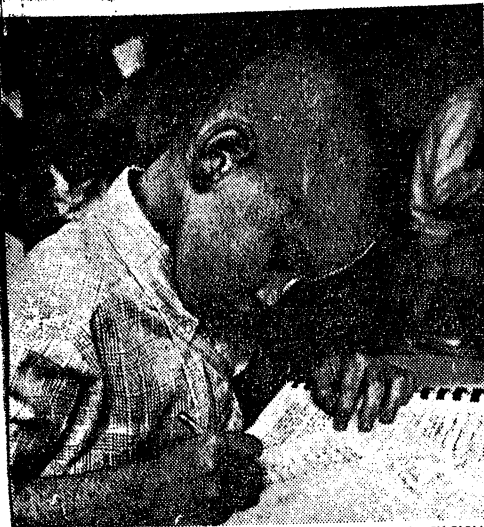


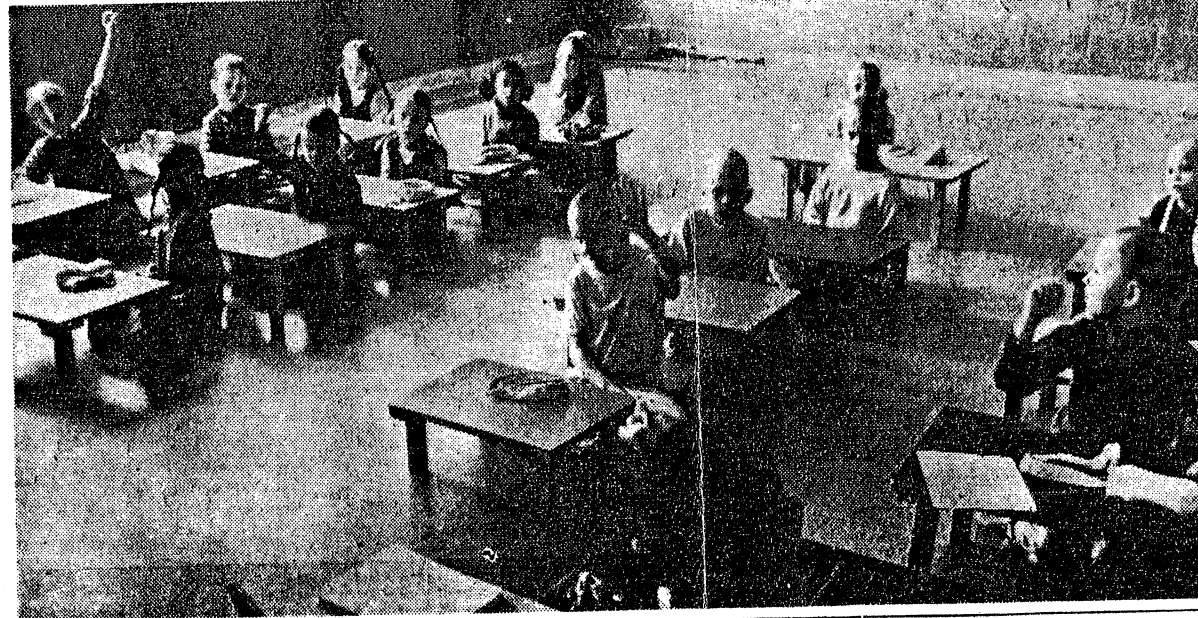
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Religion: Control Stressed at Krishna Children's School



Photographs for The New York Times by JERRY CABLUCK
Above: Ekendradas, 9 years old, writes his English lesson at the gurukula, or boarding school of the Hare Krishna cult at Dallas. Below: Dressed in a sari, a girl named Dianne eats her breakfast. Right: a classroom scene.



By ELEANOR BLAU
Special to The New York Times

DALLAS, Nov. 24 — Krishna Kumari was telling her kindergarten pupils a story about Lord Krishna and a bee the other day when she stopped to scold a boy for inattention.

"Oh, there's Jason, listening to his mind, his garbage-pail mind," Krishna Kumari said. Jason put his hands to his eyes in shame. He stayed that way a long time, face tilted down, the topknot of hair sprouting from his otherwise shaved head.

"Servant of the mind," the young teacher intoned, gazing at him. Then she resumed the tale.

The scene was a classroom of the gurukula, a boarding school to which the more dedicated members of the so-called Hare Krishna cult send their children when they reach the age of four or five.

It is the only school so far for the movement, which was

founded in the United States in 1965 by an Indian guru, A. C. Bhaktivedanta, known to his devotees as Prabhupada, a title of respect.

He had come to tell the West about Krishna, god of the Vedic scriptures who is said to have taken human form 5,000 years ago. Prabhupada now has 5,000 followers, three quarters of whom are in the United States. The rest are in Europe and Asia, according to the Los Angeles headquarters of his International Society of Krishna Consciousness.

