

**THE THEOSOPHICAL
SOCIETY
IN CANBERRA**

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The Theosophical Society in Canberra is not responsible for any statement in this newsletter. Views expressed are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Society or the Editor.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

ATTUNEMENT—AND WHAT GOES INTO IT

At the Theosophical 2010 convention in Launceston, each day started with a morning attunement. For all of us to be able to participate in air-conditioned surroundings, many services were provided by minerals, plants and animals. The room was very quiet, except for the humming of the air conditioning machines keeping the air fresh and at the right temperature.

In order to have the appropriate engine which makes this possible - first the minerals have to be found to make the machines, then they are converted into the right form. The different pieces and components then have to be put together to assemble the motor and something else has to happen. They are sent from the factory to the place of installation, where the machine will eventually work, and connections must be made to power it. The power then makes the instrument push the air after cooling or heating. This energy, electricity, is made by burning fossil plants to make steam that will push blades around to generate electricity. Copper, aluminium, steel cables and wires bring electricity to the air-conditioning plant and the humming can begin.

All of these machines have been thought out in the mind and then created by human hands. Copper, aluminium and steel as iron are part of the minerals in the earth but first of all, the idea must come to the mind to look for these minerals which are then dug-up and processed into metals. The mind must have the idea to form the parts which make the motor.

The click of the door lock falling into place is the sign that the morning attunement can begin. A person starts to talk, but, to be heard by everyone in the room, needs assistance by copper wires, plastics made from fossil oil from plants and animals in the far past. Power in the form of electricity will allow machines to amplify the human voice so the participants may understand and hear more clearly.

The morning attunement was made possible by the mind creating forms and then building the forms from materials into physical objects. We are dependent on our environment to make many things possible for us. Thank the minerals, plants and animals for their service to us.

Welcome to our autumn 1010 issue.

Peter Fokker, President.

Notes for members and friends



ROME 10-15 JULY 2010

10th World Congress

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Rome 10 – 15 July 2010

The tenth World Congress of the Theosophical Society will take place in Rome, Italy, from 10 to 15 July 2010 with the theme *Universal Brotherhood without distinctions: a road to awareness*.

The Congress will be held at the Summit Roma Hotel, in Via della Stazione Aurelia 99, 00165 Rome tel. 0011 39 06 665071, fax 0011 39 06 66418062, e-mail: pierelli@srh.it

Costs, inclusive of breakfast, lunch and dinner, are: 88.00 Euros per day in a double room, 110.00 Euros per day in a single room and 70.00 Euros per day in a triple room.

The hotel registration form must be completed and sent by e-mail to: pierelli@srh.it or by fax (+39 06 66418062) by **31 May 2010**.

The registration form is online at the home site of the Italian Theosophical Society at <http://www.teosofica.org/en/>

Tour : Post World Congress

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Travelling to the World Congress? You may be interested in the post congress tour being organised by Jean Carroll, President of the TS, the Sunshine Coast.

From 15 to 23 July, the tour takes in Rome, Pompeii, Sorrento, Positano, Florence, Siena, Assisi, Perugia, Padova and Venice, with a choice of departing from Milan.

For all information, contact Jean Carroll at oneness@tpg.com.au.

2011 Convention Brisbane

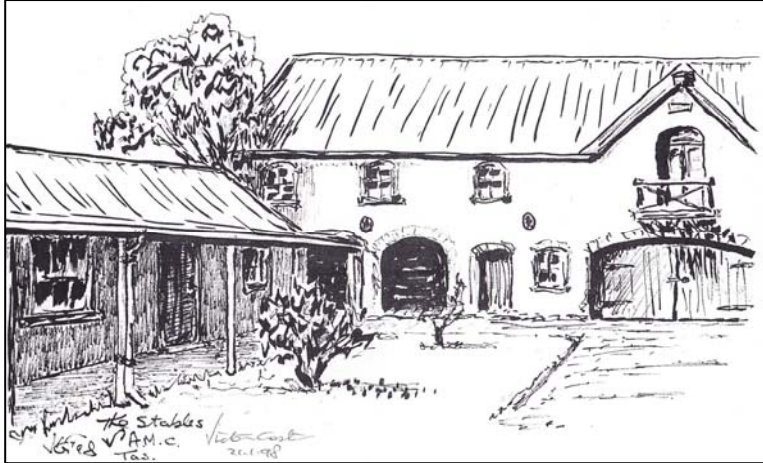
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The 2011 TS convention will be held in

BRISBANE - St John's college, Santa Lucia Campus

Starting on Saturday 15 January 2011

Further information will be given later in the year



A SKETCH FROM THE PAST

Prior to the convention held in 2010, the last TS convention held in Launceston was in January 1998— also at the Australian Maritime College. Victor Gostin, who was a delegate at both conventions, took the opportunity to sketch the stables on 21 January 1998. Victor's sketch (left) shows the detail of the buildings as they are listed in the inventory of Australian Heritage Places.

