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e editorial

NEWS!

'A vision without a task is a dream; a task without a vision is drudgery; a vision and a task is the hope of the world.'

The Theosophical Order of Service is on the move! In preparation for its centennial year of 2008, the functioning and direction of the organisation are being reviewed so that it can enter its next hundred years ready for dynamic action in its role as the service arm of the Theosophical Society. Active workers throughout the world have been invited (to the extent that it has been possible to reach them) to share their vision for the TOS's future and to express their perception of what needs to be done to reach that vision. They dream of the TOS becoming a veritable partner of the TS in every country in showing how theosophical principles, when applied and lived, can transform human nature and society.

The TOS operates presently in only half the countries where the TS is active but it is growing quietly as more people seek to apply Theoso-

phy in their lives in ways the TOS exists to support and nurture. To meet this growing need and respond as efficiently and effectively as possible, an organisational review is all the more important.

Headway was made in this direction at the second International TOS Conference held in July 2007 at the national headquarters of the TS in the United States in Wheaton, Illinois. The Conference proved not just a 'talkfest' but fruitful for both forward planning and for inspiring concrete commitments to action. A team of volunteers working to support grass roots workers around the world is gradually emerging. Heartfelt thanks to the TOS and TS in America for hosting this very successful gathering.

Look for news in the next issue of The Service Link of the Centennial Celebration held at Adyar, Chennai in early January 2008. If you would like to organise a celebration of your own at any time during this special year, your initiative will be warmly welcomed. See page 12 of this bulletin for some suggestions of activities.

In the meantime, as we enter our centennial year, please join us in sending special thoughts of gratitude to our Founder, Dr. Annie Besant, whose life remains a shining inspiration of service to all, three quarters of a century after her passing.

Diana



MRS RADHA BURNIER, INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE, while unable to write to every one of us individually, reads all reports sent to her and is deeply appreciative of the undertakings of workers in the field. She sends loving greetings and best wishes for our service projects.

The Order of the Round Table, a ceremonial movement for children based on the legend of King Arthur and founded by a Theosophist, Herbert Whyte, **will also be marking its centenary in 2008**. Writes its Chief Secretary, Dianne Hames, 'Both the TOS and the Round Table are pledged to Service. It is exciting to imagine the possibilities of some shared plans for support of the suffering and needy in our communities and the wider world.' Yes, Dianne, it is. Representatives of the TOS will come especially to England in July 2008 to attend the centennial celebration and explore ideas. For details of this event, write to the Senior Knight:

Mrs. Margie Stagg
4 Saxon Way
Woodbridge
Suffolk IP12 1LG
United Kingdom
margie.stagg@breathemail.com

Meet Riza Balino and Rekha Nahar (*photo below*): the team in the Philippines that produces and despatches *The Service Link* for the international TOS. Riza does the layout and Rekha organises the mailing. This publication is only a minor part of their work. Riza takes responsibility for all the computer work and preparation of numerous publications: the *Philippine Theosophist* and

the *Theosophical Digest*, for example, and more recently the *Theosophical Encyclopaedia*. Rekha is the Administrator of the Golden Link School and two other schools in the Philippines, as well as in overall charge of TOS projects in the country. A big thank-you to Riza and Rekha for all their work for the international TOS over a long period.



The Service Link

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Vicki Jerome, TOS New Zealand, for proofreading *The Service Link*; Helen Crombie Blommen, TOS supporter New Zealand, for a multitude of inspiring quotations.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SERVICE LINK

Any ideas for improving this bulletin? Any short articles, news items, poems, quotations, illustrations or favourite website addresses you'd like to contribute?

Any thorny subjects you'd like to discuss or see discussed? Any service-related problems you'd like to raise?

Write to the editor (see address above). Correspondence is welcome.

p p p

Would you like to receive the *Service Link*? Write to the contact people listed in the directory on the inside back cover of this bulletin or, if your country is not on the list, directly to the editor in France.



Another war is being waged today. It is a war against the denial of millions of women and girls of their inalienable rights.



To Form a Nucleus of the Sisterhood of Humanity

Fareeda Amir

Honorary Secretary, TOS Pakistan

As the global war on terrorism continues and governments join hands spending billions of dollars to rid the world of this evil, another war is also taking place, albeit silently and very often unnoticed.

