
Brotherhood, Study and Meditation



THE PHILIPPINE
Theosophist

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TIM BOYD

8th President of the Theosophical Society

Editorial Note

The Philippine Theosophist has been in hibernation for a few years. It is now being continued in the hope that it will become a useful venue for the expression of ideas, reflections and researches of our members, as well as a means for sharing other writers' theosophically relevant articles with our members. We hope that some members will include their thoughts on applied theosophy, such as on education, social harmony, inter-religious understanding and similar areas.

This publication will primarily be distributed through email. Should some members wish to receive printed copies, kindly notify the national headquarters by email or letter.

We would like to encourage members from the Philippine section to submit articles to the editors. You may send them to philtheos@gmail.com or by mailing them to the TSP headquarters at 1 Iba Street, Quezon City, Philippines. We would like to request lodges and study groups to send us news and developments regarding their lodges. We will be adding a section in this publication regarding the highlights of your activities, lectures and projects.

'The Door is Open!' A Story About Our True Self

Rabiya, a great Sufi mystic, was walking down the street she used to pass every day on her way to the marketplace. She went to the marketplace because there were many people there and she found it a good place to preach the truth that she had attained. Along the street was a mosque. For years, she had noticed the mystic Hassan, sitting before the mosque and praying fervently, "God, please open the door and let me in. I long for Home."

Every day, Rabiya would laugh quietly while looking at Hassan, thinking, "If he only knew!" But today, it was too much. Hassan was crying, with tears streaming down his cheeks, shouting again and again, "Open the door, my Beloved! Let me in! Please hear my prayers!"

Rabiya went to Hassan and shook him, saying, "Stop all this nonsense! The door is open! The truth is you are already in!"

Hassan looked at Rabiya, and at that moment, he became enlightened. He then bowed down before her feet, saying, "Thank you so much. If it were not for you, I would have called my whole life! For years, I have been doing this. Why did you just watch me praying?"

Rabiya answered, "There is a ripe moment for awakening. If I had approached you before today, you might have been irritated and told me not to disturb your prayer. Of course, I had always wanted to tell you, 'Hassan, don't be a fool! The door is open! You are already in! You are already one with the Beloved!,' because like everyone else, you have never really left Home but have only fallen asleep. But I had to wait for your destined moment of awakening. Today, after much great effort on your part, that moment has arrived."

— a narration of the Sufi story
by Sofo Archon



What Matters Most

Many things in your life matter, but only one thing matters absolutely. . . . and that is finding the essence of who you are beyond that short-lived entity, that short-lived personalized sense of self. . . . You find peace not by rearranging the circumstances of your life, but by realizing who you are at the deepest level.

ECKHART TOLLE

The Inner Silence

Learn to get in touch with the silence within yourself and know that everything in this life has a purpose. There are no mistakes, no coincidences; all events are blessings given to us to learn from. There is no need to go to India or anywhere else to find peace. You will find that deep place of silence right in your room, your garden or even your bathtub.

ELISABETH KUBLER-ROSS



Neither shall they say, "Lo, it is here!" or "Lo, it is there!" For behold, the Kingdom of God is within you. (Luke 17:21)

THE BIBLE

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The Solution to All Problems

Tim Boyd

Recently, I have been talking to different groups about a number of seemingly different topics. Although the subjects seem different, ultimately I have been talking only about one thing — the solution to all problems. The idea of addressing something as vast as the solution to all problems seems a bit presumptuous, immense, and necessarily covers a broad spectrum of conditions. The range of problems appears endless. For an individual, something as mundane as a headache is a problem. We all have problems in our families, whether it is illness, alcoholism, or irritability. Every society has a whole range of problems, from health care to crime and to various kinds of social inequalities. On a global scale, we are aware of pollution, deforestation, global organized violence, and so on. So to be able to identify a possible solution to all of this, would be something of enormous value.

Let us take the example of a volcano. When it erupts, it can be a very destructive event that everyone can witness. There is a great upheaval, dust comes out and molten lava erupts which can be seen by all destroying everything on its path. For most of us, when we think about a volcano, it is the eruption and lava that we can see and point to. We never give much thought beyond this symptom of the eruption

that we witness. But if we think carefully, we realize that what we see is the result of something that is happening under the surface. Deep within the earth this lava is becoming heated and flows from many directions. It finally reveals itself to us as a sudden eruption, but it has been developing for many

*The better approach
(to finding the solution
to our problems)
is to direct our attention
towards causes,
not the symptoms.*

years. The better approach is to direct our attention towards causes, not the symptoms. Although we have to address the symptom, the important part for our future is how we first see and then address the central cause.

For each one of us, there is one central cause that leads to all sorts of sufferings we experience. In modern society, there is a problem called “identity theft,” where one person takes the identity of somebody else, pretends to be that person, and then behaves in a manner that creates financial problems for the real person. Our central problem is very similar, except that we are the ones taking on a series of false identities. The process is the

same for all of us, and it begins at the moment of birth.

Let us examine this process. What is it that happens when we are first born into this world? If we are familiar with Theosophy, there is no need to go into details about reincarnation. We can accept that as a given fact of existence. The process begins with the soul that associates itself with a new body. We know that a soul is not feminine or masculine, has no nationality or race, no religion or political party. But what happens when the baby appears in the world? The doctor examines it and the first thing pronounced is “It is a boy” or “It is a girl.” From that point onwards everyone regards the soul and its body as a specific gender. Based on that identity, certain things will be permissible behavior and certain things will not, depending on the local culture. So in the United States, for example, it would not be acceptable behavior if a boy were to play with pink dolls; to play with guns or weapons would be acceptable and even encouraged.

Next, the soul is assigned the name of a particular family, and based on this family name and history, one’s occupation and social status are strongly influenced. Then we receive a nationality, a religion, and so on. Layer after layer after layer is put on top of a soul that in reality has no gender, name, country, religion. This is how the identity problem that we face when we come into this world, begins.

From the moment of birth the process starts where everyone around us, whenever they see us identifies us and responds to us based on this variety of identities that have been layered around the soul. For a time, the message that is continually imparted to us is “Your name is Tim. You are a boy, a Christian, an American, and so forth.” This in itself is not such a problem; the real problem appears later. At a certain point, we start to repeat what we have heard and reaffirm all the different layers placed on ourselves.