“The Newnham Estate, now the Australian Maritime College, Newnham Campus, Launceston, demonstrates significant phases of the evolution of European settlement. Newnham Hall, together with the Stableyard, Riverside Cottage and remnant landscape features are good representative examples of elements of a mid-Victorian agricultural estate in Northern Tasmania. The Stableyard is an example of a compact complex of utilitarian outbuildings and is notable for its symmetry along an axis aligned with Newnham Hall. It is an important element of a substantial mid nineteenth century agricultural complex.”

Without Victor's drawing it is doubtful we could have visualised the description of the Inventory listing with such clarity.

NEW BOOK RELEASES

From The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, India <http://www.adyarbooks.com/> - these new publications can be ordered directly from Adyar online.

The World Around Us by Radha Burnier:

This is a compilation of 'On the Watch-Tower' notes written by Radha Burnier, International President of the Theosophical Society. The notes appeared as her editorial articles in the President's official monthly journal *The Theosophist* between the years 1980 and 2007. ISBN: 81-7059-547-9

N. Sri Ram – A Life of Beneficence and Wisdom by Pedro Oliveira:

A biography of N.Sri Ram, fifth President of the Theosophical Society, is bound to inspire its readers. The special qualities he brought to the leadership of the Society amounted to a genuine spirit of humility and selfless service, which subtly but steadily permeated and coloured the very fabric of its membership. ISBN: 81-7059-561-4

From Thoughts for Aspirants

Our wishes are often the progeny of our weaknesses; our fancies the creations of our wishes, and these fancies, when they become adjusted to the frame of our minds, are all too apt to be mistaken for facts. (N Sri Ram)

Convention Time!

This year four delegates from Canberra attended the annual TS Convention, held in lovely Launceston, with the Maritime College as the venue and *Divine Wisdom in Art, science and Philosophy* as the theme. National President, Dara Tatray, gave the

first talk on Sunday morning – *On Defining the Divine Loosely*. The recently appointed Education Coordinator, Edi Bilimoria (who visited Canberra TS in 2008) was a key presenter, speaking on how nature mirrors the divine. Edi, who is also a concert pianist, gave a later talk on Musical Yoga and how music soothes the savage beast.



Group photograph of 2010 Convention delegates

Every true theosophist is like an artist. We must live in constant training and become perpetual students of the perpetual philosophy applied to life.



Web-master, Gil Murdoch—who keeps the Canberra web site up to date.

The CDs of Edi's talks, and the main events, will soon be available.

Art historian, Jenny McFarlane, from Canberra, known to some of our readers, illustrated the work of Australian artists and how they were influenced by the TS (*see page 8*). Did you know that Elvis had a very spiritual side? Isolda Suelmeyer, accomplished musician and self-confessed 'Mozart fanatic', kept the audience rapt with a talk on Elvis's quest for the spiritual. Apparently, on Elvis's reading list, along with books on Hinduism, Judaism, meditation, was *The Voice of the Silence*. Have you heard of María de los Remedios Varo (known as Remedios Varo)? Lynden Thomas introduced us to this para-surrealist artist, born in Spain - who lived in Mexico, through her many works which were influenced by a range of mystic traditions.

Olga Gostin introduced us to an interface of The Dreaming with Christianity: "The dreaming is everywhere. There is no division between time and eternity. In the Mass, at the Eucharist, there is a reality which goes back in time and a calendar repeating the life of Christ."

Other talks included Brian Parry—*The problem with God*; Victor Gostin—*Gaia and Adapting to climate change*; Barry Bowden—*Working with Formative Force in Nature*. A panel of five discussed the use of the word 'theosophy' in The Theosophical Society, as well as other critical matters – recognising that membership in the TS is currently declining. A panel of three (Harry Bayens, Hana O' Rourke and Denise Frost) gave talks from different perspectives on *The Powers Latent in the Human Being*. Workshops included The art and science of Crop Circles; and Mandala art. This is only a short selection of what happened during the week. The best way to appreciate what went on during Convention week is to borrow the CDs and listen at your leisure.

