expert talks was the contribution we can make to society. Pre-conference sessions were also very informative," commented Chidanand, PhD scholar working in Smart Grids at Amrita University.

Dr. Dhareesan Unnithan, Director, Energy Management Centre, Kerala, delivered a special address, Energy Efficiency – The Need of the Hour. "In the Kerala situation domestic consumption of electricity is 48%. Simple steps like switching off unwanted lights, fans, motors, and heaters and introducing energy efficient equipment will mean much," he pointed out.

Conservation is as important as technological advancement in finding solutions to the world-wide energy crisis of our day, all asserted. Shift in modes of transport from roads to railways for freight, promoting use of public transport in cities and better water transport etc were discussed.

"New technologies like IGCC (Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle) and energy efficient use of gas plants through facilitating distributed

generation in CHP (Combined Heat and Power) made by developing network of gas pipe lines may be encouraged," suggested one speaker. Others pointed out the operational problems in a utility under scarce power scenarios. "Economic productivity is more closely tied to energy efficiency than energy production."

Dr. K. Gopakumar, Professor and Chairman, Department of Electronics Systems Engineering, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore spoke on power converters for medium-voltage variable-speed-drive applications. He provided an overview about multi-layered invertors designed and developed at his Center. ■



Welcome to New Batch of Students

Amrita School of Ayurveda – Shishyopanayanam, July 15, 2013.

The Sanskrit word Shishyopanayanam indicates a ritual that one undergoes when beginning a formal course of study.

This ritual or Samskara is described in classical Ayurvedic treatises such as Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita and Astanga Hridaya.

The newly enrolled students of BAMS (Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery) programme were initiated observed this ancient ritual, beginning the

day with Dhanvantiri Homa. Followed by chanting of Vishnu Sahasranama. Following this came singing of devotional songs.

Br. Dr. Sankara Chaitanya, Medical Director of the Amrita School of Ayurveda, led the early morning ceremony. Faculty, staff members and senior students also participated.

Later during the day, Br. Dr. Sankara Chaitanya welcomed students and spoke about Ayurveda, its relationship





with spirituality and its relevance to our modern lives. “Learning of Ayurveda is not only for the purpose of practicing medicine, but also for becoming a more valuable human being who can contribute to society.”

Dr. L. Mahadevan, Managing Director of Sri Saradha Ayurvedic Hospital, Nagercoil, shared some of his academic and clinical experiences. “Ayurveda is the science of life. Fortunate are the students who have the chance to study this science. Understand everything in your life in terms of Tridosha Theory, which is the basic fundamental principle of Ayurveda.”

Dr. Mattakara Ramachandran Nair, As-tangaratna Laureate of 2011, and a well-known Ayurvedic physician in Kerala was the special invitee on the occasion to be honoured with the traditional ‘Guru Pooja’ by the gathered senior students.

“Ayurveda can be learnt only with true dedication,” was his advice to students.

Dr. Vasudevan Namboothiri, Principal, Amrita School of Ayurveda, administered the oath to the new students.

Providing a brief overview of recent developments in Amrita, he stated, “We conducted campus recruitment for graduates for the first time in the history of our school, last year. We are now arranging monthly guest lecturers wherein eminent Ayurvedic Scholars from across the country regularly interact with our students. Naipunyam-13, a workshop for internees on clinical

examinations was a recent highlight which was organized. In the coming days, we are planning to have plans of an international-level conference too,” he shared.

Meritorious outgoing students from the senior batches were honored for their academic excellence. Vijayalekshmi D; Aswathy Y.S; Geethika and Vidhya bagged the prizes.

BAMS is an undergraduate medical degree awarded upon the successful completion of the five-and-half years programme that focuses on the study of an integrated system of traditional Ayurveda and modern medicine. ■



Sanjeevanam – July 20-21, 2013

About 90 students from all Schools at the Amritapuri campus came together for a Youth Camp titled Sanjeevanam during July 20-21, 2013. These students from the Schools of Engineering, Arts and Sciences, Biotechnology and Ayurveda, have played major roles in the activities of Amrita Sanjeevani, the student-run seva association on the campus, during previous years. Coming together to visit orphanages and old age homes, organizing clean-up drives, spearheading anti-smoking and anti-liquor campaigns, educating the public on cleanliness etc were some of the major contribution made by these students in the past.

The additional purpose of the camp was to plan the activities for the upcoming year.

Inaugurating the camp, Sampoojya Swami Poornamritananda Puri, luded their 'seva' activities and attitude in the true spirit of our Chancellor, Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi.

“There are three types of people in this world. They are like ice, water and vapour respectively. Those who are like ice cannot share love and they remain closed all the time. They are useless. In the case of others who are like water, their love can flow only in a certain direction. They love their relatives and friends. But they are selfish. “Then there are some people who are like vapour or air. These are the Mahatmas. They can shower love endlessly and unconditionally. Every action performed with love becomes spiritual.”

Swamiji shared more insights with the students. He told them that the greatest paradox of life is that when one's desires are controlled all fortunes and happiness come after her/him. “When we don't want anything, all things will come to us,” he emphasized. Exhorting students to carry out their 'dharma', he said,



“It is our duty to protect nature, to take care of poor people and to give peace to those who are suffering. We have certain responsibilities to the universe. Giving love unasked is one of them.”



The soft-spoken Swamiji commanded an astounding rapt attention from all members of Sanjeevani with his simple examples and telling phrases.

“You can get maximum grace through selfless actions. Wherever you are working, if your action is selfless, there definitely is a reward.” The Swamiji summed up glorifying selfless love and dedication, saying, “Love makes everything beautiful. Invoke the divine love within you and enjoy each and every moment of your life. Your life can then become a celebration.”

Others who spoke included Campus Director, Br. Sudeep and Associate Dean, Dr. Balakrishnan Shankar.

“Amrita is not just about producing computer scientists, engineers, doctors and journalists alone. They must all be also great human beings first. That

is why Sanjeevani is extremely important to Amrita,” stated Dr. Balakrishnan Shankar.

“‘Education for life’ is being achieved through Sanjeevani. In fact, Amrita Sanjeevani helps us accomplish an important part of the mission of our University,” said Br. Sudeep, referring to the difference between education for a meaningful living and a mere living – the latter focuses ‘merely’ on one’s career or livelihood. The former is what we emphasize on.

The highlights of the two-day camp greatly enjoyed by all participants alike were group activities, planning upcoming events and future activities, putting together a Camp TV show – in addition to invited talks, watched inspiring movies and participating in Amrita Yoga sessions.

The Sanjeevani motto that has continued to inspire many, since the association’s inception in August 2005, Pray with your hearts and serve with your hands rang loud and clear in the camp.

“The camp was nourishing. We interacted with each other and prepared ourselves to continue serving society,” stated Rohit Prakash, final-year student of BTech (Electrical and Electronics Engineering).

“The camp was well organised. I strongly believe that it made an impact on all of us. It will help us keep up the momentum and serve, stated Amrita, final-year student of BSc (Microbiology). ■

India4EU Erasmus Mundus Scholarship Winners





Vyshakh P. T., final-year BTech student of Mechanical Engineering, was recently selected to complete a one-month summer program in Theoretical Tribology and Nonnegative Matrices at the Technion Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, Israel.

The program offered during August 1-30, 2013, attracts applicants from all over the world.

Vyshakh received a scholarship from the Institute that will cover all expenses, including food and stay.

Located on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea in Haifa, the Technion Israel Institute of Technology has Nobel Laureates on its faculty. The Institute has awarded 95,000 degrees since its inception and the main language of instruction is Hebrew.

An ancient language, just like Sanskrit, Hebrew was once considered a dead language. When the nation of Israel was formed in 1948, it was revived when a decision was taken to conduct all official business in Hebrew. Jews who came to live in the new nation from all over the world took great pains to learn it.

The Technion Israel Institute of Technology has played a major role in

Israel's contribution to the scientific world in different areas including drip irrigation, flash drives and advanced solar thermal technologies. Winston Churchill is said to have once remarked, "Technion has a great contribution to make to Israel's future prosperity, and Israel's prosperity cannot but be of great benefit to other countries, as well."

