

NEWSLETTER
Indo-Pacific Federation of The Theosophical Society - July 2006

The Core Business of the TS

What is the essential work of the Theosophical Society? Its National Sections, Lodges, Branches, Groups may be involved in continuous activity, organising public meetings, producing literature for the public, maintaining libraries, but unless a certain number of members understand what its core business is the future of the Society as an institution which is relevant to the progress of humanity may be in doubt.

The Founders of the TS, both inner and outer, made it amply clear that the Society was meant to be, from the very beginning, a vibrant nucleus of Universal Brotherhood. It is this central principle – a law in Nature – that should inform, guide and inspire every activity in the TS. The mere continuation of outward activity, however professional and well-organised it may be, does not guarantee that the Society is indeed doing its essential work.

Writing about the conditions prevailing in the TS in 1881, the Maha-Chohan had this to say:

Rather perish the T.S. with both its hapless founders than that we should permit it to become no better than an academy of magic, a hall of occultism. That we the devoted followers of that spirit incarnate of absolute self-sacrifice, of philanthropy, divine kindness, as of all the highest virtues attainable on this earth of sorrow, the man of men, Gautama Buddha, should ever allow the T.S. to represent the *embodiment of selfishness*, the refuge of the few with no thought in them for the many, is a strange idea, my brothers.

Reflecting the same essential spirit, Mahatma K.H. wrote to Mr Sinnett about the importance of motive in TS work:

To our minds then, these motives, sincere and worthy of every serious consideration from the worldly standpoint, appear — *selfish*. (...) They are selfish because you must be aware that the chief object of the T.S. is not so much to gratify individual aspirations as to serve our fellow men; (...) Perhaps you will better appreciate our meaning when told that in our view 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 or a tendency to do injustice, even when these exist unconsciously to himself.

Both statements address the core business of the TS. Universal Brotherhood without distinction implies a mind that is awakened to the reality of Altruism as the quintessential building power in human life. The Society was founded on this profoundly sacred keynote, proclaimed by the Masters: “None of us lives for himself; we all live for humanity.” And it is the existence of unselfish, dedicated and pure-hearted members that can make the TS truly effective for they would constitute that nucleus through which a regenerating influence would flow into the world, inspiring many hearts and minds to follow that way of life which heals humanity from the evils created by selfishness.

Can we establish in our programmes, meetings, seminars, a space in which we can continuously explore our core work, as deeply as we can, and perhaps gain a living insight into its nature? Let us also remember that the Society was not the brain-child of HPB and HSO, and that the impulse to form it came – and comes – from those Great Ones who are fully awakened to the reality of the undivided oneness of life and the illusory nature of the personal self. Their work is our core business.

Pedro Oliveira

INDO-PACIFIC THEOSOPHICAL NEWS

INDONESIA

Following the devastating earthquake in Yogyakarta, the Federation, thanks to information received from Brother Chong Sanne, President of Singapore Lodge, circulated an appeal giving details of how to get donations quickly to the victims. The following is part of the appeal circulated among Australian members by the National Director of TOS in Australia, Carolyn Harrod:

The relief effort on behalf of the TS is being coordinated by two members of the TS Lodge in Solo which is 60 km from Yogyakarta. Three members of the TS Lodge in Yogyakarta have had their houses destroyed and are very much in need of help, as are thousands of other members of their community. The TS Lodge in Solo and other lodges in Indonesia have already provided some emergency support in the form of food, tents and clothes. The TS in Singapore is currently gathering donations from members. We are hoping that Australian TS members will also be able to assist our near neighbours at this time of crisis when they so desperately need our compassion and support.

For those who are in a position to assist, donations can be made in two ways:

1. by sending a cheque made payable to the Theosophical Order of Service in Australia, to Carolyn Harrod, 26 Lytham Street, Indooroopilly, Q 4068 (an aggregated donation will then be made by bank transfer) or
2. directly to Indonesia by bank transfer to:

Shanti Paramita Suyono

Bank Central Asia

Jl. Brigjen Slamet Riyadi 3

Solo 57112 Indonesia

Swift Code: CENAIJJA

Account Nr.: 0151399524

Dr Hugh Murdoch, a veteran member of the TS in Australia, its former National Treasurer and for many years working as the Coordinator of the Theosophy-Science Group in that country, circulated this appeal among the recipients of the *Theosophy-Science Newsletter*:

“There follows the text of an email from Carolyn Harrod, Director of the Theosophical Order of Service in Australia. As the event happened just too late for

inclusion of an appeal in *T in A*, Carolyn is making an appeal to Lodges and individuals and asking them to pass it on to friends and contacts. I am taking the liberty of sending this to my Newsletter email list in furtherance of that request.

