

NEWSLETTER
Indo-Pacific Federation of The Theosophical Society
December 2006

Theosophical Leadership

Writing about the future of the TS in *The Key to Theosophy*, Madame Blavatsky pointed out:

Its future will depend almost entirely upon the degree of selflessness, earnestness, devotion, and last, but not least, on the amount of knowledge and wisdom possessed by those members, on whom it will fall to carry on the work, and to direct the Society after the death of the Founders.

Was she describing the characteristics of Theosophical leadership which are necessary for the TS to carry on its work with renewed determination and vigour? It is worthwhile to ponder on this important point.

The corporate world recognises the importance of leadership but sees it directly linked, and geared to, practical results manifested in increasing sales and financial growth. Its view is a goal-oriented one, with clearly determined targets and strategies. Those who do not conform, or abide by, such principles can be easily replaced or made redundant for in such business the need for successful results predominates over personal concerns. Human resources become vectors in an endless war for business excellence.

The Theosophical approach is very different from the one mentioned above. For example, could we ever, in the Theosophical Society, make Universal Brotherhood without distinction a specific target to be achieved within a fiscal year? Who would measure its progress towards that target? Also, how to regiment the human resources within the Society for such a goal? Is Universal Brotherhood without distinction a result?

The fact is that the success or failure of the TS depends entirely on the capacity of its members to live the kind of life that the Objects of the Society imply and suggest. Obviously, nobody can make them to do that. It must come from within. Let us examine some of HPB's words. 'Selflessness, earnestness, devotion.' The Theosophical Society is an other-centred organisation. It does not exist to gratify personal and exclusive goals, or agendas. In order to help it we must first understand what has really moved it since its foundation: the power of Altruism. Only such an insight can make us truly earnest workers for the Theosophical cause, for it brings with it the energy which is inherent in clarity of purpose. An insight into the nature of Altruism naturally brings into being that unselfish and unwavering, loving dedication which is devotion in a very deep sense. The following was written by former President N. Sri Ram. His words beautifully illustrate the spirit of Theosophical leadership (*On the Watch Tower*, p. 508-509):

It is not learning which is important, nor the ability to speak, nor talent of any other kind, although all these have their uses, but rather the attitude of mind which we bring to the work and our motives as we carry it out. ... Therefore, the whole question is: Are we doing the work for its own sake, for what it is supposed to achieve, or does our interest lie in

occupying the stage and making such an impact upon others as would resound in our ears?

Pedro Oliveira

INDO-PACIFIC THEOSOPHICAL NEWS

IPF TRIENNIAL MEETING

As announced earlier, 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?". Registration details are still awaited from the TS in the Philippines which has kindly agreed to host the meeting. A full announcement about it will be made in the coming months.

BANGLADESH

We are happy to report the receipt of the following annual report of Comilla Lodge in Bangladesh: "The nucleus of the TS at Comilla was set up by a few gentlemen in 1889. In 1913 the large hall of the Lodge was constructed in the Town Hall compound of Comilla Town. The native King of Tripura donated a large sum of money to construct it. In the theosophical movement at Comilla the greatest role was played by Brother Chandrakumar Guha, FTS. He was the Secretary of Comilla Lodge from 1889 to 1919. What happened to the Lodge after his death in 1919 is not known since all old documents are lost or destroyed. The Lodge had a good library but during the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971 a number of refugee families took shelter in the Lodge and used the valuable volumes as fuel."

Examining the Annual Reports of the TS for the period after 1972, it shows that a small but steady theosophical activity was being carried out by Comilla Lodge with weekly meetings in the house of a member. The number of members in 1973 was sixteen and its president was Rashmohan Chakravarti. Possession of the original building was regained on 30 September 1975. Membership grew to 28 in 1977. Mr Chakravarti passed away in 1982 and the Ven. Dharma Rakshit Mahathero was elected president. The Lodge had 39 members at the end of that year. Ven. Mahathero attended the International Convention at Adyar in December 1985. Membership was at 43 in 1986. The Lodge celebrated the centenary of its foundation in May 1989 in a befitting manner over a three-day period. The last annual report from the Lodge by Ven. Mahathero was received at Adyar in 1990.

The current annual report continues: "The Comilla Lodge started its journey anew in 1998 under the leadership of some gentlemen from Comilla interested in Theosophy. Brother B. L. Battacharyya, President of the Bengal Theosophical Federation, and Brother Vicente Hao Chin, Jr, former President of the Indo-Pacific Federation, visited the Lodge and help the members to better understand Theosophy. Dr C. V. Agarwal, Presidential Representative for Sout-East Asia, keeps a very close contact with the Lodge. Through their help, spiritual and financial, a part of the dilapidated building has been reconstructed and the Lodge has a rich Library of Theosophical books.

At present the Comilla Lodge has 42 members. They hold regular discussion meetings on Theosophy and the Library is open from 3:00pm to 7:00pm everyday. It is now very clear that Theosophy is slowly becoming popular in Comilla, perhaps for the first time, as many persons are now interested in becoming members of the Lodge.”

