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The Service Link 2002

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MRS RADHA BURNIER, INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE, EXTENDS LOVING GREETINGS TO MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE TOS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, WISHING THEM STRENGTH AND ENERGY IN THEIR SERVICE WORK.

War Madness

Radha Burnier

Human society has been so plagued by war that classroom history often centres round wars. People talk of war almost as if it were a commonplace event. There are, indeed, accounts of how in the old days peasants ploughed their fields and continued their activities undisturbed by battles fought in their neighbourhood. As conquerors and warlords came and went, the life of ordinary people was not too much affected.

Today's scenario is absolutely different; the effects of war can no longer be localized, and they have repercussions in the psychological, ecological, economic and spiritual domains. War now means that untold numbers of people, combatants and civilians, are killed, perhaps gravely injured. The nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki are not past history, for the victims are still suffering the consequences, and the health of future generations is at stake. Wars leave a trail, not only of the maimed and diseased, but also of innumerable orphaned children, suffering the trauma of separation from parents and relations, having their limbs amputated (as in Sierra Leone), and being used as frontline shields. Vast numbers of women have been

raped and humiliated to prove the supremacy of conquering forces, and not only to satisfy the lust of soldiers. Torture and rape are being used as political tools to subdue the adversary. It is impossible to describe the miseries of war refugees, the agony of the millions who are displaced. They exist on both sides of the conflict. Demented rulers, traders in arms, and others with vested interests incite war. The suffering is that of whole populations who have everything to lose and nothing to gain.

For those who open their hearts to this vast suffering in which combatants, civilians, families, children, women and others are engulfed, the question of who is right or wrong is secondary. The major fact is that on both sides dreadful memories, fear, hatred, desire for revenge, hardening of the heart and dehumanization are perpetuated. All the armed forces, whether on the offensive or defensive, are trained to be brutal and get used to bloodshed, torture and other forms of horror. Though some nations may claim to be defenders of peace and of human rights, war-making is based on violence and assaults upon human rights and dignity.

The US Detention Centre in Afghanistan is an example. Suspects were put into 'metal shipping containers protected by a triple layer of

concertina wire' and kept standing, kneeling or held in painful positions and deprived of sleep. This is only a small part of the techniques of 'stress and duress'. Reporters of The Washington Post say that 'each of the current national security officials interviewed for this article defended the use of violence against captives as just and necessary'. This particular US detention centre is said to be one of several they have overseas, where the US 'due process' does not apply. If the world's foremost claimant to championship of civil rights and liberties, according to one of its own prestigious newspapers, descends to this abominable level of war-making, euphemistically called 'anti-terrorism', what can one say about regimes where even theoretical acceptance of human rights does not exist? Information elicited during the trial of Milosevic and other despots is too shocking for words. Will the victims' families ever forget? Is it surprising that each war generates further hatred and more wars?

Apart from its psychological effects, the impact of modern war on the ecology of the earth is incalculable, and outside human control. Water and air do not confine themselves to limited areas, and once poisoned might further threaten the diversity of life, already seriously affected, including generations of human beings. Such things as landmines planted in enemy territory are a formidable obstacle to the peaceful pursuit of their livelihood by ordinary people. What the consequence of employing chemical and bacteriological weapons will be, no one can foresee.

With globalization and increasing economic interconnections between all parts of the world, war will also endanger the economic security and stability of huge populations. The fate of the millions who continue to be on the brink of starvation will become more uncertain. Warmongers from far away may throw them into the jaws of death. India has spent a huge amount of

money on the forward deployment of troops on its western border for ten months, while there is desperate need for essential development funds. The US proposes to spend \$200 billion or more on war against Iraq while about 30 million people in Africa have no food. All war is colossal waste – a form of madness.

In addition to the above, let us think about the spiritual consequences of propagating ruthless-

ness, desire to kill, arbitrary occupation of territory and suppression of other people. When war is accepted as the norm in human society, human beings deny their own destined spiritual future. War should not be looked upon merely from the political, economic or ecological angle, for it is spiritual retrogression.

'On the Watch-Tower' Note, April 2003

On March 22, 2003, Director of the Peace Department of the TOS in America, Deni Gross, sent the following e-mail to her correspondents outside the USA, on the subject of the war in Iraq.

Good morning all...

Very few of our Peace Department members outside the US have access to computers or e-mail, but for the few of you who do, I felt compelled to send a message during these dark days since our American government has gone into Iraq on its mission of 'liberation'. My heart is sad and heavy this morning after I watched extended coverage of the war on television last night and listened to radio coverage today.

Although our American reporters have yet to comment about civilian casualties, preferring to pat our President Bush on the back for his technologically superior military, one brave BBC reporter went out into the streets of Baghdad this morning and entered a hospital. He said that he can say with certainty there is no such thing as a 'surgical strike'. That is, there is absolutely no way we can continue to bomb this city and not hurt civilians. He stood at the bedside of a 5-year-old boy who just having had shrapnel removed from his skull, lay in a coma, his mother weeping beside him. She asked what she was guilty of that the Americans were doing this to her family? It broke my heart and my spirit. GOD HELP US ALL!

Ever since the war drums have started beating, I have not been hearing a word from the members of our Peace Department who live outside the US. Those who so faithfully supported our work and kept in correspondence with me aren't anymore. I fear they feel betrayed by the United States and, by association, our group. Please let everyone you know that not all Americans support the Bush administration's war-mongering. Of course, we all agree that Saddam Hussein is cruel and tyrannical, and we want to help those Iraqis who have suffered under his reign of terror. But many of us, including very many in our Peace Department, are working extremely hard to counter this mad rush of war, destruction, and violence and find a peaceful and constructive way to help the Iraqi citizens. We are not sleeping, even making ourselves ill, feverishly writing letters, petitioning, holding vigils, demonstrating, etc. PLEASE get this message out to the people of your various countries. And join us in trying to put a stop to this insanity before it, as analysts are now predicting, spreads to other countries . . . the first on the list predicted by many to be North Korea.

I send you much love, light, and my sincere hopes for peace. . . . Deni



WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE TOS AROUND THE WORLD?

Looking for a new service project? Try reading this report of TOS activities in 2002 prepared by the international secretary and the Spanish language coordinator. You may pick up a worthwhile idea to try out in your own community.

Theosophists tend to have a reputation for being somewhat bookish and so it can be interesting to discover just how varied, extensive and innovative their service work actually is, both in groups and as individuals. The TOS is only active in about half the Sections where the TS operates, however. Currently, principal areas of work include children's education, hunger and medical relief, spiritual healing, planetary peace, ecology, the arts and music, animal welfare and vegetarianism.

In 2002 a special appeal was made to members the world over to write to the Prime Minister of India

about plans for a massive expansion of the meat industry, urging him to consider the ecological and health repercussions of industrial farming. The response from members was overwhelming and the results of the campaign positive (see the Good News column on page 11).

Spanish language coordinator Fernando Pérez Martín and the new President of the Inter-American Federation, Terezinha Franca Kind, have been collaborating to support and stimulate service work in South America. The TOS is now active or embryonic in 12 countries there, an increase of three over last year, though communication is irregular in some places. In general, efforts tend to be focused on poverty relief, with special attention to underprivileged children. The majority of TOS groups, such as those in Bolivia and Uruguay, also engage in healing, peace and/or animal welfare work.

Argentina

The economic situation in Argentina is disastrous at present. National Director, Silvia Raquel Blajer reports that the TOS concentrates on providing material and cash support for a number of non-governmental organizations that receive no government help at all. It has recently divided its work into three departments: social action, animal welfare and healing. A former President of the Inter-American Federation, Manuel Farinich, is coordinating the healing work. There are plans to form more departments.

Australia

The TOS continues to give generous financial support to TOS projects overseas, this year to educational work in India, Kenya, Pakistan and the Philippines. Local TOS groups engage in a wide variety of activities: healing and peace meditation, visits to elderly TS



TOS members in Melbourne Australia visit elderly TS members in their rest homes

members in rest homes, participation in 'Greening Australia' projects, working bees at the TS Retreat Centre in Queensland, the supply of blankets and clothing to institutions for the handicapped and fundraising for local charities, etc. The TOS in Sydney ran a seminar on 'Grieving — Living and Working through the Process' and the money raised was donated to the HPB Hostel at Adyar. A news bulletin, the TOS Network, reports on the work of the different TOS branches around the country and overseas.

Brazil

Terezinha Franca Kind has accepted the role of National Director of the TOS in addition to her other responsibilities in South America. Meetings have been held to explain what the TOS is and to attract volunteers. One of the talks given was filmed for broadcast on cable television. Terezinha's objective is to reactivate the TOS in each state. A national meeting of the TOS will be held within the next year. At pres-



Staff with children of the orphanage run on the premises of the Theosophical Institute close to Brasilia

ent the TOS has active groups in Rio de Janeiro, Salvador and Recife. In Brasilia also, departments have been created for work in healing, peace, art, health and social service. Each now meets regularly. Activities include meditation for peace, the TOS healing ritual, the collection of donations for deprived children, theatre (by the younger members) and flower arranging (Ikebana — for the beauty and peace it affords). An orphanage, located on the premises of the Theosophical Institute close to Brasilia and directed by Zeneida C. da Silva, received a donation this year from the TOS in England.