Elaine and I will be making a generous donation. We remember fondly our participation in the inaugural meeting in Yogyakarta in 1978 of the Indo-Pacific Federation of the TS, presided over by John Coats, and the warm welcome from the local members. We especially remember visits to the famous Hindu and Buddhist temples in the ancient multicultural city of Yogyakarta and a magnificent outdoor evening dance performance of the Ramayana.”

Ms Andrini Martono, National Secretary of the TS in Indonesia, reports the receipt, from the Federation, of H. S. Olcott's *Inaugural Address* and *At the Feet of the Master* in Chinese. She says that in Indonesia only elder Chinese descendants are still able to read Chinese. It is hoped that Col. Olcott's Address will be translated into Indonesian.

Their Annual Meeting was held in Malang, 9-11 April, with a record of 90 participants. The theme was “Universal Brotherhood Through Understanding Theosophy.” Up to May this year 48 new members were admitted by various Lodges, a marked difference in relation to the past two decades. Dr Soepangat Soemarto was re-elected National President. On 31st May, Sala Lodge sent a team of seven members to provide food and necessities to five villages in Bantul district, which suffered widespread destruction due to the devastating earthquake in Yogyakarta.

Matius Ali, Vice-President of the IPF, reports that the Study Group meeting at the Hotel Madju in Bandung has applied to become a Lodge and the name chosen for it is “Sophia”. This Group studies *The Key to Theosophy* and meets once a month. Matius Ali has started a new weekly theosophical Group at the New Age Café in Jakarta. The Group, which includes between 8 to 15 business executive people, is studying “Basic Theosophical Teachings” using Prof. K.V.K. Nehru's PowerPoint slides.

SRI LANKA

We are happy to report that regular theosophical activities are held at the Headquarters of the TS in Colombo. Last May, two DVDs sent by the Australian Section were screened. The first, *HPB's Diagram of Meditation* by Dr John Algeo, International Vice-President of the TS, was shown on 8th May, White Lotus Day. The Presidential Representative, Mr S. M. Jayathilake, reported that it was a

great event. The second screening, on 27th May, was of an interview with Ven. Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, Prime Minister of the Tibetan Government in Exile, on *Buddhist Meditation*. It was attended by 65 people and followed by a discussion facilitated by Ven. Olande Ananda Thera, Director of The Pagoda Meditation Centre.

As part of the programme on 27th May, a Sinhala translation of *At the Feet of the Master* was released for the public, with the first copy presented to Ven. Olande Ananda. *The Sri Lanka Theosophist*, a quarterly service letter, produced under the auspices of the Presidential Representative, had its fourth issue also released on this occasion.

Mr Jayathilake also reports the formation of a core study group that seeks to go into deeper aspects of Theosophy in addition to monthly lectures. As part of this activity a DVD on *Yogis in Tibet* was shown on 10th June to members. It was a great success and attended by more 20 people. There are plans to set up a TS publications outlet at the Headquarters in Colombo. TPH Adyar has already been contacted and further details are awaited.

SINGAPORE

The Singapore Lodge continues its tradition of quality theosophical presentations and

fraternization among members and their families. On Sunday, 4th June, the Lodge organised a Family Outing and more than 40 people joined. The venue was the Singapore Botanic Gardens, with lunch and refreshments included.

The Lodge programme also includes a basic Course in Theosophy and an Informal Study Group, which aims at answering questions of students. Brother Chong Sanne, President of the Singapore Lodge, is the facilitator for both activities.

Titles of public talks during the first half of this year include “Nature of Psychic Abilities”, “The Occult Hierarchy”, “Chakras, Prana & Kundalini”, “Mahatma Letters – An Overview”, “The Christian Creed”, all by Chong Sanne. Other presenters included Lily Chong, who spoke on “The Invisible Helpers”, “Meditation”, “Reincarnation – Fact of Fallacy?” and “Prayer and Forgiveness”; Sister Choong Tsui Wei on “Concentration by Ernest Wood”; Bro. Kam Chai Heng on “Hidden Wisdom in the Holy Bible, vol. I” and Bro. Tang Kwok Choon on “Theosophy and Contemporary Literature”.

Honouring the memory of Bro. Kwee Sim Djiang, a long-standing and very dedicated member of the Singapore Lodge, who had joined in 1957, and passed away in December 2002, the Lodge decided to name its library the “Kwee Sim

Djiang Library”.

IPF TRIENNIAL MEETING

The next Triennial Conference of the Indo-Pacific Federation will be held in Manila, The Philippines, on the weekend of 2, 3 and 4 November 2007. The theme of the Conference will be “How Can Theosophy Change the World?” The programme and registration details will be announced at a later date. We ask all units in the Federation to kindly give suitable publicity to this event in their journal/newsletter.

AUSTRALIA

The Australian Section has brought out a new Theosophical Study Paper on “The Theosophical Society - Historical Review”, being a retrospective look at main events in the history of the TS from 1875 until the present time. The text is available online at:

<http://www.austheos.org.au/topics>

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