



Issue 2 - January 2009

Dear fellow members of the TS and TOS around the world,

Welcome to this second issue of the on-line newsletter of the international TOS, which aims to keep you in touch with what is happening in the TOS, to allow you to get to know TOS members outside your own country, to keep you up to date with organisational developments and to bring information to inspire your service work within or outside the TOS.

This issue introduces our newest national TOS representative, reports on a TOS response to November's terrorist nightmare in Mumbai and shares ten suggestions for personal action from a pillar of the TOS in Nairobi.

Remember that the newsletter is designed to be read while you are connected to the internet.

We welcome your contributions, either through your National TOS Director/President/Coordinator/Correspondent or directly to the editors at: carolyn.tosinternational@gmail.com

Successful partnership with the Kern Foundation

Donations from around the world have been matched by the Kern Foundation to raise almost US\$75,000 for the Golden Link School in the Philippines. [Read more in Latest News on our international TOS website.](#)

Meet another of our new Correspondents

Deepa Kapur is the new Correspondent for the TOS in Tanzania. She has a deep commitment to social welfare and works particularly with children and women. [Read more](#)

TOS news from around the world

Find out about TOS activities in Brazil, Cardiff in Wales, Chennai in India and the Sunshine Coast in Australia. [Read more](#)

Teddies for Tragedies – update

The TOS in England continues to enthusiastically support this project and has now produced a series of greeting cards to publicise it and raise funds for more teddies. [Read more](#)

What's new on the International TOS website?

The new [Featured Project](#) and [Featured Article](#) on our International TOS website both focus on the inspiring work of TOS members to relieve the suffering of animals. There is also news of the Kern Foundation's support for the Golden Link School in the Philippines and additions to the TOS photo gallery, reports and the Inspiration section. Go to <http://international.theoservice.org>

What are your New Year resolutions?

Kiran Shah, a member of the TOS in Nairobi, shares his commitments for making a difference in our global community. [Read more](#)

Evidence of cats and dogs being skinned alive for fur in China

See the video, read the report from PETA and join the action to prevent this cruelty. [Read more](#)

UN International Days

For information on [UN International Days from February to May 2009](#).

The power of petitions

Amnesty International has produced a thought-provoking video promoting the power of petitions.

[View it.](#) (4.2Mb WMF windows movie file)

Invitation from the USA TOS website

The TOS-USA website (<http://usa.theoservice.org>) has been re-cast as a dynamic, user-built community website. Site members can easily comment on any article and even post their own article, or email their contribution to the webmaster. The interactive features of the website allow it to serve as an effective networking and communication tool for TOS members and friends.

Would you like to automatically receive this on-line newsletter?

- a) To sign up, you only have to send a message to tos.intouch@gmail.com with 'Subscribe TOS e-newsletter' in the subject line. Please also state where you are located and what is your connection with TS or TOS groups.
- b) If you do not want to receive future newsletters you can easily unsubscribe. All that is needed is a blank message to tos.intouch@gmail.com with 'UNSUBSCRIBE TOS e-newsletter' in the subject line (with capitals as shown here).

With best wishes,

Carolyn and Diana

*Diana Dunningham Chapotin is the International Secretary of the TOS and
Carolyn Harrod is the National Coordinator of the TOS in Australia.*

“Peace comes from being able to contribute the best that we have, and all that we are, toward creating a world that supports everyone. But it is also securing the space for others to contribute the best that they have and all that they are.”

--Hafsat Abiola

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If I Could Help Change the World

Kiran Shah has been active in the TOS in Nairobi, Kenya for many years. Here he shares ten practical commitments for personal action.



When we look at the scale of planetary problems, we may wonder what as individuals we can do to reduce the suffering and misery. Change starts with individuals, however; all great changes have come about from small beginnings.

Can we members of the Theosophical Order of Service begin something fresh to alleviate suffering, according to our resources?

Here are some suggestions which we may consider implementing in our lives:

1. I will set aside a certain percentage of my earnings to help the less fortunate in society.
2. I will sponsor the primary or secondary education of up to five needy children.
3. I will try my utmost to avoid polluting the environment. I will plant five trees every year, either in my neighbourhood or where they are most needed, and I will see that they are properly watered and cared for. I will encourage others to do the same.
4. If I have a business that employs staff, I will reserve a minimum of 5 per cent of the positions available for disabled persons.
5. I will contribute to the maintenance of rest homes in developing countries. Few elderly people who are poor have anywhere to go for care and thousands find themselves on the streets.
6. I will donate to orphanages for destitute children suffering from HIV, AIDS or other diseases.
7. I will not be a part of any corrupt practices, because corruption is crippling the economies of many countries.
8. I will donate income-generating items to the poor in developing countries, such as sewing machines, spinning wheels and tools for small craft workshops.
9. I will create awareness of healthy living through natural methods, which will include nutritious diet, exercise, relaxation and positive thinking. I will make people aware of the healing power that nature has abundantly implanted within us.
10. I will use the powerful energy of the mind to help relieve the suffering of others. I will resolve to send positive, healing thoughts for a few minutes every day to those who are ill, depressed or in other difficulties.