Launceston Convention—Carolyn Harrod—There is Wisdom in Action

Wisdom is not a question of learning facts with the mind; it can be acquired only through perfection of living.

Wisdom is a root-principle in man, which has to flower in right thought, right action and right living.

The essence of these powerful quotations from Sri Ram are woven throughout the talk.

More than an intellectual study, Divine Wisdom is a vehicle for spiritual transformation that is reflected in our lives. In this world of manifestation, we cannot avoid action. Every thought and feeling, every choice to speak or remain silent, to walk away or become involved, to meditate or to try to influence political decisions, is an action.

From the first days of the Theosophical Society, members have been reminded of the importance of both our **inner work** related to our spiritual development and transformation, and our **outer work** in service to all life.

HPB saw these two aspects of theosophical work as being of equal importance. In one of her essays in *Collected Writings, Vol 11*, she writes about the inner work we must do:

One of the fundamental laws is that ordinary morality is insufficient to deliver one from rebirth; one has to practise the six Paramitas or cardinal virtues for it: 1. Charity. 2. Chastity. 3. Patience. 4. Industry. 5. Meditation. 6. Ingenuousness (or openness of heart, sincerity). And how can a hermit practise charity or industry if he runs away from man?

HPB also leaves us in no doubt as to the importance of our work in the outer world. In her editorial; in *Lucifer* in November 1887, she writes:

He who does not practise altruism; he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or a poorer than himself; he who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation, or creed, whenever and wherever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery; he who hears an innocent person slandered, whether a brother Theosophist or not, and does not undertake his defence as he would undertake his own—is no Theosophist (no seeker of Divine Wisdom).

A similar message was given to us in the famous Jubilee Address of 1925, attributed to one of the Great Ones:

You cannot truly be students of the Divine Wisdom, save as you are active in the service of the Divine Life. Where trouble is, where suffering is, where ignorance is, where quarrel is, where injustice is, where tyranny is, where oppression is, where cruelty is – there must we find the earnest members of Our Society.

This is a call to the service of all life, but it is service of a particular quality. It is action that flows naturally from a nature in which wisdom-compassion is awakened.

Daily life provides us with multiple opportunities to be of service and these opportunities are on a variety of levels. We are encouraged to contribute to international campaigns related to human rights, disaster relief and animal welfare. We write to politicians and give donations to programs aimed at relieving suffering.

This can consist of giving moral support or donations to groups engaged in direct action, such as the Smith Family and Flying Doctor Service. Our contribution could be through one of the many service groups in which we influence decisions and participate in direct action, such as Rotary and Lions groups and our own T.O.S. Or we can serve others on an individual basis by giving our time to volunteering in animal shelters, providing companionship to residents of aged care facilities, tutoring and befriending refugees in our community, mentoring young people, working on local environmental projects, painting rooms in refuges for homeless women so that they have pleasant surroundings. The list could go on and on.

Our own families, work places and circle of friends also provide constant avenues for service. The unasked for act of kindness, the decision to put someone else's needs ahead of our own convenience, the silent eye contact and smile, the willingness to work alongside someone to assist them towards their goal, giving time to a relationship, can all be acts of service.

It is unlikely that anyone would deny that these examples of action were positive. But are they necessarily actions that flow from the wisdom of spiritual transformation? Not necessarily.

Our motivations behind our actions are most important. If we act from a position of viewing ourselves as superior and the recipient of our act of service as inferior, then the recipient may feel resentment, discomfort, embarrassment or some other emotion tinged with negativity. If we feel coerced into providing a service, then the relationships involved in the service are unlikely to be positive. When we are attached to the outcomes of our service, our relationships can be affected.

There may be anxiety on our part about our image, or about getting a particular outcome; we may expect the recipients of our service to act in a particular way, and if they don't live up to our expectations we can feel unappreciated and let down. This can result in our putting up barriers that strengthen the sense of 'them' and 'us' or 'me', rather than reducing the barriers to allow a feeling of 'we'ness, fellowship or oneness to flourish.