In recent times, scientists at Technion have designed, built and launched one of the smallest satellites in the world. They have also printed a Nano Bible on an area the size of a pinhead.

While Vyshakh will be fortunate to study at Technion, he will also be getting ready for another overseas stint. Upon return, he will proceed on a ten-month student exchange program to the Politecnico di Torino University, Italy.

This will enable him to complete his bachelor's degree as well as his final-year project. In addition to taking classes in his discipline, he will also participate in a few field and research projects at the host university.

This exchange program will be facilitated by the India4EU Erasmus Mun-

dus scholarship, funded by the European Commission. Recipients study in the best universities of Europe in a wide variety of academic fields with the scholarship providing subsistence allowance, travel costs, tuition/registration fees and insurance.

In addition to Vyshakh, three more students from the School of Engineering at the Amritapuri campus, will head to Europe as part of the same program. Sowmya Ravidas, Savita Seetaraman and Sreepriya Chalakkal are all final-year students of BTech (Computer Science and Engineering). While Sreepriya and Savita will enroll in classes at Politecnico di Trento University, Italy, Sowmya will be based at Aalto University, Finland.

"We are extremely happy about these developments. We encourage our juniors to avail the enormous opportunities that are being made available to us.

We thank our friends and mentors who motivated us to move on ahead, despite hurdles," the students shared, underlining, "Life is short, make the most of it and help make the world a better place." ■



Amrita Bioquest

August 10-14, 2013

The first International Conference on Biotechnology for Innovative Applications, Biofest 2013, hosted by the Amrita School of Biotechnology and Research on August 10-14, 2013, is now a greatly talked about conference in the scientific community.

AMRITA BIOQUEST 2013 which was hosted by the Amrita School of Biotechnology provided an ideal forum to discuss exciting and emerging multidisciplinary themes related to the use of biotechnology in addressing several pertinent societal needs. The conference focused on the ways in which research areas such as translational medicine, nanotechnology, neuroscience, genomics, proteomics, bioinformatics and bioengineering contribute to alleviating human suffering and improving the quality of life for everyone. This conference served as an ideal platform for distinguished experts from diverse areas of biotechnology to come together, discuss and deliberate on established as well as emerging platforms and strategies.

Dr. Venkat Rangan, Vice Chancellor, Amrita University recounted how ASBT had come into being and the phenomenal growth of this School in less than a decade. "Receiving funding from DST's Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) to start a Center of Excellence in Biomedical-Technology in 2004, this Center has emerged as the leading TIFAC Center in India. Within a span of three years, it was being nationally recognized as one of the best performing research centres in

the nation." This TIFAC Center soon became the Amrita School of Biotechnology, offering programs of study and research to bachelors, masters and doctoral students. It obtained the first ever US patent for Amrita University for the design of the insulin pump.

Dr. Bipin Nair, Dean, Amrita School of Biotechnology declared that today, Biotechnology has the potential to change the employment opportunities in our country and create intellectual wealth."

Eminent scientist and scholar Dr. Suresh Subramani, Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs, University of California, San Diego, USA, echoed the same thoughts. A call was given by all unequivocally to the international research community gathered here for the 4-day conference to focus on making medical diagnosis and treatments more affordable for the common man.

Dr. P. R. Sudhakaran, Director, Kerala Biotechnology Commission, Government of Kerala said, "The Indian biotechnology sector is one of the fastest growing knowledge-driven sectors; it



The GSoC Internship



Srishti Srivasthava, final-year student of BTech in Computer Science and Engineering will soon complete her prestigious Google Summer of Code (GSoC) internship.

Beginning on May 24, 2013 and slated to end on September 29, 2013, the internship provided Srishti with an opportunity to write code for the Mozil-

can play a significant role in shaping the Indian economy." He complimented the ASBT and the Amritapuri Campus for being a unique campus, and agreeably special in so many respects.

Why and how Amrita was special was explained during the benedictory address by Swami Amritaswarupananda Puri, recalling an incident from one of Amma's tours in Switzerland. Amma, the Chancellor of Amrita University travels all over the world conducting spiritual 'Satsangs', retreats and other programmes.

la Open-Source Software Foundation during the four-month period.

A global program that offers stipends to write code for open source projects, 'the Google Summer of Code internship' is designed to provide exposure to real-world software development to students, even while they are studying. The process begins with the potential interns submitting project ideas, complete with abstracts and detailed descriptions.

Sristhti submitted a project idea that aimed to improve text selection and rotation features of the PDF plug-in for the Mozilla Firefox web browser. When her idea was chosen, Sristhti became the first female student from Amrita to be awarded this opportunity.

Amrita students have been recipients of the GSoC since 2010. Past GSoC awardees from Amrita include Varrun

Ramani and Adithya Rao who graduated with BTech CSE degrees in 2010, Zubin Mithra and Prasanth Kumar who were awarded BTech IT degrees in 2011 and Bithin A. who completed his MSc (CS) in 2011.

All these students were mentored by Vipin Pavithran, Assistant Professor, Amrita Center for Cybersecurity.

Sristhti received additional mentoring from Aditya, an alumnus of Amrita University, Amritapuri campus presently working in the Department of CIR (Corporate and Industry Relations).

"I feel blessed that I was made aware of such opportunities in which students like me can participate. I hope that next year many more Amrita students can get this internship, and also receive exposure to new, upcoming things," said Sristhti.

Regarding her work, she explained, "Mozilla Firefox has incorporated a new in-built pdf viewer component, but there are a few issues which need to be fixed and improved in this component. My project revolves around implementing some new features for this component and fixing the existing problems."

Sristhti has mastered many programming languages during her academic tenure and she keeps an eye on the software horizon to stay abreast of changing technologies. She is keenly interested in Android programming and Android application development. ■

"We were at one point near an apple grove. The owner of the grove was also with us. It was a pleasant evening, clear and sunny. We spent about half an hour there just experiencing nature's abundance and the pure air. When we were about to leave, Amma wanted to give something to everyone as prasad. The owner of the apple grove requested Amma to pick a few apples and distribute to everyone there. So Amma walked to one of the apple trees, and gently and lovingly touched and caressed the tree first, then with her palms joined together, bowed down to the tree and asked the tree to allow her to pluck a few apples. Amma waited a few seconds, as if waiting to receive the tree's permission, and then gently plucked the fruit. Before returning, Amma bowed down to the tree again. She sprinkled some water at its base and remarked, "It is your willingness to share everything with others that makes you so beautiful. May we human beings become inspired by your example and remember it forever."

The seven tracks that were organized as part of Amrita Bioquest 2013 were:

1. Genomics and Translational Medicine;
2. Biomedical Engineering
3. Neurobiology and Computational Neuroscience
4. Bioinformatics and Computational Biology
5. Bioprospecting and Bioengineering
6. Bioanalytical Techniques.
7. Biotechnology in India from a Global Perspective

One very interesting, informative and significant feature of Amrita Bioquest 2013 was a live webcast interaction with Prof. Leland Hartwell, (Nobel Laureate for Physiology and Medicine for his discovery of protein molecules that control cell division) who addressed the conference delegates, live from his office in Seattle, USA, followed by a live question and answer session. Prof. Hartwell spoke

on the theme "The Role of Science and Technology in Creating a Sustainable World."

Here are some of the other interesting events at the Conference which included over 300 poster presentations in seven conference tracks:

Ten Talks was a PhD symposium selecting 10 novel papers from current PhD students. The goal of the "ten talks" event was to highlight their work to external experts to get valuable feedback and additional guidance.

Pitchfest was a contest for entrepreneurial start-ups with innovative ideas in Biotechnology. Pitchfest offered the perfect platform for new business ideas to be presented with the potential for useful applications, to a panel of experts in the field.

Everyone present opined that Amrita Bioquest 2013 had thus provided an ideal forum to discuss and deliberate on established as well as emerging platforms and strategies in their area. ■

Birthday News

The 'Amrita RITE-Rural India Tablet Education'



This is a programme designed for after-school tutoring and adult literacy among the rural folk with the use of custom developed tablet computers and was unveiled on the occasion the 60th birthday celebrations of Mata Amritanandamayi at Amritapuri.