A time comes when the process moves from “You are . . .” to the qualitatively different internal statement “I am . . .” No longer is it the projection of the surrounding environment, but now it becomes the fully accepted embodiment of who we are. We have all engaged in this process. Even if we stopped there, it would not be such a big problem. But the process continues. It is no longer enough for us to be a certain nationality; soon we want to be a “good” American, famous, rich, good-looking, and so on. The initial process of assigning an identity moves to the stage of accepting and promoting an identity, and then expanding it. This is really the source of all our problems, because none of these layers are the reality of the soul that has incarnated. We become so rooted in these identities that as a soul inhabiting an American body, it is completely justifiable for me to go to Iraq and kill a body inhabited by a soul from that nation. This is not just an individual problem, but a general one. What can we do about this state of affairs?

Many traditions speak about a way that we can move away from this destructive identification modality. There is a term in Sanskrit *neti, neti* — which literally means “not this, not this.” It describes a process of recognition of all the layers of identity. The only way that we can ultimately free ourselves of this problem is by first seeing this process that we are engaged in, witnessing the identities to which we have become attached, and then releasing them. We look, examine,

and ask ourselves “Who am I? Am I a nationality; am I a religion, and so on?” And if we look and examine carefully we say “No, not this. *Neti, neti.*” If all the identities are released there is still a soul that remains. Layer after layer, identity after identity, we engage in this process of seeing and asking. It is much like peeling away the layers of an onion. Ultimately, we get to the point where there are no more layers to take away. When the last layer is peeled back, what remains? That is the question we each have to answer for ourselves. It is impossible for that question to be answered by the speech, ideas, or writings of any other person. The value of such writings and teachings is to lead us to the point where we are able to peel away the last layer for ourselves. Then it becomes a question of experience, not knowledge.

The *neti, neti* approach to moving away from the sense of multiple identities is the negative way. But this is a dual universe, and there is another way. The negative path is one of radical subtraction, and the second path would be the path of radical addition, or inclusion. This is the path of compassion. In Buddhist philosophy, compassion has a clear definition — the desire to relieve the suffering of other beings. This is a good beginning, but does not express the full reach of compassion. To the extent that we are engaged in this way of thinking, it affects our behavior. It is easy for us to want to relieve the suffering of our family and loved ones, but what happens when we extend this feel-

ing towards others? There is a feeling of expansion. We feel ourselves enlarged in our capacity to experience life, no longer as an isolated individual, but from an ever-expanding center.

The “greatness” of those we regard as the Great Ones is that they have been so inclusive with their compassion and altruism that it has no limits. It becomes a different expression of identity. When asked, “Who are you?” Jesus responded, “I and the Father are one.” There is no division, no separation. Can we see this? Can we at least attempt to see it? It begins with us imagining ourselves as one with all. This is not just a unity of mind, heart, and body, but a unity with everything. This is the solution to all problems.

Gems of the Path

We are called, we are chosen. Meditation is our response to that call from the deepest center of our awakened consciousness . . . by letting go in meditation, we learn how to love.

JOHN MAIN

The ability to observe without evaluating is the highest form of intelligence.

JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI

Love is the cement of the universe; it holds all things in place and in eternal keeping; its very nature is celestial peace, its very characteristic is cosmic harmony, permeating all things, boundless, deathless, infinite, eternal. It is everywhere, and is the very heart of the heart of all that is.

G. DE PURUCKER

I love you not as something private and personal, which is my own, but as something universal and worthy of love which I have found.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU



Tim Boyd was elected International President of the Theosophical Society in 2015 and is the President of the Theosophical Society in America. He is founding member of a spiritual community situated in the heart of Chicago in what had been a deteriorating urban area. The group established organic food gardens on vacant lots, purchased and renovated numerous buildings in the area and placed beehives on the roofs of buildings. Tim has co-

produced, narrated and conducted interviews for the Eternal Quest radio series, broadcast on stations in the US and Canada. He has lectured and conducted workshops throughout the US and is a prolific writer.



The remarkable story of an Indian woman who remembers not just one, but two, previous lives

Swarnalata Remembers

Dr. K.S. Rawat

In his landmark book, *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation*, world-famous researcher Dr. Ian Stevenson tells the story of Swarnalata Mishra, the daughter of a school inspector in India, whom he interviewed in 1961, when she was 13. He tells how Swarnalata, at age three, went on a trip with her father to the city of Jabalpur, and while on the way home, “unexpectedly asked the driver of the truck they were in to turn down a road toward ‘my house’” in the city of Katni, where they planned to stop for tea. Katni is about 100 miles from their home city of Panna.

Swarnalata said they could obtain much better tea at “her” house nearby, Dr. Stevenson recounted. Her remarks puzzled her father, especially when he learned that she later told her siblings of a previous life in Katni as a member of a family named Pathak.

In the several years that followed, she performed dances and sang songs she had not been taught in her present life. At age 10, she also met the wife of a Professor

Agnihotri from Katni, whom Swarnalata claimed to recognize from her previous life. Her claims were investigated a year later by Sri. H. N. Banerjee, who spent two days in Katni where he became acquainted with the Pathak family of which Swarnalata claimed to have been a member. He had a list of nine statements Swarnalata had made about the Pathak residence,

Swarnalata’s case has since become famous. “Almost all the eminent parapsychologists of the world connected with reincarnation research have studied the case of Swarnalata.”

which he sought to confirm upon arriving there. Her statements corresponded closely with the life of Biya, a daughter of the Pathak family and the deceased wife of Sri Chintamini Pandey. Biya had died

in 1939, nine years before Swarnalata’s birth.

Swarnalata and members of her family then went to Katni and other towns where Biya had lived much of her married life, and where she died. She recognized additional people and places and commented on various changes that had occurred since the death of Biya.

It was in the summer of 1959 that members of the Pathak family and of Biya’s marital family were recognized by Swarnalata. Then in 1961, Dr. Stevenson spent four days in the area interviewing people concerned with the case, including Swarnalata and Biya’s brothers and children, “for whom she showed the warmest affection.”