Meet another of our new correspondents

Deepa Kapur, Correspondent for the TOS in Tanzania

Born into a theosophical family in Dar es Salaam, Deepa Kapur received her higher education in India which enabled her to visit the international HQ of the TS many times during her youth, where her commitment to the Theosophical Society deepened progressively.

Alongside her pursuit of law on the academic front, Deepa became passionately engaged in social work through the Lions Club in Mumbai: women's welfare, care for the environment and medical treatment for the needy including aid for the visually and physically challenged. She was extensively involved in a programme to tackle hunger, the focus of which was never merely to feed people but to empower them – especially women.



Married to Runjiv and blessed with a daughter, Malaika, in Mumbai, destiny brought her family back to her birthplace, Tanzania, in 2000. Here, Deepa picked up her social work especially in the area of child welfare. She is deeply involved in the Tanzania Heart Babies Project that runs under the aegis of Dr Kanabar of the Lions Club and that to date has funded successful surgery in India for over 1300 Tanzanian children.

As our new correspondent for the TOS, Deepa feels that theosophical teachings bring a valuable long-term perspective to the development of her country and that the TOS provides an opportunity to put those teachings into action in wise ways. She reports that her small TOS group is very modest in its undertakings but full of energy and enthusiasm. Its principal achievement during the special TOS centennial year of 2008 has been to collect what is a large sum of money for Tanzanians: 1.2 million shillings (approx. US\$1,000) for local charities.

We wish Deepa joy in her efforts to develop the TOS in Tanzania.



Evidence of cats and dogs being skinned alive for fur in China

PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) has video evidence of cats, dogs and other animals being skinned alive on fur farms in China. Here is part of the written report of their observations:

When undercover investigators made their way onto Chinese fur farms recently, they found that many animals are still alive and struggling desperately when workers flip them onto their backs or hang them up by their legs or tails to skin them. When workers on these farms begin to cut the skin and fur from an animal's leg, the free limbs kick and writhe. Workers stomp on the necks and heads of animals who struggle too hard to allow a clean cut.

When the fur is finally peeled off over the animals' heads, their naked, bloody bodies are thrown onto a pile of those who have gone before them. Some are still alive, breathing in ragged gasps and blinking slowly. Some of the animals' hearts are still beating five to ten minutes after they are skinned. One investigator recorded a skinned raccoon dog on the heap of carcasses who had enough strength to lift his bloodied head and stare into the camera.

China supplies more than half of the finished fur garments imported for sale in the United States. Even if a fur garment's label says it was made in a European country, the animals were likely raised and slaughtered elsewhere – possibly on an unregulated Chinese fur farm.

What can you do to help stop this cruelty?

- ö Visit the PETA site at <http://www.peta.org/feat/ChineseFurFarms> and view the evidence.
- ö Sign PETA's pledge to be fur free.
- ö Don't be fooled by garments, toys and trinkets from China that say they have fake fur. If it feels like fur it probably is. Cat fur is frequently used on supposed 'fake fur' items from China.
- ö Write to the Chinese government about your concerns.
- ö Write to retailers in your community about the cruelty on Chinese fur farms and your concerns that they could be encouraging cruelty by selling items with even fake animal fur.
- ö Share this information with friends.

Teddies for Tragedies – update

Upon learning that very small children who have to go into hospital recover more quickly if they are given a teddy to cuddle, a project was started in England called 'Teddies for Tragedies'. Since the children keep their own teddy and take it home, the doctors need a continual supply. The TOS has been supporting the project for many years now, finding and initiating knitters up and down the country – producing over 6,500 teddies to date for shipping abroad! A recent item about the project in the local papers in the town of Bradford, along with a photograph of our TOS secretary, Cynthia Trasi, attracted more workers, resulting in 650 more teddies in no time at all. If anyone wants to knit some teddies, they are very easy and quick to make – as TOS coordinator, Atma Trasi, learned to his surprise (see photo).



And now there are Teddy greeting cards...

To commemorate the Centenary of the TOS, the English members have produced a set of colourful A6 size greetings cards in 4 different designs incorporating the teddies. They are blank inside for our personal message and are suitable for any occasion. (A set of 4 different cards with their envelopes can be purchased for £1.)

For more details of the teddies and the cards, visit the website of the TOS in England:
<http://www.tos-uk.org.uk>

TOS news from around the world

TOS in Brazil

Regina Celi Medina Alves Silva, National Coordinator of the TOS in Brazil, shares the highlights of a busy year:

The Centenary of the TOS was celebrated by:

- holding a function highlighting the history and achievements of the TOS; and a past TOS choir that existed between 1996 and 1999 was reunited to sing
- making a DVD about the history of the TOS and practical TOS work in Brazil since its foundation
- creating a calendar for 2009 and printing 300 copies.



