



# MAYA PUWATH

Volume 5 Issue 1 February 2009

**Dhammapada** ~ "All conditioned things are impermanent" — when one sees this with wisdom, one turns away from suffering. This is the path to purification." ~ Lord Buddha

Hello All!

Hope the new year is treating all of you kindly. This year started out bleak for people all around the world. The economic uncertainty is setting the stage for trying times ahead. These are the times when having friends who are out there waiting to offer a word of encouragement or send a joke to make you laugh is invaluable. Being part of the MGCAANA and being able to connect through the newsletter is something we must treasure. So we encourage all our readers to take advantage of the opportunity to make a connection by writing something just to make your presence known and take advantage of a wealth of friendship and camaraderie.

Cost cutting is playing a big role in the new year. With all the economic turmoil, job security is on the line for a lot of us. So in this Newsletter, we are trying to discuss about this new facet to our regular lifestyles in terms of cutting cost in everyday life. Hope all of you find some useful tips and ideas and will let us know about it. Any feed back is always welcome.

On a lighter and a positive note, MGCAANA has been carrying out its good work thanks to its dedicated members. Recently some members, namely, Nernjika Dissanayake, Gayathri Samarasingha, and Kaushalya Premachandra, while on holiday in Sri Lanka handed the donation of a projector to the Collage Math Lab on behalf of MGCAANA. The ability of doing something this useful to our former school is something we should all be proud about. Another such wonderful donation to our alma mater was made when an American lady, with no connections to MGCAANA whatsoever, found out about our organization while browsing the web to donate her mother's French book collection. Thanks to her and the tireless contribution by one of our members, Kishani Martin, our MGCK will have a French Book Library collection which probably is the best and the biggest a public school in Sri Lanka ever had! This is not the first time that French Books were donated to our school through MGCAANA. Kishani Martin and Nilmini Wickramaratne carried a whole lot of donated French books that MGCAANA's French book project procured to Sri Lanka in their personal luggage! Thank you to all of you who are inspirations to us all!! You can read more about these two donations in this issue of the Newsletter.

MGCAANA also has some other projects ongoing and planned for this year; the ongoing *Batik project* (go to: (<http://www.mahamayaalumnina.org/batiks.html>), *selling the 75th Anniversary commemorative volume*, the *Endowment project* are to name a few (visit: <http://www.mahamayaalumnina.org> for more information). We hope we can make more progress in all our ongoing projects and successfully start new projects.

The next newsletter is due in April. Hope you all will participate in it by contributing something in way of writing or sharing. The theme is "Avurudu." Send us your best Avurudu holiday memory (or memories), Avurudu recipes, how to pull off a great Avurudu celebration here in the west, your "home away from home."

**Editorial Committee: Nazrana Caffoor, Priyanka Jayakodi, Dakshika Bandaranayake & Pamuditha Mahadiulweva.**

## Cost cutting—Is it anything new?

I have to confess that this topic was one of my ideas. And now when I think about it, it doesn't seem like there is anything new to add. Let me explain myself a little more, so most of you can understand what I am going on about.

We first generation immigrants have mastered frugal living to an art. It is the way of life in Sri Lanka. To make ends meet we live without waste. I surfed the web thinking there will be great many tip on cost cutting as this is what the whole world is talking about right now. Here are some of the most written about tips.

**To Cut your electricity bill** - use CFL light bulbs or in Sri Lankan jargon energy saving bulbs. Also switch off your lights/fans when you leave the room. Don't keep your refrigerator door open while you decide what you want to take from it. Decide first and then open it! Turn off or reduce A/C or the heater while there is no one at home.

**To reduce your grocery bill** - Make a list; it will prevent you from random buying. Buy vegetables and fruit weekly. It is fresh and there is less waste. Buy dry rations in bulk; reduces cost and trips to the market. Cut down on eating out.

**Reduce waste** - Recycle bags and other plastic containers. Print on both sides of the paper. Reuse the paper if it is only printed on one side.

These were some of the tips I found on the net written in more detail and explained more carefully. But this is nothing in new Sri Lankans. We have been living with all these very practical habits for a long time. Cost cutting is nothing new and most definitely nothing to learn about. To me, and I think for most of you, hearing about how a nation has to learn to live in a more cost effective manner is a new concept. I am thankful that we know how to live a comfortable life without waste. I grew up with the phrase "waste not want not" and today I am reaping the benefits of a well rounded upbringing.