Swarnalata made statements of a much more fragmentary nature about another life she believed she had lived subsequent to her life as Biya in Katni. She stated that after she died (as Biya), she was born as one Kamlesh in Sylhet, Assam (now in Bangladesh), and that in that life, she died as a child of about nine and was then reborn in the Mishra family. Some of the statements made by Swarnalata with regard to this “intermediate life” accord with the geography and other facts of Sylhet. It had not yet been possible, however, to identify a child from this area whose life corresponds with the rather few details given by Swarnalata. Investigation was hampered by the war in East Pakistan (now in Bangladesh.)

Swarnalata’s songs and dances apparently belong to the culture of Bangladesh. The language of the songs was Bengali. Sylhet is a Bengali-speaking region. In India, Swarnalata lived entirely among Hindi-speaking people.

Srimati Agnihotri, the wife of Professor Agnihotri had known Biya, but neither Swarnalata nor her family had known the Agnihotri family prior to the time when Swarnalata made her initial

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Living the Spiritual Life

Flerida Ruth P. Romero

AS I entered the elevator, the two ladies inside lowered their voices. One was saying, "But I can't believe she would do this sort of thing. Why, she's such a religious woman! I can't think of a more devout person. She often goes to church, not only on Sundays, but on holidays of obligation, too." Replied the other, "*Oo nga, manang na manang siya* (Yes, indeed, she's such a pious person). Now, I wonder if she'll still be the *hermana mayor* (the person in charge of a religious festival) of our *fiesta*." Their voices trailed off as they stepped out of the elevator.

What they said remained with me the whole day. The subject of their conversation must be a common friend who had done something to merit their condemnation. Unthinkable, they said, because she's "so religious," "so devout."

I asked myself: Why should we consider the external acts of people like going to church regularly, bowing their heads on bent knees with rosaries entwined in their fingers as they mumble their prayers and joining the priests as they minister to the sick and the dying as signs of religiosity, even of spirituality?

So when such a seemingly pious person makes the mistake of cross-

ing the borderline of sanctity, she becomes a target of criticism from the self-righteous. Indeed, many of us consider as synonymous the terms "religious," "pious," "devout," and "spiritual."

But didn't even Jesus, the Christ, consider them hypocrites who raised their hands and voices to pray at street corners? They go through the motions of being pious in public; that is, they do acts

One can attain to spirituality if he fully realizes that all Life is One; that the Essence of Life is the Divine Life.

marked by conspicuous religiosity. Does it follow that they are spiritual? Observe them and call to mind what a perceptive layman has said: "A hypocrite will often pray on his knees on Sunday and prey on his neighbors on Monday." A sincerely spiritual person will not exhibit such a dichotomy between his spiritual beliefs and his life in the outer world.

To my mind, the test of true spirituality is in how we live our lives, interact with others and relate to

God. Transcending religious concepts and beliefs, a sage put it beautifully: "To be spiritual is a matter of looking into the hearts of men, sharing their joys and anguishes, and feeling that you can strengthen the weak and purify the muddy and ugly places of the world." Only as we see ourselves reflected in others can this attitude be cultivated.

Oneness of Life. In the foregoing context, one can attain to spirituality if he fully realizes that all Life is One; that the Essence of Life is the Divine Life. This is the Life that pulsates in all human beings and animals, even in so-called inanimate things like plants and minerals.

The pantheism of the Greeks captures best this sense. It equates God with all the matter and forces of the universe. Originating from the Greek *pan* meaning "involving all" and *theism* which is to "pertain to the divine," it discerns God in everything. It is to postulate that we are all interconnected with every other creature on earth.

What a world of wisdom is found in this simple verse of Tennyson:

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower – but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

To see beneath the color of the skin of everyone, probe beyond the nuances of language and understand dissimilarities in beliefs and practices in order to catch even a glimpse of the underlying Divinity in all, partakes of Spirituality. When the Good Word refers to us as brothers and joint-heirs with Christ, it was not referring only to those who profess to be Christians but to all mankind.

This underlying One Life is the basis of that moral quality called "harmlessness" or "non-violence."

It is so not to hurt others for we thereby only hurt ourselves. By the same token, there should be no room for envy or jealousy at the successes of others, for their joy is ours, too. Could we but internalize this principle, the vicious trait of crab mentality often attributed to our people would have no place in our collective persona.

For those who have given up trying to make friends of their enemies or trying to “reform” the wayward character of a loved one, they should instead address their efforts to the Divine Fragment common to all. With tender compassion and understanding, try to invoke the Christ in each person. You profess to be a “Christian,” then turn to your brother and say to yourself, “Christ ‘yan, ah” (“He is Christ”).

Brotherly love is not like Christmas decor that is polished and hang during the “Twelve Days of Christmas,” or much longer for Filipinos, but for all time.

Service. If the truly spiritual man lives the principle of Unity of Life by practicing the negative quality of harmlessness, he will, sooner or later, realize that his life is empty unless he recognizes its positive aspect of service. As Brotherly Love suffuses our whole being, its natural tendency is to manifest itself in acts of kindness, helpfulness and compassion.

By being “outward-turned,” we shift the focus of our consciousness to others. Far too many of us live our lives absorbed in “I, myself and me.” The polestar by which we are guided in times of decision-making is: “What is there in it for me?” Yet all around us, so many are suffering and sending out signals for help. Unfortunately, in spite of our better judgment, times there are when we hesitate or are reluctant to assert our better natures. Maybe the sufferer is an enemy from the past and here is now an opportunity to even up the score.

At other times, we dream up ex-

cuses like: “Let him be. He has brought this punishment upon himself.” Or: “If I help him out, he will not learn to be independent. I’m actually doing him a favor by leaving him alone.”

Has it not occurred to us that if an erring brother crosses our path and appeals to us for help, it is a sign that we are duty bound to proffer a helping hand? On such occasions, the “sin” of inaction will be a karma on our part which we will

is an attribute of the soul. Not being a product of the mind, it arrives at the truth underlying facts and circumstances unerringly without having recourse to reason, science or religion.