It is a war against another form of wickedness. It manifests through the ignorance, superstition and tradition that deny millions of women and girls in underdeveloped countries

their inalienable rights.

For centuries a male dominated world has looked upon women as inferior to men. While her sisters in the West rose up and demanded equality, the Eastern woman, with some remarkable exceptions, has largely been helpless in changing her circumstances. A mere glance tells us why she continues to be equated with worldly possessions and subjected to social and cultural injustice of all sorts: because of her ignorance. She is subjugated and has no control over her own life because she is uneducated. It must be the ultimate goal of those committed to brother-

(Above photo) The face of a progressive Pakistan: our engineering students at the TOS office in Karachi. These girls have come from underprivileged backgrounds.

La cara de un Pakistán progresista: nuestros estudiantes de ingeniería en la oficina de la OTS en Karachi. Estas muchachas proceden de situaciones desprotegidas.

hood to aid her to gain the knowledge that will empower her.

Let us take the example of rural, poverty-stricken Pakistan where a woman's life is a litany of woes. In



The idea of sponsoring a Literacy Centre in Pakistan is gaining ground amongst TOS groups overseas. In the past, lack of funds has resulted in the closure of several Literacy Centres so this renewed interest is giving a great lift to the team in Karachi.

La idea de apadrinar un Centro de Alfabetización en Pakistán gana terreno entre los grupos de la OTS de otros países. En el pasado, la falta de fondos tuvo como resultado la clausura de varios Centros de Alfabetización, así este interés renovado está dando un gran empuje al equipo de Karachi.

(Photo right) The TOS in New Zealand has collected the US\$ 855.00 necessary to fund a Literacy Centre for one year. This effort, which the New Zealanders hope to manage relatively long term so that continuity can be relied on, is focusing largely on girls and street children. The TS in New Zealand has followed suit, adopting a Centre of its own. The TS in Australia has decided to adopt no fewer than FIVE Centres!

La OTS de Nueva Zelanda ha recaudado los 855,00 dólares de EE.UU. necesarios como capital para un Centro de Instrucción durante un año. Este esfuerzo, que los neozelandeses esperan mantener durante un tiempo relativamente largo para que exista continuidad en la ayuda, está destinado principalmente a muchachas y niños de la calle. La Sociedad Teosófica en Nueva Zelanda ha seguido el ejemplo, adoptando un Centro propio. La S.T. en Australia ha decidido patrocinar no menos de CINCO Centros!



Needy girls are taught to read and write at the TOS's Literacy Centres in depressed areas of Karachi.

Muchachas pobres aprenden a leer y a escribir en los Centros de Instrucción de la OTS en áreas deprimidas de Karachi.



urban areas the situation is not so bleak, but it is nevertheless a far cry from the privileges that women and girls take for granted in the West. From birth a female child is discriminated against. She is fed only after her brothers have eaten (and therefore is always malnourished); she takes care of her younger siblings and helps with heavy domestic chores while she is still a child. Helping her overburdened and perpetually pregnant mother is her lot. Play and recreation are alien to her world. She has no self-worth and believes that she is inferior to her brothers. She is made to believe that her role in life is to be servile and obedient to the men in her family. First to her father, brothers and other male family members (grandfathers, uncles, male cousins) and after marriage – which often takes place when she has barely stepped out of her childhood – to another set of males (husband, father-in-law, etc.).

This is exactly what the members of the Theosophical Order of Service in Pakistan want to change. We realise that centuries of darkness cannot be changed in a few years, but we have made a beginning. We have to continue working and work with relentless dedication.

The TOS in Pakistan decided long ago that the only way forward for the women of this country is to educate

them, to make sure they know their rights and acquire a feeling of self-worth. It chose the urban areas as a starting point for its work, and has focused on the city of Karachi so far. TOS workers talked to parents and convinced them to educate their daughters. Its aim was to enable as many girls as possible to get an education. Since the 1950s it has run an extensive educational sponsorship programme for both girls and boys, with special attention paid to the girl child.

