

AUM

VIDUSHI VEERANGANA NIRMAN SHALA

By Brigadier Chitranjan Sawant,VSM

The Doon valley is famous in more than one way. Long long ago Dronacharya, the Guru of the Kuru royalty trained the royals in *shastra and shastra* in the health-promoting environment of his *ashram*. In the 21st century another ashram is flourishing at the foothills of the Himalayas encircled by the Shivalik ranges. It is *Manav kalyan Kendra that runs the Dronsthal Arsh Kanya Gurukul. The Gurukul moulds and develops the personality of young girls from the backward regions of Bharat who hail from the underprivileged sections of the society. The Brahmcharinis, as they are addressed, are a devoted group of girls. Many of them do not know Hindi at the entrance but graduate as scholars of Sanskrit and the Vedic literature. They rejoin their regions in far off Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Andhra and the rural belts of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and so on. About one hundred girls, coming from diverse backgrounds, linguistic and cultural environments work as a team at different stages of education. They have a mission – promoting health and happiness in every nook and corner of Bharat. In a decade long existence till date, the Gurukul has achieved its aim and continues to do so. The founder Kulpita, Dr Ved Prakash Arya,80, is indeed a great achiever. He walks a self satisfied man in the evening of his life. The Brahmcharinis have done him proud. Some of the graduates of this institution work as Gurus in other Gurukuls like the one in Ludhiana. Indeed, the credit for shaping the personality of girls who have just entered the double digit figure of life goes to Acharya Annapoorna Ji who has taken a vow to lead a life of celibacy to fulfil the dream of moulding raw material into finished human product called Vidushi-Veerangana.*

MODUS OPERANDI

Mind is the man. Influence the mind of the youth with the wisdom of sages of yore. Here the Vedas, Vedangs, Upanishads, Panini's grammar, the six schools of philosophy or the *shad darshan*, besides languages, sciences, mathematics and what have you form the balanced syllabus. The *Acharya*, in her early thirties, and her team of learned teachers carry a heavy burden on their shoulders. They have not failed. They have kept the girls of impressionable age on course by their personal example of devotion, dedication, chastity and correct motivation. The imagination of the pupils is fired with the inspirational discourses of Vedic scholars. The food and dress are so simple that the desire for mundane things is indeed sublimated into patriotism and love of the humanity. *Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah, Sarve Santu Niramayah* is their credo and they work for the health and happiness of the humanity without any discrimination whatsoever.

The *Kulpita* takes care of the education in *shastra*. In this wide wicked world, a well-intentioned guardian would not like his or her wards become a prey of human predators. Education in martial arts, self defence, unarmed combat and training in wielding weapons like lance, sword and even elementary fire arms is given to young *Brahmcharinis*. Both the teacher and the taught do so with aplomb. Of course, Dr Ved Prakash Arya, in his DAV days at Lahore wielded weapons for the defence of the defenceless. With two pistols in holsters on either side of the waist, he inspired confidence among the oppressed souls. He is at it even now despite being an octogenarian. The learners of the Gurukul undergo the training in martial arts with

great joy. Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi is their role model. Sacrificing self for the noble cause of uplifting the downtrodden will never be a problem with them.

ACHIEVEMENTS GALORE

Let us meet *Brahmcharini* Saudamini Samvedi and her fellow student Anupama Arya. They know the entire *Samveda* by heart. The Vedic institution at Kartarpur in the Punjab had held an all-India competition of Vedic recitation where these two students came out with flying colours and earned the title of *Samvedi. Sauki*, that is a tribal name of a girl hailing from vananchal. She voluntarily changed it to *Sumitra* to facilitate easier pronunciation and merging with the main stream. She has excelled in Sanskrit and won laurels at the university level. *Shastri* is the degree of the Uttaranchal Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya that the students study for with success. Of course, some have done well in the Master of Arts degree of the Garhwal University as well.

Men, women and children from all over the country come to the *Dronsthali Arsh Kany Gurukul, Dehra Doon* to witness the physical feats of the young girls. Be it horse riding or callisthenics, firing at the range or measuring prowess wit swords, alumni of the *Gurukul* are second to none. They are ever ready to defend themselves and their motherland against both the common criminals and terrorists. The alma mater is indeed proud of the brilliant and chivalrous breed of our own *VIDUSHI VEERANGANA*.