Chile

Activities this year centred around healing, ecology, animal welfare and

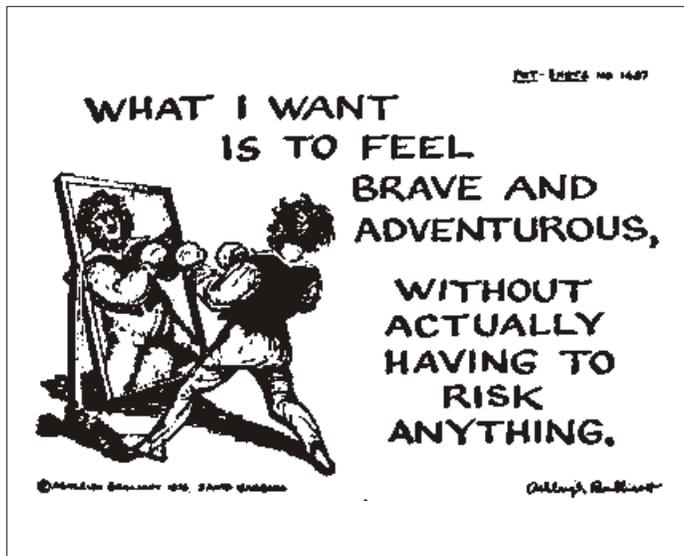
social service. Introductory pamphlets were written outlining the work of each of these areas. Public lectures and study courses were put on at the HQ handling the same themes with an excellent response from the public. The TOS healing ritual has been performed every Friday and a total of 90 individuals have been on its list. Clothes and food were collected and distributed to the needy.

Colombia

During her last visit, the International President encouraged the members to start the TOS. Julia Ballesteros de Martínez took up the challenge and became Correspondent in June. The younger members expressed particular interest in helping children, both within and outside the TS. The first TOS project in Bogotá was therefore to provide support for Sueños del Mañana (Dreams of Tomorrow), a charitable group looking after needy children. In addition to gathering material supplies and donations, the young Theosophists wrote and performed a play to convey Theosophical ideals to the children. It is hoped that the Round Table will be started one day.



Terezinha Franca Kind and her husband, Jan. Terezinha is the new National Director of the TOS in Brazil



Costa Rica

The TOS healing ritual has been performed for decades uninterrupted, under the faithful care of Pilar Madrigal Nieto. Pilar has now turned over the role of Correspondent to Ligia Cos Montiel. The members in this small country collect money and used clothes, especially at Christmas, for delivery to the needy.

Cuba

The TOS is active principally in the areas of healing, peace and ecology. It has yet to start up the arts department it had plans for. In addition to meeting regularly for meditation, the members meet every three months to handle administrative matters.

East & Central Africa

In Kenya, it is the tradition on Founders' Day to make donations to homes for destitute children, for abandoned girls and mothers, the disabled, those with leprosy and the elderly. Over six tons of foodstuffs were donated this year, covering some 4500 persons in day and residential care. Unwanted babies left in gardens, ditches and even thrown into pit latrines are of particular concern to TOS members who sometimes despair at the immensity of the task before them on the world's poorest continent. They were especially grateful to receive a

donation again this year from the TS in Australia.

In Nairobi the Starehe Boys' Centre continues to receive support. The TOS assisted or organised talks by the National Lecturer in local high schools on topics such as creative self-expression, the role

of youth in the 21st century and living with dignity. It continues to conduct meditation and healing sessions on a regular basis, and to visit those in mourning.

In Tanzania, food was donated by the Daresalaam Lodge to an orphanage and to a leprosy settlement. Moshi Lodge made a very generous donation to the Kilimanjaro School and also gave US\$1000 to the Olcott School at Adyar. The members sponsored the school fees of a student and gave money and goods to a local orphanage.

England

The TOS has been steadily declining for a number of years, though its long tradition of fundraising for a wide variety of practical projects continues to exist. In the past five years, a greater proportion of donations have gone to directly TS and TOS educational and social programmes in countries where exchange rates allow money to go a long way. A legacy received from a long time member, Irene Squires, has enabled some generous gifts. Amongst those benefiting have been the Olcott Educational Society at Adyar and the TOS in India, Pakistan and the Philippines. Karin Viney and Annette and Alan Coombs have done sterling work in keeping the TOS afloat in England and ensuring the equitable and sensible distribution of donations. Local projects such as 'Teddy's for Tragedy' continue to attract quiet support, especially in the north-west.

France

The TOS organises a two day sale in Paris each November which provides funds for many of its activities: the despatch of clothing, medicine and books to schools, hospitals and refugee homes in India and Togo as well as to charitable groups within France. It also finds sponsors



Perrette Domer, National Director of the TOS in France. Commenting on her approaching 90th birthday, Perrette says, 'At my age, there's only one thing left to do: serve others.'

for the education of over 100 Tibetan and Indian children, including some 18 attached to a TOS group in Orai (Jalaun), India, under the direction of Mr K.L. Gupta. This year the TOS made modest direct donations to the TOS in Pakistan and the Philippines and a more substantial donation to the Institute of Buddhist Dialectics in Dharamsala for the improvement of the water supply to the monastery, hospital and local district. In collaboration with the Indian Embassy in Paris, it organised a concert to raise funds for a retirement home for destitute elderly women in Chennai, which were sent to Mrs Radha Burnier to present on behalf of the TOS. It also ran

an appeal for donations for a flooding disaster in the south of France and a cheque was sent to the mayor of the village of Aramon. In her ninetieth year, Mrs Perrette Domer, the National Director, continues to lead the work with dynamism and efficiency, always with an eye to new projects and striving to answer all requests for help.



Coordinator of the TOS in Orai, Krishnan L. Gupta (right), and some of the children sponsored by the TOS in France.

India

New National Director, Mahendra P. Singhal, reports that the TOS has 4500 life members on its rolls (a 10% increase on last year) and many dozens of local TOS groups scattered around the country. Efforts are concentrated in the areas of education and poverty relief, as well as in environment and

animal welfare. Considerable sums of money (in Indian terms) are spent on health and nutrition services for the needy, educational materials for underprivileged children and mobility aids for the handicapped.

A recent innovative project was the adoption of villages for concentrated support by local TOS groups in Delhi, Allahabad, Varanasi and Bhubaneswar. Rangpuri Pahar, a rural community served by the TOS in Delhi, has a population of 4000. After a study of its health and hygiene needs, a cancer and HIV/AIDS prevention programme was launched. Some of the educational material developed to combat disease in the community has been used throughout India in the form of leaflets in regional languages.

The TOS in Delhi also runs a free coaching school for 50 boys and girls aged 6 to 14. Three member volunteers work hard organising intensive tutoring for these children who have had no formal schooling and need special instruction in order to be able to enter regular classes at their own age level. This venture is an experimental one:



New National Director of the TOS in India, Mr Mahendra P. Singhal, with retiring Director, Mrs Saraswati Narayan who did sterling work for many years.

note is being taken of the effects of emotional support through one-on-one contact.

A fine news bulletin is now being published in English called *Seva Path* to appraise work at the mid-year point. The new National Secretary, Mr Prahalad S. Mital, is its editor.

Seven TOS workers around the country have received awards this year for outstanding service to the community.

Italy

There are currently 39 active groups working under the guidance of National Director, Luigi Marsi, an increase of 3 on last year. Excellent fundraising efforts have been made for a wide variety of overseas projects, principally educational. Generous support was given this year to the Olcott Educational Society at Adyar. New projects in Niger and the Congo have been taken up. The education of 117 needy children in various countries is sponsored. Around 300 members meet regularly in groups to meditate for world peace, and more than a hundred perform the TOS healing ritual.



TOS-sponsored children in Orai, India performing traditional dance.

Nearly a hundred members give assistance to the elderly and to the ill. A number of TOS groups work actively for the promotion of the vegetarian ethic. At the centennial celebrations of the TS in Italy held in May in Assisi, room was made for a display of vegetarian literature. Active collaboration between the TOS

and TS greatly helps in the expansion of TOS work in Italy.

Pakistan

The political tension arising from the bombing of Afghanistan in the pursuit of international terrorists has had immediate repercussions on the educational work of the TOS in Pakistan, as certain overseas supporters, unsure of conditions, have simply stopped donating and even communicating! The honorary secretary, Mrs Fareeda Amir, and her team have been particularly grateful therefore for the support of the TS and TOS in Australia, Italy, England, France and New Zealand in continuing to underwrite the education of some of the 450 under-privileged students on its rolls. She also reports that this year the TOS was fortunate enough to attract the attention of the USA-based International Organization of Pakistani Women Engineers. A representative visited the TOS office in Karachi and the organization subsequently decided to sponsor a number of engineering students in the TOS Educational Sponsorship Programme.

The TOS also runs a Montessori School on TS premises for over 200 students. In addition to regular mu-



Luigi Marsi, National Director of the TOS in Italy with the Int. Sec. at the centennial celebrations of the TS in Italy, May 2002



Children performing at the TOS Literacy Centres Independence Day Concert, Karachi, Pakistan.

sic classes, the children participate in World Animal Day and Independence Day celebrations by presenting songs and skits for the students of the educational sponsorship programmes and their parents. The late President of the TOS, Mrs. Gool K. Minwalla, was the Chief Guest on both occasions this year. The passing of Mrs Minwalla represents the end of an era in Theosophical life in Pakistan. This remarkable leader was honoured in a special commemorative service held shortly after her death on May 20, 2002.

The Literacy Programme continues to do well and three new schools have been added to the Programme, bringing the total to 12 Literacy Centres functioning in the slum areas of Karachi. Two free medical clinics extend medical assistance to the poor. The TOS pays the salaries of two doctors, each working 21 hours per week. Mrs Amir also reports that 48 families and elderly people who have no proper means of support are receiving help on a regular basis.