At present the educational sponsorship programme supports nearly 400 students and almost 60% of these are girls. Of this 60%, 90 are college students. They are studying engineering, medicine, dentistry, textile design, science, commerce, nursing and the arts. Two who finished their studies in 2004 are now qualified physiotherapists. Most of these girls are 'A graders', and are bright and confident young women. Roughly 150 of our female students are still in school and range in age from 5 to 16 years. We are already encouraging them to study further after finishing their secondary schooling. Many are from homes where both parents are illiterate. All are from economically deprived backgrounds and many live in conditions of abject poverty. Fortunately for these girls and young women, life will not be the same as it

TO SPONSOR A YOUNG GIRL

To sponsor the education of a young girl in Karachi which costs US\$120.00 a year, please write to:

Mrs Fareeda Amir
Jamshed Memorial Hall
M.A. Jinnah Road
Karachi – 74200
Pakistan

E-mail:

tospakistan@cyber.net.pk

Here is the information necessary for an electronic transfer:

Account name: Theosophical Order of Service

Name of bank: Standard Chartered Bank Ltd.
Garden Road Branch
Karachi, Pakistan

US Dollar Account No:
01-05-7412231-90

Please write to Fareeda Amir for current Swift Code.

was for their mothers. They have hope. They are bright and talented and they know it. They play an important role in their homes in steering their siblings and parents. They are aware of what is going on in the world, of the pace of progress elsewhere and they want to be a part of that forward-moving world community.

In the TOS Pakistan, we know that what we are doing is a drop in the ocean but we also know that great things have small beginnings. With dedication and perseverance, we know that we can achieve our goal. We are inundated with applications from young girls and have to maintain long waiting lists while we look for sponsors.

The ideals of the TOS are lofty and its members are privileged to be connected with it. There is plenty to inspire us as we read the literature of the Theosophical Society and the words of the founder of the TOS, Dr. Annie Besant:

'In those who are growing into the spiritual life, and in those who cannot be happy while others are miserable, and in those whose meals are rendered bitter by the starvation of the poor and in those whose luxury is a burden because of the want of the miserable and those who will sacrifice that others may be happy, in those you will find the Builders of a New Civilisation.'

Let us join hands and lay the foundations of this new civilisation.

**Let us
join hands and lay
the foundations
of this new
civilization.**

A Prayer for the World

Let the rain come and wash away the ancient grudges, the bitter hatreds held and nurtured over generations.

Let the rain wash away the memory of the hurt, the neglect.

Then let the sun come out and fill the sky with rainbows.

Let the warmth of the sun heal us wherever we are broken.

Let it burn away the fog so that we can see each other clearly.

So that we can see beyond labels, beyond accents, gender or skin colour.

Let the warmth and brightness of the sun melt our selfishness.

So that we can share the joys and feel the sorrow of our neighbours.

And let the light of the sun be so strong that we will see all people as our neighbours.

Let the earth, nourished by rain, bring forth flowers to surround us with beauty.

And let the mountains teach our hearts to reach upward to heaven.

Rabbi Harold S. Kushner
(contributed by Betty Bland)



Ponderables

Alan Harris, TS member,
Tucson, Arizona, USA.

Sooner or later one's purpose in life comes pushing up through one's mistakes like a delicate flower blooming in a trash heap.

Friends bend where fakes break.

The impossible is just around the corner.

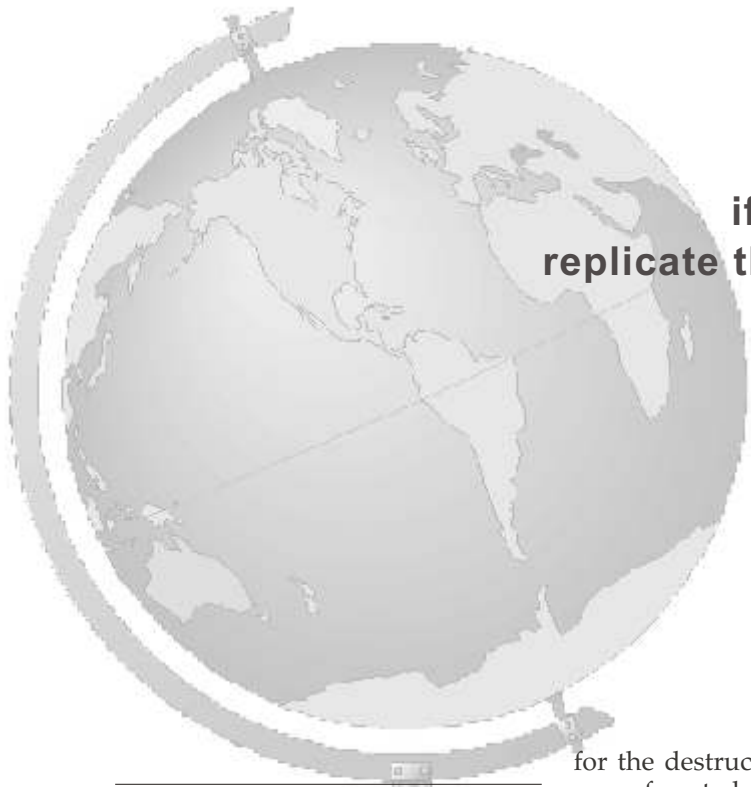
Exits from the freeway of truth begin at a small angle.

