

Rising Sun

Fort Calhoun or Cooper – Another Fukushima? Failure of the Fourth Estate

By Mirra Price

Every Wednesday afternoon since mid-March, like clockwork, I have checked the website of the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources' Radiation Protection Section (RPS) for weekly updates of sampling results of air, water, vegetation and fish for radioactive isotopes. It's not out of idle curiosity that I am focused on this data. It has felt like survival, especially since on May 3rd, in the middle of the Fukushima nuclear crisis, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) stopped increased monitoring air, precipitation and water. The EPA stated that the post-Fukushima radioactivity levels had fallen, so special monitoring was no longer necessary. ("NRC news," 2011)

Personally, I spoke with the Section Chief of the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources (NC DENR) many times concerning the data on their weekly updates. I consulted with Mary Olsen, Head of the Southeast Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS) and with Arnie Gunderson, Chief Nuclear Engineer for Fairewinds Associates and former nuclear engineer for 70 nuclear plants in the U.S. With Mary's and Arnie's expert help, I posed a different framework for reporting radioactivity results to the public. I asked, also, that RPS check samples for radioactive isotopes from trans-uranics (uranium, plutonium, and other deadly substances with long half-lives*). I also asked that reports include the location and dates of the samples. We wanted simpler reporting for the public, as well.

Although the Section Chief was helpful, the only change made was to include maximum and minimum levels of radioactive isotopes found and where the isotopes were found. RPS neither agreed to test oyster shells for strontium-90 nor did they add a chart as had suggested, making results more user-friendly. When the EPA ceased special post-Fukushima monitoring, so did North Carolina RPS. However, on this same date, May 3rd, the EPA RadNet (online radiation monitoring system) showed that large concentrations of Iodine-131 and Cesium-137 were still

Continued on page 6

Women's Prout of North America

INSIDE:

What is Prout?

Elevate the Dignity of
Women



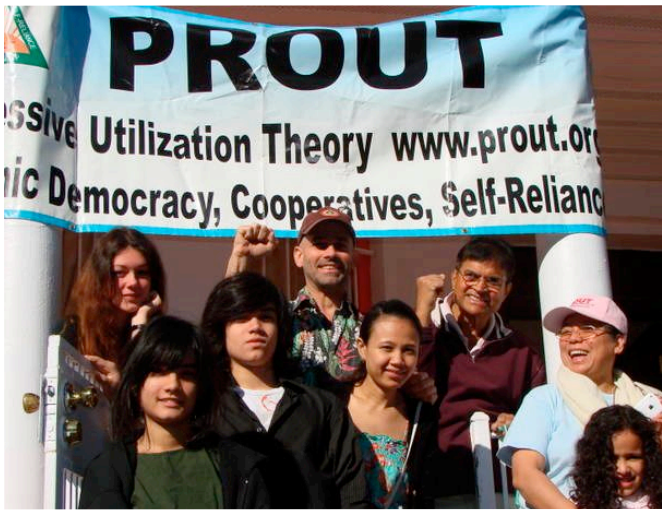
Strategies for Neo-Humanism

By Diipali, originally from PNA/New Haven

The question, "What is it you women want?" has been asked by men for, doubtlessly, as long as we have existed. We want respect; we want economic independence; we want self-determined and noble destinies; we want spiritual unity.

A healthy, dynamic society is one where men and women work in co-ordinated co-operation, not subordinated co-operation, solving together the necessities of the hour. This dynamism requires time and expanded understanding that is non-existent in our society. Finding solutions to women's economic dependence requires expanded and acceler-

Continued on page 5



What is PROUT?

Written by Dada Vedaprajananda

As Communism and Capitalism fail to meet the expectations of the people, the masses are in search of an alternative economic system which can meet their requirements.

During the 20th Century, Marxism and capitalism were the contending economic theories and the world was almost engulfed by a Third World War due to this struggle.

But, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the other communist bloc governments laid the way for the triumph of capitalism. Today, however, half of the world's population lives on two dollars a day or less, and the developed countries are in an economic recession that is reminiscent of the Great Depression of the 1930s. Once again, people are asking, "Is there an alternative to capitalism?"

In 1959, P.R. Sarkar, an Indian philosopher, answered this question when he presented the Progressive Utilization Theory (known by the acronym, PROUT). PROUT is an economic theory that addresses the defects of both capitalism and Marxism and offers the promise of a new economic order in which the world's resources will be distributed in an equitable and rational fashion.