The TOS undertook an exciting new project this year. 'People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals' (PETA) asked the TOS to help them promote an educational programme for school children called 'Compassionate Citizen – a Humane Education Programme'. The TOS approached the Minister of Education,

Government of Sindh, about introducing this programme in schools in the Province of Sindh. This year the TOS also joined hands with the newly revived Vegetarian Society, and hosted a vegetarian lunch at the formal re-launching of the Vegetarian Society's magazine "Veggie Voice."



Paraguay

Thanks to Terezinha Franca Kind, a provisional TOS group was formed in July 2001 within an unofficial TS group. Since then regular visits have been made to a psychiatric hospital and indigenous communities to deliver clothes, blankets, food and medicines. In 2003, the members will apply to Adyar to be recognized as a TS Study Group and then it will be possible to have an official TOS group also.

Peru

Used fiction and non-fiction books were collected for direct donation to prison libraries but members then found that an organisation named Cedro already existed for this purpose so the books were delivered to them. At Christmas 2001, the delivery of new and used toys to poor children was so successful that it was decided to do it again in 2002, changing the distribution date to January 6, 2003. In cooperation with the Presidential Agent, a re-activation of the healing ritual is planned.

Puerto Rico

Benito Rodriguez, the General Secretary of the TS, has agreed to act as Correspondent for the TOS. The healing ritual is performed once



The Golden Link School, opened in the Philippines in June 2002.

a week and some social work has been engaged in this year.

Philippines

The TOS continues to engage in substantial work in depressed areas: health and nutrition, parenting education, student sponsorship, youth activities. It runs three kindergarten schools for children from low income families and opened a

fourth this year, the Golden Link School, which has at present around 30 pre-schoolers. The latter school represents an innovation in the domain of transformative education. Growing out of six years' experience in running The Golden Link Youth programme, it seeks to integrate academic studies and theosophical values. Next year primary classes, Grades 1 to 3, will be added, then up to Grade 6 the following year. Secondary level will start after that. Two years from now, Phase II of the building construction will begin. At present, while the classrooms are functional, facilities such as the playground, library, office and clinic are still being completed.

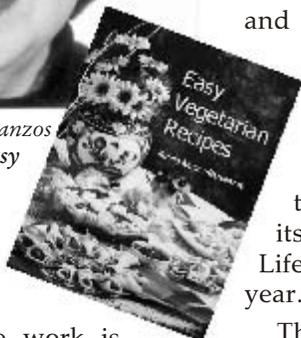
A 'Self-Transformation Seminar', developed and led by TS members, takes theosophical principles into secondary and tertiary educational establishments, government agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations, private companies and religious groups (notably Christian and Muslim). Vegetarian food is served in all seminars and is generally well received, in spite of the fact that vegetarianism is not well known in the Philippines.



Pre-schoolers at the Golden Link School



Norma Aquino-Garbanzos
with her new book *Easy
Vegetarian Recipes*
published by TPH
Philippines



boarding school has established a team consisting of three social workers, a psychologist, a speech therapist and a representative for children's rights. The project attracts support from the Swedish International Development Agency, which is indicative of the professionalism with which it is run.

USA

The TOS subsists on donations and is staffed entirely by volunteers. It has seven working departments: Animal Welfare, Arts & Music, Ecology, Family, Healing, Peace and Social Service. National Director, Jean Gullo, edits the journal, *For the Love of Life*, that appears three times a year.

This year three key staff members have been replaced: the directors of the Healing and Ecology Departments, and the Treasurer. The TOS has been most fortunate to find very capable people to fill these positions. It has many loyal members, a large contingent of them overseas. The foreign ones come mainly from Deni Gross who is Director of the Peace Department and corresponds with people in other countries. This particular department's work expands steadily as people feel the urgency of participating actively in the building of peace on earth.

The Animal Welfare Department, directed by Candi Phillips, is very popular with members. Besides writing articles for *For The Love of Life*, Candi publishes a regular bulletin for her department members, called *All Creation*. Less well known is the Social Service Department, with its ongoing campaign for a moratorium on the death penalty in the USA, the fight against homelessness, mental illness and poverty. Joseph Tisch, the Department's director, is the retired director of the Human Services Department of the city of Melbourne in Florida. On a one-to-one, personal basis, he continues to supply prisoners with theosophical literature and personal care items.

Wales

TOS Correspondent Alice Shergold reports that through the initiative of a Cardiff Lodge member, the TOS healing ritual is now being performed once a month. There are 11 members in the group. The Cardiff Lodge lends its premises every two weeks for a 'Bowen Technique' free clinic for Cerebral Palsied children, conducted by a team of four members, including Alice herself who is a speech therapist. Through a charity bookstall, support has been given to the MacMillan Nurses Fund.

Spain

Official service work is limited in Spain as yet, as the TOS was only reactivated relatively recently. This year, four branches have been performing the TOS healing ritual and two branches the Circles For Peace meditation. Two branches have delivered used clothes to charitable organisations. A series of gatherings on service-related issues has been initiated in Madrid. The first, held in November 2002, took peace as its theme and proved fruitful in motivating participants to arrange special peace meditations. Additional information was given out for members to take back to their branches.

Sweden

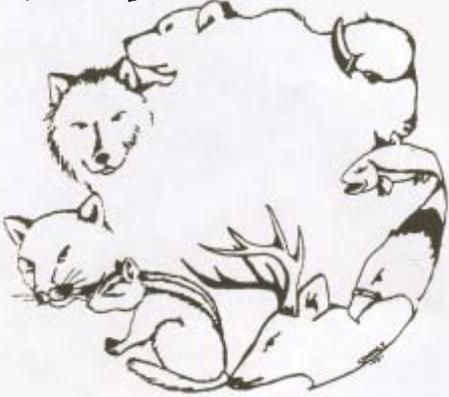
TOS members, under the direction of Birgitta Stålhammar, continue to collaborate with an organisation called *Letthjälpen* in supporting a boarding school, Riga Internatskola, and teenage community home, *Kopa ar Mums*, for neglected children in Riga, Latvia. Regular shipments of all manner of goods are made. Seasonal activities for the children are organised: this year a one month summer camp, a week long stay in the Swedish countryside for some of the children, sports activities and horse-riding, etc. Arising from staff training, the



TOS Correspondent, Alice Shergold (left), with the team that runs a free clinic for Cerebral Palsied children every two weeks at the Cardiff Lodge in Wales.

The Good News Column

Ahimsa Upheld in India



In 2002, the Government of India was formulating its tenth five-year plan for the development of India. The meat sub-committee of its Agriculture Ministry's Animal Husbandry Department produced a report recommending a massive increase in animal slaughter and in the export and import of meat products. The TS and TOS in India considered this to be contrary to the country's beautiful spiritual heritage of ahimsa and that it represented a further step down the path that Western nations have taken of industrially exploiting animals without regard for the environment and human health.

The International President of the TS and TOS, Mrs Radha Burnier, asked us to write to the Prime Minister to express concern. The campaign was coordinated by Mr Arjun Gopalaratnam at TS HQ at Adyar in co-operation with other animal lovers and organisations. The response from Theosophists within India and around the world was wonderful. Many hundreds of letters were sent.

Arjun reports that the meat sub-committee's report was re-

jected by the government and he adds, 'The planning commission wrote officially to us as well as to many other organisations, saying that the government now has no plans to increase slaughter or mechanise slaughter houses. Furthermore, the government of the state of Tamil Nadu [where the HQ of the TS is situated] has solicited the help of the police and animal husbandry state departments as well as of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, to reinforce the supervision of the transport and handling of animals for slaughter in existing quotas.'

Engrossed in study,
engaged in good work,
one forgets selfish desire.

Learning without labour
is barren;

it does nothing to better
the world.

Labour without learning
is empty;
it does nothing to enlighten
the world.

If employed by the commu-
nity,

labour for people and not
for power.

Mishna Avot, 2:2

*(Trans.: Rami Shapiro, Wisdom
of the Jewish Sages, p. 23)*

k k k

To feel 'compassion' without an adequate practical result ensuing from it is not to show oneself an 'Altruist', but the reverse. Real self-development on the esoteric lines is *action*.

H. P. Blavatsky,
Lucifer, October 1889



'Lord, if you receive my prayer, please confirm by fax.'

Theosophy in the Counselling Profession

How do Theosophists apply theosophical principles in their jobs? In issue 7 of *The Service Link*, a TS member from New Zealand talked about how his theosophical convictions have helped him in his work as a staff training officer in prisons. In issue 9, a Spanish professor of neurology answered the question, 'Does Theosophy have any application in dealing with your patients?' In this issue, Barbara Bradley Hebert of Covington, Louisiana and a member of the National Board of the Theosophical Society in America answers a similar question. Barbara is a high school counsellor.

The Service Link: What does high school counselling actually involve? Is it something to do with giving career advice to teenagers or with sorting out their psychological problems?

Barbara: In the United States, being a school counsellor involves a wide variety of tasks, including career counselling, personal counselling, and academic counselling as well as crisis counselling.

TSL: How many students are there in your school?

Barbara: Around 1600 students. I become counsellor for an incoming class of ninth graders (fourteen year olds), and I follow those students all the way through their high school experience until they graduate. After they graduate, I take on another class of fourteen year olds. I am currently responsible for 326 seniors graduating in 2003.

TSL: Are the teachings of Theosophy of direct or indirect use to you in your work?