Aspiring After the Ideal. A man who seriously treads the spiritual path but keeps on stumbling over rocks and brambles will not so easily give up if he holds up before his spiritual eyes his Ideal. This may be the personification of his re-

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have to work out in the future.

We may not be called upon to part with cherished possessions. Life presents us with numerous occasions to do unselfish acts of service, such as sharing scanty resources; or giving a little of our time to pause and cheer up an invalid or a depressed individual; or giving up something we are actually using to someone who is in greater need of it; or going what is called the “extra mile” — all done with a smile and not with an air of martyrdom. We may feel that we are sacrificing something, but do you know that the term “sacrifice” means “to make sacred”?

As we start each day, therefore, let us resolve to be sensitive to pained cries for help. These may not be verbal, for body language can be more eloquent in sending out SOS signals.

Beyond language and actions, we can know in a flash if someone needs our help. Convinced that every person is our brother, we can ignite the spark of intuition in our inner being to respond. For intuition

ligion, whether he be a Christian, Moslem, Buddhist or Hindu or any of such verities as Universal Love, Compassion, Justice or Truth. Whatever it may be, surely it eschews selfishness which, in our world, our culture and time, seems to be the norm of our actions.

But the man who aspires to spirituality will be guided by another set of standards. The words of the Scriptures or the image of his Lord and Master will flash before his eyes if he but takes time to reflect, meditate and ponder upon these.

Let us etch these words in our hearts: “Build for yourself a great Ideal — the Ideal of that which you wish to be. Think of it, dream of it, try to love it. One day, you will wonder that you have become that fair thing that your thought threw on the clouds of the future.

Flerida Ruth P. Romero is the founder and past president of the Logos Lodge of the Theosophical Society in the Philippines. She is a retired Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.



Mainstreaming Theosophy

Vicente Hao Chin Jr.

THE Theosophical Society has been around for 139 years. But its growth as an organization has been relatively stagnant in the past more than half a century. Its membership has been declining since 1928 when it had a peak membership of 45,000, down to about 26,000 today. Since 1928, world population has increased three and a half times. Every year, there are 80,000,000 people who are born. If the message of theosophy reaches only 100,000 new people per year, it will take us 800 years before we will reach the number of new people born in one year alone. To reach the population increase of just 2 years, it will take us 1,600 years. We will see that at such a rate, the Theosophical Society will become more and more irrelevant to the changes happening in the world.

130 years ago, the Mahachohan, the teacher of the Adepts, exhorted the leaders of the infant Theosophical Society: "For our doctrines to practically react on the so-called moral code or the ideas of truthfulness, purity, self-denial, charity, etc., we have to preach and popularize a knowledge of theosophy." (ML Appendix II)

Have we achieved such popular-

ization? I'm afraid we have not. The word "Theosophy" remains a very unfamiliar word or concept to a large majority of the world.

Have the theosophical doctrines reacted practically on society's moral code and influenced the con-

"For our doctrines to practically react on the so-called moral code or the ideas of truthfulness, purity, self-denial, charity, etc., we have to preach and popularize a knowledge of theosophy." — the Mahachohan

duct of men and women of the world? Again, we have to answer generally in the negative. It is my impression that a very large percentage of our lodges are oriented towards its internal activities rather seeking to actively help solve the problems of society.

It is incumbent upon us that we renew our effort to achieve this vision of the Mahachohan – to make theosophy and the Theosophical

Society a part of the mainstream of human society.

To go mainstream means that an idea or practice has become part of the prevailing current in public thought, in other words, most people would somehow be familiar with it or know something about it. It can be a concept like Zen, or meditation, or reincarnation or karma.

How can we successfully enter the mainstream?

I would like to share with you what I consider to be three foundations in the effort to go mainstream:

1. We need to decide what we would like to be known for.

When people hear of theosophy, what comes to their mind? Is it an Eastern cult? An abstruse philosophy? A psychic group? An educational organization?

99 percent of the world who have heard of theosophy will only know us by one or two word associations. For example, it can be "esoteric," "cult," "clairvoyance," "Blavatsky," "brotherhood," "intellectual," "Hindu," etc. Those few words will determine whether they will become interested and inquire further about theosophy or not. If the associated word is negative or irrelevant, then people will not pursue further the learning of theosophy.

It is important that we deliberately determine the keywords for which theosophy will be known and then popularize it. Will be it "oneness," "brotherhood," "character building," "meditation," "a spiritual way of life," etc.?

If we do not deliberately introduce or present theosophy according to the way that it should be known, then there is no other choice but that public opinion will create such impressions or associations, even if very inaccurate or wrong. Wrong impressions will greatly harm the effectiveness of the Theosophical Society.

2. We need to popularize applied theosophy and establish theosophical practices on a wide scale.

In the book *Letters of the Masters of the Wisdom*, a Master wrote: "Theosophy must not represent merely a collection of moral verities, a bundle of metaphysical Ethics epitomized in theoretical dissertations. Theosophy must be made practical and has, therefore, to be disencumbered of useless discussion. . . . It has to find objective expression in an all-embracing code of life thoroughly impregnated by its spirit. . . . Its followers have to set the example of a firmly outlined and a firmly applied morality before they get the right to point out, even in a spirit of kindness, absence of a like ethic Unity and singleness of purpose in other associations and individuals." (LMW II, Letter 82)

To make theosophy relevant, therefore, we must convert theosophical knowledge into enduring practices and institutions that can permeate individual life, family life, schools, politics, society, media, culture, etc.

Let us take one example of applied theosophy, which is theosophical education. It has always been a puzzle to me why the Theosophical Society is not deeply involved in theosophical education. All the theosophical pioneers, whether Blavatsky, Olcott or Besant, have strongly advocated the founding of theosophical schools. Yet it is one of the most neglected areas of applied theosophy.