We can understand PROUT by looking at six essential features of this new socio-economic system:

1. Spirituality:

Both capitalism and Marxism are materialist philosophies with a worldview that gives little (in the case of capitalism) or no importance to spirituality. PROUT on the other hand, is founded on a spiritual outlook. According to Sarkar, the material world is but an expression of consciousness and humans are stewards rather than ultimate owners of any physical wealth. The goal of society is to provide a base from which humans can expand their full mental, physical and spiritual possibilities. This spiritual basis of PROUT has important implications for the management of physical

resources, for the development of human resources and for the establishment of proper government.

When we adopt the spiritual worldview envisioned by Sarkar, then our relationship with the environment will change. Similarly, when we regard other human beings as manifestations of that one Consciousness then our relationships with each other will change. Finally, when such a spiritual worldview permeates our whole society, we will get the kind of service-minded and selfless government that is currently lacking in the world today.

2. A "Floor and a Ceiling":

Welfare economists have always emphasised that the minimum necessities of life should be provided for everyone in a properly structured society. Efforts to make a minimum wage or to provide various kinds of welfare systems to help impoverished people are all part of this concern.

P.R. Sarkar agreed with some aspects of welfare economics and stated that the minimum necessities of life should be guaranteed to all members of society. He, however, recognised that if the society would simply give people a check at the end of the month, with their required income, then this would only encourage laziness. According to Sarkar, the best arrangement is that society should provide people with the purchasing power to procure the minimum necessities of life in exchange for their labour in a job. Full employment providing everyone with the proper amount of purchasing power thus provides the "floor" of the economic system. No one should be allowed to "live in the basement".

Where PROUT breaks new ground is in its attention to the "ceiling" of the economic system. The poverty of many is tied to the affluence and over-accumulation of a few, and if we really want to bring about a harmonious society we need to think about putting limits on the amount of physical wealth that a person can accumulate. In the first principle of PROUT, it is stated that "no individual should be allowed to accumulate any physical wealth without the clear permission and approval of the collective body of society".

This concept is sure to evoke howls of protest from the super-rich, the very rich and even middle class people who aspire to wealth. The classic argument of the wealthy people is that by their effort, wealth is created and this wealth will trickle down to the rest of the society. The apologists of laissez faire capitalism have been very successful in convincing people that this is the truth, but the starving, sick and homeless people of the world have been waiting for a long time for the wealth to trickle down, and it does not seem to be happening.

Sooner or later, we will come to our senses and realise that the over-accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few is not in the best of interest of society as a whole and this principle of PROUT, curbing excessive accumulation, is sure to be put into practice around the world.

3. Economic Democracy:

In the past century, a great deal was said about making the “world safe for democracy”. But, the “democracy” that was talked about was political democracy. In many of the impoverished countries of the world, the same ones where people struggle with \$2.00 per day, the people have the right to vote but they do not have any say in their economic life. Similarly, even in developed countries a person can vote to decide who will be the next president, but he or she usually has no vote in deciding economic matters that are very close to home, like keeping a job.

According to PROUT theory, society should be organised in a manner that will empower as many people as possible. One of the best ways to do this is reorganise the ownership and operation of economic enterprises. Under capitalism, the primary business form is the corporation. The owners of the shares of a corporation have all the votes and decide how the enterprise will be run. Those who work in the enterprise have little or no say in the vital economic decisions that will affect their lives.

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The PROUT system would establish the co-operative as the most important business form. Most enterprises, except the very large key industries and very small businesses, would be organised as co-operatives. Those who work in the enterprise will be the owners and will elect management and will vote in elections governing the running of the enterprise.

In a PROUTist economy, the very small enterprises with a few employees and dealing in non essential goods would be privately owned and operated, and the medium enterprises would be owned and operated as co-operatives. Large-scale key industries (energy, communication, transportation, etc.) would be publicly managed either by local governments or by special public bodies (in unitary political systems). This three-tiered system of private, cooperative and publicly run enterprises would provide the base for economic democracy.