The e-learning project was launched by 'Amma' by handing over a tablet to the Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Sri Shashi Tharoor. The project would be initiated in the villages adopted by the Math.

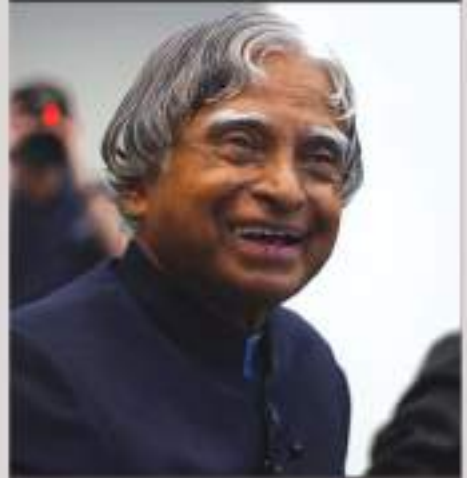
The Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences in Kochi unveiled a package to provide free surgeries worth Rs 50 crores to the poor.

The package included free kidney transplants, cardiac surgeries and cancer treatment to deserving patients.

Maharashtra Governor Sri K Sankaranarayanan and Union Minister Oscar Fernandes gave away the beneficiary certificates.

The Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Sri Shashi Tharoor distributed the Math's financial assistance of Rs 1 lakh each to the families of the nine persons killed in a boat tragedy in Alappuzha earlier this year.

Several welfare programmes of the MA Math already benefiting thousands were extended to additional thousands of beneficiaries. For instance, the Amrita Nidhi Pension Programme was extended to 69,000 from the current 59,000 and Vidyamritam Student Scholarship Programme to 46,000 from 41,000. ■



A P J Abdul Kalam :

India needs twin-tracked development

Former President of India, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam said that India must implement a two-layered development programme to bring in rural prosperity. It should ensure employment potential and holistic socio-economic progress to every villager. He was addressing a public meeting on the occasion of Amritavarsham 60 at Amritapuri.

Dr Kalam also said that Amma's University should focus more on developing a model for sustainable development of villages through implementation of Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA) systems. A comprehensive model for the development of villages was needed, he said. "India has 6,00,000 villages where 70 percent of her people live. Bridging the rural-urban divide is closely interlinked with the mission of overcoming poverty and inequity."

In Kerala, the development of an all-season smart waterway would be the best option for ensuring sustainable development of villages.

Eminent scientist Dr M. S. Swaminathan said that Amrita University has been an agent of change as it was instrumental in bridging the digital divide and making use of technological advancements for the benefit of the people. Nobel laureate Dr Leland Hartwell also addressed the mammoth gathering. ■

Release of Three Books

Three books written by the disciples of Amma were released. 'Colours of the Rainbow' by Vice-Chairman Swami Amritaswarupananda Puri was released by Sri Shashi Tharoor by handing over a copy to Ron Gottsegen, President of Mata Amritanandamayi Centre, US. Amma Herself released the books 'Guru Sishya Bandham Oru Hridayalayanam' written by Swami Thuriyamritananda Puri by handing over a copy to Uttar Pradesh former Chief Minister Sri Jagdambika Pal and 'The Fragrance of Pure Love' by Swami Krishnaamrita Prana by handing over a copy to Home Minister Thiruvanchoor Sri Radhakrishnan.

A study conducted by the Bharatiya Vichara Kendram on Amma's life and teachings was released by Sri O Rajagopal, a senior politician. A souvenir on the occasion of Amma's sixtieth birthday, 'Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi-The Impact of Her Life & Teachings in Societal Transformation', was also released.

Amrita Live-in-Labs

'The focus now shifts to the villages' — to understand the rural population's problems in areas of health, hygiene, energy, water, waste management and environment. Amrita University, in collaboration with the University of California launched an experiential learning programme that encourages the youth to live and experience the problems in the country's villages so as to find meaningful solutions leading to general welfare and all-round progress in the villages of India.

The varsity's Amrita Centre for International Programs floated its new 'Amrita Live-in-Labs'. The scheme envisages students of Amrita as well as international students from some of the best universities of the world to live in Indian villages for six months to understand the problems of rural India's. It also aims to define projects that seek to address the problems, devise solutions,

implement, test and eventually demonstrate innovative solutions.

The idea behind the Amrita Live-in-Labs came early this year when Amma suggested in Her speech at the 150th birthday celebrations of Swami Vivekananda that a way to ensure that at least one child from every family served in rural areas for one year after their graduation. She also recommended government funds for such a programme, saying the initiative would help awaken compassion in the youth besides uplift the poor and ensure a holistic growth of the nation.

As part of the programme, Amrita University signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the University of California (UC), San Diego, to enhance research and student exchanges. The signatories included UC executive Vice-Chancellor Sri Suresh Subramani and Amrita University Vice-Chancellor Sri P Venkat Rangan. The MoU will also facilitate exchanges of faculty, undergraduate students, graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, joint research projects and publications, virtual labs, exchanges of publications, materials, and information; and also initiate special short-term programmes to focus in all relevant areas that need to be addressed.

Women's Safety

A security device put together at the Centre for Cyber Security Systems and Networks at the Amrita University Campus in Amritapuri promises to offer women the chance of alerting their families in any sort of crisis situation.

Krishnashree Achuthan, director of the Centre for Cyber Security Systems and Networks in the University Campus, led the team which developed the Amrita Personal Safety System (APSS).

"APSS is an inconspicuous, wearable and easy-to-operate electronic device that will help girls and women to trigger communication with family and police when in distress. The device will remain invisible to the offender and yet

can easily be triggered by its user with multiple options to ensure stealthy and secure communication," Ms Achuthan said.

The nationwide outrage sparked by macabre incidents like the Dec 16 rape and death of a girl in Delhi had set the professionals at Amrita Centre for cyber-security to work.

The Amrita Centre for Cyber Security is making efforts to ensure that this device is securely lodged in the wearer who will have no discomfort of any kind on this account and springs into action instantaneously when alerted.

"We are designing it so that it can be affordable. The device will soon be equipped with technology that can videotape events," added the director.

A distinct feature of APSS is that it can function even in rural areas where the speed of communication is minimal.

Also, this device intelligently combines many location-aware technologies and it can function both indoors and outdoors.

"This customisable device provides flexibility in design so it can be easily worn, and integrates more than 15 features pertaining to women's safety and security. Significantly, it can also be used as a safety device for mentally challenged people with many functionalities to quickly help identify their whereabouts."

The product is inspired by the concern of the Chancellor of Amrita University, Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi.

The APSS prototype was formally unveiled during Amritavarsham 60 celebrations, Sep 26-27.

Amritakeerthi Puraskar

The Amritakeerthi Puraskar National Award for writer and literary critic Sri Manoj Das and Amritakeerthi Puraskar State Award for Thiruvavoor Sri Viswambharan were also presented on the occasion. ■

A Slew of Programmes Launched



The MA Math (MAM) has launched a slew of developmental schemes, including a plan to adopt 101 villages across the country, on the occasion of the spiritual leader's 60th birthday.

The projects - one of them also envisages a relief package for Uttarakhand - were floated in her presence at a function on the concluding day of 'Amritavarsham60'.

While 'Amrita Svasrayagramam', the 101-village adoption programme, was launched by Union transport Minister Sri Oscar Fernandes, the Rs 50-crore Uttarakhand relief and rehabilitation scheme was launched by Union Labour Minister, Sri Kodikunnil Suresh.

Through the village adoption programme, the Math has plans to adopt 101 villages where it will provide basic facilities like schools, drinking water and healthcare, according to a press release.

MAM will also build 500 houses in Uttarkashi and Rudraprayag districts in Uttarakhand, the state which was hit by flash-floods during the recent monsoons.

The ceremony also witnessed presentation of 'Amritakeerti Puraskar National Award' to writer and literary critic Prof Manoj Das and 'Amritakeerti Puraskar State Award' to Prof Thuravoor Viswambharan.

