

NEWSLETTER

INDO-PACIFIC FEDERATION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

December 2002

CENTRES OF LIGHT AND HOPE

We are living in a time of unprecedented insecurity worldwide. The tragic events of 11 September 2001 in the US have created an aftermath of increasing tension, bellicose statements and fear. Violence is on the increase and corrupt practices both in the business world as well as in public administration are making the headlines on a regular basis.

In such an atmosphere, how can theosophical Lodges (Branches) and Groups help to bring into the world a sane, universal, compassionate and wise approach? How can they be centres of light and hope wherein many can find the clarity and the inner strength to face these crises and also to be able to act so that peace can become a reality?

One of the main reasons for the existence of Lodges (Branches) and Groups in the TS is that through them members can study Theosophy regularly. This does not mean that the study should be an end in itself. Perhaps more important than the study is the attitude of those present. Are we really open to listen to an opinion without inwardly reacting to it? Do we contribute our share of harmony to the collective atmosphere by preparing ourselves beforehand through meditation and mindfulness? Do we approach the teaching with an open mind or do we bring to it fixed opinions and conclusions?

The Theosophical Society was once described as a training ground, in the sense that its members have an opportunity to know themselves and others through relationship. As N. Sri Ram said, “brotherhood is the only right relationship” for it is free from the biases, prejudices and preferences that usually beset human relations. This does not mean that everyone in the TS is already brotherly! The important point here seems to be the direction our attitude to relationships is taking.

So if we meet as students of the Wisdom Religion which is Theosophy and if we have the right attitude — an open and listening mind, with profound respect for each other’s point of view — then the conditions are present for us to go as deeply as possible into the teaching and to discover how practical Theosophy is.

Take the idea of karma, for example. The more we study it, the more we delve into it, the more we realise that all action begins in the mind and that we need to pay attention to our mental patterns in order to transform them through growing understanding. Violence, for example, is one such pattern and it can end through awareness and understanding. The great religious teachers of the world were a living example of this.

If the regular, harmonious and joyous study of Theosophy becomes a reality in our Lodges (Branches) and Groups, scattered in many countries throughout the world, then they can help the Powers of Love in their work of rescuing humanity from the illusion of separateness.

Pedro Oliveira

INDO-PACIFIC THEOSOPHICAL NEWS

THE PHILIPPINES

The Section has inaugurated the Golden Link School on 7 June 2002. It has started with pre-school but it is meant to become a secondary school within approximately five years. The school is intended to integrate the theosophical way of life into the curriculum and school environment.

In another development, the Theosophical Research Group was started and it is an attempt to enhance the capability of members to teach various courses for the Philippine Theosophical Institute. The TS in that country has been invited by various government agencies and universities to train their staff and teachers under the Self-Transformation Seminar programme. To meet the demand for the seminar, facilitators are being trained in several cities in the Philippines.

SCHOOL OF THE WISDOM, ADYAR

Dr Ravi Ravindra will be the Director of the School of the Wisdom, 6 January to 13 February 2003. The theme is "Spiritual Quest in the East and the West". For more information please contact Mrs Dolores Gago, Secretary of the School of the Wisdom, The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai 600 020, India. Tel: (+91 44) 491 2474; Fax: 446 3464; E-mail: theossoc@satyam.net.in.

SINGAPORE

The Singapore Lodge organised a successful retreat in Batam, Indonesia, situated across the Singapore Strait, on 24-25 August 2002, attended by many members from Singapore and also by two senior members from the Indonesian Section, Andri Martono and Soedadi.

Recent programmes include a study class on *At the Feet of the Master*, a video with Robert Ellwood on "Universes Within: Theosophical Reflections on the World's Religions", and talks by Lily Chong ("Esoteric Christianity") and Chong Sanne ("The Seven Rays"). The Lodge continues to offer, on a regular basis, a Basic Theosophy Course to the public.

Rose Weerekoon, a long-standing member of the Lodge, who had joined the TS in 1956, passed away peacefully on 30 September 2002. Our deepest sympathy go to her daughter, Gertrude, who is also an active member of our Society.

JAPAN

Regular monthly meetings continue in the Lodges in Tokyo and Osaka. There is also a bimonthly internet magazine for subscribers. Mitsuko Yanagida, Secretary of the Nippon Lodge in Tokyo, reports that study meetings are held every third Sunday of the month. One of the books recently studied was *The Key to Theosophy*. She says the members are quite enthusiastic about theosophical study. Ms Yanagida has been invited to attend the School of Theosophy at Springbrook, Australia, in April 2003.

SRI LANKA

We have very little information about theosophical work in Sri Lanka. In a recent letter, the National President of the Section, Tudor Jayewardene, reported that the programme for November 2002 included a talk on “The Search for Happiness” by Rajah Kuruppu and the commemoration of Founders’ Day on 17 November, which took place at the Ananda College, founded by Col. Olcott. The Honourable Karu Jayasuriya, Minister of Power and Energy, was the chief guest. Plans are afoot for the visit to Sri Lanka of IPF President, Pedro Oliveira, in March 2003. The programme includes members’ meetings, study classes and public talks.

MALAYSIA

Brother M.P. Arunam Pillai, who was the President of Seremban Lodge, passed away on 1 September 2002. Our deepest sympathy go to Arputha Devi, his daughter, as well as to his other family members. Brother Arunam Pillai was a keen student of Theosophy and will be missed.

