



Update

A NEWSLETTER FOR PROFESSIONALS

Asia-Pacific NA Forum Meets in Kuala Lumpur

In December 1995, the annual three-day meeting of NA's Asia-Pacific Forum brought twenty Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship representatives from Australia, Hawaii, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, India, and Hong Kong together with five officials from NA World Services to discuss local NA development issues, among them:

- Religious and cultural diversity. NA meetings in religious facilities gain community credibility, but may be less inviting to non-religionists.
- Role of women in NA. In three Asian NA communities, women compose between 5% and 10% of membership.
- Government registration. Questions about the legality of drug addicts meeting together for recovery purposes in one country led to a discussion of the registration process to legalize NA meetings.

NA World Services participants outlined a process for translating Narcotics Anonymous literature, which is very important to the development of new NA communities. Translation work in the Asia-Pacific region is proceeding, at one stage or another, in Hindi, Tamil, Urdu, Manipuri, Bengali, Tagalog, Malaysian, and Thai, though we expect it to take some time before many translations are published in these languages. Today, the only publications in these languages are the NA pamphlet *Who, What, How, and Why* in Hindi and Tagalog.

This year's APF meeting will be held in Manila in November. The Forum will meet next year in India.

Related Articles

India's NA Community Strong and Growing

The Narcotics Anonymous movement in India is strong, and healthy, and growing rapidly. In 1991, there were a couple NA groups in Bombay and one in Calcutta, and that was about it. Today more than 100 weekly NA meetings are held in the Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Imphal, and New Delhi areas, and nationwide membership is estimated between 750 and 1,000 recovering addicts. The Bombay NA community held its 4th annual convention at the end of January, with 250 members in attendance from West Bengal as well as the other Indian areas. Calcutta held its first convention a few weeks earlier, with 60 registered participants. Those working or traveling in India can contact Narcotics Anonymous by writing one of the following NA area service committees:

Bombay ASC, PO Box 16489, Mahim, Maharashtra 400 016

Calcutta ASC, PO Box 9146 Park Street, Calcutta, West Bengal 700 016.

Madras ASC, PO Box 1082 Kilpauk, Madras, Tamil Nadu 600 010.

Imphal ASC, Marwari Dharamsala Bldg. Rm. 19, PB #93 GPO, Imphal, Manipur 795 001.

Delhi ASC, C-1 Safbarsung Development Area, New Delhi, Haryana 100 015.

A Story of NA recovery in India

This story is taken from Meeting by Mail, the bimonthly newsletter of the NA Loner Group. MBM links addicts who have no meetings in their areas or have difficulty attending meetings with NA members from established NA communities.

I am from Bombay, the financial capital of India. Right now I stay in Viron, a remote suburb of Bombay metropolis. I stay with my parents and have a wife and a two-year-old son.

I'm the only child of my parents, so I remember my childhood as a rather pleasant time with no responsibilities. I was pampered, and everyone was quite excited over my academic and athletic prowess. But fates were different. My parents were caught up in a constant battle for financial survival. My mother, whom I never knew well, supported the family working a backbreaking twelve to fifteen hours a day. My father was usually at home, though no help to mom nor any kind of company for me. Though we lived in the city then, we were isolated from the rest of the family as well as our neighbors, thanks to my father's attitude and behavior. I was allowed contact with only one family who were considered our moral and social equals.

I was encouraged to read, and I found escape in the fantasy world of the Hardy Boys, so much so that I would assume their identities. I never had friends in school, and when in high school I "called junior college in our country" I was shocked into reality. My fantasies and self-image were overdosed into rubble, and I took refuge in drugs. I asked for my first smoke of hash. From then on, for five years I experimented with various drugs until I found "brown sugar" heroin (pure white is not readily available in India).

One year on brown was enough for me, and I had what today I think of as a spiritual experience. I called out to God that I'd had enough and had reached my limit "I couldn't go on!" The next day I went into detox, and since then for the past ten years have stayed off that particular drug. But my personality did not change, nor did my desire to escape reality go away. I substituted alcohol, downers, or hash for the heroin. The last ten years, I've come downhill where I feel worse than any hard drug user. My self-respect was lost to me. At that juncture, in August 1995, I found Narcotics Anonymous and suddenly felt as though a light had shone in the black tunnel of despair that my life had become. I want the new life that NA can give me. I know that my old ways of thinking and old patterns of behavior cannot save me any more. I cannot live the old life and continue living; only death or insanity can result. Today I choose life the NA way, for I see that is the brightly lit path where I can truly fulfill the dreams I've had "at least those that are in tune with my Higher Power's will for me!"

SK, Bombay, India