4. Economic Reorganisation

(Decentralised Economy, Balanced Economy and Regional Economic Self Sufficiency)

If we want to bring about the economic well being of all of the people, then we must also make sure that some geographic areas are not depressed while other areas are thriving. The best way to bring about economic development and prosperity for everyone is to decentralise the

Contact Us!

Online at: www.proutwomen.org

Women Proutists of North America

PO Box 733

Florence MA 01061

Call us at: 828-274-1683

Email us: womenproutists@gmail.com

economy, develop all sectors of the economy and to strive for regional economic self-sufficiency.

One of the biggest reasons for economic imbalance within any particular country is the modern trend of urbanisation. Usually most manufacturing and many other services serving the manufacturing sector are situated in cities. The metropolitan areas thrive, and people in the countryside are either unemployed or work in low-wage or subsistence agriculture.

The best way to reverse this situation is to place some industries, and supporting services and industries, in rural areas. In this way, excessive congestion of urban areas will be avoided and strong regional centres will provide employment and services to previously neglected rural areas.

Economic decentralisation should also be coupled with balancing the various sectors of the economy: industry, agriculture and services. In some countries, more than 75% of the people work in agriculture and a small minority in industry and services. Underdeveloped countries with poor economies are usually structured in this way. In industrialised countries a huge majority of the population work in industry or in services, and very few people are engaged in agriculture.

P.R. Sarkar said that a more ideal set-up would have 20% of the population in agriculture, 20% in agro industries (producing goods using agricultural produce), 20% in agrico-industries (supplying machinery and tools for agriculture) and the rest of population in industry and services.

A society with this kind of economic balance would be better able to achieve economic self-sufficiency. Currently “globalisation” is the buzz-word of the era, and economic self-sufficiency is not in vogue. But, is it really healthy for any country to neglect its agricultural sector and rely on imported food? Similarly, should some countries remain with little or no industry and rely on far-away countries for all their finished products?

Generally, countries which depend solely on agriculture or which export raw materials like wood and minerals remain poor while heavily industrialised countries thrive. This is not good for the non-industrialised areas, but it is also not

healthy for the developed countries as well. In times of war or in time of any disruption to transportation, their vital food supplies will be in danger.

On top of this, in a world where climate-warming and ecological difficulty have become major problems, does it continue to make sense to rely on centres of supply (for either raw or finished products) that are halfway around the world?

PROUT recommends that countries in a particular geographic region come together and form economic zones that have balanced, decentralised and self-sufficient economies.

PROUT recommends that countries in a particular geographic region come together and form economic zones that have balanced, decentralised and self-sufficient economies. Such an arrangement would be ecologically advantageous, provide for economic security in times of war or unforeseen disruptions of transportation, and most importantly would ensure that no particular country or region will remain in poverty while others thrive.

5. Moral Leadership

The various plans for a better organisation of the economy and for economic democracy are good in theory, but the problem of materialising these noble ideas depends on the quality of the human beings in our society. If elected and appointed, corrupt officials will prevent the implementation of policies designed to bring about social and economic welfare. For example, the social equality preached by the Marxists was belied by the reality of corrupt government officials living in luxury while the masses remained in poverty.

The only way out of present economic and political problems is to elevate the moral standard of our society. If people are properly educated, conscious of their social and economic responsibilities and moral, then democracy can thrive and moral leadership will come to the fore. The hope of the future will rest on the shoulders of men and women who will enter public office with the spirit of service and sacrifice rather than for the selfish purpose of lining their own pockets or enhancing their prestige.

A proper spiritual outlook coupled with an educational system that is free from political interference and focused on the all-around development of human beings is the best way to bring forth leaders who are moral and work for the good of society.

6. Global Governance

Against the backdrop of the universe, the earth is a small

planet and human beings have to learn how to live together in harmony on this small planet. The best way to minimise the possibilities of war and to safeguard the rights of all people is to establish a global government. Previous attempts in the 20th Century in this direction, namely the League of Nations and the United Nations, have not been adequate and it is time to move onto a better level of global coordination.

In his book, *Problem of the Day*, P.R. Sarkar laid out a concept of world government that should be achievable in the near future. He advocated the establishment of a bi-chambered world government. One chamber, the lower house, would have representation based on population and the other chamber, the upper house, would provide equal representation for all nations. The upper house will not be able to pass a law unless it has first been passed by the lower chamber, but the upper house will also have the right to reject bills passed by the lower chamber.