Barbara: They are invaluable to me, both as a school counsellor as well as a private counsellor. Like many in the helping profession, I see a great deal of humanity's sad-

ness in my day's work. If I did not have the theosophical perspective through which to view 'man's inhumanity to man', I don't think that I could be a useful counsellor. I would be so overwhelmed with the difficulties faced by children, adolescents and adults, I would not be helpful. However, when I use my theosophical 'glasses' and centre myself, I am much more effective with my clients.

Also, my counselling goals are thoroughly grounded in my theosophical beliefs. As a counsellor and as a theosophist, I do not feel that I have the answers for others, nor do I give advice to others. I simply serve as a facilitator to help them find their own answers, their own path. I respect each individual thoroughly and completely as a divine spark of the Universal. This unconditional positive regard, a basic skill requirement for an effective counsellor, is a part of my life as a theosophist. I strive to empower clients to look within and find their own answers which are compatible with who they are.

TSL: Haven't you ever had a student through your office who seemed a hopeless case, divine spark notwithstanding?! Theosophy puts a great deal of emphasis on the importance of self-mastery and spiritual unfoldment through personal effort but do you think that people really change all that quickly? Has your work with teenagers made you pessimistic or optimistic about the pace of change?

Barbara: I have certainly had more than one student through my office who has made me wonder if there is a spark! That thought is 'the slayer of the real' to me. Reality, with a capital R, reminds me that there is a divine spark, even if I can't find it.



Barbara Bradley Hebert

As a theosophist and a counsellor, I work to remember that the individuals in front of me are unique and special in their own way—even if I, in my limited sight, can't see that uniqueness, that divinity within.

My perspective is that people don't necessarily change quickly, and many people seemingly don't change at all. However, once again my theosophical beliefs help me continue to work with students who are unwilling to change or who move very slowly. The recognitions that this is just one lifetime out of many, that there are lessons to be learned (of which I am unaware), that the lessons will somehow be learned one day, that the students have the right to make their own decisions thereby determining their own karma are all helpful to me in accepting them wherever they are on their own path.

I do certainly become pessimistic at times about the pace of change as well as about the incredible amount of sorrow and hurt in this world. When I feel the cynicism and pessimism beginning to overtake me, I try very hard to re-centre myself and see the situation from a more universal perspective.

There have been some nice surprises along the way. I once had a student who seemed to be beyond help. His family situation was dreadful—substance abuse, violence, poverty. He hated school, and he would not even make eye

contact with me. He simply sat in his desk with his head down. I tried every technique I could think of with this student and nothing seemed to make a difference. Then, one day another counsellor talked about a specific technique which appealed to the 'magical' side of clients. I adapted the technique for use with this student. I said to him, 'I have a gift for you. Please stand up so that I can give it to you.' He very slowly looked up at me and even more slowly stood up. I cupped my hands together and extended them toward him. I said, 'I know it looks as if there is nothing in my hands, but there is. It is a very special gift for you. It is a magical golden ball of love. When I give you this golden ball of love, it will fill your whole being with love so that whenever you feel scared or alone, you will know that this golden ball of love is within you.' I reached forward and placed my hands on the boy's chest as if putting the ball of love into his heart. He looked a little shocked and then he smiled and said 'Thank you.' I wish I could say that the impact of this technique was immediate, but it wasn't. However, the student did begin at times to respond to me when I spoke with him. Several years later I found out that he had married, was working full-time at a job he enjoyed, was buying a house and was not using drugs. I don't know if the golden ball of love sustained him, but I like to think that it may have had an impact on him in some way—encouraging him to see his own spark of golden light within. As a theosophist, I do believe that every interaction with another has an impact of some sort whether we see the result of not.

TSL: Are you ever tempted explicitly to mention theosophical ideas – spiritual evolution, reincarnation, karma – to your students?

Yes, I've been very tempted, but I have not yet explicitly talked to students about these ideas. If the student brings up the issue, then I certainly talk about it with them. I

am much more likely to bring up the some of the theosophical concepts in a more implicit manner. For instance, when a student experiences the death of a loved one, my theosophical ideas become relevant. As always, I try to be very sensitive to the students and their backgrounds. However, I am comfortable asking about their own religious beliefs about what happens after death. If it is appropriate, I share my belief that we are never separated, even through death. I tell the student that I believe that love connects us to those we love, even after death. Frequently I use the symbol of a golden thread of love that connects us with a loved one—both living and dead. As a theosophist, of course, I never want to proselytise. As a counsellor, my job is to meet students where they are. I move very gently around the whole religion and ethics arena. I live in a very small, rural, conservative area, and I try to remember that when I am dealing with students. Also, I believe that the way I live and the way I interact with others (all based on my theosophical convictions) speaks more strongly than words.

TSL: Has your job helped you in your own spiritual journey?

Barbara: Absolutely. My job makes me look at myself as a person, makes me look at my motives, makes me look at my own issues. I try to be self-observant so that my issues don't have an impact on my students. I also want to be self-observant because I am encouraging my students to be self-observant.

Sometimes I wonder what effect I would have on students if I were able to approach them consistently in a spirit of oneness, going into interviews with my heart fully open.

TSL: There doubtless have been students with whom you *have* established a solid, consistent, heart-to-heart connection...

Barbara: Yes, I believe so. It amazes me how frequently students look to the school counsellor or to a

special teacher for the only positive support they receive. Many children are born into situations where there are no supportive adults, and in fact, the adults in the lives of these children may provide a very seriously negative environment. I continue to be appalled by the number of children who live with adults who are being destroyed on a daily basis by alcohol or drugs. (I hesitate to call it a family because the adults do not even begin to provide a situation that one would recognize as a family.) Thus, it is extremely important for every one of us to be aware of the possibility that not every child has had the opportunity to be born into a loving, caring family. As theosophists, we may wish to focus on only the good and the positive as we are frequently encouraged in theosophical literature; however, it is also important to balance that focus with a recognition of the reality into which some children are born. As theosophists and citizens of this planet, it seems we have an urgent calling to assist the children. They are truly the way of the future.

TSL: Do you have any meditative technique, or affirmation, or mantra, that helps you achieve the serenity you need when dealing with deeply troubled teenagers?

Barbara: Yes. I don't know who the author is, but there is a meditation I learned from my grandmother, a theosophist of many years. I say it frequently to myself. Here it is:

*Father, I come to thee in the quiet of
this early morning hour,*

*Seeking union with thee and therefore
with all others.*

*Seeking to realize that thou art seated
equally in the hearts of all men,*

*To see thee gaze at me in all eyes, to
hear thee speak in all voices,*

*Seeking to manifest thy peace, thy
wisdom, and thy power.*

*Seeking to see thy children as thou
seest them*

*And to manifest thee that I may call
thee forth in all thy beauty*

In all whom I meet this day.



From One to All

Dear Fellow Theosophists,

I should like to share with you a wonderful experience of the human family I had recently - that of traveling to Accra, Ghana and meeting our Theosophical brothers and sisters there. Mr Paul Kwakyi the General Secretary, and his wife Karen, and Mr John Boakye the Asst. General Secretary, took me to the Blavatsky Lodge where I addressed some of the members, speaking on the concept of reverence for life. As Assistant General Secretary of the South African Section, I extended fraternal greetings from my fellow members and told them of some of our activities, such as our recent Convention. I was touched by the hospitality and warmth the Theosophical Society extended to me, with a visit to my hotel from at least one of its members every day. It was wonderful to see Theosophy's flag flying high in Accra.

While in the city, I represented South Africa at a Peace Conference of the World Peace Prayer Society whose aim is to promote a world order transcending race, religion, politics and cultural differences. It is undoubtedly intolerance of our differences coupled with self-centred attitudes that brings about global tension. The World Peace Prayer Society promotes the Universal Prayer, *May Peace Prevail on Earth*, through Peace Poles, Peace Prayer Ceremonies, Peace messages, Peace Foundations, Peace Pal activities in schools, interfaith religious gatherings, dance and song groups and co-operation with the United Nations. The idea is to reach both the outward level — through educational work — and inner, more subtle levels where with the help of prayer and awareness, heavy negative thought vibrations can be transmuted into vibrant light energy. This helps create a conducive atmo-

sphere where peaceful thought and action can arise.

The actual theme of the African Peace Reps Conference was 'Towards a New Paradigm of Peace Promotion'. We came from Nigeria, Gambia, Kenya, Congo, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Ghana, South Africa, Japan, USA and Germany to explore this theme, exchange news and educational strategies, get to know each other and hold a Peace Prayer Ceremony. The Ceremony involved school children carrying all the flags of the world as prayers were said for each country. Various community leaders, politicians and the President of the World Peace Prayer Society, Mr Hiroo Saionji, addressed the Conference. Mr Saionji also presented to us the principles of the Goi Peace Foundation: 1. Reverence for life. 2. Respect for all differences. 3. Gratitude for and coexistence with all nature. 4. Harmony between the spiritual and material. It is interesting that this philosophy echoes our theosophical one.

During our laughter-filled four days together, an incredible bond of camaraderie was built up. We went on excursions as a rainbow array of cultures, gaily adorned in our vari-



Susan Kaschula (front row in white) and fellow Peace Reps.

ous ethnic costumes. We emerged with a respect for and an appreciation of each other's endeavours to promote peace. Some representatives had undergone torture and one Nigerian Rep. who is standing for parliamentary election has had two assassination attempts on her life. I found the spirit of the heart of Africa beating strongly in these people working against great odds and for no financial reward, united simply by a belief in the spiritual mission of Africa. It was a humbling and joyful experience.