The kindest way to make chicken soup is to leave out the chicken.

Why can't we not worry by not wanting to worry?

It is efficient to be patient about several things at once.

Gossip is a time-filling voodoo that uses words for pins.



**What world will be possible
if those who proclaim its necessity
replicate the very causes they hope to fight?**

Fifth World Social Forum — Another World Is Not Possible

Marly Winckler

President

Brazilian Vegetarian Society

www.svb.org.br

Yes, sorry to say it but the old practices reproduced all around (with rare exceptions) at the Fifth World Social Forum won't take us to another world.' This is what I said to some 200 people who attended the talk presented by the Brazilian Vegetarian Society at the Fifth WSF, which took place in Porto Alegre from the 26th-31st January 2005.

What could be seen all around us were barbecues, creating halls full of smoke of an unbearably bad smell to the point of making breathing difficult. Also – with a few commendable exceptions – eating places under tents served food that for the most part was meat based and rather depleted of nutrients.

The meat industry is one of the main ones responsible for the consumption and contamination of water and destruction of forests. It was – and still is – principally responsible

for the destruction of the richly diverse forest along the Atlantic coast of Brazil, the Cerrado* and now the Amazon Forest. Soy cultivation also contributes to the destruction of springs and aquifers, as well as fertile land. With it goes, of course, flora and fauna diversity, generating many of the problems discussed at the WSF.

Who consumes soy in Brazil? Apart from some substantial portion used to make oil, the Brazilian population is not used to soy consumption. Soy is used to feed animals, which will turn into beef and barbecue, creating a vicious circle, responsible for enormous waste. The generation of one kilogram of meat requires 7 kilograms of grain, grain which could be directly used to feed the hungry – up to ten times as many humans. How then can we talk seriously about Zero Hunger without addressing this issue?

People's health is being undermined. The health system is bankrupt. The main diseases from which our population suffers are directly connected with a meat-centred diet – principally cardio-vascular complaints, high blood pressure, various types of cancer, kidney disease, dia-

betes and the staggering rates of obesity. Food quality is poor. Billions of defenceless animals are reared and slaughtered in appalling conditions.

It is useless to continue to hide the rubbish under the carpet. We reap what we sow. If our societies treat sentient creatures in such uncivilised ways, another world will simply not be possible. I'm totally convinced of this. Those who want a better world must realise that a simple act they repeat every day, even three or more times, namely the act of eating, is umbilically connected to this new world they quite reasonably seek. Such a world is possible, yes, but to achieve it, they must build it every day through the dish of food just in front of them.

* Cerrado: a vast, savanna-like region covering over 20% of the surface of Brazil. Cerrado is a kind of vegetation that occurs only in Brazil – it is an extensive tract of land composed of twisted trees like the savanna in Africa. Atlantic forest is a very rich in diversity forest that occurs in the Atlantic coast of Brazil.

People who feel that there are no services for them to perform often forget the existence of animals and plants.

George S. Arundale

THEOSOPHY IN THE WORKPLACE

An interview with Dr Antonio
Martínez Segura

THEOSOPHY IN MEDICAL SERVICE

If someone were to ask you how you apply Theosophy in your job, would you be stuck for an answer? Perhaps there is no direct application of its principles in your field. Yet, somehow, there is a level at which Theosophy has an influence on all you do, isn't that so?