Other welfare programmes launched were the 'Amrita RITE- Rural India Tablet Education' for after-school tutoring and 'Adult Literacy' in these villages.

The e-learning project, 'Amrita RITE-Rural India Tablet Education' was launched by handing over a tablet to Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Sri Shashi Tharoor.

The session also witnessed the release of three books written by the disciples of Amma. ■

Centre for Spiritual Studies

A Centre for Spiritual Studies was launched by Amrita University on this occasion to strengthen the understanding of India's rich spiritual traditions.

The academic research and extension activities will focus on spiritual, social and cultural development and awareness at the centre. The idea is also to promote and institutionalize a service-oriented education steeped in selflessness in keeping with Amma's universal message to "Love and Serve all."

Academic and research collaborations with similar centres of repute around the world are also in the offing. Study programmes in Sanatana Dharma, spirituality and culture at post-graduate and doctoral levels will be on offer. It goes without saying that research activities into spiritual subjects will include the study of Sanskrit and the scriptures, arts, science, technology, literature, astrology... and allied subjects.

Documentation, dissemination and spread of the universal message of Amma's life and teaching will also be done by the Centre. The centre will also work on what Amma has termed "Vishwa-matrutvam" – the quality of viewing every aspect of the universe with a 'motherly attitude' and equating all creation with the love, patience, compassion and selflessness that motherhood stands for.

Amma's charitable, humanitarian and social programmes will also be assessed and studied to give them greater reach and effective to benefit society. Teaching of meditation and yoga like 'Integrated Amrita Meditation Technique' and 'Amrita Yoga' are also on the cards to benefit individuals at deeper levels.

The Centre will seek to bridge the gap between Eastern and Western knowledge systems, and institutionalise selfless service activities as part of its credit-based curriculum. ■

Amrita setting up disaster sensor network in the North East

Coinciding with the 60th birthday of Amma, an important step Amrita University has taken is about setting up an advanced integrated real-time wireless-sensor network system for continuous monitoring and real-time detection of disasters in the North-eastern regions. The move from the varsity's Center for Wireless Networks and Applications (AmritaWNA), a first-of-its-kind system for anywhere in the world, the technology has also received the required go-ahead-nod from the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences, said Dr. Maneesha Sudheer, Director of AmritaWNA. For the researchers at the varsity's Center, the Assam project comes soon after the roaring success of its inaugural venture in 2009 at the landslides-ravaged Munnar in Kerala's hilly Idukki district funded by the European Commission under the 'FP6' programme. The system can prevent loss of life and property, as it continuously monitors natural changes below ground which result in disasters.

"Our Center is equipped with the nation's first-ever life-size landslide laboratory set-ups. Our technology is cutting-edge," said Dr. Maneesha. The laboratory arrangements are equipped with an indigenously designed and developed seepage simulator and a rainfall simulator to generate the required water infiltration.

"We have created large and medium laboratory set-ups for cooperative use with the wireless-sensor network deployment that aims to detect landslides," the expert said. "They can also come in handy for modeling and simulating the landslide phenomena."

The advanced integrated real-time wireless-sensor network system to be installed in the Northeastern region is

a first in the country, said Dr Maneesha. "We will be installing more than 100 sensors in the landslide prone areas. The project is to take off next month; the process of setting up the initial facility will completed by October 2014."

Recalling that 150 geophysical sensors connected to 20 wireless-sensor nodes were deployed in Munnar, she said the system did successfully issue a second-level warning of a possible landslide during the torrential rains that lashed across the State in 2009.

Dr. Venkat Rangan, the Vice Chancellor of Amrita University, said 'Amma' has guided the team at every step of the research and also provided the required funding and extra manpower for this research project, adding, "Even though the project did not demand a real test-bed for landslide detection, Amma instructed us to identify a landslide-prone area and perform a real-deployment, that can save human life."

It must be added here that AmritaWNA is a winner of the Union Government's NABARD Innovation Award in Technology for Rural India in October 2012, and also holds the credit of having developed real-time monitoring systems for other disasters. ■

Sri Narendra Modi at Amma's 60th Birthday



Gujarat Chief Minister Sri Narendra Modi who was here to take part in the celebrations said that humanitarian projects taken up by Amma's Ashram and the other institutions attached to it have offered hope for mankind at a time when not merely our country but the entire world is being thwarted by ever-increasing terrorism and violence. The BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate for the Lok Sabha elections in 2014 regretted that, on the one hand, violence has been killing innocent people in recent times almost every day, as it were, citing the recent terror attacks in Nairobi, Peshawar and in Jammu 'this very month'.

"On the other side, we have people like Amma who serve humanity and are working towards making the world a better place for everybody," he said.

Sri Modi said the Amma could have limited the scope of her work to spirituality but she, instead, chose to extend it by adopting scientific and technological progress by establishing institutions under Her Ashram. He lauded her role as an inspiring presence that brings educated youngsters back to the country and use their skills to make lives here better. Through her social service initiatives, she's actually carrying out a major chunk of what is otherwise the work of the government.

Sri Modi, commencing his speech in Malayalam, also called for a return to traditional value systems to help the country match its potential. "The Macaulay education system has led to misinterpretation of all our values and what our ancient seers have done and said. Our great tradition of service has

been undermined." Even the nation's freedom struggle had been enriched essentially by the presence, blessing and grace of spiritual masters.

Sri Modi launched a host of technology projects devised by the different institutions run by the Ashram in the presence of Amma. Various spiritual and community leaders and other guests including acclaimed filmmaker Shekhar Kapur were present on the occasion ■

News at a glance

“PULSS: Prenatal Ultrasound Scan System for Low Resource Settings”, a project submitted to IEEE EPICS (Engineering Project In Community Service), NJ, USA, by our IEEE Student Branch was approved for a funding of \$4840.00 USD. Vishnu G B (S1 MSc CS) and Sarath Kumar (S1 MCA) are working in this project under the guidance of Rajesh Kannan Megalingam.

“Webtesla” a workshop on Web technology, organized by MITRA association was conducted on October 26-27. It covered the following areas:

- HTML5 and css3
- Javascript
- PHP and Mysql
- Twitter bootstrap

A team of 30 students of S-1 BBM and BCom guided by their class advisors Ms Ambily and Ms Aarathy, and along with Bri Meera and Ms Malu visited with great initiative and enthusiasm the Amrita Sanskrit Higher Secondary School, Parippally, on Sept 11. They also donated liberally for the utilities-front for the children at Parippally. After dining with the children they had long interactions with the children, planted saplings and took part in the cultural extravaganza arranged there.

“Women in Industry Awareness Program” was organized on Sept 10, as part of activities of the IEEE- Industry Applications Society (IAS) Student Branch Chapter of our campus to motivate women to involve more in the engineering and related fields and to showcase how women too have been torch-bearers in the industry section along with men. The distinguished guest on the occasion was Dr.B G Sreedevi, Director, NATPAC (National Transportation Planning & Research Centre), R&D Centre, Govt of Kerala, who shared her work experiences with the students and spoke on the “Role of Women in Society and How to become an Effective

Manager”. She also touched upon matters regarding road safety.

The third edition of Amrita-TIDE Innovation programme, a multi-campus initiative to encourage innovation among students and faculty members was launched by Amrita TBI on Sept 7.

ASAPS, the official launch of ‘Amrita Serve an Hour Partnership in Schools’ was done on Sept 5, co-ordinated by Sri Binu.P.K and a few energetic student volunteers of ‘Amrita SAH’

<http://www.amrita.ac.in/serveanhour/>

Amrita IEEE Students won the coveted Richard E Merwin scholarship, thanks to Br. Bijukumar and Sri Sreethu.

Sri Rajesh Kannan, IEEE SB Counselor, won this year’s IEEE Outstanding Branch Counselor and Advisor Award’ from IEEE, NJ, USA, a global recognition from IEEE conferred on individuals who, through their work as Counselors and Advisors, exemplify the Institute’s commitment to the educational, personal, professional, and technical development of students in IEEE related fields of interest. The award carries a prize money of US\$500 and a certificate and also rewards the Student Branch that submitted the nomination with US\$200.