S. Kaschula

SUSAN KASCHULA

Assistant General Secretary of the
TS in South Africa
Secretary Johannesburg Lodge

Hello everyone,

I should like to share with you a piece of good news. Some readers may recall an appeal in The Service Link for support for the TOS in Pakistan which was left holding the baby (-ies, literally) when the Save the Children Fund decided to phase out its child sponsorship programme, in which the TOS was a partner. It had to find new sponsors for several hundred children and young people who were part way through their education, including a small group of university students.

As a result of the generosity of a number of our New Zealand members, 10 youngsters are now being sponsored. I have one myself. His name is Kishore Kumar. I received a letter recently to say that he has passed his Bachelor of Commerce degree. This was a lovely surprise as I hadn't realised he was so close to graduation. It really made me think. If anyone deserved a helping hand, he did - his father is retired, his mother works as a sweeper and he is one of 7 children. To cap it all, he is unable to walk after having polio as a child - something I don't believe would even happen in this country - and worse, cannot get

around in a wheelchair as the community environment there is just not set up for it, so he has to be carried around everywhere on his brother's back. I guess we don't know how lucky we are. Without this education, and the hard work that has led to his success, I can't imagine what sort of an existence this young man would have been condemned to. So I'm feeling that something really worthwhile has been achieved, have a great sense of satisfaction and consider it a privilege to have been part of it.

If anyone reading The Service Link has been thinking of sponsoring a child and would like the chance to do something worthwhile, I encourage you to email or write to Mrs Fareeda Amir for details of how to go about it. The cost is only US \$75 per year. Any bank can tell you the local currency amount required to meet this amount. I don't see why a branch of the TS couldn't decide to sponsor a child collectively, which would make it even easier financially.

With greetings to all,

Vicki Jerome
North Canterbury, New Zealand



Kishore is carried around everywhere by his brother as his community is not wheelchair-accessible.

Editor's Note :

Readers may contact the TOS in Pakistan at the following address:

Mrs Fareeda Amir
Jamshed Memorial Hall
M.A. Jinnah Road
Karachi - 1
E-mail: azra1@attglobal.net

The Peace of Wild Things

*When despair grows in me
and I wake in the middle of the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with the forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting for their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.*

WENDELL BERRY

TOS WEB SITES



The Theosophical Order of Service in Australia

Web address: <http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/theohbt/tos.htm>

The TOS is a world-wide organisation committed to improving the material and spiritual condition of humanity. It also has a compassionate and constructive approach in dealings with animals and the environment.

Sydney branch

Web address: <http://www.matra.com.au/~hpb/tos.htm>

Formed by Annie Besant in 1908, it provides opportunities for members of the Theosophical Society and others to help reduce suffering. Its approach is broad and it welcomes members from diverse backgrounds. The activities of the TOS in Sydney cover: fund-raising for a wide range of welfare groups, campaigning on particular issues, healing/therapy groups, supporting other organisations with similar aims.

Brisbane branch:

Web address: http://home.iprimus.com.au/btheos/brisb_tos.htm

TOS activities include donating to various causes, writing to international bodies and governments about human rights issues, and taking an active part in a variety of local service activities. Members of the Brisbane TOS group are working,

either individually or collectively, in a range of projects associated with community service, health, education, the environment, animal welfare and world peace. The TOS provides opportunities for members not only to work together but also to enjoy each other's company and friendship.

Theosophical Order of Service Philippines

Web address: <http://www.theosophy.ph/tos.htm>

The Theosophical Order of Service in the Philippines has undertaken a comprehensive programme for the upliftment of the less fortunate people in society through the following programmes:

Intensive rehabilitation for severely malnourished children, vocational training for their parents, educational sponsorship and the running of schools, establishment of co-operatives, leadership training, values education with teenagers, healing, etc. Anyone interested in volunteering in the above service programs is welcome to contact us.

Theosophical Order of Service Spain and Latin America

Web address: www.otshispania.org

TOS Spanish language coordinator, Fernando Pérez Martin, is happy to announce the creation of a Web site for Hispanic and Portuguese members. The site is beautifully illustrated and contains news and information on themes such as social service, animal welfare, world peace, music and the arts, healing and good citizenship. Special thanks to Raul Dorado Basso for his help in designing the site.

Theosophical Order of Service USA

Web address: <http://www.theoservice.org>

The TOS offers a framework in which individuals may demonstrate practical and humanitarian action in a theosophical spirit, whether or not

they are members of the Theosophical Society. We invite you to become acquainted with the Society, especially to glance at the 'Theosophical World View', which inspires TOS activities. You can find this and other information at: <http://www.theosophical.org>

The TOS has the following departments: healing, ecology, family, music and the arts, social welfare and peace. The official journal of TOS in the USA is *For the Love of Life*, currently published three times per year and mailed to members. Two of our departments publish their own newsletters. Our address is: P.O. Box 41584 Tucson, AZ 85717-1584.

SUBSCRIPTION

Subscriptions to *The Service Link* may be addressed to The Service Link, Résidence Isabelle, 18 Avenue Berlioz, 93270 Sevrans, France, at an annual rate of US\$3.00 (postpaid). A free sample copy will be sent upon request. In the following countries, orders may be placed direct with national distributors:

Australia: Georgina Fode
TOS National Director
126-128 Russell Street
Melbourne, VIC 3000 (Aus.\$5)

Canada: Lorraine Christensen
27 Northmount Cr. N.W.
Calgary, Alberta T2K 2V6

India: Mr M.P. Singhal
D. 7411 Vasant Kunji
New Delhi 110 030

Philippines: Mr Vicente Hao Chin, Jr.
Chairperson
Theosophical Order of Service
1 Iba St., Quezon City
1114 METRO MANILA

United Kingdom: Vanessa Zachos
Theosophical Order of Service
50 Gloucester Place
London W1H 8EA (£2)

Can We Trust Them?

Many of us hesitate to donate to service projects in developing countries because we hear stories about the money being siphoned off by corrupt officials, or used for exorbitant salaries. We sometimes wonder if clothing, food and toys really arrive at their destination.

There are specific ways to deal with such doubts. If we don't have the time or money to pack our bags and fly around the world to check a charitable project out for ourselves, we can write directly to the administrators, requesting a copy of their balance sheet, asking how many staff there are, what the salaries and honoraria are, what percentage of donations goes directly to projects, etc. If the charity doesn't answer our questions to our satisfaction, we are entirely free to look elsewhere.

If we know volunteers within an organisation, one can also learn a lot by asking them what they do, what others do, how things seem to be going on a daily basis, etc. Anecdotal evidence is helpful in getting a picture of the real effectiveness of a group.

It is possible to get hold of charts analysing the performance of non-profit groups. The proportion of income spent on actual projects, on fund raising and on administrative overheads, etc. is indicated. Director salaries are given. Some of the charts even rank list the charities investigated and then we just have to select a group from the top of the list to feel confident (as confident as one ever can) that one is donating wisely.

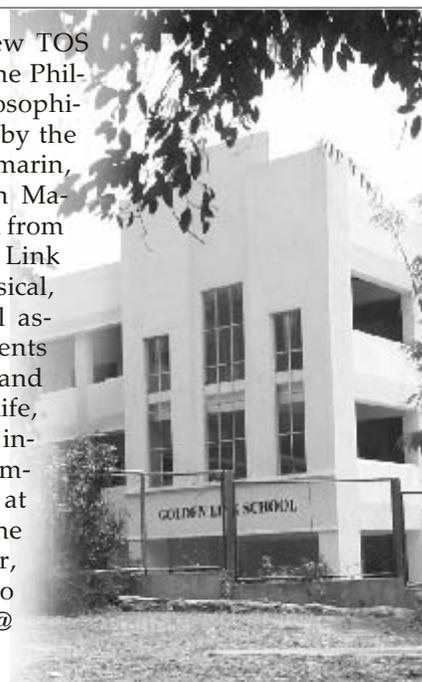
Over the past seven years, The Service Link has brought reports on a small number of charitable projects, almost all of them TOS or TS run. Each has been visited by one – or many – of our members, or by a team. Several years ago, Mrs Beverley Champion, President of

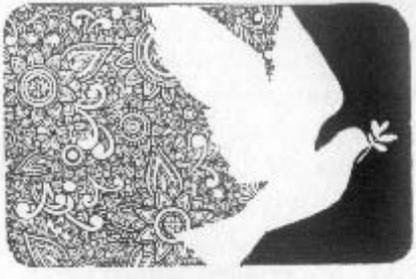
the TS in Australia at the time, flew to Pakistan to give some lectures for the TS, accompanied by the National Secretary, Mr Don Fern, an accountant. While they were there, they investigated the educational work of the TOS in Karachi. They were impressed with what they saw. Another accountant, Karin Viney, until recently Treasurer of the TOS in England, also visited the TOS in Pakistan, accompanied by a former National Director of the TOS, Annette Coombs. The local members were kind enough to give them a full tour of operations. Vic Hao Chin also visited Karachi. All reports on the educational work were enthusiastic. As a result, The Service Link provided information on opportunities to sponsor the education of underprivileged children through the TOS in Pakistan. Full details were given on how to send money direct from bank to bank by electronic transfer, or else by cheque. In 2002, Karin Viney and Annette Coombs travelled, again at their own expense, to visit an orphanage in Brazil. Located on TS

premises just outside Brasilia, it is run by long time Theosophist, Zeneida da Silva. Another positive report was returned. Annette wrote, 'A great attraction to me in supporting TOS projects in developing countries is that more can be done with the money – a little goes a long way. This was made very plain to me in Brasilia when we realised that the sum we donated there was almost enough to set up another accommodation unit – whereas here in England it would barely fund a worker for six months.'