Our act of service may, on the other hand, result in the recipient feeling more optimistic or less alienated, more positively connected with other people, aware that someone is interested in them and cares about them. Even then, our actions may still subconsciously be selfishly motivated because we have a sense of separation from the other person. Our actions do not yet spring from the well of wisdom-compassion brought forth from our inner transformation. In Letter 2 of *The Mahatma Letters*, we find this advice: *The highest aspirations for the welfare of humanity become tainted with selfishness if, in the mind of the philanthropist, there lurks the shadow of desire for self benefit, even when this exists unconsciously to himself.*

Action motivated by love and compassion is our aim. Compassion arises from a deep acknowledgment of oneness – there is no "other". Compassion leads to a strong commitment to acting for the welfare of all. This is unbiased service toward all beings, without reference to their values, beliefs, habits or relationship to ourselves. Compassion arises from our expanded circle of love that enables us to be a friend to all sentient beings. Compassion enables us to act selflessly, without attachment.

Three profound little books set out the task needed for our inner transformation – *The Voice of the Silence*, by HPB, Mabel Collins's, *Light on the Path* and *At the Feet of the Master* by Aleyone or Krishnamurti. Each of these texts is said to reflect the Wisdom Teaching and to be inspired by the Great Ones.

At the Feet of the Master sets out four qualifications that we must work towards to enter the Path – discrimination, desirelessness, good conduct and Love .

Non-attachment and desirelessness do not imply inaction. As *The Voice of the Silence* advises us:

Sow kindly acts and thou shalt reap their fruition. Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin. (135)

Shalt thou abstain from action? Not so shall gain thy soul her freedom. To reach Nirvana one must reach self-knowledge, and self-knowledge is of loving deeds the child. (136)

At the Feet of the Master describes the characteristics of service taken up by those on the path of spiritual unfoldment:

They who are on the path exist not for themselves, but for others; they have forgotten themselves in order that they may serve others... they are a living plume of fire, raying out upon the world the divine love that fills their hearts.

The wisdom which enables you to help, the will which directs the wisdom, the love that inspires the will – these are your qualifications.

Fully realizing the unity of all life and expressing this understanding in our actions involves **both our inner and outer transformation**. Turning to the guidance in *Light on the Path*, we are advised to kill out all sense of separateness. This includes the separation inherent in the dichotomy of good and evil. We are then counselled:

But if you allow the idea of separateness from any evil thing or person to grow up within you, by so doing you create karma which will bind you to that thing or person till your soul recognises that it cannot be isolated.

In *At the Feet of the Master* we are advised to fill our beings with Love so that there is no sense of separation from the Divine and therefore no separation from all life. *Of all the qualifications, Love is the most important. In daily life this means two things – first, that you shall be careful to do no harm to any living thing; second, that you shall always be watching for an opportunity to help.*

The importance of recognising the need for this inner transformation in order to serve selflessly is highlighted in the philosophy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. *There will be no future worth living, he writes, unless everyone now takes personal responsibility for their own inner lives and universal responsibility for the pain and misery in the world. None of the major terrible problems that threaten survival of the earth can be solved by merely institutional or political methods. Humankind, to survive, must undergo a massive and unprecedented change of heart, an ordered and passionate spiritual revolution that changes forever our relation to each other and our relation to nature. It is only from such a revolution that the new vision the planet so desperately needs can arise - a vision that sees the connections between every thought and every action, the relation between the obsession with the individual self and its hunger for false securities and every kind of exploitation.*

In this talk, I have proposed that *There is Wisdom in Action* in so far as our inner transformation is reflected in the outer transformation of our actions. The two go hand in hand as we see in HPB.'s description of the spiritual journey on which we are embarked:

A clean life, an open mind, a pure heart, an eager intellect, an unveiled spiritual perception, a brotherliness for all, a readiness to give and receive advice and instruction, a courageous endurance of personal injustice, a brave declaration of principles, a valiant defence of those who are unjustly attacked, and a constant eye to the ideal of human progression and perfection which the Sacred Science depicts – these are the golden stairs up the steps of which the learner may climb to the Temple of Divine Wisdom.

Launceston Convention—Jenny McFarlane – Australian artists and the TS 1890 – 1930

Jenny's talk honoured those people whose artistic lives were very much influenced by being part of the Theosophical Society and the impact it had on them.

Berthe Mouchette born in France (1846?) was a painter and teacher who had trained in Paris and taught at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. She arrived in Australia with her husband in 1881 and her sister Marie Lion, a painter of miniatures and novelist who wrote under the name of "Noel Aimir" (an anagram of her name) (See *The Black Pearl* published in 1911).