Sarkar envisioned a stage-wise movement towards world government. In the first phase, the world body would only be able to frame laws and administration would be in the hands of governments of the individual countries. In a later stage, the world government would also have administrative authority and a world militia at its disposal. In the past, world government was considered a utopian dream, but in the near future, it will become a necessity.

These are the core economic and political ideas that form the backbone of the Progressive Utilisation Theory. In the years ahead, they are sure to be the pillar of efforts to solve the thorniest problems that confront humanity today.



Strategies for Neo-Humanism

Continued from front cover.

ated movements. The solution that women should be 'taken care of' by men is not only irrational, but is women-defeating. The statistics on women and poverty clearly indicate the irrationality of trusting women's welfare to 'their men'. It is women-defeating, because its core sentiment is that women cannot be self-reliant.

As PROUTists, in our movement toward Neo-Humanism, we demand that:

- Women's full potential—physical, mental and intuitional—be acknowledged, trained, utilized and equitably compensated.
- Women should not have to trust anyone else for their economic welfare.
- Teachers of children should be highly compensated, trained and respected.
- All careers should be open to the pursuit of both men and women.
- Employment must be adaptable to women's needs.
- Paternity must be respected.

But only through personal transformation will these changes be instigated. The fastest, most effective way to make personal changes is through spiritual practices. Practices that many times force open the shutters of preconceptions to let an inner, clearer light shine in. Practices that, while strengthening personal resolve and courage to forge a new way, still leave the good of the old way intact. It is through this intense inward turning that we as women and men can crack the shell that binds us to this un'wholey' alliance.



However, it is an illusion to think that all people will willingly give up their exploitative power over a few people's personal revelations. Along with the personal changes, there need to be corresponding changes in society's institutions. These political changes must cater to the varying needs of women, regardless of their marital status. These changes must incorporate four major situations women face: married women without children, wanting to work outside of the home; women with children wanting to work outside of the home; women with infants wanting to return to work; women wanting to work in the home.

PROUTist recommendations to accommodate all these needs are:

- Enforceable laws against employment discrimination [Even WITH such laws, exploitative corporations like Wal-Mart manipulate the court system to continue to treat women employees as second class citizens as with the recent Supreme Court decision against women composing a legitimate class for a class action lawsuit—Dukes vs. Wal-Mart-- that over one million female Wal-Mart female employees brought against the company for discrimination in wages, promotions and working conditions (Ed.)].
- Comparable pay standards set by boards.
- Equitable divorce and alimony laws.
- Equitable inheritance for daughters as well as sons, widows as well as children.
- Subsidized career counseling, and job training for women re-entering or changing careers.
- Technical assistance and subsidy for home businesses.
- Continuing technological advancements that make housework less time consuming.
- Consideration of home administration as legitimate employment with comparable pay.
- Insurance through community support that economic dependence should never be the only reason for a woman to remain in an exploitative marriage.
- Provision of the necessary technical assistance

and economic capital so that a woman's home life becomes more economically secure and psychically fulfilling.

- Establishment of a major and potent Department of Women at all political levels.

Political and personal changes go hand in hand. Political changes must be there to reinforce personal changes. Children raised in a new political environment will have fewer personal scars to shed. The current leaders of society will fight hard to maintain their status quo. Men and women are pitted against each other in their pursuit for survival while leaders claim that there is not enough cash/food/jobs to go around. Only through an open challenge to these political misconceptions as well as to exploitative leaders will Neo-Humanism emerge.

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Continued from front cover.

being detected on the West Coast, Alaska, Idaho, and other sites (Huff, 2011). Iodine-131 had been detected in milk samples and cesium-137 had been found in vegetation in North Carolina (NC DENR RPS, 2011). Actually, even when the EPA was monitoring, the results are suspect in that the RadNet system is fraught with old, poorly maintained equipment, some of which has been shown by the University of California at Berkeley to be inaccurately calibrated, and, therefore, inaccurate. (Huff, 2011)

If nation-wide governmental monitoring of radioactivity has ceased, and state monitoring may be far from effective, where can the public get information? Maybe, other states are telling residents more, yet I doubt it. Can we, then, depend on the media? That is a strike-out, as well, unfortunately.