If you would like to support the work of the TOS around the world, you can write to Mrs Radha Burnier (Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai, 600 020, India) or to the International Secretary of the TOS (Diana Dunningham Chapotin, 18 Avenue Berlioz, 93270 Sevran, France). They will be happy to give you up to date information on worthwhile projects along with details on how to send your donation. In some cases your own TS HQ may be willing to forward your donation for you.

We are happy to announce a new TOS project, the Golden Link School in the Philippines. For those interested in theosophical education, a school was opened by the TOS in June 2002. Located in Camarin, Caloocan City (part of metropolitan Manila) and catering mainly for children from low income families, the Golden Link School seeks to integrate the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects of their growth. Teaching students to embrace their common humanity and to recognize their place in the web of life, the school holds the conviction that individuals who are at peace with themselves will ultimately create a world at peace. For more information about the school, write to Ms Rekha Nahar, TOS, 1 Iba Street, Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines. E-mail: theophil@info.com.ph





The Year 2000 was the United Nations International Year of a Culture of Peace. A number of TOS members around the world lent their support to the UN by undertaking peace-related activities. These days, every year seems to need to be an international year of peace. Vladimir Loncar of Wellington, New Zealand, long time peace activist, shares with us his insights and asks our views. Editor's note: since writing his article, Vladimir has passed away (February 18, 2003). We wish him a peaceful sojourn in Devachan!



Vladimir Loncar, 'militant for peace'.

It is when we all play safe that we create a world of utmost insecurity.

DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD

Everyone wants world peace, never more so than after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the intensive bombing of Afghanistan, the fighting between Israel and Palestine and the nightmare dance between the USA and Iraq. If the United Nations had the weight it should have, though, and asked each of us for a plan to bring about peace, how would you respond? What ideas could you come up with?

There are a number of paths, I would suggest. The world's most travelled path so far has been that of military action. It's not very peaceful, of course (!), and is a last resort, but the result can eventually produce some stability — from the point of view of the winner!

A second avenue is that of diplomacy. The citizens of the world can work with international laws, conventions and treaties, with United Nations conferences, task forces

and so on. These are a useful guide for nice people to relate to people from whom they are alienated in some way. Sadly, even these require force, or threat of force.

What other avenues are there? There are trade and commerce. By developing ties of material interdependence, another kind of stability is produced. Self-interest and prudence (prudence — a kind of cautious, sensible action that does not give cause for alarm) go a long way towards compensating for lack of love. Let's face it: a lot of normal harmonious social intercourse functions in this way — a kind of mutual cupboard love.

Group and individual friendships, and intermarriage, world-wide, can break down barriers at grassroots level. The friendship has to be of a quality sufficient to transcend other loyalties, especially ethnic and nationalistic ones. There is no reason why global good can't be a greater power than global greed.

Another way in which people attempt to reach world peace is by embracing anti-war movements and philosophies, especially pacifism. An increasing number of people show concern for the planet and each other in this way. The motivations may not be even, though. Fear, prudence and love all play a part. Pacifism is a position to which one cannot just pay lip service. It is a philosophy, a way of life that requires positive, even radical, action.

A path toward world peace that has great value in my eyes is that of world-wide education on interna-

tionalism and interfaith. Organisations such as UNESCO could well lead the field in promoting this crucial form of education for world citizenship. Difficult to set up in many areas of the globe, though, where nation-states systematically corrupt their people with propaganda of a patriotic and religiously fanatical nature.

The path toward world peace which the Theosophical Society has principally promoted is that of individual spiritual regeneration through an awareness of the unity and love at the heart of the cosmos. One difficulty with this is that it takes millennia and many lives to bring to fruition, hence the need for all the other paths mentioned above. We need the other paths because spiritual regeneration does not get results quickly enough. To save this planet we have to harness fear, anger and self-interest as well as altruism. World-wide education on internationalism (first loyalty to humane principles) and interfaith (universal spirituality) can go hand in hand with individual spiritual regeneration.

Where does each of us stand in terms of *active involvement* in any of these paths to world peace? Do you feel that all of them are necessary or inevitable at this stage in humanity's evolution? Is war ever justified? As a peace activist and member of the TOS, I'd love to hear from others. . .

Readers may address comments to The Service Link at its editorial address (see page 34).

Paths to World Peace

A Loving and Gracious Server

Gool K. Minwalla

1st May 1913 – 20th May 2002

The Theosophical Order of Service salutes the passing of Mrs Gool Minwalla, known principally to Theosophists around the world through her appearance on international TS platforms, but known more especially in her own country for her outstanding humanitarian action.

Gool was born in Karachi, Pakistan on 1st May 1913, the fifth child of Behramji and Pirojabai Birdie. She showed signs of leadership from a young age and excelled wherever she was – in the classroom, the playground, on the stage, or as a Girl Guide. A schoolmate recalls, 'Because she was courageous, wise and sympathetic, we, the girls, took our little problems to her to be solved, and we sought guidance and comfort from her.' At school she won the hearts of everyone – the students and teachers alike.

Inspired by the grand example of Jamsheed Nusserwanjee, a great social reformer and the first Mayor of Karachi, she began visiting the Civil Hospital when she was 16 years old, giving help and companionship to poor and lonely patients in the general wards. She did this for many years. It was also through Mr Nusserwanjee that she joined the



Theosophical Society - at the age of 21 - and in so doing found her spiritual mission and the philosophy that underpinned her commitment to humanity. From the very beginning she was a working member of the TS, eventually taking over from Mr Nusserwanjee as its head. It is to Gool that the Society owes its beautiful and well-equipped building – the Jamsheed Memorial Hall – and also the goodwill the Society enjoys today in Karachi.

In addition to starting the Theosophical Order of Service, she got in touch with the Save the Children Fund U.K., arranging for the TOS to handle its Individual Child Support Programme in Pakistan.

Gool worked actively in a number of other organisations. A review of the positions she held in the

course of her long life is arresting:

a) Founding member of the Karachi Children's Welfare Society, the Social Service Coordinating Council, the Karachi TB Association, the Pakistan Conference of Social Work, the Pakistan Council for Child Welfare, the Society for the Promotion and Improvement of Libraries, the Pakistan United Nations Association, the National Geriatrics Council and the Pakistan Montessori Association. She held different positions in all of these associations for many years.

b) Member of the managing committees of the Poor Families Welfare Society, the Ida Rieu Poor Welfare Association and the Poor Patient Relief Society, of the Pakistan Red Cross and the St John Ambulance Association. She was appointed by the Government of Pakistan as the first chairperson of the National Council of Social Welfare.

c) Member of the first Board of Secondary Education in Pakistan, of the Karachi Development Authority and of the Advisory Boards of Radio Pakistan and the Pakistan Television Corporation. For six years she represented the Government of Pakistan on the U.N. Commission for the Prevention of Crimes and the Treatment of Offenders.

d) Member of the boards of the All Pakistan Women's Association, the Parsi Ladies Association and the Mama Parsi Girls High School.

e) Member of the managing committee of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and founder of the Pakistan Vegetarian Society.

Inspired by her realization of the Oneness of all Life and by the noble objects of the Theosophical Society, Gool will be remembered by many as a loving and gracious friend and a true server of humanity.

In the 15 months I worked closely with Gool in Karachi, I could not get over the loving relationship we had. It never seemed like work and during our whole incredible time together, I never once saw her have a moment of impatience, disappointment or criticism of *anyone*. Volunteers felt at all times surrounded and strengthened by her warm love and appreciation. I will cannot be thankful enough for the privilege of having served with her.

— Helen George, TOS member, Adelaide, Australia

Teaching TOLERANCE

Looking for something to do to promote tolerance in the world? TOS member from New York, Anna Lemkow, along with Deni Gross, Director of the Peace Department of the TOS in the USA, recommend the following group for resource material and action ideas:

Teaching Tolerance
400 Washington Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36104
USA
Fax : (1) (334) 956-8486
<http://www.tolerance.org>

Here is a sampling of the '101 Tools for Tolerance' they have created to help foster tolerance in ourselves, our families, our schools and our places of work. Some of the ideas are things to do. Some are things to think about. Some are things to remember.

1. Attend a play, listen to music or go to a dance performance by artists whose race or ethnicity is different from your own.

3. Attend services at a variety of churches, synagogues, mosques and temples to learn about different faiths.

4. Involve all members of the family in selecting charitable projects to support.

5. Establish a high 'comfort level' for open dialogue about social issues. Let children know that no subject is taboo.

6. Shop at ethnic grocery stores and specialty markets. Get to know the owners. Ask about their family histories.

7. Ask a person of another cultural heritage to teach you how to perform a traditional dance or cook a traditional meal.

8. Take a conversation course in another language that is spoken in

your community.

9. Speak up when you hear slurs or racist jokes. Let people know that biased speech is always unacceptable.

10. Write a letter to the editor of your local or national newspaper relating a story about co-operation and tolerance.

11. Think about how you appear to others. List personality traits that are compatible with tolerance (e.g., compassion, curiosity, openness). List those that seem incompatible with tolerance (e.g., jealousy, bossiness, perfectionism).

12. Assess the cultural diversity reflected in your home's artwork, music and literature. Add something new.

13. Point out stereotypes and cultural misinformation depicted in movies, TV shows, computer games and other media.

14. Don't buy toys for your children and grandchildren that promote or glorify violence.

15. Gather information about local volunteer opportunities and let your children select projects for family participation.

