

8-11-53

CDIS to help Hindu Studies teachers with special aids

THE Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore plans to prepare audio-visual aid materials to help teachers of Hindu Studies. It is compiling a list of reference books on Hindu Studies which will be circulated to schools later.

The director of the CDIS, Mr Wang Mong Lin, disclosed this at the opening of the third phase of a Hindu Studies teacher training course at the Regional English Language Centre yesterday.

The week-long intensive course is jointly organised by the Ministry of Education, the CDIS and the Hindu Advisory Board.

Some 80 secondary teachers are attending the course which is being conducted by Professor Manoj Das, a consultant on Hindu Studies from India.

During the week Prof Das will discuss with the teachers the pupil's textbook and teachers' handbook which he wrote for Secondary Three pupils who will be taking Hindu Studies next year.

Printed copies of the pupil's textbook, Hindu Reader, and teachers' handbook will be available for use in schools next year.

Contents of the textbook include an account of Hinduism in South-east Asia, stories from the Hindu epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata, and the philosophies and basic ideas behind Hinduism.

Earlier, in launching the course, the chairman of the Hindu Advisory Board and MP for Kuo

Chuan, Mr P. Selvadurai, said Professor Das had structured the essential teaching material in simple terms "without detracting from the seriousness of the purpose of the Hindu quest in life".

The book provides glimpses of the gradual evolution of Hindu thought on the subjects of God, the social order, institutions and the demands of the spiritual discipline and ethical life.

Mr Selvadurai was confident that the glimpses would assume the proportions of a firm vision with the publication of a second book on Hindu Studies.

The chairman of the Hindu Endowment Board, Mr S. R. Nathan, said the attempt by CDIS and Prof Das to bring out the book and teaching aids to help launch and test the programme was the first such attempt in our part of the world.

Mr Nathan said it must be expected that there will be some who may question the interpretations because they claim to know more about the subject.

He advised teachers to leave such skeptics alone and concentrate on the syllabus and teaching texts that have been prescribed for the subject.

"Those who have qualms about the material should take it up at the professional level at other appropriate forums," he said.

A total of 38,000 Secondary Three students in nearly 300 schools will be taking religious studies, when it becomes a compulsory subject next year.