The team of students - Goutham P, Vivek J and Mourya G of S7 ECE – have won the IEEE Student Enterprise Award this year, again under the guidance of Sri Rajesh Kannan. It is significant that our students have done this for the third year in a row. This year, it was for the project titled PULSS: Portable Ultrasound Scan System for Low Resource Settings. The award consists of US\$1500 towards project implementation.

The project of the final year students Sri Ayyappan.A, Sri Ashik.A, Sri Deepak.N.D and Sri Diljith.P.C of the 2009-

2013 BTech EEE batch, titled ‘A strain gauge based landslide detection system’ has been selected as first entry for the ‘All IEEE-Region 10 Young Engineer’s Humanitarian Challenge’ from among more than three hundred entries from various Asian countries of which only twenty one were selected. (Ten of the selected were from India.) The selection is based on the ‘Humanitarian Problem + Technology Solution + Entrepreneurial Leadership’ basis.

Sixteen students from Amritapuri Campus were selected to participate in 9 events representing Amrita Vishwa Vidya Peetham in the AIU South zone Youth Festival to be Held at Mahathma Gandhi University, Kottayam during September 18-22. These students were selected after two screening sessions, first at Amritapuri and then at the Ettimadai Campus.

The Samskriti Amrita Nandnam Theatre Club screened its 6th drama SAKETAM (an excerpt from the Ramayana) by the noted Malayalam dramatist C.N.Sreekandan Nair. It was a joint venture by the staff and students of ASE, ASAS in September. (The theme of the drama had been taken from the Ayodhya Kanda in the Ramayana that depicts the emotional turbulence starting from the preparations for the coronation of Sri Rama eventually resulting in the tragic death of King Dasaratha.)

A Lecture series by Dr. Sampadananda Mishra, Director, Sri Aurobindo Foundation for Indian Culture (SAFIC) at Sri Aurobindo Society enlightened and thrilled the audience at the Acharya Hall organized under Amrita School of Ayurveda’s Sankrit lecture series.

Cisco Networking Academy Program – The Cisco Academy in our Campus has been recognized as an Advanced Level Instructor in the world wide networking instruction venture. We are

happy to be one of the top 25 percent instructors at the world-level assessment. (Cisco Networking Academy began in 1997 with 64 schools and has grown to become one of the “world’s largest classrooms” with 10,000 academies in 165 countries, and nearly 4 million students having participated in the program to date.

The Department of Social work organised an invited lecture by Dr. Abey George, Asst Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Kerala Centre) on the topic “Decentralisation, delegation and devolution of Power in Kerala: process, prospects and challenges.

Sanskriti and Spicmacay presented a programme of Baul Music by Parvathy Baul on August 27.

“Design and Development of Mobile Operated Control System for Humanoid Robot”, a research paper authored by Aswath Suresh, Chinmaya Krishna Tilak Kasarneni, Abhay Sengar (students of Electronics and Mechanical Engineering, III year) and Dr Ganesha Udupa has been accepted in a prestigious international conference and journal. This is the first paper from our new Mechatronics and intelligent Systems Research Lab.

The Sanskriti Malayala Sarga Vedhi organised its 8th Literary get together on the topic ‘P. Padmarajan-Chalachitravum Thirakkathayum (P.Padmarajan-Cinema and Screenplay) on August 16. It was followed by Poem Recitations and Discussions.

Independence Day celebration was organized in the Campus by Sanskriti. As a part of this various events and competitions like Quiz programmes for students on the Topic ‘India – Past and Present’ which saw several rounds, and “Colour the Saga of Freedom Struggle” painting on a huge long canvas by about 50 artists of our Campus, both staff and students.

The Induction Programme of ASAS for the First Year students was organized by Ms Amritalakshmi and Ms Durgalash-

mi (Conveners). An inspiring talk by Swami Amritageetananda Puri for the event enlightened the first year students on our age-old value system.

Selection in the Top Five - Two teams of final year ECE students HuT Labs made it to the GHTC 2013, San Jose, USA. The first team was, Ajithesh Gupta, Uday Dutt and Hitin Sushruth (all S7 ECE A), for the topic “Hand Orthosis for Paralysed People” and made a mark with their poster recognized as one of the top five selected for final presentation at the Conference to be held in Oct 2013, San Jose, USA. The other team, Goutham P, Vivek J and Mourya (all S7 ECE A), with the topic “Heal-Well: Health and Wellness Monitoring gadget for Home Bound Elders” gained recognition as one of the top five student papers selected for final presentation at the same Conference.

Amritasanjeevani is organised a CleanUp Drive on August 15 as part of our Independence day Celebrations. The area of cleanup drive was the main road from Valickavu Junction to Amrita Setu and the other paths around the campus. The drive started at 9.45 am after the flag hoisting ceremony in the main building and went on till mid day. There was enthusiastic participation from a large number of student and staff volunteers.

Publication – by Chandra Sekharan Nair Omana Amma Sreekala, Jinchu Indiramma, Kandala Bala Subramanya Pavan Kumar, Karyaveetil Savithriamma Sreelatha and Mahesh Saran Roy - in the Journal of Nano Structure in Chemistry – “Functionalized Multi-walled Carbon Nanotubes for Enhanced Photocurrent in Dye-sensitized Solar Cells”

The Induction Programme for M.Tech in E-Learning Technologies for the current academic year, scheduled on July 29 was organised by Ms Sruthy Anand and Sri Kiran S. Pillai.

ISEE 2013 – became the biggest IEEE Student event of IEEE Kerala section. The grand Symposium made a great

mark with more than 700 participants including 50 school students, 16 speakers and with eight parallel tracks of which one track was exclusive for school students. The entire event was organized and coordinated exclusively by student volunteers. It was also a grand show of great co-ordination between all – from the students to the highest authority of the Campus and several departments.

The prestigious **Richard E Merwin scholarship** from the IEEE Computer Society, NJ, USA, was awarded to the Student Chair Tom Charly and the Treasurer and IES Chapter chair Goutham Ravindran (both ECE S-7) of IEEE Student Branch of the Campus in recognition of their exemplary involvement in student chapter activities, excellent academic achievement and willingness to act as student ambassadors. The scholarship consists of a certificate and USD 1150.

Amrita’s Green Campuses initiative began with Dr Rajendra Pachauri, Nobel Laureate and Director of TERI giving a session on Green Campus Initiatives telecast to all students and faculty of Amrita on July 25, organized by our A-View Team.

“Tholpavakkuthu” was organised by Sanskriti based on the story of Ramayana by Shri Ramachandra Pulavar and Team, at the School of Ayurveda.

Further studies in the US – our students secured admission in several prestigious campuses as below: Sri Deepak Dileepkumar (Grand Valley State Univ. for M.S in Biomedicine - Full Scholarship and RA with stipend), Sri Anantha Krishnan (Univ. of Cincinnati for M.S in VLSI - 87% Scholarship), Ms Meera Viswanath (Univ. of Cincinnati for M.S in VLSI - 87% Scholarship) and Sri Sachin Namboodiri (Villanova Univ. for M.S. in VLSI - Full Scholarship and RA with stipend).

Sanskriti presented an enchanting Drupad (Hindusthani Vocal) performance by Vidhushi Alaka Nandi with Kathak by Vidushi Sushmita Banerjee

on the auspicious day of Gurupoornima (22/07/2013) following a Bhajan and Satsang.

SANJEEVANAM'13 (July 20-21), a Two day Youth Camp organised in the Campus had special highlights like a session by SATGAMAYA Team to really help motivate the students, the CAMP TV conducted by Br Shekhar and the AMRITA YOGA conducted by Bri Shobana. The camp was meant for students who had actively participated in the various programmes of Sanjeevani during the previous semesters.

“Prosthetic Arm Control for Quadriplegics and Arm Amputees” was a Student Paper Contest in the IEEE R10 UG in which Sri Ajithesh Gupta, Sri Uday Dutt and Sri Hitin Sushruth of S7 ECE won the 2nd Runner-Up prize of USD 150. The award was given at the ongoing IEEE R10 Student Congress at Hyderabad. IEEE Region 10 (R10) includes South East Asian countries including Singapore, Japan and Australia.