16. Play 'action hero' with your children. Are the heroes all aggressive males? Help your children see the heroic qualities in those whose contributions often go unrecognised (e.g., nurses, bridge builders, volunteers in homeless shelters).

17. Read books with multicultural and tolerance themes to your children.

18. Watch what you say in front of children when you're angry. Curb your road rage.

19. Examine the 'diversity profile' for your children's friends. Expand the circle by helping your children develop new relationships.

20. Enrol your children in schools, day care centres, after-school programmes and camps that reflect and celebrate differences.

21. Donate tolerance-related books, films, magazines and other materials to school libraries.

22. Applaud the other team. Promote good sportsmanship and ban teasing and taunting.

23. Give 'Teaching Tolerance' materials to educators in your community.

24. Present a 'disabilities awareness' event with the help of a local rehabilitation organisation.

25. Examine the degree of diversity at all levels of your workplace. Are there barriers that make it harder for people of colour and women to succeed? Suggest ways to overcome them.

26. Cast a wide net when recruiting new employees.

27. Fight against the 'just like me' bias — the tendency to favour those who are similar to ourselves.

28. Add social justice funds to your investment portfolio.

29. Ensure that your workplace complies with the accessibility requirements for those with disabilities.

30. Provide employees with paid leave to participate in volunteer projects.

Bus Yoga

Pedro Oliveira

Profound pranaams to my teacher, the Bus.

It is very sad that the widespread car-culture has stopped many people in the world benefiting from the deep lessons that can be learned in bus travel. A bus, like many other situations in life, can become a veritable theosophical classroom.

Whether we speak of urban or regional services, a bus always begins its journey, on leaving the depot, completely empty — save for the driver of course. At that time, which in some countries is very early in the morning and quite dark, the bus stands as a pure possibility of service, of helpfulness.

A bus does not discriminate in picking up its passengers. It does not ask what our religion is, which social class we belong to. Nor does it ask for an identity card. A bus picks us up exactly as we are and takes us where we want to go.

While we are on the bus we become part of a meaningful metaphor: for some time, even if very short, all of us are travelling together, sharing a common space, sitting near people we have never met. During that time there is a potential realization of the all-pervading oneness of the human condition, irrespective of belief, social origin or status. If we care to look at some faces, they have written large on their foreheads their life-story: worry, sadness, joy, loneliness, excitement and perhaps a hope of better days, a hope of a life less burdened by suffering and confusion. And the bus drives on.

Two incidents, among many, come to my mind when paying

homage to this teacher, the bus.

The first took place when I was travelling to the Raja Theosophical Centre, in the outskirts of Sao Paulo, on a Friday night. I leave to your imagination what it means to be a bus driver in a city of 17 million people, plagued by mad traffic and ubiquitous violence. It was almost midnight and a black woman was carrying a huge bundle of clothes. She pressed the button to indicate she wanted to get off at the next stop. The driver proceeded to stop the bus and upon realizing she had this voluminous bundle he got off his seat and, with a smile, carried it for her to the pavement. She reciprocated with a gentle smile. I don't know about the other passengers but tears sprang into my eyes.

The other incident happened on the beautiful island of Florianopolis, south of Brazil. The bus was crowded almost to capacity with workers, surfers and pensioners. It stopped to pick up still more passengers, amongst whom was a poor and visibly drunk man with his little son. The poor man had apparently soiled himself, and the smell, in a crowded bus, created a volatile situation. Many passengers objected to his presence on the bus and demanded of the driver that he be put off at the next stop. The driver drove on, leaving a number of passengers simmering with anger. To make matters worse, it turned out that the man in question didn't have any money to pay for the trip.

Then unexpectedly, a man stand-



ing next to him quietly offered to pay his fare, which was accepted. When a lady continued her protest this man asked her: 'Do you believe in God?' To which she replied: 'Of course!'

'Then you should know', the man continued, 'that this man is your brother'.

There was a moment of silence, after which a young man got off his seat and stood beside the man and his little boy, defying all the protesters, with the clear intention of protecting him from harm. I still remember vividly the drunk man's eyes, scared, perhaps confused, but holding his son's hand with a firm grip. And for a moment I had the impression that this poor man could have been our teacher, offering us an opportunity to put into practice our belief in the truth that everyone is our brother and sister, no matter what their condition.

Now when I find myself sitting in a bus, I look at my fellow passengers and salute each one as a fellow pilgrim...Instead of succumbing to impatience, boredom or irritation, I recall that the bus can be a moving classroom of wisdom and compassion.

Ourselves and Our Environment

Talk delivered by Mr P.S. Mital at the TOS meeting of the 127th International Convention of the Theosophical Society on 29-12-02 at Adyar, Chennai, India

The history of life on this earth, is the history of interaction between living things and their environment. The physical shape and traits of earth's vegetation and animals have been moulded by the environment since the appearance of life. However, the opposite phenomenon of living beings acquiring the power to alter their surroundings and nature is a comparatively recent phenomenon. During the last several decades, humans have started contaminating air, earth, rivers, and oceans with lethal materials and chemicals.

Dangerous activities include: (i) nuclear waste, explosions and fall-out. (ii) excessive burning of fossil

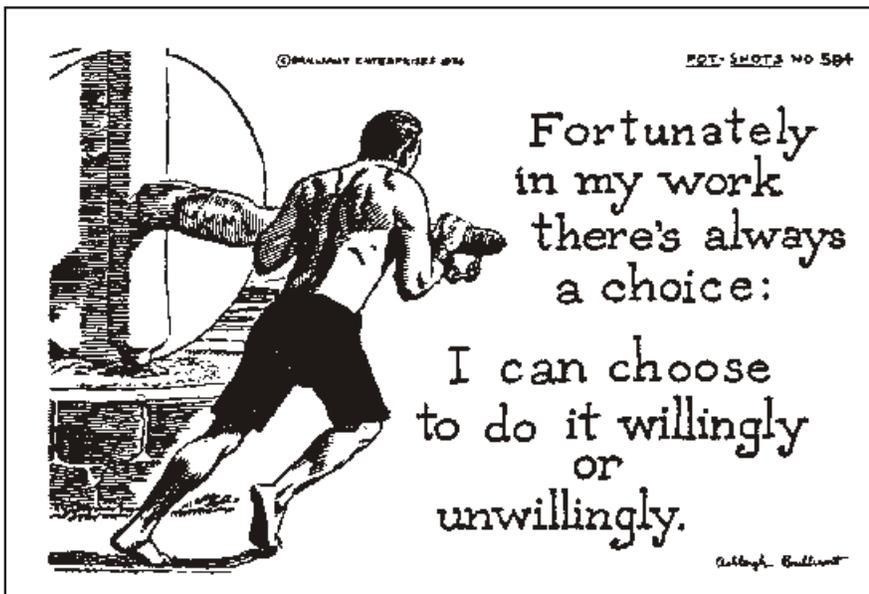
fuels. (iii) use of chemical fertilisers and insecticides. (iv) the denuding of the earth of its forests for purposes of agriculture, residences, factories, and commerce. (v) the excessive use of raw materials and mining for the production of consumer goods. The danger of these activities doing irreversible damage to the environment and gradually driving all living beings to extinction is well known and hardly needs repetition here.

This is an age of specialists, who have extensive knowledge and skill in their own fields, but are reluctant to look at the effect of their activities on other aspects of life. Engineers are taught how to produce buildings, machines, roads, canals, transport, chemicals, and consumer goods. Progress is measured in terms of productivity. It is proudly claimed that India's Gross Domestic Product is growing at the rate of 6% per annum but this does not take into account the long term cost of



environmental damage.

All this paints a depressing picture and gives the impression that humans, in their foolishness, will finish off not only themselves but all life on this beautiful planet. However, I hold an optimistic view. I believe that such a catastrophe is very unlikely. Why? I have firm faith in the theosophical view of a Divine Plan unfolding through evolution and believe that in time humans will modify their interaction with the environment. The most powerful instinct in all living beings is the survival of their species. This instinct will force humans to handle their environment sensibly. More and more citizens of the world seem to be showing an interest in the wise stewardship of nature. A positive trend in technology is that of increasing efficiency in the use of energy and raw materials. The miniaturisation that is being achieved in electronics is well known. In other fields it is going on, though at a slower pace. A two hundred ton jet plane performs with much greater efficiency tasks that an 85,000 ton ocean liner used to perform. A space satellite weighing less than a quarter of a ton outperforms 150,000 tons of trans-oceanic communication cables. When I joined Indian Railways as an electrical engineer, controls for train lighting equipment on a coach consisted of several cupboard size panels mounted on the under-frame; these have now been replaced by a small signal box. Internal combustion engines in



transport and industry achieve only 15% efficiency, while a jet engine achieves 60%. There is no reason why jet technology cannot be developed for surface use. This will reduce fuel consumption by some 75%. It is also quite possible to develop within the near future commercially viable technology for the direct use of solar energy and other renewable energy sources. This will end the use of fossil fuels, which are big pollutants.

There are definite signs of a growing global awareness of the causes of pollution. Efforts are being made to control population. The communication revolution – the use of computers and the Internet, for instance - will drastically reduce the use of paper, thus saving forests.

This, however, does not mean, that we can sit assured that everything will turn out fine, and not raise the alarm. As all of us connected with the Theosophical Society know, change is brought about through thoughts. Thought Power is the most effective tool of change, and therefore must be utilized for safeguarding our environment.

