# Pasant Palley

## October, 2012

# TODAY

# SCHOOL WATCH

Vasant Valley School Aaj Tak Vaad Vivaad Pratiyogita - Results: Winners: Venkateshwar International School Runners up: New Era Public School Best Speaker: Daisy Ahuja Best Interjector: Amit Singh Hindi Inter-Section Debate (Class 10) 1<sup>st</sup>- Shaurya Abhi and Akshay Sharan Hindi Power Point Competition (Class 7) 1<sup>st</sup>- Divij Chandna and Gaur Hari Social Science Essay Writing (Class 5) 1<sup>st</sup> - Dhruv Rattan

# **CONGRATULATIONS:**

# Mindfulness

"The good life is a process, not a state of being. It is a direction, not a destination."

When a group of monks and Buddhist practitioners came to our school, most of us were unsure as to what to expect. On the first day of the workshop, we were introduced to the 'practice' of relaxation. The



monks instru cted us on how to relax every part of our body, leading us step-by-step to the state of total relaxation. The emphasis on breathing, understanding the 'eye of the storm' and using imagery like that of the tree trunk were integral to remaining calm and peaceful. The sessions on controlling our wave of emotions and understanding them, taught us an invaluable lesson that was pivotal for all the subsequent sessions. The second day was marked by the rather unusual exercises of walking and eating meditation. Walking meditation provided us with an insight on how different moods shape our gait and walking speed.



Session on eating meditation

"Through simple lessons and exercises, the monks were undoubtedly successful in showing us how to be in control of both, our surroundings and ourselves."

Keeping quiet and simply introspecting enabled all of us to gather our thoughts together, remain

focused and calm at mind. On the other hand, eating meditation demonstrated to us how to appreciate the food that we often don't realize the value of and take for granted. The final day was commenced with an

initial exercise to attain total relaxation, which was followed by an inspiring video of the Wake Up Song that these very monks and practitioners had sung with hundreds of University students from Yale, Columbia, UPenn, Harvard, New York University and Brown. The interconnectedness and cohesion of "Wake Up" sung by undergraduate students all the way on the East Coast reflected bonds of interaction and integration, all



facilitated by these mindful monks. Our workshop ended on a high note with an interesting question and answer session, which truly reflected the degree to which these monks had inspired us; an inspiration drawn within 3 days, albeit an inspiration all the way. The questions were all answered with a degree of honesty and calm that reflected our guests' inner peace. At the end of this three day journey, the monks and practitioners taught us much more than the art of breathing, they taught us the art of living, healthy and satisfied. The ever-smiling faces, open-mindedness, optimism and frankness all bound together in a monk's life left Vasant Valley School with a little less stress, and a lot more happiness. The Newsletter spoke to Sister Maye from Hong Kong who shared with us some of her experiences and beliefs.

NL- What inspired you to follow the path of Buddha?

SISTER-Most of us were accompanied by our parents to the Mindfulness practices in various places including New York and France. From then on these ideals were instilled within us and so we decided to join when we became older. NL- *What is the significance of your attire?* 

SISTER- Our leader was from Vietnam, where all the farmers dress in brown. It is the earthly colour. For us, it symbolizes the simplicity and humility of a farmer, away from worldly materialistic objects. The shaved

heads are also to show our detachment from worldly beings.

NL- Is anyone and everyone eligible to become a part of your group?

SISTER- No, we have certain parameters that allow us to accept people into our group. Anyone who is mentally and physically healthy may be a part of our group. This is because we follow strict discipline on a day to day basis and not everyone can keep up with this discipline. Also, we find it hard to instill the Buddhist ideologies in people above the age of 50 years as they are already accustomed to their own habits.