The devotees, who take Indian spiritual names, have become a familiar sight in many cities. Dressed in orange or pale yellow garments—the men with shaved heads except for a tuft of hair—the young ascetics sell Krishna literature and ring little bells, chanting the name of their lord.

Only some are strong enough in the faith to send their children to the school. Parents are asked, although not required, to

visit the youngsters only once a year.

Seventy-five children from the ages of 3 to 15 presently attend the gurukula, whose name means place of the guru in Sanskrit.

Ten adults, most in their late twenties, teach and supervise the children with the help of assistants. Pupils are divided into three age levels and are separated, according to sex, in the oldest or advanced group.

Context of Faith

The world of Krishna pervades their lives. They learn reading and writing in English and Sanskrit, arithmetic, history and geography, all in the context of the faith.

"Then Krishna swallowed all the flames of the fire until it was completely gone," reads a 10-year-old, in a sari and pig-tails, from one of the sect's books for children. The teacher is. "What is the verb?" he asks. "What is the object?"

Krishna Kumari's reproach in

the kindergarten class reflected a basic aim of the two-year-old school: to teach self-control.

"A person who can control his senses and mind can learn and understand many things," explained Nandarani, supervisor of the older girls and wife of Dayananda, the headmaster. "We assure that they are going to be good devotees of God as well as good all-around citizens, free from lust, anger and greed, which are the major ailments in American society."

All students and teachers take two cold showers a day, the first when they get up at 3:30 or 4 A.M. Adult devotees believe that sexual desire wastes spiritual energy, so the only permissible contact is between married couples once a month at the optimum time for procreation.

On at least two occasions during a 24-hour visit to the school, an observer saw evidence of anger. "You had anger in the kitchen," one of the older

boys taunted a pouting companion. "I saw you, your ears were red."

And a girl who had indicated a wish to punch a classmate's face was sent into the temple to chant.

Gurukula children chant and jump about a great deal. "It's a great release," observed Nandarani, who in her own childhood made her mother take her to Episcopal church every morning.

"The life here is very exacting," she said. "Instead of stifling or perverting emotion, we let it out by chanting and dancing." They also chant numbers and vocabulary lists.

The teaching methods might seem old-fashioned, but we find them to be very practical," remarked Nandarani.

Krishna Kumari herself learned a measure of control two weeks after taking refuge in a Krishna temple. She said she had fled from her husband, whom she described as a "well known criminal."

Her 7-year old child was killed in a car accident, she told a visitor. "Here I was saying, 'boo-hoo, my daughter is dead,' and they were quoting the Bhagavad Gita. They showed me my daughter is not dead," said the teacher, who, like other devotees, believes in reincarnation. "Her personality still exists," she said. "Only her body is gone. We are not our body."

In response to a question, she acknowledged that she did not like her own body.

\$100 a Month

Gurukula teachers are strict, soft-spoken and, with the very young, affectionate. The kindergarten pupils, some of whom have known no other world but Krishna, laugh easily.

The children do not leave the school except to play in the yard or, in the case of the older pupils, sell literature in the neighborhood. Donations, \$100-a-month tuition and the sale of incense manufactured at the sect's Los Angeles headquarters provide the school's \$10,000 monthly income, spokesmen said.

All the boys have shaved heads with the ponytail by

which Krishna may wish to seize them "back to the spiritual sky." But only the older boys wear the traditional dhoti—a cloth wrapped around the waist and drawn up between the legs. Kindergarten boys wear trousers. Most of the girls braid their hair and wear saris or long skirts.

Using their right hand instead of utensils, the children eat Indian-style vegetarian food served from vats onto wax paper sheets placed on the floor of what used to be a church sanctuary. Most meals include hot sweet milk and oranges.

Sleep on Floor

The children sleep on the floor in dormitories set up according to sex and age. Their morning begins with four hours of devotional study and worship. The highlight is 7 A.M. when the lime green curtain on the stage of the temple room—formerly the church gymnasium—is parted to reveal newly dressed marble images of the blue-black Krishna playing his flute, Radharani, his closest devotee, and other deities.

Adults put night clothes on the figures before retiring and dress them again in costumes and jewelry, different ones each day, before the curtain is parted. Kindergarten children imitate the ritual later in the day with miniature box stages that each tends in class.

Incense hung heavy in the crowded temple the other morning as children and adults paced back and forth, danced about or swayed, murmuring the Hare Krishna verse or mantra said to put one in touch with the "supreme personality of godhead."

A two-tone drone emerged from time to time, the thin, high children's voices distinct from the men's low hum. The session lasted about four hours, but few children appeared to tire. Some joined hands and danced, smiling. Four- and five-year olds prostrated themselves with aplomb, but tipped sideways once they were down. Here and there a somber older child, holding an adult's hand, danced reluctantly.