Environmental protection requires worldwide co-operation, the real function-

ing of brotherhood, the pulling down of artificial boundaries between nations. We have to give up the mind-set that someone's gain is another person's loss, a mind-set born out of the psychology of scarcity of resources. There are sufficient resources on this planet for all living beings. Faster communications are bringing humans closer to each other. The age of co-operation is gradually replacing the age of unhealthy competition. Humanity is becoming less selfish in my view, and is gradually advancing. Slavery is gone, colonialism is on the way out; democracy is gaining ground. National boundaries are being made less restrictive, as can be seen in the European Union, NAFTA, and ASEAN, etc. and may ultimately, in the far

ANGELS OF NATURE

HAIL, devas of the earth and sky!

Come to our aid.

Give fertility to our fields,

Give life to our seeds,

That this our earth may be fruitful.

Hail, devas of the earth and sky!

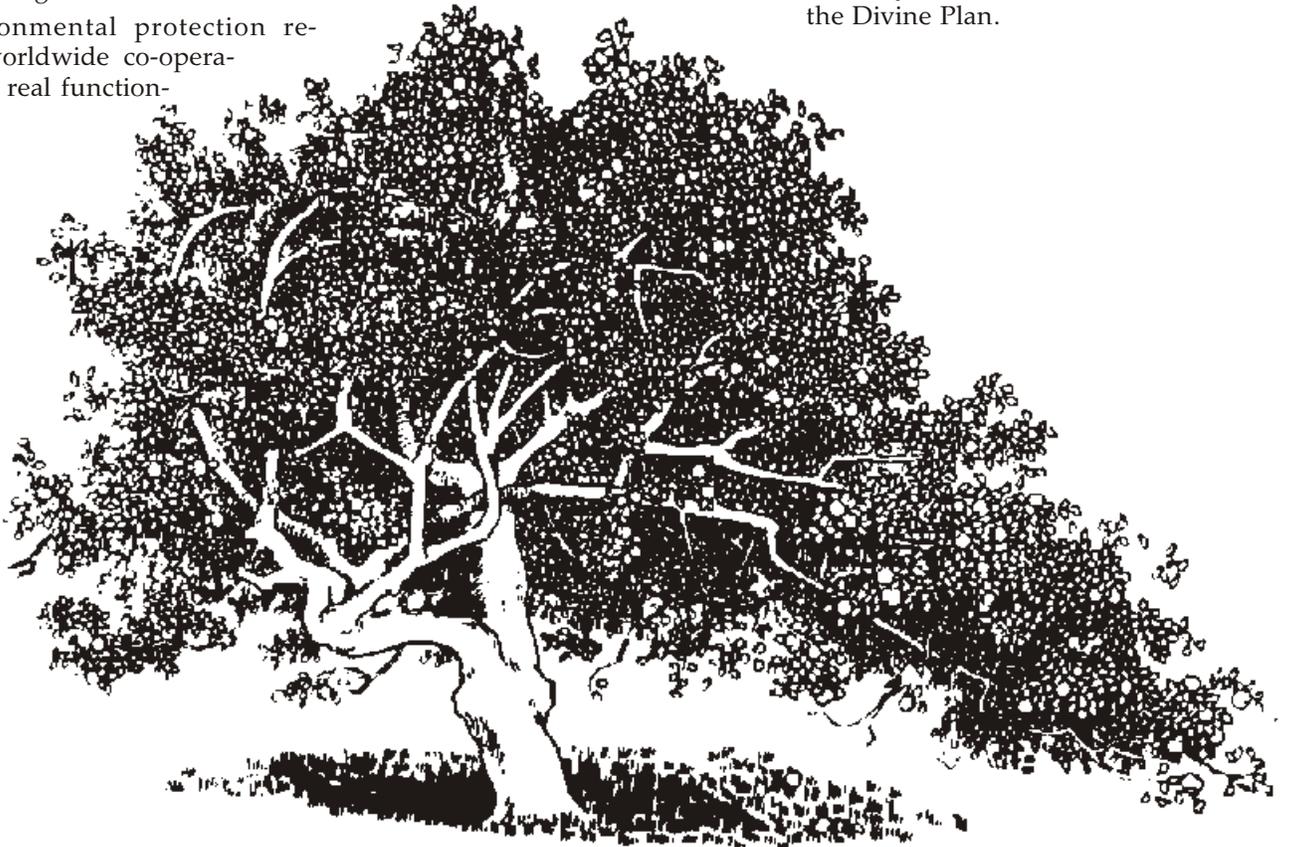
Come to our aid.

Share with us the labours of
our world

That the divinity within may be
set free.

GEOFFREY HODSON

distant future, disappear altogether. I have full faith that humanity will be able to make technological advances that will not only be equitable but also environmentally sound and in accord with the Divine Plan.



The Theosophical Order of Service

The Theosophical Order of Service was founded by Dr Annie Besant in 1908 to provide an opportunity for participation in activities which promote the first object of the Theosophical Society:

To form a nucleus of universal brotherhood without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.

Defining itself as 'a union of all who love in the service of all that suffers', the TOS offers a framework in which the individual may demonstrate practical and humanitarian action in a theosophical spirit, and acts as a forum whereby members may air their views on affairs of public interest.

The TOS is international although not active at this time in all countries where the Theosophical Society is represented. Each section is autonomous and organized to meet the needs of its own communities. Members of the TOS need not be members of the TS. A variety of interests is welcomed. For further information, and written contributions to *The Service Link*, write to: Diana Dunningham Chapotin, TOS International Secretary, Résidence Isabelle, 18 Avenue Berlioz, 93270 Sevran, FRANCE. E-mail: tosinternational@wanadoo.fr

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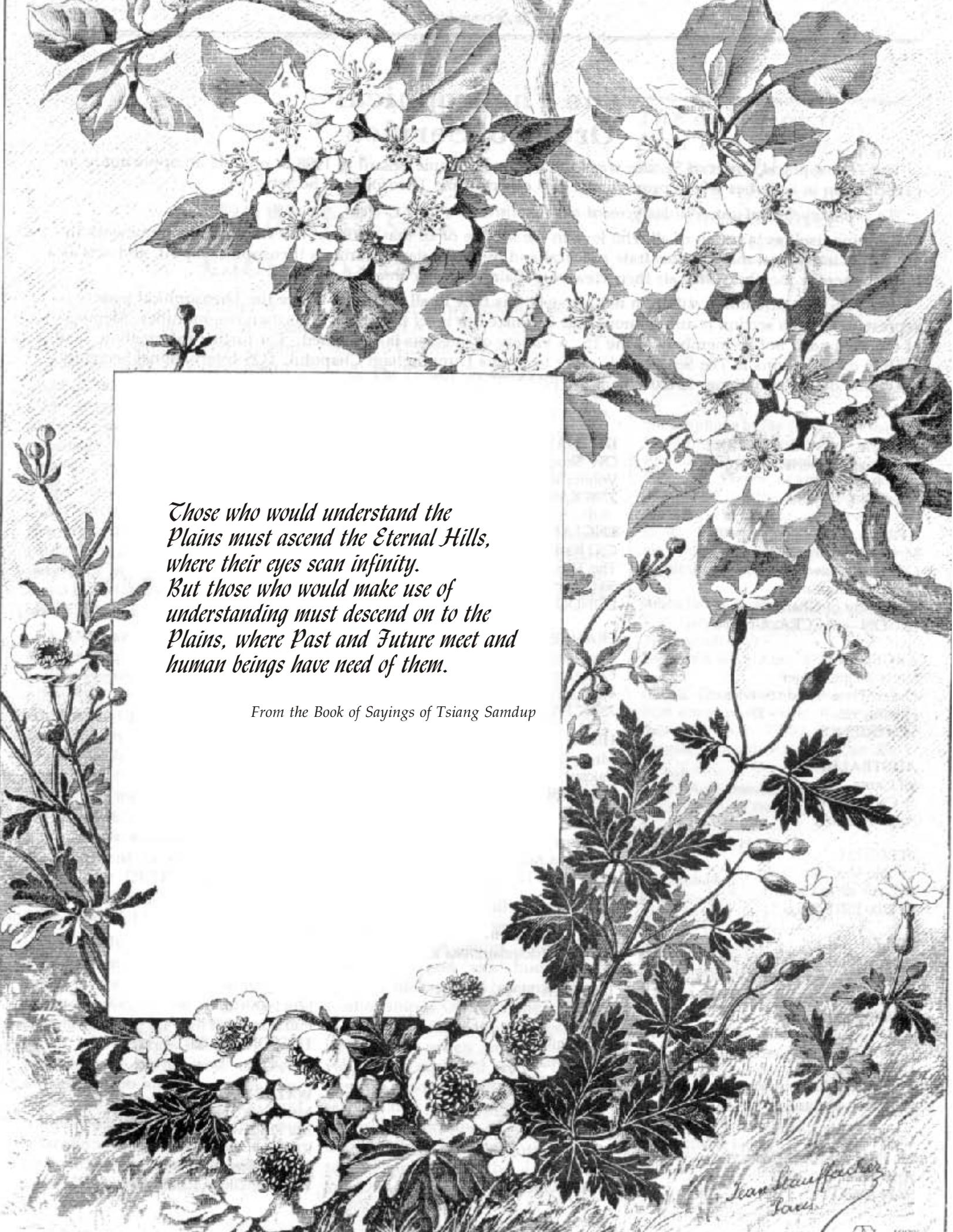
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*Those who would understand the
Plains must ascend the Eternal Hills,
where their eyes scan infinity.
But those who would make use of
understanding must descend on to the
Plains, where Past and Future meet and
human beings have need of them.*

From the Book of Sayings of Tsiang Samdup

*Jean Stauffacher
Paris*