-Serena Nanda, 9 and Aadya Sinha, 12



Ludhiana

Punjab

Bathinda

Chandigarh

New Delhi

Utt

Namrata Narula, Vandita Khanna, Aditya Srinivasan and Sanjna Surya represented Vasant Valley School at the Annual Sondhi Debates Cup Challenge at the Lahore College Himachal of Arts and Sciences (LACAS), Lahore, Pakistan. Exposed to a completely different Pradesh World School Debating Format, here's an account of their novel experiences and unique observations on the other side of the border:

# DEBATING IN DAKISTAN

Debating in Pakistan was a new experience, a different challenge, one that I'd like to remember as a learning opportunity. Pakistan follows the World School Debating format, normally practiced at the college level in other countries. Passionate and enthusiastic 11 year olds are whisked away and intensively trained in speaking for 8 minutes on a motion with one hour to prepare for. It took us sometime to get a hang of the format, and to be able to speak for eight whole minutes frankly. The first debate, along with everything else, opened our eyes to a standard of debating that inspired us. The high quality of

rebuttals, the unwavering confidence of all the speakers, and the minimal reference to written material compelled us to sit down the first night, think about where we were going wrong and then get accustomed to the world school format.

While in most Indian schools, some debates tend to lean on theatrics, the debating culture in Pakistan was different, as it focused entirely on strong matter, sharp rebuttals and clarifications, and of course, a clear voice that will not tremble after 7 minutes of speaking. So we tried our level best in the subsequent rounds as we grasped the gist of the debating style quickly and took every topic thrown at us as a new challenge, at the end of which, we proudly won two of the debates as well! Key highlights of the debate were however, the Points of Information (POIs), whereby the opposing team could pose a question between the first and seventh minute of the speech. In our first debate, POIs came thick and fast, and it was more than a little unnerving for us novices. But soon, we picked up the skill, and came to enjoy not only giving POIs, but also waving away those of persistent opponents.

I must say that the feedback of every judge really helped each one of us work on our weaknesses and use our strengths to our advantage. I really appreciate them pointing out our mistakes, especially in the first round, because of which we were able to show marked improvement, literally, overnight. By the end of it, we couldn't wait to return to India and do our 'Modified Cambridge' debates, with hours to prepare, the internet at our disposal, and 3 minute speeches to produce at the end of it!

This debating experience not only exposed me to the different debating culture of Pakistan, but also facilitated a greater learning experience, one which pushed all of us to not give up, transform every challenge posed in front of us into an opportunity, and effectively, actualize our debating potential.

Yes, we learnt a lot at Lahore. We didn't make it to the quarters, but we didn't regret it- in fact we are all charged up for next year! And this time, we will make it. -Sanjna Surya, 11

My trip to Lahore was an eye-opener, as it enabled me to break stereotypical barriers knitted together by preconceived notions at one level. But it was essentially a reminder as to why I love debating so much as well. Perhaps, that's why our exposure to the World School Debating Format, which entailed intensive training, delivery of 8 minute long speeches, unwavering POIs and effectively, extempore construction of cases and rebuttals, left me truly inspired.

The elegant mosques, winding streets, boisterous bazaars and commendable hospitality of the LACAS faculty and students made me



feel right at home on the other side of the border. More than anything else, my visit allowed me to firmly believe that as students, there are so many similarities that bind us together than differences that set us apart. Lahore is not just the place to go to rediscover history and explore cultures, but also the place to be to celebrate these very similarities. -Vandita Khanna, 12

"When I first found out that we'd be going to Lahore for the Sondhi Debate Cup challenge hosted at LACAS every year, I was excited. Perhaps not especially excited, but excited the way one usually is about such events. When we crossed the border at Wagah, that's when it really sunk in that we were going to Pakistan and that's when I realized that this would be a once in a lifetime opportunity, and I couldn't wait. Spending time with the students of schools from across

Pakistan, and debating against them, changed us. It enabled us to broaden our perspectives, and challenge stereotypes about Indians and Pakistanis both. I'll always be thankful for the opportunity, and remember the experience as being irreplaceable."

-Namrata Narula, 11









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(L-R) Aditya Srinivasan, Vandita Khanna, Namrata Narula, Sanjna Surya

As a traveller, it's a funny but common thing to see people jump at the sight of something recognisable while travelling. Indians crave Indian meals in Kuala Lampur, jump at the sight of an Indian shopkeeper in the United States, and so on. Ironically enough, no matter how much you want to get away from the dreary surroundings at home, there is always some joy in recognition. Indians leaving for Pakistan would probably think that there is at least something different about its people, a key factor that would help the Indian tourist make a distinction. Clothes, maybe. Accent, style of speaking, anything.