~ Nazrana Caffoor

In recognition of February as the **International Friendship Month.....Friendship Quotes**

"A real friend is one who walks in when the rest of the world walks out" ~ Walter Winchell

" Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light" ~ Helen Keller

"Don't walk in front of me, I may not follow

Don't walk behind me, I may not lead

Just walk beside me and be my friend." ~ Albert Camus

Silence is the true friend that never betrays ~ Confucius

"Friendships marks a life even more deeply than love. Love risks degenerating into obsession, friendship is never anything but sharing." ~ Elie Wiesel

Sent By ~ Pamuditha Mahadiulwewa

## Projector Donation ~ by Gayathri Samarasingha

Upon the request of one of the senior Mathematics teachers, Mrs. Swarna Hitihamu, MGCAANA decided to donate an LCD Projector for the Mahamaya Mathematics Laboratory. With the generous contributions of some of our MGCAANA members, our organization was able to raise the necessary funds to buy an Epson S5 2000 Lumen 3LCD Multimedia Projector in April 2008.

I had the opportunity to join Neranjika Dissanayake and Kaushalya Premachandra in donating the projector to the Principal Mrs. I. Withanarachchi. Mrs. Hitihamu and all the other Mathematics teachers at Mahamaya joined us for the occasion. We had the opportunity to visit the Mathematics Laboratory and also to learn about amazing projects the students have done. They were getting ready for an exhibition that was scheduled for the following week and Mrs. Hitihamu mentioned that they will be using the projector at the exhibition as well.

Following is the Thank you letter written by the Mathematics Circle:



MAHAMAYA GIRLS' COLLEGE Mathematics Circle - 2008	
<b>Patron</b> Mrs. I. Withanarachchi (Principal)	<p>President, Mahamaya Old Girls' Alumni Association, U.S.A</p> <p>Dear Madam,</p> <p>It is a great privilege that Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy, a world renowned Institution, is gifted with a multifaceted Mathematics laboratory.</p> <p>Your contribution towards its development is greatly appreciated by the whole staff and the students of the Mathematics Circle of Mahamaya Girls' College.</p> <p>With all our heart we sincerely wish you good health, wealth and happiness. And may your support be with us in the future too.</p> <p>Thank you!</p> <p>Yours truly, ..... Mrs. S. Hitihamu Teacher-in-charge Mathematics Circle Mahamaya Girls' College</p>
<b>Teacher-in-charge</b> Mrs. S. Hitihamu	
<b>President</b> Thivanka Ratnayake	
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## French Book Project Phase II (239 books): Heartwarming Efforts

On September 9, 2008, Kishani received an email from a total stranger. The letter was written by a young lady called Lucie with a French heritage, whose parents had advanced degrees in French literature. Father was a professor and mother was a librarian. Mother had recently entered a nursing home. The family library that contained copies of many French plays and novels, anthologies, instructional books, glossaries, study helps and books for children and young readers, had to find a good home. Lucie and her mother Helena were concerned. Lucie had seen online about our efforts in 2007 to secure French language books for Mahamaya library. After seeing the information on the internet, Lucie wrote an email to Kishani. That letter gave a great start to our Phase II. Technology can do amazing things!

Kishani, our in-house expert in French was thrilled and shared the exciting news with the Exec. Committee and the BOD. Kishani wrote, *"I think this is wonderful. Let's jump on it. May be this person lives close to Philly and I may be able to pick up the books and even take them to Sri-Lanka just as I did the 50 books last year..."* Everybody got excited. Lucie and Kishani started communicating with each other. Kishani wrote her back saying that we were very excited and pleased with Lucie's offer. And she further explained how precious and useful those books would be to Mahamaya students who study French.

Both Lucie and Kishani had to come to some agreement on how to meet. They were about 250 miles apart. Lucie and Kishani decided to split the distance. Kishani and her husband James started driving one Sunday in September. They were to meet Lucie in a small city in the middle. That was a joyous meeting. They had lunch together. Lucie was happy that the 239 French classics that she was donating were going to a good cause. Later she wrote, *"Also, all my good thoughts go toward your efforts to help your school. It's exciting to feel connected with those so far away!"* Her mother Helena was so happy to learn that her books have found a new home. Kishani was happy that she got 239 most wonderful books for the school. MGCAANA sent them a receipt for the donation.