In 1892 the sisters moved to Adelaide, where Madame Mouchette joined the Adelaide Lodge following Annie Besant's tour of Australia. She was a founding member of the Alliance Française.

In 1894 Annie Besant visited Adelaide, and Madame Mouchette had her first encounter with her. Her life-size oil portrait Annie Besant was shown at the 1907 Women's Work exhibition in Melbourne. As an artist, Berthe Mouchette had easier access to Annie Besant than did her colleagues in Paris. Among her paintings is *The Queen's Bouquet* in Melbourne.

Jane Price arrived Australia 1880 from England and died in 1948 at St. Kilda. She became a founding member of the Melbourne Branch of the Theosophical Society. She is quoted as saying:

"Art is a matter of life and death for the building of a nation. Australia cannot do without it."

She worked as a governess, and for some time taught Fred McCubbin's children. Price's paintings should be seen in accordance with Olcott's address in 1891:

The Australian temperament is evolving, I feel it is in the atmosphere. It would not surprise me to be shown that fifty years hence, Theosophy will have one of its strongest footholds in the hearts of these dear, good people who were so kind to me during my recent tour.



Jane Price: Sydney Harbour by Night



Florence Fuller was an active member of the Perth TS. In 1908 Annie Besant toured Australia and membership doubled. Florence Fuller painted the portrait of Besant which is still in Perth Lodge. She went to Adyar as a theosophical student, in search of something deeper. She was recording secretary there and formed part of the group of Europeans overseeing Krishmaruti's early education. Her portrait of the Lord Buddha is in the Campbell Library, Sydney.

She seems to have been influenced by contemporary Indian art. Thelma Slingso wrote in *Advance Australia* in 1928 that "Europeans needed to learn from Indian artists who would sit down for a week or so, before painting, to get the portrait in his mind".

Christian Waller's book of linocuts, *The Great Breath* was influenced by the theosophical understandings of the nature of reality. (CW 1894 – 1954)

Judith Fletcher – When CW Leadbeater made his home in Sydney, Fuller, Price and Fletcher were living at the Manor. Price and Fletcher were teaching and Fletcher had the task of making a portrait of Leadbeater. Her open and light-filled photographic portrait captures the charismatic quality of CWL.

As Leadbeater wrote in *The Hidden Side of Things*:



*The Completed
Eucharistic Form*

There is a hidden side to every picture—the conception which was in the artist's mind and heart. That conception, when he formed it, expressed itself clearly in astral and mental matter, even though he may have succeeded but partially in bringing his idea down to the physical world.

Every true artist will acknowledge that, however excellent his work may be, it invariably falls short of what he intended and expected. Yet the conception, as he thought it out, exists really and vividly in the mental world, and the feelings and emotions which he endeavoured to express exist in the astral realm, and these, which we may call the unseen counterparts of the picture, are always radiating vibrations of their own character, whatever that may be, and are therefore producing a never-ceasing effect upon those who live within their influence.

In the foreword to his book *The Science of the Sacraments*, Leadbeater expresses his indebtedness to E Warner for the difficult technical work of preparing the illustrations of the eucharistic form; and to Judith Fletcher for her photography work in it. Warner also became a priest in the LCC.

Florence the writer/theosophist

In March 1906, Florence Fuller had an article published in *Theosophy in Australasia*: 'The Way, the Truth and the Life'. To illustrate the attachment Florence had to theosophy, we emphasize a few short lines from the article.

"Listen attentively to the voice of conscience and obey it, for its silence whispering is but the prompting of the real Self, it is the light of the guiding star.....

We must not lose heart but keep our eyes ever on our guiding star, and it will lead us safely and surely through our many long earth

pilgrimages, and between each pilgrimage shall we not go home to rest?....

We have no need to fear, for our light will be ever growing stronger. All trials and all obstacles in our way will be but means of gaining strength; all sorrows that may come to us will only draw us into closer sympathy with the suffering ones around us, that we may help them, too, along the way that leads to life....

Even now the Light is within us, and we have only to follow; the way is hard only until we can identify ourselves fully with our divine guide, our star, which is our highest Self."

Canberra member, Joseph Berény, gives us the following New Year wish.