No such luck in Lahore. Perceptions about places have always existed, but then again, the only way to get rid of them is to visit those places yourself. In the hope that I could come back and brag about my visit to Pakistan, I took a spanking new camera with a new memory card. I came back with no

pictures. This is not to say that Lahore is not worth visiting. It has its own charm, very much like Delhi.

Old Lahore has similar, winding streets and there are similar wide roads passing through the city. A **quick look to your left and right will reveal the same hustle and bustle that is so characteristic of Delhi.** Cars zoom past at the same speed, the same neon lights flash by, and there's the same characteristically Indian smile. In short, the more visible sight of Partition is not that there are so many differences, but that it's just one country split into two.

# "If at all a trip away from home helps you discover differences, a trip to this charismatic and quaint city, the closest to the Wagah border in Punjab, initiates the discovery of similarities."

Well, if there is anything worth doing in Lahore, what is it? First, eating all that there is to eat. There is, sorry to say, one key difference between Indians and their Pakistani counterparts: the ability to cook meat. The majority Muslim population means that there is something about the Pakistani flavour different from the Indian one. Meat, especially in kebabs and curries, is cooked softer than anywhere you can hope to find in India. Pakistani kebabs reveal the true distinction between the two countries, and for all the tension that's brewing, it is food for thought (and body) that there can exist such good food across the border.

There are a couple of tourist attractions. The most obvious one would be mosques. Badshahi mosque, Lahore's largest mosque, is a key tourist attraction, as is the Lahore fort. Unfortunately enough, the fort and mosque are reminders of the seen-one, seen- them- all attitude so typical of Delhi's medieval



Exploring Lahore's Badshah-e-Mosque

architecture. The fort does house some unique heritage paintings and artefacts though, which mustn't be missed. The Wazir Khan mosque, famous for its tile work, is another attraction. Old Lahore, at face value, is the same bustling

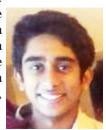


At attention during the Pakistani national anthem

tile work, is another attraction. Old Lahore, at face value, is the same bustling entity that ChandniChowk is in Delhi. The curious tourist could explore the area himself, and asking for directions is a refreshing formality because Urdu is almost identical to Hindi. Besides, a lot of Lahoris are educated and speak perfect English, so tourists shouldn't have a problem. **To the Indian tourist, Lahore is perhaps a slightly smaller version of Delhi. To the foreign tourist, it is perhaps one of the few Pakistani cities that is so Indian in its demeanour that it has the same laid-back air about it.** 

Similar dusty roads greet you, and with the exception of names, there's actually a good chance even the most seasoned of Indian tourists wouldn't be able to make a distinction. There is the cheap thrill of crossing the border, and beyond that, upon arrival in Lahore, the city's a beautiful place with lots to see. Conversation will reveal that a lot of Lahoris have some sort of

connection with India, and that's highly likely; it's an identical place. Lahore doesn't seem to have much public transport, but finding a travel agent usually isn't an issue. Knowing that you're Indian is actually a bonus, because conversation and small talk is never an issue. Even as an exotic tourist, a visit to this city is almost essential. The similarities abound in almost all aspects of life. It's almost like rediscovery, in the non-spa, non-beach sense. Before traipsing off to an exotic far eastern or western location, it would do the tourist a world of good to visit Lahore, experience a change in perspective, and then ponder.



-Aditya Srinivasan, 11

# oblivion

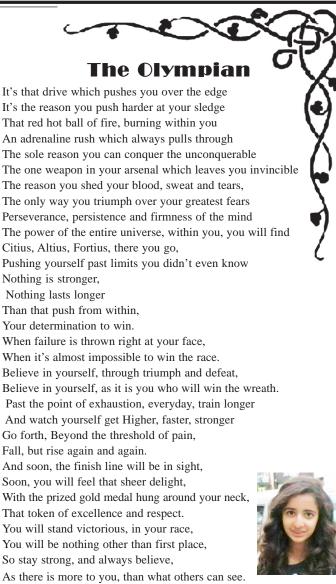
And there it stands before me Yet I cannot see it clear, Rooted to the spot I stand Paralyzed, gripped by fear. I step into the unfamiliar Afraid and all alone, A voice beckoning me closer Taking me away from all I have ever known. Thoughts race through my mind Of the horrors I have yet to see, Unfamiliarity sets in again Leaving all other emotion behind. White light filters in Illuminating all that is in sight, I inch closer with apprehension With a deep breath, it takes all my might. But what I see I cannot fathom, Reality slowly slips away As if I am stuck in a dream Awake or asleep, I cannot say It slowly dissolves into a mist. It enshrouds me in totality Soon I see nothing, I hear nothing For in the end I am nothing.