The next job of taking the books to Sri Lanka from Philadelphia was a challenge. Kishani and her husband James were planning a trip to Sri Lanka to visit Kishani's family and friends in December 2008. In this trip, both of them carried 100 books (weight 80 lbs) in their suitcases and backpacks all the way to Sri Lanka from Philadelphia!

On January 9<sup>th</sup> we heard from Kishani after her return. She had stamped all the books with the MGCAANA donation stamp and dated. Most of the books were carried by James, some even in his backpack. Thank you James for your unconditional support. We appreciate it very much. We learned that you had to buy new clothes in Sri Lanka to wear because you did not have much room in your suitcases for your own clothes. After all this heavy lifting and not having enough room for their clothes and gifts, Kishani wrote, *"Taking the French books for the girls at MGCK was the right thing for me."*

Thank you Kishani and James for your wonderful spirit and generosity!

Written by **Sujatha Werake**

**(Dear Mayans, Please note that we have 139 French books that need to be taken to Sri Lanka. If anybody from the East Coast is visiting Sri Lanka, please consider taking at least a few with you to the school. We should be able to deliver them to you if you are living in Maryland, Washington DC., Southern Philadelphia, and West Virginia. Please email: [Mahamaya\\_alumnae@yahoo.com](mailto:Mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com) and let us know if you could help us in this venture. Thank you).**

## Natural Remedies for the Flu Season

It certainly is "that" time of year again! Many of us aren't strangers to the typical symptoms, such as coughs, colds, fevers, stuffy noses, aching head and body. That's the bad news. The good news is that there are some simple **natural home remedies** you can make using ingredients that are probably already in your refrigerators or pantries. Remember to see a doctor to make sure you aren't seriously ill and to make sure you are using these plants safely. You may also want to consult with a herbalist.

**Lemons:** Mixed with a little honey and hot water, lemons help soothe sore throats. For fevers, my grandmother used to squeeze a little lemon juice in a dish of cold water and apply it to my forehead with a washcloth. It also gives you some added vitamin C to help your immune system.

**Honey:** Excellent for sore throats and coughs. You can take it plain, one teaspoonful at a time or mix it with some hot water and lemon.

**Garlic:** One of my favorite cough and cold remedies involves garlic. Chop and peel five garlic cloves. Cover with a half a cup of honey. Mix in a little cayenne pepper or ginger. Let sit for at least an hour. Take one teaspoonful as needed.

**Cayenne pepper:** Used in small amounts, cayenne pepper helps your immune system. Add it to food or make the garlic/honey recipe. It also helps keep you warm if you have a chill.

**Chamomile tea:** Chamomile is commonly used to help you relax and sleep. It is also good for stomach problems and fevers. Don't use if you are allergic to ragweed. Also don't use in large amounts if you are pregnant (more than two cups a day).

**Peppermint tea:** This is one of my favorite herbs to use, especially when my sinuses are all blocked up. You can either drink it, or put a few tea bags in your bath water. Don't use in large amounts if pregnant.

**Ginger:** One of my favorite teas to drink when I feel chilled and tired from a cold or the flu is ginger tea. Cut off a one-inch piece of the fresh root and peel it. Grate it into a mug and pour one cup of boiling water. Let it stand for five minutes. You can season it with honey if you want. This is also a good tea for stomach problems.

**Thyme:** This is one of my favorite herbs to use when I have a cough. To use, prepare a tea with one cup of the dried herb and one cup hot water. Let it steep for fifteen minutes. Strain out the herb and sweeten with honey if needed. Store it in the refrigerator and take one teaspoon every hour as needed. Only use this remedy for a day or two.

**Oregano:** This is also used for coughs and colds. Prepare it the same way as thyme.

**Sage:** Sage is a classic sore throat remedy. Prepare the same as thyme and oregano. You can either drink it or gargle with it depending on your preference. Sage is also good for fevers.

**Cinnamon:** Cinnamon is a remedy that may help your immune system. Add small amounts of the powder to food. You can also add the powder or a cinnamon stick to an herbal tea.



Source: <http://www.stretcher.com/stories/04/04dec20f.cfm>

Sent by: Pamuditha Mahadiulwewa

A Publication of the Mahamaya Girls' College Alumni Association of North America  
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