We must keep in mind the enormous influence that schools can do in molding young minds in the right direction. If we but glance at the Catholic schools, we will see one of the important secrets of the influence of the Roman Catholic

Church. There are numerous Catholic orders who run schools, such as the Jesuits, the La Sallite brothers, the Dominicans, the Franciscans, etc. Let's take the Jesuits. Out of about 20,000 Jesuits, there are only 2,400 Jesuits involved in education; but they run 2,129 schools

For theosophy to become part of the mainstream, we need to become relevant to the daily life of the individual; otherwise, the theosophical message will be drowned out by the billions of bits of information that are broadcast every day.

all over the world with 1.7 million students. Many of their graduates become leaders of their countries. Let's look at the La Salle brothers. There are 1,693 La Salle brothers involved in education, and they have 1,049 schools with almost 1 million students. The Catholic Church itself has more than 200,000 schools around the world, enrolling 52,000,000 students. That is more than the combined population of Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Norway and Finland. You can imagine the influence of the Catholic Church in countries where it has schools.

Why doesn't the TS be inten-

sively involved in education? Why can't it have at least 100 schools by the end of this century? We have the underlying philosophy, we have the methodology, we have the lands, and we have so many educators among our ranks.

We can look at many other examples of how applied practice and institutions can help mold the public mind. Zen became popular because of the example of monks in Japan as a practice for inner equanimity. Because they started it by their example, there are today more than 3 million Zen practitioners in Japan and millions more outside of Japan.

The organization called PETA (People for Ethical Treatment of Animals) was only started in 1980 by two persons. But because of its applied advocacy, it has done more to make people aware of animal rights and vegetarianism than any other organization. It is the most influential animal rights organization in the world today with an annual budget of \$34 million. Do you know that the annual budget of the international TS is only 1% of this organization which focuses mainly on animal welfare? With the deep and noble goals of the TS, why can't we have a budget a hundred times what we have now? Sometimes, we worry that there is not enough money to start these. I think the reality is that we don't have enough worthwhile theosophical projects that will draw the funds that are looking for good projects.

It is essential that we as a Theosophical Society should be involved in actual practices and institutions that will help the daily life of individuals. We must demonstrate the usefulness of theosophical principles in solving the problems of living and the problems of society.

For theosophy to become part of the mainstream, we need to become relevant to the daily life of the individual; otherwise, the theosophical message will be drowned out by the billions of bits of information that are broadcast every day.

Meditation Corner

Concentration, contemplation, and meditation all involve focus, and a knowledge of both the Known and the Knower. Concentration focuses the direction of our thoughts; meditation focuses the direction of our lives. According to the Bhagavad-Gita, the highest knowledge is that "wisdom which perceives in all nature one single principle, indivisible and incorruptible, not separate in the separate objects seen" (ch. 18).

DARA EKLUND

Continued on p. 14



Enriching the Character, Blossoming of a Leader

Victor Peñaranda

WHEN one becomes a theosophist, one gradually becomes aware that the life journey is never easy and not always what we want things to be. We travel the smooth and the rough. There are times when we choose to take a road less traveled or make a sudden turn towards somewhere, that we find out later will not bring us to our intended destination. We do constant corrections and reflections in our journey.

We gradually learn about ourselves by exploring our imperfections. We begin to recognize that being human is also being divine, and by this mystic illumination we humbly embark on the development of our character. This aspect of theosophical practice is often appreciated for its practical applications. When we are clear about our commitment to the enrichment of character, life goals emerge with clarity from the sea of existence. From being perplexed, we learn to envision and imagine while going through the process of self-discovery and self-renewal.

I learned from the Theosophical

Society that life experiences offer lessons by which we are able to develop that precious potential in each one of us — human character. The dynamic enhancement and enchantment of character involves

The Theosophical Society has to invest in developing leaders. And as a matter of theosophical practice, the mentoring of potential leaders is crucially linked to character-building.

the nurturing of the inner force that compels us to chart our destiny while performing life duties. By dealing diligently with the necessary changes or improvements in one's character, self-transformation becomes a matter of conviction.

People are often curious about what of the useful or the wonderful happens in the process of molding

our character? It's safe to say the following:

First, we gain a level of confidence, even serenity, by being aware that we live in a world of impermanence. We learn that we evolve in consciousness from life to life and the best way to prepare ourselves for each existence is to act according to the law of karma.

Second, it's possible to prevail over suffering and decay because of our awareness of what is divine in us. A mystery is better appreciated and can be unlocked with creative energy and understanding; what is mystical could be grasped by awakened intuition. There is power in kindness and beauty in the cycle of ebb and flow, in the cycle of living, dying, living.

Third, we must be honest with ourselves and with others. We have to be aware of our limitations and weaknesses that we may grow from strength to strength. We have to examine the kernel of truth contained in every criticism we receive. Along the way, we learn that respect and trust follow honest acts. We learn that honest work involves giving your best, to do better than what you have done before, and to equate your effort with quality or excellence.

Fourth, we begin to understand inner peace by being aware of our capacity to love. It is through love that we reclaim our profound respect for people and what is sacred in life. Only by offering ourselves to unselfish service can we be transformed into touchstones of social consensus and the wellspring of harmonious relationships.

Fifth, we must be imbued with courage to be able to love, to be peaceful, to be honest, to prevail over suffering, and to be serene. To be courageous is to be fearless in conviction and selfless in action.

The process of character-building may blossom in preparation to become a leader. Leadership is not being on top of a hierarchy, not about fame, not about wielding power or use of force. Leadership

As we walk the Path, we become the pilgrim of unlimited possibilities. As we transform ourselves, we contribute to the transformation of others wherever we choose to be.

begins modestly with having a purpose in everyday life (i.e., in the family, in the neighborhood, in the workplace, etc.). One who has character is a potential leader or a leader in the making. Who are they? Those who are dedicated — heart and mind — to study, meditate and serve. Those with the energy to accomplish, confidence to envision, creativity to pioneer and to integrate various parts of our work into a substantial whole.

An organization, like the Theosophical Society, has to invest in developing leaders. And as a matter of theosophical practice, the mentoring of potential leaders is crucially linked to character-building.

Allow me to mention some abilities expected of them:

- to be diligent in theosophical study and practice;
- to be calm and resolute in considering choices and making decisions;
- to innovate under changing conditions;
- to inspire by moral or ethical example;
- to communicate clearly;
- to manage resources effectively;
- to be accountable for one's actions;
- to motivate others to achieve results;
- to gain the support of the people

being served;

- to persevere despite setbacks;
- to create opportunities to unlock the potential of others.