- Divya Shastri,11 Winner of Class 11 Poetry Writing Competition

# MEMORIES

The path of our life, on which we walk Every day, every moment, every hour on the clock. From the crack of dawn, till the dark of night From when a butterfly is in its cocoon, till the day of its flight. From cradle to grave Every step we save Until we put on the wooden coat And to the one above, our lives, we devote. All the highs and lows, like speed breakers on the way We construct our path with life's modeling clay. As we move forward the memories behind turn more golden just like sun bathing hay. As we walk down the memory lane These reminiscences get engraved in our brain. At the end of the day we recall these memories with pleasure and pain. But there are many memories that just evaporate. Into the heavens, out of the mind's gate. The memories we cherish we'd like to recreate Do remember some of them can be strong crestfallen memories a person will hate. Leaving fresh memories in a bouquet This is the art of memory crochet. As we leave this world, with memories alone We hope these memories are not to be thrown! -Shreya Bahl, 7



-Riddhima Wahi, 10

# शिक्षा पर सभी का अधिकार

व्यथा देख नॅंगे पैर घूमते बच्चों की मन में एक तीस सी उठी उनके लिए कुछ लगी लगन मन में उठते अनेक विचारों में हो गई मगन किसी भी तरह इनहें शिक्षित करना है सिर्फ अपनो को ही नहीं इनहे भी साक्षार करना है सिर्फ अपनो को ही नहीं इनहे भी साक्षार करना है मित्रों से मिलकर योजना बनाई अपनी बचत से सबने जोड़ी पाई पाई बना हमारा विद्दालय और शिक्षक हम सभी ठान ले तो हिमालय की शिखर पर भी पहुँच सकेंगे कभी अपने अतिरिक्त समय का हमने किया खुव प्रयोग

अपने अतिरिक्त समय का हमने किया खूब प्रयोग लेकर हृदय में आशा और उमॅंग कि सफल होगा हमारा प्रयोग।



ः सरीना मित्तल 8

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# 21st Vasant Valley School Drama Festival 2012 News and Views

Name: Suramia Arora School: Mount St. Mary

Interviewed by: Suhasini Takkar

**Question:** How did you feel while performing in front of so many people?

**Answer:** It was a bit frightening at first but then we got so involved with our play that it was fun. We had practiced hard and the audience too was good.

**Question:** What do you think about the theme of the Drama Festival?

**Answer:** Aur Kitna Tang Karoge was a very interesting topic. We had a lot of fun putting together our play



as we've heard this line so many times from our parents so it was not too difficult to prepare our play. Of course our teachers helped us to make our play and gave us a lot of practice. The best part was that we missed classes to prepare for this play.

Name: Gemma

School: The British School

Interviewed by: Sumona Sarein

**Question:** How would you describe the audience? **Answer:** The audience was very encouraging and motivating.

**Question:** What did you like the most? **Answer:** I liked the entire experience. The interludes were very entertaining. The best part was that we were not competing against each other but just doing our best and having fun.

**Q2.** How would you describe the audience? Answer: The audience was very encouraging and motivating.

### Q3. What did you like the most?

**Answer:** I liked the entire experience. The interludes were very entertaining. The best part was that we were not competing against each other but just doing our best and having fun.

### Q2. How would you describe the audience?

Answer: The audience was very encouraging and motivating.

### Q3. What did you like the most?

**Answer:** I liked the entire experience. The interludes were very entertaining. The best part was that we were not competing against each other but just doing our best and having fun.

**Q1. What do you think about our Drama Festival? Answer:** We enjoyed ourselves thoroughly. Vasant Valley School gave us the opportunity to perform in

front of an audience of so many schools. Each school put up a good show. I hope I can come here to be a part of this show next year too.