INDONESIA

The First Secretary of the Indonesian Section, Andrini Martono, reports on the several activities in that part of the theosophical world. As mentioned earlier, she and brother Soedadi participated in the retreat in Batam, organised by the Singapore Lodge. She says it was a memorable event, the presentations by Chong Sanne, president of Singapore Lodge were very clear and illustrated with many coloured slides.

The commemoration of Annie Besant’s birthday, which was held on 6 October, was a special occasion for the Lodges in Jakarta, when 15 new members were admitted: one from Saraswati Lodge and fourteen from the study group coordinated by Matius Ali, most of them young. It was the highest number of admissions in the past ten years. This group meets twice a month and already has its own library of approximately 135 books which was donated to them from the estate of Brother Soemardi. They are now in the process of applying to form a Lodge.

Mrs Martono also lectured at Adiwerna, Penerangan (Surabaya) and Sala Lodges. Her subjects were ‘The Occult Hierarchy’, ‘Individual Uniqueness’ and ‘Observation of Our Wandering Thoughts’. Adiwerna Lodge commemorated its first anniversary during Mrs Martono’s visit.

The new leaflet produced by the Australian Section — *Theosophy and Islam* — was very appreciated and it is planned to send copies of it to the Indonesian Lodges.

The Section’s Annual Convention will be hosted by Sala Lodge on 16-18 May 2003, when three Lodges — Surabaya, Yogya and Bogor — will commemorate their centennials.

AUSTRALIA

Three new publications were brought out: *The New Cycle*, a theosophical study paper containing an article by H.P. Blavatsky of 1889; the leaflet *Theosophy and Islam*, for which the Section had the assistance of both TS members and Quranic scholars from Karachi, Pakistan; and *The Essentials of Theosophy*, a booklet based on an article by Dr John Algeo originally published in *The Theosophist* (May 1981).

The Section will have its annual convention in Perth on 11-18 January 2003, with the theme 'Theosophy and Human Transformation'. The guest speaker will be Dr Aryel Sanat. Dr Sanat teaches in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at The American University in Washington, D.C. and is the author of the Quest Book *The Inner Life of Krishnamurti*.

The next Australian School of Theosophy will take place on 5-12 April 2003 at the Theosophical Educational and Research Centre in Springbrook, Queensland. Mary Anderson, International Secretary, will be the study leader and the theme is 'The Fundamentals of Theosophy'. Subjects covered will include: What is Theosophy?, The Concept of the Divine, The Human Being, Evolution and The Spiritual Path.

THEOSOPHY IN CHINESE

Permission is being sought to reprint a Chinese translation of *At the Feet of the Master*, originally sponsored by a Vietnamese member of the Society. If we have a positive reply the matter will be put before the Federation's Executive Committee for approval. To have theosophical literature in Chinese language is one of the needs that our Federation should address.

NO SELF-SEEKING

N. Sri Ram
(*On the Watch-Tower*, p. 528-529,
February 1959)

I wonder how many Theosophists there are throughout the world who, instead of merely seeking something from the Society, something of value to themselves or the importance that one feels from having a position, are really concerned to do their individual best to make the Theosophical movement a success, feeling a personal responsibility for it and not put off by the shortcomings of fellow-members nor discouraged by their own. Of course, this is assuming that they see some shortcomings in themselves.

Only too often people imagine that the only way to be responsible or to serve the movement is by holding office whether in a Lodge, a Section or the Society. All offices are of course important, the lowest as well as the highest. But whatever work is done in them should have, apart from the formal and superficial action, a spiritual content which comes from the heart, the dedication and the thoughts of the doer. But then this spiritual complement, which is not something static, but a radiation, a fragrant potency, can be imparted to anything we do out of pure goodness as an expression of the Universal Brotherhood or our Theosophical understanding. It is because we ignore the spiritual significance of the little things we may do, whether of set purpose or by a spontaneous impulse, that we attach so much importance to positions, formalization, notice or acknowledgment by others and tokens of that sort. A man's word produces its truest effect, I feel, when it goes with no authority other than its own intrinsic truth. Our responsibilities arise not from assignment by any one, except outwardly and superficially, but out of our purpose, our kinship and contacts, the need of the situation and our ability to supply it. If we can abolish from our Society all seeking of office and position, by whatever methods, and let each be willing only to serve in any capacity that supplies a need, it would become immediately a distinguished body and a channel for potent influences.

In so many instances, the way a Lodge is run is no different from that of any other association that is professedly and plainly of the world worldly. I have heard

occasionally of even falsification of ballots, which was explained to me as being “human”! There are, at least in India, Lodge properties which are regarded as existing mainly for the use or convenience of the Lodge President, Secretary or some relative of theirs. Such instances are rare; nevertheless they exist. If all such practices and even the conventionally approved methods of pushing oneself were completely given up, our Society would gain greatly in strength and become the instrument that it is meant to be, at the hands of Those at whose instance it was first formed and came to be, who according to tokens still available, continue to help and use it to its capacity, which is the capacity of its members individually and in groups. Every Lodge ought to be like a Temple, a place where there is a fresh breeze from the heavens, through which flow those waters of life that come from the unpolluted heights.

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