The **Department of Social Work** arranged a workshop on presentation skills for the MSW students in the Campus in July. Our Vice Chairperson Mr.Rajeev MM inaugurated the session and Mr.Ranjith Kavumkara handled the session.

Swagatam'13, Induction Programme – was organized for the MCA lateral entry students of 2013 admissions on July 10. Lateral entry admission is being introduced for the first time in Amrita University for the MCA programme. Twenty one(21) students have been selected, based on their performance in academics and the technical interview for the direct admission to MCA second year.

An FDP (Faculty Development Programme) on Electronic Circuits was conducted in the Campus during July 12-14, attended by several interested faculty from Bangalore and Ettimadai Campuses along with our own staff members. ■

Quotes from our Chancellor



Meaningful life and true love are not two. They are one. To love means to see and feel life in everything. Life is here, life is there, life is everywhere. There is nothing but life and there is nothing but love.

The past is history, the future a mystery and today is a gift—that is why we call it the present.

Let us strive to reach a state in which we are able to see all beings on earth as a part of our own self.

You don't belong to the darkness. The darkness is a prison created by your own mind and ego; it is self-imposed

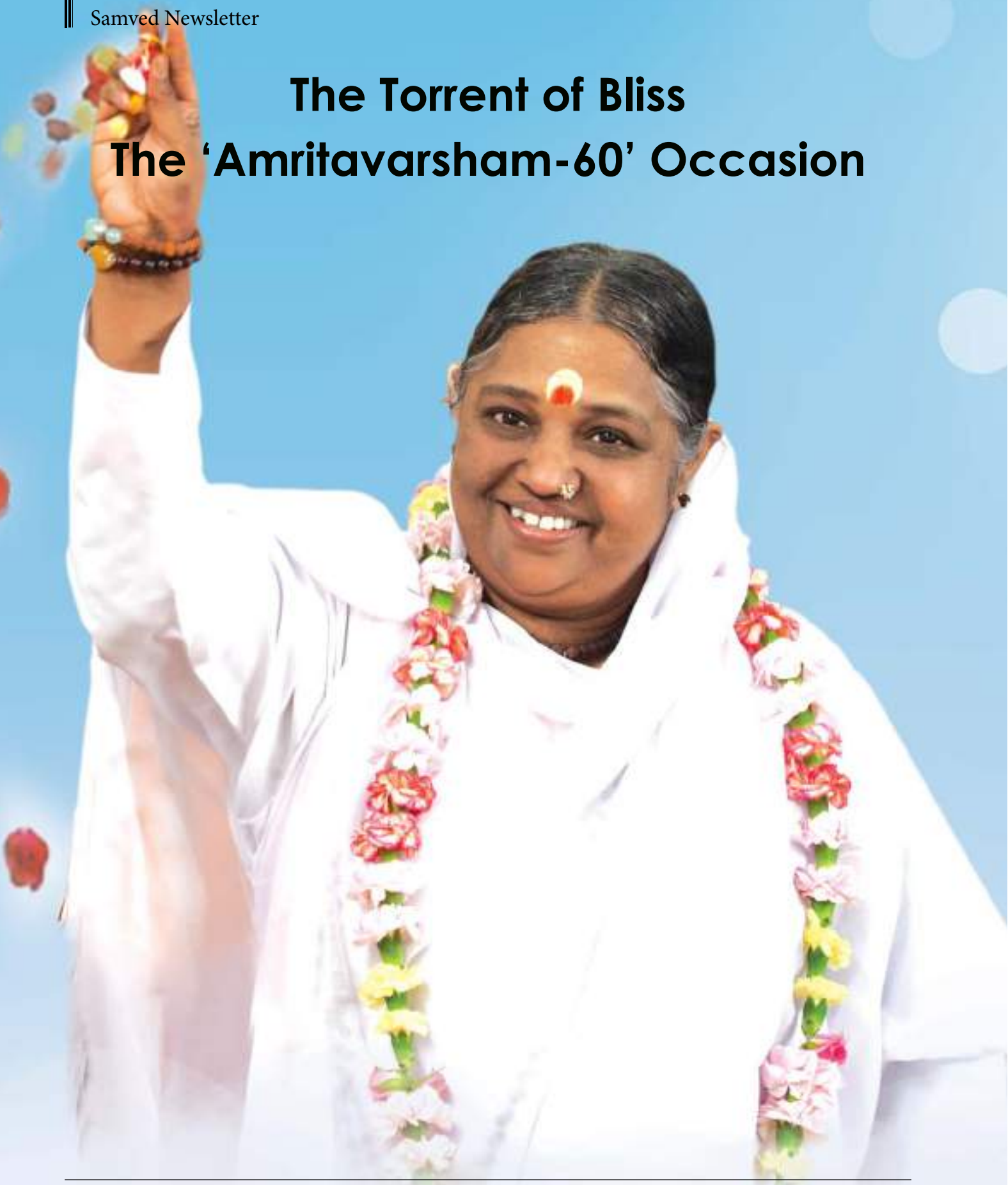
and self-created. It is not your real abode, for you belong to the light. You are the light of God.

One truth shines through all creation; rivers and mountains, plants and animals, the sun, the moon and all the stars, you and I—all arte expressions of this one reality.

Compassion is love expressed in its fullness.

The Torrent of Bliss

The 'Amritavarsham-60' Occasion



Guru: Brahma

Guru: Vishnu:

Guru: Devo Maheswara |

Guru: Saakshaat

Param brahma

Tasmai Sree Gurave Nama ||

Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara are Gurus (to the world) but (the/my) Teacher is 'Param-Brahma', that is, the Highest Guru. Him I salute.

This Sanskrit verse can be elaborated as praise of a Sat-Guru verily as Parabrahma (Guru Ultimate) for being everything for a disciple. He is the Creator Brhma (for creating awareness in the disciple of the Divine purpose of life); the Sustainer Vishnu (for giving the required direction towards it); and the Destroyer Maheswara or Siva (for mending ways and removing obstacles on the path of progress towards the goal).

The sum and substance of this verse is that in the life of a seeker after Truth, a (true) Guru plays all the three roles – that of a creator, sustainer and destroyer – accomplished by the Trinities of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva in Cosmic Creation. The Guru, hence, is the Ultimate (force in the life) for a true seeker.

Singing the glory of The Guru (noble Teacher) in no uncertain terms and in a great variety of expressions is an essential feature of every scripture in Sanadhana Dharma. It assigns to the Guru all the three functions seen as inevitable in Cosmic Creation. He makes the life of a disciple virtuous, meaningful and beneficial for himself and to the rest of creation. Removing the darkness of ignorance in the disciple, he fills him with the light of knowledge. The hint here is that a human life which is not lived in unison with Creation and to benefit it is in no way better than that of any lower animal and is not worth calling

human. In short, a human life is to be understood as extremely precious and must be utilized to awaken one's Inner Divinity – and not be squandered away.

The verse above is a sample of how significant a role the Guru plays to elevate man from his 'low animal nature' to his 'original spiritual self'. The Guru is thus the 'ultimate' for a spiritual aspirant. As Swami Vivekananda puts it, The Spark of the Divine is in Every One of us. The goodness and greatness of the Guru is that she/he awakens one to this Divinity in oneself by removing the 'ignorance' (result of maaya) enveloping it.

India is a holy land for the simple reason that her inbuilt spiritual fertility has made it holy by raising innumerable great Gurus from time immemorial, in every era, till this day. Inevitable is the grace of the Guru for the fructification of the efforts of a seeker after Truth. Thus the Guru is the bestower of the Ultimate Knowledge 'from which all knowledge/sciences originate and knowing which one needs to know nothing more' (ya vijnaanam sarva vijnaanam bhavati). The Guru elevates mortal man to realize his own immortality and hence such glorification of the Guru as in the verse above.