In the Theosophical Society, there are no followers — only seekers, volunteers, and messengers. They have to take the frontline if they are to mainstream theosophy. This means that a new wave of leaders has to be mentored in an enabling and challenging environment.

I have often mentioned to family and friends that taking the spiritual Path is one great adventure in living. And in this adventure, the enrichment of human character is decisive. As the mystery deepens in us, so does our commitment to love and serve those within our reach. A theosophist should be ready to guide and care for others when the situation calls for it. A theosophist should be prepared to take on the role of leader when conditions demand it.

Remember: As we walk the Path, we become the pilgrim of unlimited possibilities. As we transform ourselves, we contribute to the transformation of others wherever we choose to be.

Victor Peñaranda is the Vice President of the Theosophical Society in the Philippines.

Reincarnation: Fact or Fancy?

Reincarnation, at least as I conceive it, does not nullify what we know about evolution and genetics. It suggests, however, that there may be two streams of evolution — the biological one and a personal one — and that during terrestrial lives these streams may interact.

DR. IAN STEVENSON

Question & Answer

Q. 1: How are mysticism and occultism related in the view of Theosophy?

A.: As Annie Besant put it, “The occultist and the mystic differ in their methods as well as in their object. The occultist seeks knowledge of God; the mystic seeks union with God. The occultist uses intellect; the mystic emotion (and/or intuition). The occultist watches Ideas embodying themselves in phenomena; the Mystic unfolds the Divine within him that it may expand into the Divinity whose Body is a universe.”

And yet, in true Theosophical understandings, mysticism and occultism go hand in hand, marrying into the one complete or “whole” human being in the approach to enlightenment or wholeness. A true mystic path prepares the student well in the basics of meditation, an understanding of the natural laws and the processes involved in moving towards enlightenment. Occultism adds the element of science, a greater cosmic view and deeper understanding of mystic experience and inner meditations to the basket of the mystic’s knowledge and experience. The mystic now seeks to examine mysticism more closely. A true mystic already “knows” from inner experience but may wish to expand on that “inner knowing.” It is a finely tuned balancing act that needs to be directed with right intention and a loving heart. Fine examples of this way of being are both Helena Blavatsky and Annie Besant who have both been described as “great mystics.”

From “Theosophy and Mysticism,” by Warwick Keys (*Theosophia*, March 2016)

News and Events



Leni Robredo at the TSP National Convention

Philippine Vice President Leni Robredo was the guest speaker of the 2016 National Convention of the Theosophical Society in the Philippines (TSP) held last Nov. 18-20, 2016 at the TSP National Headquarters in Quezon City. The theme of the convention was “Self-Transformation for Social Change.” In the photo, the Vice President poses with the outgoing members of the Board of Trustees, Chally Romero, Vic Hao Chin Jr., Victor Penaranda, Rosel Doval Santos, Rekha Nahar and Flor Garcia. They were all reelected during the convention, with Dr. Preciosa Soliven.

New Building of Golden Link College at Bohol

The Bohol Campus of Golden Link College is now constructing its second school building to accommodate the new students enrolling this year. The Bohol campus is now offering from Nursery level up to Grade 3 in Elementary. The building will be ready for use by July. The construction is being supervised by Mrs. Cora Ponteres, the school directress, with the assistance of Borland Development Corporation.



TS/GLC Seminar for Urdaneta City Government

The Urdaneta City government invited the Theosophical Society in the Philippines and Golden Link College to conduct a one-day seminar to the officials of the city on “Personal Growth and Transformation Leadership and Management.” It was arranged by Bro. Ramil San Juan, a former city councilor who is currently the Secretary of the City Council.

An Evening of Rumi Poetry and Musical Performance

A TSP event called “In the Arms of the Beloved” — an evening of reading Rumi poetry as well as musical performance — was held on March 12, 2017 at the Lecture Hall of the TSP's National Headquarters. Organized by TSP volunteers, the event's guests included writer and cultural icon Gilda Cordero Fernando; poet, writer, musician and TV host Lour de Veyra; poet, writer-editor and professor emeritus in Literature Marj Evasco; book author Tweet Sering, and many other distinguished poets, writers, academicians, and artists.



Self-Transformation Seminar at the National HQ

The first Self-Transformation Seminar of 2017 was held at the TSP National Headquarters on February 19, 25 and 26. It was conducted by Vic Hao Chin Jr. and Victor Penaranda. The Self-Transformation Seminar is a three-day session that seeks to integrate the fragmented life facets of the participant through self-awareness and the diminishing of inner conflicts.

Self-Transformation Seminar at the Ateneo de Davao University

The latest Self-Transformation Seminar was held at the Ateneo de Davao University on May 4-5, 2017. It was for the librarians and other key staff of more than 20 universities in southern Mindanao. It was organized by Jean Lim, a member of the Satsang Lodge. As a result of the seminar, two more seminars will be organized by the Philippine Librarians Association, to be held in Cagayan de Oro and Davao City in July and August, 2017 respectively.



News and Events

Dr. Deepa Padhi Elected TS Vice President

Dr. Deepa Padhi of Odisha, India, has been unanimously elected by the Theosophical Society's General Council as the international Vice President of the Theosophical Society. Deepa has been very active in the work of the Theosophical Order of Service in the state of Odisha. She also organized a conference on Theosophical Education last year. In the photo, Deepa is with Tim Boyd, the international president of the Theosophical Society.



TS General Council Holds Strategic Planning Meeting

The General Council of the Theosophical Society held a strategic planning meeting last March, 2017 at Naarden, Netherlands to chart the future of the Theosophical Society. Vic Hao Chin Jr. was asked to help plan and coordinate the session in coordination with Tim Boyd, the president, and Marja Artamaa, the international secretary. The meeting identified about 35 priority areas that will be attended to by the Theosophical Society.

Vic Hao Chin Jr. Speaks at TS Convention in Africa

Former Theosophical Society in the Philippines (TSP) President Vic Hao Chin Jr. was the guest speaker of the biennial convention of the Theosophical Society in East and Central Africa held last April 14-16, 2017 at Kampala, Uganda. He also conducted a Self-Transformation in Mairubi, Kenya. Several members expressed interest in training as facilitators for the Seminar. Vic also traveled to Tanzania and Zambia to deliver lectures.



