

NEWSLETTER

Indo-Pacific Federation of The Theosophical Society
December 2005

The TS and the Wisdom Tradition

The Theosophical Society extends to all its members and sympathizers alike complete freedom of thought and individual search. It does not have an official teaching which they have to subscribe to. As Annie Besant said, their bond of union is not a common belief but a common search and aspiration to find the truth about existence.

The TS derives its name from the Greek word *theosophia*, “divine wisdom”, the spiritual heritage of all humanity. It is linked to this universal stream of inquiry not only by its name but also by what it stands for. In the words of HPB, “it was formed to assist in showing to men that such a thing as Theosophy exists, and to help them to ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities.” (*The Key to Theosophy*)

Three core values of the Wisdom Tradition are altruism, self-knowledge and openness of mind. They express themselves as selfless service, self-awareness and respect for each other’s point of view. While the TS does not impose any values or behaviour on its members, it seeks to promote such timeless values in an atmosphere of freedom of inquiry, mutual respect and cooperation. Without them the search for Truth has very little meaning.

Sometimes members interpret the Society’s policy of Freedom of Thought according to their own interests and convenience. Not infrequently, one sees Lodge programmes that seem to be based more on the notion that “everything is Theosophy” than on what the TS is meant to be. Promoting teachings of “gurus” or self-styled “teachers” goes against the ethos of the TS, which encourages independence of thought and an enquiring mind. Emphasis on healing techniques based on psychic energies and psychic orientation also contradicts the nature of the work it is supposed to do. As *The Voice of the Silence* points out, spiritual instruction is not to be found in the psychic realm and its illusions. It requires a purification of heart and mind through selfless service, study and meditative awareness.

Individual members are always free to pursue any path they choose. But Lodges of the Society are chartered by the International President, under the Rules of the TS, to carry out the work of the TS in their area. The spirit of that work is clearly defined in our three Objects, in our motto – *There is no Religion higher than Truth*, and is encapsulated in the quote mentioned earlier: to help in making Theosophy known, studied and assimilated by all those who are seeking it.

The temptation to loose direction is an ever-present one as the attractions in the modern world are stronger and alluring. The fact that after 130 years of existence the TS has not created a spiritual authority shows that the spirit of Theosophy is alive within it. Can we work so that it may continue to be its worthy vehicle for many centuries to come?

Pedro Oliveira

PAKISTAN

Study classes, conducted by Dara Mirza, Presidential Representative, TS in Pakistan, were held at the Karachi Theosophical Society (KTS) on Wednesdays throughout the year, except in the holy month of Ramzan and on public holidays. On a few Wednesdays public lectures were held at the Avari Towers. Several books were used as study texts, notably Geoffrey Barborcka's *The Divine Plan* and Clara Codd's *The Ageless Wisdom of Life*.

17th February, Adyar Day, was commemorated with a talk on the life and work of Col. H. S. Olcott by Cmdr. [R] Jamil Ahmad. It was followed by devotional songs with musical accompaniment by Prof. Mohammad Aslam Sheikh and Irfan Akhter Khan, and it was very appreciated by those present. Other talks included "From Knowledge to Wisdom" and "Work as Worship" by Yazdi Bankwala. *The Karachi Theosophist* was published bi-monthly throughout the year, containing inspirational and theosophical articles. An Urdu translation of *At the Feet of the Master* was completed and there are plans to publish it in the future.

Karachi Theosophical Society, which was founded in 1896, has 86 members and at its last Annual General Meeting Amanullah Amir was elected President. The Federation President, Pedro Oliveira, and the National President of the TS in Australia, Linda Oliveira, are visiting Karachi in December 2005.

Amanullah Amir
President, Karachi Theosophical Society

INDONESIA

The Study-Group at the Madju Hotel in Bandung has been running well for six months. More people are attending it and asking serious questions. 15-17 people attend the discussion regularly once a month. We use *The Key to Theosophy* (abridged edition by Joy Mills). The Group also studies *Basic Theosophy* by Geoffrey Hodson.

The previously inactive Wishnu Lodge in Malang now has meetings once a month. Approximately 20 people attend these meetings. Rudyanto Philip, TS Coordinator of East-Java, and Brothers Sandjaja and Djoko M. Sale are responsible for the revival of this Lodge. They are studying the Indonesian translation of *First Principles of Theosophy* by C. Jinarajadasa. A new Study-Group was formed at the Faculty of Film and Television in Jakarta in which lecturers and students of the Jakarta Institute of Arts participate. The Dean and Assistant Dean of FFTV became very interested in Theosophy after reading our National Magazine,

Theosofi. The project to publish theosophical books into Indonesian language with aid from the Non-English Publications Fund has reached its final stage. Six books will be published in March 2006: *The Key to Theosophy*, abridged edition by Joy Mills; *Esoteric Christianity* by Annie Besant; *Talks on the Path of Occultism*, vol. 1 (*At the Feet of the Master*) by Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater; *Meditation, Its Practice and Results* by Clara Codd; *The Voice of the Silence* by HPB; and *Vegetarianism and Occultism* by C.W. Leadbeater.