In trying to understand what was going on at the Fukushima Dai-ichi, after it was severely damaged by an earthquake and tsunami on March 11th, I had to scour the alternative media for information. There seemed to be a mainstream media blackout. Finally, outlets, such as Forbes, The Wall Street Journal, the London Guardian, and even FOX News began covering Fukushima. But, where was NBC, CNN, CBS and the major media coverage? Since NBC is owned by General Electric, and CBS is owned by Westinghouse, both builders of nuclear reactors, it is easy to make a connection to the news blackout with these multinational corporations. GE even built the Fukushima Mark 1 reactors, and, apparently, lobbied Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) not to divulge the actual severity of the accident. Instead, TEPCO aired television fluff ads that promote nuclear power as being safe. (Goodman, 2011)

Beyond Nuclear has warned that such a flood as is, currently, threatening to submerge the station, combined with a threat to the primary electric grid, such as a thunderstorm or tornado, could plunge Cooper into station blackout and meltdown.

What about the current nuclear crisis in this country? On June 19th the Nuclear Regulatory Commission issued an Unusual Event Declaration, due to rising floodwaters at the Fort Calhoun and the Cooper nuclear power plants in Nebraska. Fort Calhoun, north of Omaha, had been shut down in April for re-fueling, and had not been re-started due to concerns about flooding. Cooper, near Brownville, is close to being shut down because the Missouri River is



rising to critical levels, pushing water over levees. ("NRC news," 2011)

Earlier, it had been, inaccurately, reported that Fort Calhoun had been designated as a Level 4 nuclear disaster due to release of radioactivity from the plant. It had also been rumored that the plant was trying to cover up the emergency by making a no-fly zone over the plant. However, according to Victor Dricks, spokesman for the NRC Region IV office in Arlington, Texas, all of these reports are untrue. He stated that the no-fly zone was created to prevent news helicopters from flying too low over the plant. ("rumors swirl around," 2011)

The reason for these rumors is yet another sordid story; this time it deals with the tendency of journalists to just paraphrase and regurgitate news taken from media conglomerates, as Dawn Stover asserts in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists on June 16th (Stover, 2011).

The Cooper Nuclear Station, near Brownville, remains operating at full power. The plant issued an unusual event declaration as water levels rose, but the current level is just two feet below the plant's estimated level at which it would be submerged. However, the waters are rising - a levee north of Brownville - broke on June 23rd, adding to the worry that residents have about a potential nuclear disaster, requiring their evacuation. ("Levee breaks north," 2011)

Beyond Nuclear has warned that such a flood as is, currently, threatening to submerge the station, combined with a threat to the primary electric grid, such as a thunderstorm or tornado, could plunge Cooper into station blackout and meltdown. Yet, the nuclear utility Nebraska Public Power Department (NPPD) downplays the risks. ("Fukushima's evil twin," 2011) Although Fukushima Dai-ichi had emergency back-up batteries that lasted eight hours; Cooper's may last as little as four hours. Cooper's

If you must be out in the rain, take a shower and wash your clothes afterward as radioactive isotopes collect in the upper atmosphere, falling to the ground with precipitation.

storage pool very likely contains vastly more high-level radioactive waste than Fukushima Daiichi Unit 4's spent fuel pool. ("Fukushima's evil twin," 2011)

Nebraska residents are understandably nervous. Some may worry about a nuclear disaster like the one that occurred in Japan after the earthquake and tsunami in March. If floodwaters wipe out the plant's electrical systems, unless the back-up diesel system can last until power is restored, the remaining nuclear fuel would have to be cooled, just as is currently being done at Fukushima with sea water. Even though the Fort Calhoun plant is shut down, as is normal procedure, only one-third of the fuel was removed during re-fueling. The fact that most of the fuel is still in the plant is not publicized by the NRC or Omaha Public Power District. (Burnett, 2011)
What can the public do to prepare for any possible nuclear disasters in this country, and to mitigate the effects of ionizing radiation to ourselves and the environment?