Vic Hao Chin Jr. Conducts School of the Wisdom Session

The School of the Wisdom session held at Adyar, India from January 9 to 20, 2017, was conducted by Vic Hao Chin Jr. The theme of the session was "Self-Transformation and the Spiritual Life." The session was attended by participants from many countries. This is the third year that Vic has been asked to conduct the session from eight countries.

Youth Camp for Self-Discovery and Self-Transformation

The Youth Camp for Self-Discovery and Self-Transformation was conducted by Victor Penaranda, Eiren Galang and John Derson Herbolario on May, 2017. Requested by the Institute of Philippine Cooperatives and Social Enterprise Development (IPCSED) and participated in by IPCSED officers and staff, the youth camp is the culmination of IPCSED committee head Tess Molino's efforts to integrate Vic Hao Chin Jr.'s Self-Transformation methods into IPCSED's developmental work.



Former Secretary Dinky Soliman Guests at GLC

Former Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Corazón "Dinky" Soliman was the guest speaker of the Golden Link College's college graduation ceremonies held on March, 2017. She is a recognized negotiator and facilitator and also an advocate of collaboration between the government and civil society.

Mainstreaming Theosophy

continued from p. 8

The third foundation is the need to train qualified advocates of theosophy and applied theosophy.

These advocates are those who will competently face the general public and explain about theosophy and its usefulness. The availability of qualified advocates is absolutely essential because if we do not have these people, then, even if we become popular, such popularity will backfire and we will become notorious because those who speak in behalf of the TS may not really be proper representatives of the ageless philosophy.

For this reason, it is essential for the international TS and the most active sections in the world to undertake a concerted and integrated program of training theosophical workers on three areas:

a. *Theosophical knowledge* – the theosophical advocates must know well

the ageless wisdom, supplemented by modern insights in psychology, science and other fields.

b. *Theosophical practice* – the advocates must have explored the principles in their lives and in society.

c. *Communication skills* – the advocates must possess a minimum level of communication ability: spoken or written, plus prudence.

This effort to develop a growing corps of advocates must be done on an international scale because many sections do not have the trainers or the experience in conducting such training. The interna-

tional headquarters and the strong sections must help the less active theosophical groups.

But we must not forget that such a training should not limit itself to theoretical topics, but must include the applied side of theosophical knowledge. Ideas alone cannot change the world. It is the application of these ideas that will change the world.

The range of possible theosophical practices and institutions is almost limitless. It can be as simple as a center for stress management, or it can go deeper into meditation or yo- ga or well-being. It can be on

marital harmony, parenting, education, the establishment of schools, vegetarianism, health and fitness, animal welfare, ecology, organic agriculture, energy conservation, compassionate entrepreneurship, leadership, politics, youth development, social development, and so on. It is best that different theo-

sophical groups with similar advocacies and projects should coordinate with each other in order to develop synergy; otherwise, there will be a tendency for individual projects to just fade and die a natural death.

If the TS itself does not pioneer the application of its tenets and principles, then it will remain as an intellectual philosophy that will have little relevance to the problems of the world.

Vicente Hao Chin Jr. is the President of Golden Link College Foundation and was past president of the Theosophical Society in the Philippines.

Swarnalata Remembers

continued from p. 5

statements about Katni. Both Srimati M. L. Mishra and Srimati Agnihotri stated that their families had never met until Prof. Agnihotri, having heard of Swarnalata's claims to remember a previous life, invited her and her father to his home to tell about the previous life. Subsequently, Swarnalata's recognition of Srimati Agnihotri then occurred. This happened in July, 1958, when Swarnalata was 10 and had already been talking about her previous life for six years.

Dr. Stevenson learned that the Mishra family traveled from Panna to other cities, passing through Katni from time to time, and it is conceivable that she picked up some knowledge of Katni during such journeys. The Pathak family was prominent and presumably, the location of their house was well-known there. But Swarnalata gave information about the structural details of the house as it was years before she began talking of the previous life. If she somehow picked up knowledge of the Pathaks, it eluded her parents for they knew nothing of the Pathak family when she first began to talk about them. As Swarnalata never left home without her parents, Dr. Stevenson thought it unlikely she could have learned about the Pathak family while her parents did not acquire the same information at the same time.

Swarnalata's case has since become famous. "Almost all the eminent parapsychologists of the world connected with reincarnation research have studied the case of Swarnalata."

Dr. K.S. Rawat is director of International Center for Reincarnation and Survival Researches.

Directory of TSP Lodges and Study Groups

Provincial Areas

Ahimsa Study Group

Meeting: Every Saturday 6:00p.m.
Venue: RVS Building, La Salle Avenue
Bacolod City

Amor Study Group

Coordinator: Michael C. Andrade
Meeting: Weekends 2:00p.m.-4:00p.m.
Venue: Sabino Residence
c/o Bro. Joyce Cary Sabino
Damula-an, Albueria, Leyte
Tel.: (Cellular 0916) 542 7153 (c/o Michael
C. Andrade)

Bataan Study Group

Meeting: 2nd and 4th Sundays of the
month
Venue: East Calaguiman, Samal, Bataan
(beside Barangay Day Care Center; about
150 meters away from the plaza and
church)
Tel.: (Cellular 0917) 576 2407
(Cellular 0929) 725 6762

Bacolod Lodge

President: Ferdinand Yulo
Meeting: Every 1st and 3rd Sunday
Venue: 82 St. Ignatius Avenue, Dona
Juliana Heights, Bacolod City

Bohol Lodge

Meeting: Every Thursday 6:00 p.m.
Venue: 120 P. Garcia Avenue
Mansasa District 6300
Tagbilaran City

Cabanatuan Study Group

Venue: Cabanatuan City

Cebu Lodge

Meeting: Saturday, 6:30 p.m.
Venue: 2nd Floor, Pan de Malunggay,
Juana Osmena St., Cebu City (be
side NS Pension)
Tel.: (Cellular 0943) 520 2891