Matius Ali

Vice-President, Indo-Pacific Federation

SINGAPORE

The Singapore Lodge now sends its nicely produced monthly Newsletter as a PDF file by email. The Lodge organised a Retreat on 26-27 November 2005 at the nature reserve and marine sanctuary of Sevana Cove. 70 members registered for it. The theme was “The Three Poisons and the Five Obscurities”, which was taken from letter no. 47 of *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*:

“Look around you, my friend: see the “three poisons” raging within the heart of men – *anger, greed, delusion*, and the five obscurities *envy, passion, vacillation, sloth, and unbelief* – ever preventing them seeing truth. They will never get rid of the pollution of their vain, wicked hearts, nor perceive the spiritual portion of themselves.”

Dr N. C. Ramanujachary, a resident at the International Headquarters at Adyar and a National Lecturer for the Indian Section of the TS, gave a series of talks at the Lodge in September 2005. His titles included “Forgotten Factors of Life and Consciousness: Unity and Brotherhood”, “Many Facets of Theosophical Understanding”, “Significance of Theosophical Psychology (Intellect and Intuition)” and “Occult Philosophy of T. Subba Row”. He also led a study class on *Viveka-Chudamani* of Shankaracharya. His last lecture before departing Singapore, on 1st October, was on “Annie Besant: A Most Wonderful Woman”.

On 5th November, the Chairperson of the European Federation of the TS, Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, visited the Lodge and delivered a talk on “Modernity of the Eternal Teaching.”

JAPAN

In the Nippon Lodge, Tokyo, we hold monthly study meetings in which we are perusing chapter XI of the Japanese translation of Madam Blavatsky's *The Key to Theosophy*. We are striving to comprehend the profound esoteric significance of the tenets of Theosophy in her works. We are at present perusing this difficult part of the book which deals with mental and spiritual growth of the higher human Ego

which progresses in innumerable series of physical rebirths under the Law of Karma or the unerring Law of Retribution. In relation to the teachings on reincarnation, we have elucidated the difference between the concept of reincarnation of the higher human Ego in Theosophy and *Samsara*, or the doctrine of rebirth in Buddhism, which consists of the six *lokas* or realms. We also considered the difference between the idea of reincarnation in Theosophy and the Christian dogma of Last Judgment in the Revelation of St John, which speaks about the destiny of the soul after death.

Members of the Tokyo study group clarified that *Avitchi*, or endless hell in theosophical doctrine, refers not to the lower part of *kama-loka*, or astral plane, but to severe physical existences of higher human Ego on earth (*The Key to Theosophy*, TUP edition, p.141, *The Voice of the Silence*, TPH edition, p. 97). We also explored the significance of cultivating an understanding of the profound tenets of Theosophy in the study meetings of TS.

Taichi Yamaguchi, Tokyo

TRAVELS

The Federation President will be visiting Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka this December. In Pakistan he will be giving talks and a seminar and will be accompanied by the National President of the TS in Australia, Linda Oliveira. In India, both of them will participate of the International Convention at Adyar, Chennai, where both are to contribute short talks. While in Chennai, he will fly to Colombo for meetings with members of the TS in Sri Lanka and also deliver a public talk.

AUSTRALIA

The Australian Section held a successful event at its national centre at Springbrook, in the mountainous region in Queensland, on 'The Buddhist Tradition in the Light of Theosophy: Mindfulness, Insight and Compassion in Daily Life'. The guest speakers were Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, Chair, European Federation of the TS, and Brian Parry, Supporting Lecturer for the Australian Section. It attracted a number of participants. The 2006 Annual Convention of the Section will be held in Melbourne in January on the theme "Universal Responsibility, Non-Violence and Peace." The Guest Speaker will be Dr Anna Alomes, a renowned philosopher, writer and worker for non-violence, reconciliation and conflict resolution. Her presentations will include 'Icons of Peace in the 20th Century' and 'Dissolving Barriers/Removing Boundaries Through Non-Violence'. The programme also features a number of talks, workshops, panel discussions, a Theosophy-Science

session and a PowerPoint presentation on the life and work of J. Krishnamurti.

Another important development in the Section was a Regional Workshop, held on 26-27 November at the National Headquarters in Sydney, for New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory committee members on 'The Purpose and Committee Work of TS Centres'. Discussion, dialogue and presentations explored the following questions: what is the purpose of TS centres? What is *not* the purpose of TS centres? Relevant quotes from *The Key to Theosophy*, *Human Regeneration* and *To Form a Nucleus* were considered in a in depth exploration by all the participants. Suggestions were presented on how TS centres can better fulfil their purpose. Questions about Lodge/Group programming were also explored and a list of the educational resources of the Australian Section was presented. Donald Fern, National Secretary of the TS in Australia, spoke about the importance of Committees, of following Committee procedure and adhering to the TS Rules. The two-day meeting also considered what constitutes good committee etiquette, the role of Lodge/Branch President, Secretary, Treasurer and publicity work. A dialogue on 'Maintaining Harmony in Lodges/Branches' inquired in to the possible causes of disharmony and how members could contribute to harmony in their TS centres. The National President, Linda Oliveira, reviewed the areas covered during the workshop and announced that similar workshops will be held in other places in Australia in the near future.