- Become informed. I have found some alternative media outlets useful, e.g. Natural News.com, Huffington Post, Rense.com, and Democracy Now. Reading reports from these sources has been my lifeblood since Fukushima.
- Change your diet. Eating seaweed, kelp, and miso which are rich in iodine is helpful. Most of the cancers from Chernobyl were due to thyroid cancer. If we get enough iodine, our thyroid gland will not take up the radioactive, iodine-131. Covering the leafy vegetables in your garden is best, but, at least wash them well as cesium-137 concentrates in leafy green vegetables. Cut down on dairy products and avoid meat and meat products as radioactivity is concentrated in milk and the bodies of animals. This is especially important for pregnant or nursing mothers and for children. Check out the follow article for more tips. <http://www.livewellnaturally.com/Health-and-Nutrition-Articles/Nutrition-Articles-2010/Protect-Yourself-from--Radiation-2-22-10-.html>
- If you must be out in the rain, take a shower and wash your clothes afterward as radioactive isotopes collect in the upper atmosphere, falling to the ground with precipitation.
- Drink well water, or use a sophisticated water filtration system that uses a combination of reverse osmosis, distillation and de-ionizing processes.
- Join in the struggle to end the use of nuclear power, and to shut down all reactors.
- Support solar power, wind energy, biogas alternative energy sources.

Until the government is controlled by a benevolent administration that focuses on the welfare of the populace, rather than one steeped in monopoly capitalism driven by profit, we need to shut down nuclear power in this country. We need to develop solar power, biogas, wind energy, and more environmentally friendly alternative energy sources. The technology is available; the powerful elite in control rejects it, in favor of nuclear, coal, oil and gas, which are controlled by companies owned by those in power and by those who keep them in power.

For now, every Wednesday, I am returning to my weekly ritual of peering into the computer screen, trying to make sense of the local radioactivity monitoring results. It is frustrating and lonely. Until we all pull together, we will all have to fend for ourselves. We must share what we know and network. This is my hope for a better future for all.

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Elevate the Dignity of Women

The oppression of women in our society happens in very subtle as well as very overt ways.

Women are expected to be in the working world, but they find that they earn only a percentage of the wages that men receive; experience sexual harassment and discrimination; and find few opportunities for creative and meaningful work.

As mothers, women find themselves in a society that gives lip service but little else in support of family life and children. Being a parent closes off many career and economic alternatives, and often leads women into financial dependence or total poverty.

As our society becomes increasingly more violent, women are rarely the perpetrators and frequently the victims of violent crime. Rape, assault, incest, wife battering and other kinds of mental and physical abuse leave many women injured and force the rest of us to live in fear.

Women's attractiveness is used as a commodity to sell everything from cigarettes to car parts.

Despite what we consider an "advanced society," education art and literature, health care, and many other fields neglect half the world's population. How many women do children learn about in their history books? How much art and literature makes it to popularity that reflects the life experience of women? How often do women get an appropriate chance to learn about their own bodies or to find compassionate and competent health care?

Proper respect and dignity for women is something that women must fight for and men must acknowledge. A society can only limp along at best when the rights and potentials of half its population are ignored and trampled upon. Women will have to develop courage and a spirited intellect, so that we can make our compassionate and creative changes in the future society.

There should be coordinated cooperative leadership between men and women.

Yet, while it would be an accomplishment to see women leaders occupy half the government positions to reflect their numbers in society, it will be more important to work for the day when women's interests are promoted whether a man or a woman is holding office.

PROUT has a separate, parallel women's organization to

promote women's interests and give women and men a chance to work independently while still functioning as a united group with a common Neo-Humanistic goal. The women's PROUT organizations have platforms such as:

Economic Independence for Women:

We promote and create cottage industries and other alternative workplaces which break down the rigid walls between the domestic and business worlds, so that women are spared the frequent and agonizingly difficult choice between family and career. We also seek to insure positive economic and career alternatives for women.

Support for Mothers and Families:

We work to encourage respect and joy for the profession of parenting; we support natural ways of nurturing which fill the many needs of both parents and child; we develop economic opportunities which keep families intact; and we advocate community support for all mothers, no matter what their situation or where they live.

Bringing spirituality into women's issues:

We shed a spiritual light onto women's issues so that

women's struggles don't become limited to only one portion of the world's women and so that the women's movement doesn't fall into the trap of hating those people whose actions retard women's progress. Spirituality has been and will always be an essential source of strength and unity for women, and can't be left behind if women are to move forward.

Physical and mental education for women:

We teach self-defense, exercise and yoga to women and develop courage, strength and good health. We encourage women to develop their educational opportunities through continued study. We agitate for an educational system that demonstrates the importance of women in the past, present, and future society.



Contact Us!

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