I have come to appreciate the statement that there is a spontaneous speed, much faster than the speed of light and that is the speed of our mind. In between this cacophony of voices it is an asset to recognise the voice of silence of our hearts. The mind is a false pretender.

News! A two-day event at Canyonleigh on *Foundations of Esoteric Philosophy* will be facilitated by Dara Tatrav and Edi Bilimoria 10 and 11 April. Registrations by 26 March. Cost: \$95 which includes all meals. Members only.

“The Trees and Plants of Adyar” compiled from material in the TS archives, was published in *The Theosophist*, December 1975. It is a tribute to Mr C Jinarājadāsa and of his love and care for the plants in Adyar .

“Mr C Jinarājadāsa has endeared himself to members of the Theosophical Society all over the world who have known him or heard him speak or read his writings. He is admired and much loved as one who represents the finest qualities of a theosophist. But none perhaps loved him more than the trees and plants of Adyar; he was their greatest friend... He has done more than anyone else to build up the botanical and horticultural excellence of Adyar. He communed not merely with the souls of the trees and plants, but also the many devas and nature spirits who had their home in them. He looked upon nature as “The Garment of God,” and for him the Sangha included .. A brotherhood of venerable trees”.

He had gathered in Adyar three hundred varieties of beautiful trees and plants from all parts of the world. We owe to him the inspiration for the Founders Avenue, with trees planted by the General Secretaries of all the National Sections of the Society, on soil brought by them from their respective countries. during the Golden Jubilee Convention of the Society in 1925.

In “The Two Banyan Trees - An Episode at Adyar” (*The Theosophist*, Sept. 1973) Mr. Jinarājadāsa gives a very interesting account of what was done to explain the position to the tree spirit of an eighty years old Banyan tree which had to be removed to make way for certain improvements to the Estate. He says, “The tree spirit of the Banyan was already alarmed, for of course he sensed some danger from the men digging at his roots. Mr. Leadbeater's task was not an easy one, but a somewhat unexpected factor smoothed matters. I had come to the tree with him. and immediately I came to the tree, its nebulous aura showed in the part of it towards me a rosy tinge. The tree recognized me as a benefactor and we gathered that I had the reputation among the trees at Adyar of being their benefactor”. Mr. Leadbeater explains the method of communication with plants thus: “One of the psychic exercises in which some of us have been trained is to learn how to blend our consciousness with that of these

lower forms of life—so as to be able to understand them and not hurt their rudimentary feelings unnecessarily.” The Tree Spirit was persuaded to move out of the tree, which had to be felled, on to two of its branches, which were then planted by Mr. Leadbeater himself within a couple of inches of each other. The branches have now coalesced and grown into a beautiful banyan tree in which the Tree Spirit is indeed happy in his more youthful form.

From *Plants and their Flowers*, (The Theosophist, April 1948) Leadbeater says “However strange or incredible it may seem to people who know nothing of the Oneness of life, it is possible to make friends with the higher members of the vegetable kingdom (just as with the higher animals), and to come to some sort of understanding with them ”.

In the *Watch Tower Notes* of the February 1953 issue of *The Theosophist* Mr. Jinarājadāsa writes: “In my Latin American tours of 1928, 1934 and 1938, I carefully collected seeds of flowers, trees, vegetables and grains to make Adyar a unique Botanical Garden. A few plants failed to mature, but most were lost through the carelessness of various heads of the Garden Department who did not understand my plan. There are still some trees of Guanacaste of Mexico; a creeper, Pitahaya of Guatemala, giving an edible fruit. But always a delight to me are two varieties of bougainvillea which I brought to Adyar, the first a brilliant crimson specialized in Perth Australia, in 1920, which I named Princess Elizabeth, and in 1934 from Panama (after two previous failures), a lovely rose variety which I named Princess Margaret Rose. Daughters from both plants have been distributed.”... “Everybody at Headquarters knows of my being somewhat crazy about trees and plants, not to speak of vegetables, and how during my travels in the tropical parts of South Central America I collected nearly 300 varieties. I shall certainly take every opportunity to draw the attention of members of the Society to the influence which they can gain by communing with all trees and plants.”



The Theosophical Order of Service
Representing theosophy in action on a daily basis.

The TOS was founded by Annie Besant in February 1908

The Theosophical Order of Service held its Annual General Meeting at the conclusion of the TS Convention in Launceston, on Friday, 22 January 2010.