Celestine Lodge

Meeting: Every Sunday 2:00 p.m.
Venue: Abalayan Subd., San Jose
8002 Digos City
Tel.: (Res.) (082) 553-2839
(Off.) (082) 291-1021

Godea Lodge

Meeting: Every Saturday 7:00 p.m.
Venue: No. 3A Concepcion Apt.
San Miguel Village
Pala-o, 9200 Iligan City
Tel.: (063) 351-7081, 223-0126
Email: bbtrrodil@yahoo.com

Iloilo Lodge

c/o Lisa Montero, Lily Que
Meeting: Every 1st and 3rd Sunday 6:00 p.m.
Venue: Diversion Road
Manduriao, Iloilo City
Tel.: (033) 320-3950/ 0919-8592504/
0919-3027998

Maharlika Lodge

c/o Dionisio S. Cervantes
Meeting: Every 2nd and 4th Thursday of
the month.
Venue: Road 4, Dona Vicenta Village,
Davao City (near Ponce Suites Gallery Hotel)

Tel.: (Cellular 0923) 5714743/
09255120523/ 0917-7211130

Muñoz Lodge

Meeting: Every Sunday 1:30 p.m.
Venue: Purok Curva, Bgy. Bantug, Science
City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija
Tel.: (Cellular 0908) 2889821

Ormoc Lodge

President: Arnulfo Lumangtad
Meeting: Every Sunday 5:00 p.m.
Venue: District 4, Aviles St. Corner Juan
Luna St., Anilao Riverside Ormoc City
Tel.: (Cellular 0905) 5036527
(Cellular 0928) 9509412

Palompon Study Group

Meeting: Saturday, 3:00 p.m.
Venue: 635 Lopez Street, Palompon, Leyte
Tel.: (Cellular 0926) 2213388

Satsang Lodge

President: Dr. Mary Anne Cabrera
Venue: Cafe Georg, Banilad, or Persian Pal-
ate, Mango Square, Mango Ave., Cebu City
Tel.: (032) 253-7098

Toril Study Group

Meeting: Every Saturday 4:00-6:00 p.m.
Venue: Blk 5 Macleod, Daliao
Toril, 8025 Davao City

Urdaneta Study Group

Venue: Blk 3 Lot 21 Doña Loleng
Urdaneta, Pangasinan

Metro Manila Area

Golden Link Theosophical Lodge

President: Rekha Nahar
Meeting: Every 1st and 3rd Saturday 4:00
p.m.
Venue: Conference Room, 2nd floor, Main
Building, Golden Link College, Camarin,
North Caloocan City
Tel.: 0918 914 6901

Logos Lodge

President: Bert Cabrera
Meeting: 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the
month at 4:00 p.m. (Class on Basic Theoso-
phy: 3-4pm)
Venue: Unit 304 Page 1 Building, Acacia
Ave., Madrigal Business Park, Ayala
Alabang, Muntinlupa City, Metro Manila
Tel.: 0917 945 1758

Manila Lodge

President: Mona Brocoy
Meeting: 1st & 3rd Sunday, 11:30 a.m.

Venue: TSP National Headquarters 1 Iba
St. cor. P. Florentino, Quezon City, 1114
Metro Manila
Tel.: (02) 7415740; 0927 403 4983

Pandacan Lodge

President: Luke Ironside
Meeting: 2nd and 4th Sundays, 11:00a.m.
Venue: TSP National Headquarters
1 Iba St. cor. P. Florentino St.
Quezon City, 1114 Metro Manila
Tel.: (02) 741-57-40

Rizaliana Lodge

Meeting: Every Saturday 4:00 p.m.
Venue: TSP National Headquarters
1 Iba St. cor. P. Florentino St.
Quezon City, 1114 Metro Manila
Tel.: 741-57-40

Soliman Lodge & Raja Lodge

President: Dr. Preciosa Soliven

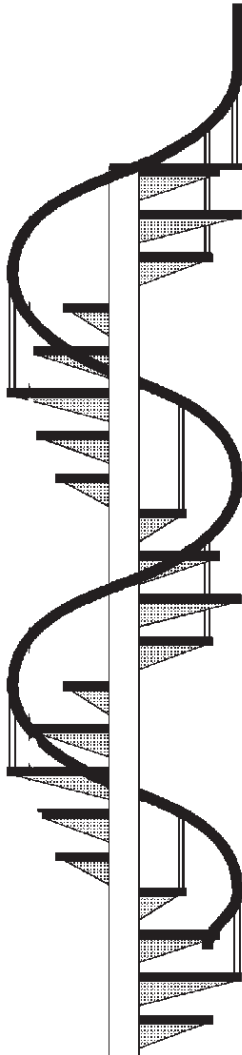
Meeting: Every 2nd & 4th Sunday 1:30
p.m.
Venue: Room 601 or Rooms 704-705, Oper-
ation Brotherhood (OB) Montessori School,
3 Eisenhower St., Greenhills, San Juan,
Metro Manila
Tel.: (text only) 0917 945 1758

Theosophical Research and Study Group

Meeting: Sunday, 6pm; inquiries
Venue: TSP National Headquarters, 1 Iba
St., cor. P. Florentino St., Quezon City,
1114 Metro Manila
Tel.: 741-57-40/0917 898 7794

Vidya Lodge

Meeting: Every 1st and 3rd Thursday 6:30
p.m.
Venue: TSP National Headquarters 1 Iba
St. cor. P. Florentino St. Quezon City,
1114 Metro Manila *Tel.:* 741-5740



The Theosophical Society

The Theosophical Society was formed at New York on November 17, 1875, and incorporated in Chennai (Madras), India, on April 3, 1905.

Its three declared Objects are:

To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or color.

To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science.

To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.

“Theosophy is the shoreless ocean of universal truth, love and wisdom reflecting its radiance on the earth, while the Theosophical Society is only a visible bubble on that reflection. Theosophy is divine nature, visible and invisible, and its Society human nature trying to ascend to its divine parent.”

H. P. BLAVATSKY
Key to Theosophy

The Theosophical Society in the Philippines
1 Iba St., Quezon City, Philippines

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