We wish Comilla Lodge and its members much success in their work for Theosophy!

SRI LANKA

Besides monthly activities at the Headquarters in Colombo, the TS in Sri Lanka carries out a number of initiatives in the area of residence of its Presidential Representative, Brother S. M. Jayathilaka, which is Badulla. Brother Jayathilaka conducted a discussion with members of the Asoka Lodge in Kandy, which is in the process of being revived. He also led an awareness programme in selected schools in the Uva Province regarding the commemorations of the centenary of Col. Olcott’s passing (17 February 2007), through lectures and distribution of leaflets. Mr Jayathilaka also participated in several radio programmes on Theosophy broadcast by Uva Radio. He presided over monthly programmes in Hamsa Lodge, Badulla, which included group discussions on esoteric topics, meditation plus the use of library facilities. He is also editing a commemorative volume in connection with the centenary of Col. Olcott’s passing.

TRAVELS

The Federation President, Pedro Oliveira, visited Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia from 15 to 30 July 2006. Approximately 100 members attended his talk at the Singapore Lodge on 15 July. The subject was ‘>From Darkness to Light: Understanding Violence.’ In Malaysia, which he visited from 16 to 21 July, he lectured at Kuala Lumpur, home of the Selangor Lodge, and in Ipoh and Malacca, where two new study groups are being formed. His titles of public talks included ‘The Quest for Self-Knowledge’, ‘The Perennial Philosophy and its Practical Application’, ‘Wisdom, Devotion and Action: Three Paths in One’ and ‘Understanding Psychic Phenomena’. For TS members he spoke on ‘The Purpose of the TS’ and ‘Seeking the Origins of Theosophy.’

While in Indonesia, he gave a lecture at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Parahyangan University in Bandung on ‘The Perennial Philosophy and its Application in Daily Life.’ He also held a questions and answers session with members of Giriloyo Lodge in that city. In Solo, he gave a public talk on ‘Understanding Violence’ and also addressed TS members. From Solo he visited Yogyakarta, which was very affected by the recent earthquake, and presented donations, collected by the TOS in Australia, from TS members to earthquake victims. He saw widespread devastation in that area. In Jakarta, he gave a lecture on ‘From Darkness to Light: Understanding Violence’ at the Library of the Ministry of Education. Before his departure for Australia, he attended the commemoration of the 43rd anniversary of the TS in that country in its present form.

AUSTRALIA

The inaugural live-in event at the Canyonleigh Theosophical Centre, in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales, took place from 27 to 29 October 2006. The theme was ‘*The Voice of the Silence, Fragment 1*’ with Brian Parry, Supporting Lecturer of the TS in

Australia, as guest speaker. This was an in-depth exploration of this Theosophical classic and it included inspirational music and dialogue.

The Section published a new Study Paper containing two articles by G. R. S. Mead, former private secretary to Madame Blavatsky and well-known scholar of Gnosticism. The articles are available at the Section's website at

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

The Australian Section has also made available a new Correspondence Course on Meditation based on Adelaide Gardner's book *Meditation – A Practical Study*.

A much appreciated Self-Transformation Seminar was held from 16 to 21 October 2006, at the Theosophical Education and Retreat Centre in Springbrook, Queensland, with participants from across Australia.

It was conducted by Vicente Hao Chin, Jr, National President of the TS in the Philippines and former President of the Indo-Pacific Federation of the Society. The emphasis was the practical application of Theosophical principles in daily life.

REMEMBERING HENRY STEEL OLCOTT

17th February 2007 will mark the centenary of Col. Henry Steel Olcott's passing. A number of events and initiatives are being planned to remember the outstanding contribution to humanity by the President-Founder of The Theosophical Society. *The Buddhist and Theosophical Movements 1873-2001*, by Dr C. V. Agarwal, now in its second and revised edition, contains a foreword by Mrs Radha Burnier, International President of the TS, and an introduction by Venerable Dr Mapalagama Wipulasara Mahathero, from the Mahabodhi Society of India.

The contents include the Panadura Debate, the arrival of Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky in Sri Lanka in 1880, the Campaign for Rights for the Buddhist communities in that island, the founding of over two hundred Buddhist schools by Col. Olcott and his helpers, the design of the Buddhist flag, the *Buddhist Catechism* and many more very interesting aspects of the work of HSO in Sri Lanka and Asia.

The book, in hard cover, is available from The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Chennai, India, at the subsidized price of US\$2.00 plus postage. Orders can be placed at tphindia@gmail.com.

PAKISTAN

The TOS in Pakistan now has a website, <http://www.tospakistan.com/home.html>. Its work has three main areas: 1) Education, comprising The Jamshed Memorial Montessori School, the Educational Sponsorship Programme for School and College students, and the Literacy/Home School Programme (Qandeel school project). 2) Relief and Rehabilitation, which includes family relief and relief to senior citizens, medical relief and marriage relief. 3) Animal Welfare. In this area, a quarterly electronic magazine is

produced, which can be seen at <http://www.tospakistan.com/pdf/AnimalsFriend.pdf>.

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of The Theosophical Society

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