To the vast majority of us today 'such' praise showered on or significance attached to a 'teacher' is often not easily understandable and may even appear sinister or embarrassing. The reason for this is not far to seek. Distanced from our great culture by centuries of foreign rule on the one hand and on the other by having lost our moorings in the age-old spiritual culture our life today is based blindly on an infatuation of everything 'foreign' as glorious. The significance of the Guru can be grasped only when one understands first that there is a higher purpose to human life—underlined by the ancient rishi-s.

Caught in the mindless mundane rat-race of life where the only goal is to equip oneself with the 'skills' needed to accrue wealth, power and position at

any cost—'good, bad or ugly; crooked, corrupt or criminal'—the age-old virtues and values have been made to take the backseat today. Virtues glorified by the scriptures appear—at best, illogical and misleading, then superfluous if not impracticable. What beats modern intellect is that it was none but these same values that had been instrumental in ranking man high among the rest of creation, and holding humanity together for millennia! Ours is a world where only by relegating our values one can 'go for the kill' – a thing inevitable for 'success'. Money, power and position alone buy 'respectability' and 'status' in the 'modernist' society which thrives on the theory that 'progress' will happen as a matter of course! Can allow oneself to be left behind in the cut-throat competition?

In this scenario how is one – especially of the 'growing' generation – to be expected to grasp the significance of ideals like Guru Charana (the feet of the teacher), or Guru Paduka (his footwear) or Guru Paada Dhooli (the dust of his feet)? The roots of the problem lie also in the casual manner one equates the 'guru' of old with the 'teacher' we see and know of in our own panorama of civilization. The teacher of today too is, by circumstances, forced to be career-oriented, compelled to move with the times and coerced to worry about 'climbing the ladder' with the rest of her/his clan. His ancient counterpart was generally a recluse who had no personal ends to gain, was looked after by the society and had a 'mature' disregard for luxury and practiced simplicity. Additionally, there is the yawning gulf between the ancient and the modern systems of knowledge transfer and knowledge content.

More unfortunate today is how the term 'guru' sounds a misnomer with a volley of 'them' around in every aspect of life —management gurus, catering gurus, finance gurus, investment gurus, placement gurus, fashion gurus... you name it!! The more eager one is to 'learn the skills' in this compartmental-

ized 'education for living', the more one 'falls westward' headlong into the inescapable competition, corruption and vicious cycle.

Swami Vivekananda emphasized that if India perishes then humanity has no hope on earth. His reference was to the value system based on the four purushrthas cherished in India—dharma or righteousness in thought, word and deed; artha or securing material possessions essential to such a righteous living; kaama or desires and quest legitimate to one's station in life, and moksha or freedom from 'ignorance' leading to salvation from the 'hold of karma'.

While taking pride that ours is a nation which was a 'Guru' to the rest of the world in bringing them basic civilization and life-values, it is imperative that we reinstall several of those missing values in personal and public life in essence a for the survival of man on this planet.

Changes were inevitable down the passage of time. Particularly after the educational reform of 1836 by the then rul-

ers in India, there has been a sea change in the situation. The effect of the westernization of our life style brought about essentially through education, was gradual but decisive. Its result on the Indian scenario was what made the Father of the Nation – mahatma Gandhi – vehemently accuse the British at the Gandhi-Hartog convention in 1931 in London, saying, 'You have destroyed the Tree of Indian Education'. It is quite unfortunate that the makers of modern India after 1947 did not see the urgency or importance of adapting suitably the old, proven, soul-enriching and meaningful pattern of education, at least in part.

Not so long ago, Sri Ramakrishna – was it a coincidence, born in the same year as the said educational reform, that is, 1836 – transformed a Narendra into Swami Vivekananda to reinforce the faith of the faithful in the tradition of the Vedanta to the West as well as to restore it to the natives—a 'miracle' a Guru alone can perform. And we now have in our midst 'Amma', whose 'Amritavarsham 60' we are celebrating now, continuing the tradition of the great Gurus of old and lighting the lamp of values in our lives.

Amma, our Chancellor, described by the Western media as the 'hugging saint from India' is a model Guru in that unflinching ancient tradition. Those who have the 'eyes to see and a mind to know' are witness to how this primary school dropout is a direction-giver to even the research supervisors in Her institutions of higher learning, a mentor of earnest youth who matter, adviser to many in high offices and power, and a



spiritual guide to seekers after Truth—in short, a 'Sadguru' whose 'life itself is Her message'. In today's world where a few 'big' minds undermine the future of a hundred thousand families, Amma is at work showing the way to creating a golden age for all mankind, making thousands 'pray in their minds and work with their hands' in the true spirit of the words well known to those familiar with the Indian scriptures—lokaa: samaaasta: sukhino bhavantu.

It will be right to add here what many of us already know—that Amma's message is easily discernible as universal and no different from a Religion of Pure Love. It is what the message of every great religion worth its name boils down to—a



simple live-and-serve-all selflessly. She is verily a 'Guru' and a 'Mahatma' readily coming down to anyone's mindset for the sole purpose of elevating one to right living. All that one needs to have is the yearning or inclination for the divine. She also makes it clear that if we willingly 'go out of ourselves God will go into the space thus vacated in us' to make our lives sublime. To Her there is no spirituality without selflessness and willing sacrifice—only these make spirituality meaningful. As acts no less than worship, they are the seeds of divinity, whatever we are and whichever faith we subscribe to. Living as a role model to any spiritual seeker, She is an embodiment of all that She teaches. She

has been rightly described as the 'Living Truth' and 'God's Love in Human BodyBody'. For four decades and more She has 'taken little and given lots'—of love to the distressed, help to the needy, cheer to the gloomy, peace to the devastated, hope to the desperate, knowledge to the seeker, upliftment to the yearning devotee—and has wiped the tears of tens of thousands of grieved who came to Her for solace. As much as those who know Her at close quarters several across the distance of continents too consider Her no less than an incarnation – an avatar of the Creatrix Mother in true spirit and merit, through their

own unique personal experiences in life. And every one of them is happy to chant to Her merrily the verse given above, '... tasmai Sree Gurave namah!' in all reverence and devotion.

Every member of the Amritapuri Campus considers herself or himself truly blessed to be a part of this institution – and particularly on this occasion of Amma's sixtieth birthday, for the opportunity it has afforded to do what little she/he could—yat-kinchit. Undoubtedly, the Amritapuri Campus itself is indeed blessed to have been anointed as the venue of the 'Amritavarsham-60' celebrations. All at Amritapuri Campus join the chant of Amma's devotees from more than two hundred lands the world over with 'melting hearts,' the age-old Vedic prayer,

Tvameva Maata ca Pitaa Tvameva

Tvameva Bandhu-scha

Sakhaa Tvameva

Tavmeva Vidhyaa Dravinam Tvameva

(Thou art [my] Mother, Thou art [my] Father,

Thou [alone] art [my true] Kinsman, Thou art [my only] Friend [in need],

Thou art Knowledge [which enlightens], Thou art All Richness)

Aum Amriteswryi Namah

from the Desk of the Editors

{happy to share thier Bliss} ■



AMMA's Birthday Message

Transform this world into heaven
“Birthday is the day we are born. Science tells us that evolution indicates and leads to progress. Then, our birth is justified only when we are able to ‘add’ to this progress. And real progress is the expansion of our minds to be able to see and feel our oneness with the rest of creation. Every aspect of creation stands as a supreme example of mutuality and support – one cannot exist without the rest. As part of creation, man is no exception to this rule. Thus it becomes our first duty to respect and help preserve all things in creation. We should at least refrain from destroying – for, we have no right to destroy what we cannot create. Every time we move closer to this realization, we are reborn a better human being. It is our new

‘happy birthday’ and we become partners in the ‘progress’ already in place.

“This is possible only when we can add more positives to ourselves and to the world around us, wherever we are. This means that we step out and help the world become more positive.

“Real birthday is the day we realize, at the human level, that our prime duty on earth is to remove the sorrows of others, a day when our hands stretch out to help another unselfishly in a spirit of sacrifice. More importantly, we should not reserve this attitude just for that one day of celebration. It should extend and come to pervade our entire life. Amma’s happiness is in seeing her children’s lives becoming the carriers of this message.