The following items were discussed and information was given on:

- Brisbane TOS is making available a meditation CD compiled by Dr Arunachalam. The cost of the CD is \$12, and the proceeds of all sales will be given to TOS.
- The draft of the new TOS Constitution was shown to all present at the AGM through powerpoint presentation and was discussed.
- Members of local TOS groups do NOT need to pay national membership dues. Membership of a local group gives the member the right to vote at the AGM. National membership is necessary only if no local group is available.

A new national TOS project was adopted – the **Heart Babies Project** in Tanzania. It is considered to be a low-cost and stable project which provides backup to parents whose babies are being sent to India, under the auspices of the Dar es Salaam Lions Group, to undergo heart surgery which is provided at no charge by doctors in India. The TOS project will provide small essentials, such as toiletries and travel requisites to make the journey easy; TOS members will work with the families to ascertain their requirements. It was agreed that the project, which is very accountable, be adopted as a national project for 2010.

The **Pakistan Home Schools Project** and the **SEE Project** in India will also continue to be national projects in 2010. Please consider giving any possible assistance to these projects which are alleviating deprivation and providing necessary services to the local communities.

Some news on the national projects:

TOS Australia currently sponsors four home schools in Pakistan, providing basic education to 90 children at a total cost of approximately \$5,000 per year. Donations are extremely welcome and TOS is optimistic in keeping this project alive. During 2009, under the SEE Project, a total of 499 eye examinations were carried out in Udhi Eye Hospitals, Chennai, with 204 pairs of spectacles being provided and 11 cataract operations carried out.

Thanks go to TOS National Coordinator, Carolyn Harrod, for her organisational skills in keeping TOS vibrant and forward thinking, and for her up-to-date and state-of-the-art newsletters. The TOS website is currently undergoing major changes and is being updated by Carolyn's husband, Geoff Harrod.

Thank you, everyone, from all in TOS.

Janice

Extra news Members planning a trip to Sydney at the end of March are invited to participate in a one-day seminar at The Manor, Mosman (Sunday 28 March 10.00am – 3.30pm). Registrations should be made by 24 March (phone 02 9969 6386). The seminar will focus on *The Wider Theosophical World* with presenters including Dianne Kynaston, Alwyn Miechel and Hana O'Rourke.

**THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN CANBERRA
PROGRAMME**

Day	Day	Speaker	Title/topic
Saturday	20 March	Discussion group	Esoteric healing
Saturday 10- Sunday 11 April		Event at Canyonleigh Centre	Foundations of Esoteric Philosophy (for members)
Monday	12 April	Grahame Crookham	The Fifth Parliament of World Religions
Saturday	17 April	Discussion group	Darwinism, Theosophy and Creation
Monday	3 May	Harry Hepburn	Ritual and Free Masonry
Monday	7 June	Verner Verass and Nigel Nunn	The Urantia Book; Revealing the Mysteries of God, the Universe, Jesus and Ourselves

Information on future talks will be in the next newsletter

Our public meetings are usually on the **first Monday of the month at 8.00pm** and discussion group meetings are usually on the **third Saturday at 2.00pm**.

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are at the **Friends Meeting House**, at the corner of Bent and Condamine Streets, Turner. **However, we will have to find a new location while the friends meeting house is temporarily unavailable from about April to June.**

EVERYONE IS WELCOME, PLEASE BRING FRIENDS.

Gold coin donations are requested at our meetings

We rely on these donations to cover the cost of renting the Friends Meeting House for the evening and they are sincerely appreciated.

The Theosophical Society in Canberra, through the Australian Section, is part of the world-wide Theosophical Society which has its headquarters in India. The Australian Section publishes the quarterly *Theosophy in Australia*, arranges annual conventions, schools and retreats and facilitates a network of regional lodges and branches. Members of the Canberra Branch receive a newsletter, and have access to a library of over 1,000 books as well as audio cassettes and video tapes. The Canberra Branch arranges monthly public meetings, workshops, study groups, occasional activities for members and discounts at the Adyar Bookshop in Sydney.

Annual fees for the Theosophical Society in Canberra:

Single: \$50, **Couple:** \$90, **student/pensioner*:** \$40

Joining fee: \$5, **Associate member:** \$10, **Friends donation:** (suggested) \$20

Library: no charge for members; \$10 for non members (reimbursed on return of book).

* Number of concession card required: as per National Executive Committee minutes of July 2004