The National Section initiated a photo competition among TS members. It was organised by a member from São Paulo, Clara Wada. Pictures were contributed on the theme, 'Nature'. Three communications professionals (only one of whom was a member of the TS) chose the best photographs and these were used to create a table calendar for 2009. The calendar includes theosophical messages and promotes the TOS.

TOS in Cardiff, Wales

The Cardiff TOS Group organised a White Poppy Meditation for World Peace to mark Remembrance Day and the 90th anniversary of the end of World War One.



TOS organiser, Jo Winter, by the Peace Table



Lighting the Candles for Peace on entering the room (photograph taken with a panoramic filter)



The Poppy Collage



TOS members attending the Peace gathering. They also gave a donation to the Cheshire Homes.

TOS in Chennai, India

The President of the TOS in Chennai, Mr Chaganti V.K. Maithreya, reports on recent welfare work undertaken by their group:



There were floods in Chennai at the end of November 2008, which left many on the streets as waters had entered their homes. For three days, the TOS, Chennai Region arranged for one meal a day for the villagers of Injambakkam, with the help of Mrs Laksmi Ranganathan and her husband Capt. Mohan Ranganathan. About 350 people were fed each day.



In December 2008, 470 school children at the Raghavendra Primary School run by the Maratha Education Trust were screened for their eyes. Forty-three of them were referred for further examination at the hospital. Mr Amudanathan coordinated this activity with the Udhi Eye Hospitals.





The TOS and Round Table in Chennai held a Peace Gathering in December 2008 to send loving thoughts to the victims of the Mumbai terror attacks of November 2008.

It was organised by Mr C.V.K. Maithreya and Dr Sunita Maithreya, with assistance from the Olcott School Headmistress, Mrs Lakshmi Suryanarayanan and her students, Mr Amudanathan, Capt. Mohan Ranganathan and Mr Vinay Kumar Patri.

The gathering began with prayers of all religions, then devotional songs, reading of a passage from the Dhammapada, a few words for world peace, a few moments of silence and finally, lighting of candles.



See the report and newspaper articles on the TOS website.

...and in the TOS on the Sunshine Coast, Australia...

Kay Schiefelbein, Coordinator of the TOS group on the Sunshine Coast in tropical Australia, writes:

We held our Garden Party at the family home of one of our members, Gerry Kortekaas and his wife Sally. We shared information for helping the environment and sold plants and raffle tickets. Gerry took people on tours of his amazing gardens and shared his extensive knowledge (he is a botanist and a permaculturist). We also had homemade snacks available. It was a most informative and enjoyable day whilst raising \$1,000 for three cleft palate operations.



We have had a lot of fun whilst doing service, especially in the kitchen of the Theosophical Retreat Centre at Springbrook where our wonderful volunteers have fed all the students in our National TS Schools.



UN International Days from February to May 2009

The United Nations was built on spiritual principles and universal values such as peace, human rights, human dignity and worth, justice, respect, good neighbourliness, freedom, respect for nature and shared responsibility. TOS groups will therefore find that many UN designated International Days provide opportunities for promoting the theosophical principles underpinning TOS work as well as networking with similar community groups in supporting relevant UN activities.

February 21: International Mother Language Day

Close to half of the 6,000 languages spoken in the world are doomed or likely to disappear in the foreseeable future.

March 6: International Women's Day

March 20: World Water Day

March 21: International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

March 24: World TB Day

World Tuberculosis Day is designed to build public awareness about the disease. It commemorates the day in 1882 when Dr Robert Koch announced he had discovered the cause of tuberculosis. His discovery opened the way toward diagnosing and curing tuberculosis. Tuberculosis (TB) kills about two million people each year, making it one of the world's leading infectious causes of death among young people and adults. One-third of the world's population is infected with TB.

April 7: World Health Day

April 22: Earth Day

April 23: World Book Day

(World Book Day was celebrated on 6 March in Ireland and the UK.)

April 25: World Malaria Day

May 3: World Press Freedom Day

May 15: International Day of Families

May 17: World Telecommunication and Information Society Day

May 25 - June 1: Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories

May 29: International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers

May 31: World No-Tobacco Day

Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death in the world. It is the only legal consumer product that kills one third to one half of those who use it as intended by its manufacturers, with its victims dying on average 15 years prematurely. **500 million of today's smokers will be killed by tobacco.** Approximately 1.8 billion young people (aged 10-24) live in our world today with more than 85% found in developing countries. Having survived the vulnerable childhood period, these young people are generally healthy. However, as the tobacco industry intensifies its efforts to hook new, young and potentially life-long tobacco users, the health of a significant percentage of the world's youth is seriously threatened by their deadly products.