Q3. What did you like about this festival?

Answer: Drama Festival was fun as there are no winners and losers here.

# ताजयात्रा कुछ मधुर यादें



में बहुत खुश और उत्तेजित था। हम सुवह 6:30 बजे स्कूल से निकल पड़े। मैंने बहुत गाने गाए और दोस्तों के साथ मस्ती की। रास्ते में हमने यमुना नदी देखी वह बहुत गंदी थी। दोपहर को

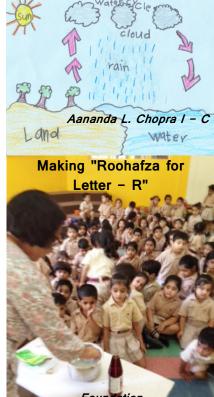
होटल में खाना खाया और संग्रहालय देखने गए। वहॉ हमने बहुत प्रकार के पत्थर देखे। कारीगरों ने अपनी कला का प्रदर्शन किया। फिर हम बिजली



की गाड़ी में ताज महल पहुँचे। जब मैं विशाल दरवाज़े के नीचे खड़ा हुआ तो मैं चौंक गया। मेरी ऑखों के सामने दुनिया का एक अजूवा था! हम एक कतार में आगे वढ़ रहे थे। हमारे गाइड ने हमें ताज दिखाया और उसके वारे में जानकारी दी। उसके वाद हमने आगरा किला में ध्वनि और प्रकाश का कार्यक्रम देखा। अगली सुवह अजीत सिंह गाइड आए और उन्होंने ताज के वारे में अद्भुत सत्य वताए। मैं यह मधुर यात्रा कभी नहीं भूलूँगा।

सिद्धान्त गांधी चार - ब

# "Learning About Water Cycle"



Foundation

### Visit by Michelin Chefs

It was a wonderful experience to meet

such famous chefs. Anjum Anand, my favorite Indian chef told us how important and



tasty healthy food can be. I saw her taking part in a challenge where she and other visiting chefs had to make a dish



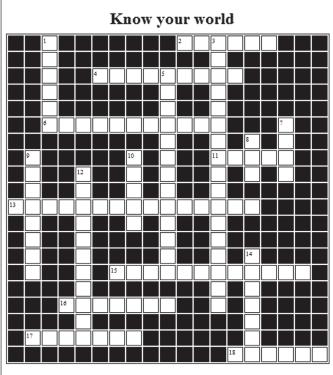
with the ingredients provided in twenty minutes. Her dish looked scrumptious and I wanted to gobble it all up! I really hope we get to see them

again and that I am chosen as Anjum Anand's helper.

Ayaan Gulyani V- C

### Gandhari

Gandhari the princess, gentle as a lamb. Married the Kuru King Dhritarashtra in faraway land In a tradition as old as the hills, She blindfolded herself for her beloved prince After marriage, she bore a hundred sons, Her daughter Dushala, though was the only one Kauravas and Pandavas relationship was as cold as ice, None could stop the war, the old or wise Even Gandhari's blessings could not save Duryodhana, The evil lay defeated in a fight with Bhima one on one Her wrath and anger charred Yudhishtra's toe black, Another curse fell on Krishna which couldn't be taken back The Yadavs were destined to die, Krishna knew this, oh fie! A great devotee of Shiva, Her life ended in a fire on the Himalayas Now Gandhari rested in the heavens, So hereby her story ends!!! Asmita Shah V-C

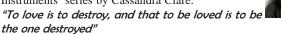


# **City of Bones-Book Review**

City of Bones is based on Shadowhunters, Vampires, Downholders, and Werewolves. It is a world of love, of hate and magic. It follows the life of a girl, named Clary, who discovers this world, existing parallel to ours. Through the course of the book, she finds out that, not only is she a part of it, but an integral character in their paradigm. As she discovers this world, she finds out about herself, and blends into it as though she had been there forever. Her adventures in the world of Shadowhunters, and her new-found life makes for an interesting read. However, parts of the book are stretched and could

be more concise. It is a new take on the typical fantasy of demons, angels, vampires and werewolves with a hint of the old ideas.