“We live in an age wherein despite immense scientific and technological advancements we are witnessing the disintegration of many other important aspects of our lives. Therefore our focus today should neither be on dependence nor non-dependence, but on interdependence. This is because humans, animals, plants, the earth, the sky, the atmosphere, the sun, the moon and all the planets are all interdependent.

“Man is a part of nature. We have come from nature. The human body is comprised of the five natural elements. For-

ever forbearing and forgiving us, the earth remains as our constant support. The sun gives us light. Trees absorb carbon dioxide, which is poisonous to us, and release oxygen. Rivers and lakes give us fresh water to quench our thirst. Air provides us with our life-breath. In spite of all this, man, who has evolved from the five elements, fails to acknowledge their importance.

“Just having a respectful approach to everything can bring about a huge transformation in our society and in the world. To rise triumphantly in life, we should begin from the bottom. To build a tall tower that stretches to the sky, we should start by building a solid foundation down in the earth. It is humility that makes us rise high. It is respect that gives one real power.

“We should live our life in a manner that is helpful to both ourselves as well as to others. God has given lightening just a few moments of existence. So too to a rainbow. Some flowers blossom just for a single day. The full moon lasts only till sunrise. A butterfly lives for only a few days. However during their short existence, they all give so much beauty and happiness to the world.

“Amma prays that we learn from their example and try to use our lives to make this world an even more beautiful place. Let us color our lips with words of truth. Let us trace our eyes with the anjana (‘kajal’ or traditional eyeliner) of compassion. Let us adorn our hands with the henna of good deeds. Let us bless our minds with the sweetness of humility. Let us fill our hearts with the light of love for God and all of God’s creation. Like this, may we transform this world into heaven.” ■

Guests Meet Chancellor Amma

Q: How can we combine ayurveda with modern biotechnology?

A: Amma is very happy to hear this. It will be great to bring the two together, ayurveda and modern biotechnology. Of course, practically speaking, it may not be so easy. So a lot of effort would be needed in this direction. Once we put in the effort, once they have come together, progress is bound to be quite spontaneous.

Q: I am very impressed by Amma's profound understanding of everything in the world. What is Amma's view on recombinant DNA? Some people hate genetically modified organisms and others think they can bring huge benefits to mankind. What is the ethical view of all of this?

A: There is no doubt that our ancient system was the best. However Amma is not discarding the modern system. For Amma, everything is significant. Amma can't say that only the old is needed and we should discard the new.

To give an example, in the olden days, in the initial stages of a fever, if one inhaled steam from water which was boiled with tulasi leaves, the fever would subside. The person also fasted and this provided a rest to the internal systems. Now at the slight hint of a fever, we take antibiotics, and the beneficial microorganisms are also killed along with the germs.

But when fever rises to say 102 degrees, then there may not be any other option, one might need to take antibiotics. But the intensity of our allopathic medicines is increasing and the chemicals are having a harmful impact on our bodies. There are often undesirable side effects. For example, one might be

taking medicine prescribed for cholesterol which may also affect the liver or the kidney in the long run.

To give another example, we now have new types of seeds. These are comparatively weaker and require chemical fertilizers. They will not experience healthy growth if organic manure is used. When we go to tribal areas or into the countryside, we should try and collect natural seeds so that they do not go extinct. It is not enough to merely appease hunger; a healthy, nutritious diet is also needed. Only divine grace can really help humanity.

August 12, 2013

Invited speakers and guests at Amrita BioQquest had the opportunity to meet Chancellor Amma during the conference. They posed many questions and received thought-provoking replies. Here are a few of them.

Q: Is it beneficial for all three major systems of medicine – ayurveda, allopathic and homeopathic to come together?

A: If these three major systems come together, we can certainly develop a new system which will do less harm. We need to create a sense of unity among the various systems of medicine and their practitioners. Each one has its own ways for diagnosing and treating. In ancient times, minds were subtle; the practitioners of ayurveda were also practicing meditation and leading austere lives. Their minds were receptive and capable of imbibing all the disciplines of study. Actually Ayurveda is a part of the Vedas. We should all work together to create a balance.

Comment to Amma: Being here is a special experience for me. It is amazing to see the science projects going on here at Amrita University. Everybody is very dedicated and focused. There seems to be the perfect blend of science and spirituality. Here people are praying and doing research.

A: Research is one part of the activities of the ashram. Amma has good children who form a good team. They go hand-in-hand with a feeling of oneness. It is their goodness that is reflected in all the actions. For Amma, even the so-called bad people have good qualities in them; Amma accepts everyone. When someone comes to her, she tries to see how the person can be transformed so that she/he may serve better.

Amma became interested in research after observing the people here in this coastal village. Here fishermen did not have bank balances ... if they had a good catch, they ate, otherwise they starved. In a hundred families, one person might have had a government job. Many had heart diseases but were either unaware of this or did not have the money for treatment. People who could have otherwise lived up to 80 died at 40, because they could not afford to buy a stent. Seeing this, Amma felt that if a cost-effective stent could be produced as a result of research and development, many people could be helped. That is how the research activities began here.

Dr. Lee Hartwell received the 2001 Nobel Prize in Physiology / Medicine for his discovery of protein molecules that control the division of cells. He was the President and Director of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, Washington before moving to Arizona State University's Center for Sustainable Health. Dr. Hartwell is also adjunct faculty at Amrita University. He spoke to the delegates at Bioquest from his office in the US, over Amrita's e-learning platform A-View. Given below are excerpts from his address.

I would like to address the young people in the audience. I know that many of you may have come to this meeting wondering, "How can I become a successful scientist? How can I prepare myself to make a contribution in this world?" These questions are interesting to me also.

Believe it or not, I am still trying to be a successful scientist. That may surprise you since you probably think that a Nobel laureate must have found the answers. But the problem is that the answers to these questions change with time and the answers are different today than what they were when I began my career fifty years ago. The strategies of the 1960's doesn't work so well anymore. What is different now?

First, what we know now is much more. For example, by 1970, no genes from any organisms were sequenced. In 2013, we have the complete sequence of the human genome. Second, not only do we know much more today, accessing that knowledge is easy. Third, obtaining new information is also much faster now.

Our rich understanding of science and technology is now needed to solve many serious problems. The human population has reached the size where we are utilizing all available resource of the planet. We are utilizing all of the agricultural land, all of the water, all of the forest and fishing resources. We are also polluting the planet that we live on.

We are polluting the land with fertilizers and pesticides; the oceans with



A-VIEW Interview with Dr. Hartwell (Q: How Can I Become A Successful Scientist?)

acids and the atmosphere with carbon dioxide. We are using up top soil and ground water, thereby reducing our capacity to feed ourselves. We are using up petroleum, the energy source that our entire economy is dependent on. These are problems we were largely unaware of, fifty years ago. But these are problems that must be solved in your life time.

The big question facing your generation is, how can human beings live sustainably on planet earth. Your two broad goals on sustainability are 1) leave the planet as you first found it for your future generations; don't use up the resources and don't pollute the planet 2) everyone deserves to have an equal share of the earth's resources.

Income strongly determines one's opportunities in life. Many poor people succumb to chronic diseases and unhealthy environments. This inequality undermines our ability to live sustainably. We can't ask the poor to leave the planet as they found it if they can't support their families. Education, health-care, employment are essential to having a sustainable society.

How can we be a successful scientist in 2013?

1. First choose a problem to solve
2. Ask questions to understand why it is not solved
3. Collaborate with those who can help
4. Develop a solution that works in the real world

Chronic diseases are our major burden and this burden will get worse. Heart disease, diabetes, cancer, dementia and other diseases. The good news is that the chronic diseases are largely preventable and more easily curable if detected early. One question that attracts me is how can we detect disease earlier when it can be more easily cured?

Can we use our increasing knowledge in molecular biology to identify biomarkers for early disease detection?

We need to collaborate very closely with clinicians who care for patients to find out exactly where they need help.

I think if we apply our technology to important clinical questions we will actually save medical expenditure and be well on our way to making a great contribution to society. ■

Serving the world with love and cooperation, you will find your own true Self. As you help those in need, selfishness will fall away, and without even noticing you will find your own fulfillment.

-Amma