City of bones is the first book in the 'Mortal Instruments' series by Cassandra Clare.



-Tanya Pawa, 9

# भारत की पहचान

अंग्रेजों का शासनकाल तो हुआ समाप्त, लेकिन उनके अवशेष आज भी हैं बसे हुए हम सीना तानकर स्वयं को स्वाधीन मानते हैं, लेकिन आज तक उनका अनुकरण हम करते रहे।

65 वर्ष पश्चात् आज अस्पष्ट है पहचान, हम क्या थे और क्या हो गए। परंपरागत संस्कार पश्चिमीकरण के आगमन से, किसी मोढ़ पर हमेशा के लिए गुम गए। हिन्दी बोलना तो दूर आज समझ तक न आती, राष्ट्रभाषा बोलने में शर्म महसूस हैं करते अंग्रेजी भाषा में ही बोलचाल है स्वीकार्य व उचित, आज के पथभ्रष्ट युवा यही हैं समझते।

राष्ट्रवादी भावना सहित हम स्वतंत्र तो हुए, परंतु, आज भी अंग्रेजों के वेशरम गुलाम भारत से निकलने की ही जल्दी लगी रहती है हमें, चाहे हो पढ़ाई, विवाह अथवा काम। पराधीनता से पूर्व हमारी नैतिकता हमारा प्रतीक, व सांस्कृतिक ज्ञान हमारी शोभा बढ़ाती थी दुर्भाग्य से आज न तो नैतिकता का निशान है, और संस्कृति हैं गंगा की गंदगी में घुलीं हुई।

चलिए आज अपने आप से एक प्रश्न हैं पूछते, हैं कौन हम, हमारा अस्तित्व है क्या ? गुलामी की निशानी को भारतीय भूमि से उजाड़कर, उगाते हैं एक नई प्रकार की राष्ट्रीयता।

ः वंदिता खन्ना 12

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1. Country of copper

5. Scientific name for Vitamin C

12. Longest highway in the world

7. US State also known as beehive state

China underwent the \_\_\_\_\_ Revolution in 1949
 2nd December is World Literacy day

10. Where is the International Court of Justice located?

- Across
  2. Largest island in the Mediterranean Sea
- 4. Which airlines first allowed flyers to surf the net? 3. First recipient of the Bharat Ratna
- Fear of Cats
- 11. Last letter of the Greek alphabet
- 13. Author of "Vision India 2020"
- 15. Where is the largest airport?
- 16. Old name for Taiwan
- 17. First university in the world
- 18. The first Asian recipient of a Nobel Prize

Farmosa, Nalanda, Tagore

14. Event Ambassador of the T20 WC Tournament 2012

Down

Answers (1 to 18): Zambia, Sicily, C Rajagopalachari, Singapore, Ascorbic Acid, Alurophobia, Utah, Red, Computer, Hague, Omega, Acid, Alurophobia, Utah, Redam, Malinga, Saudi Arabia, TransCanada, APJ Abdul Kalam, Malinga, Saudi Arabia,

# INTER-HOUSE DANCE COMPETITION 2012

Finally, after months of pleading, the Inter-House Dance competition was brought back for the first time after 2009. From the reputation of previous dance performances that have taken place on the Vasant Valley Stage, all the houses had a lot to live up to.From costumes, to music, to choreography, to props, the participants took complete control. This year each house had to base their contemporary dances on a theme. Red House proved to be the most original, with their interpretation of "Detachment". The creative choreography by Green House involving human puppets was also a crowd pleaser. The judges were most taken aback by the energy of the boys on stage who managed to outshine the girls! It was impressive to see that all the house members had managed to find time to practice together despite the multiple activities taking place in school.

In the classical category, the performance of the 'jugalbandis' made it evident that classical dances like Kathak, Bharatnatyam and Orissi are still very much appreciated by the students. With faces caked in make-up and adorned from head to toe in heavy jewelry and traditional costumes, each house presented their own choreography of the different styles of classical dance forms.

The energy level was high on the day of the competition. The results themselves further proved to show how determined the houses were to win as every house placed a position in either the contemporary or classical category. We hope that the inter-house dance competition continues to take place with the same enthusiasm every year!

-Akhila Khanna, 12