The Service Link has interviewed a number of Theosophists about their work over recent years, with this question as the starting point: 'What is the relevance of Theosophy in your career?' So far we have interviewed a New Zealand prison staff training officer, a Spanish professor of neurology, an American high school counsellor and a minister of the Church of England. In this issue, we present Dr Antonio Martínez Segura, a pillar of the TS in Colombia. Dr Martínez is a paediatrician. He is not the first medical professional interviewed in these pages but he's the first to have applied his philosophy of life extensively in the field of social welfare.

The Service Link: Was your theosophical philosophy an important factor in your medical practice right from the outset?

Dr Martínez: Far from it. As a medical student, I saw patients if not as broken machines, at least as physical bodies with parts needing repair! It was only when I started working as a general practitioner in the hospital of San Juan de Dios in Bogotá that things started changing. By the time I had completed my studies and become a specialist, I was married to Julia, the beautiful soul to whom I

have been married for nearly fifty years and a Theosophist since birth. We studied Theosophy together and I began to gain a vision of humans as complex, multi-dimensional beings on a spiritual journey. Dr Taimni's books in particular fascinated me. Our study affected my approach to medicine and took me into areas I would never have dreamed of. The writings of Maria Montessori, herself a paediatrician with a wonderful understanding of the nature and potential of children, were a great inspiration. So were those of Angela

Maria La Sala Batà, a psychologist and member of the TS in Italy.

The Service Link: What did this mean in terms of your medical practice?

Dr Martínez: Well, let's take the case of lung complaints in children. In addition to the common causes of infection, allergens within the home and environmental pollution, I learned that there were other sources of illness. Children suffer greatly from stress, from psychological tension. Family context is crucial to their



*Dr Antonio Martínez Segura, Colombian paediatrician
El Dr. Antonio Martínez Segura, pediatra colombiano*



Dr Martínez with his wife, Julia Ballesteros, who is Director of the TOS in Colombia, and some (but not all!) of their children and grandchildren.

El Dr. Martínez y su esposa, Julia Ballesteros que es directora de la OTS en Colombia, y algunos (pero no todos) de sus hijos y nietos.

well being. I have learned that in the long run it doesn't do simply to usher patients out the door with antibiotics, an inhaler or whatever and move swiftly on to the next patient. A global, holistic approach to the human being and to medicine is needed. This is nothing new to Theosophists, of course.

They will not be surprised either to learn that I see my work as both educational and medical. To me, children are like plants to be cultivated and doctors can have as much to do with watering the soil as teachers do.

In fact I'd go so far as to say that there are four aspects to medicine: rehabilitation, cure, prevention and education. The latter two need to be given far greater emphasis. Millions of lives could be saved in this way. I spend a great deal of time talking to my young patients and their parents, getting to know them and the dynamics of the family and educating,

educating, educating about the basics of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health. Seeing a family as a group of souls drawn together for a time in their spiritual journey makes a big difference. I am a great believer in the role of the family. Julia and I have five sons, by the way. In many cases, I have ended up being almost a member of the family circle of my young patients. A loving relationship with patients makes a world of difference in treating them. I don't hesitate to use the word 'love' in connection with doctor-patient communication. A loving bond is especially helpful when a patient is dying. The perspective on death that Theosophy affords helps enormously in facing and comforting grieving parents. Many doctors flee the bedside of dying patients, as they feel as though they have failed to win the battle over the enemy, death. And yet death, as we Theosophists know, is part of the journey, just as rebirth is. Theosophy provides a greater un-

derstanding that releases compassion.

The Service Link: For how long have you practised paediatrics?

Dr Martínez: For 45 or 46 years. After 4 years in hospital work, I moved on to private practice which I combined with the management of the medical service of Colombia's biggest bank, El Banco de la República.

The Service Link: What did that involve?

Dr Martínez: Establishing and supervising a team of doctors for the health care of the bank's thousands of employees. This sounds like a rather uninspiring kind of work in a business context but actually the term 'medical service' took on a new meaning for me here – almost that of theosophical service! I was able to extend health care from employees to their families, which was rare, if not revolutionary at the time in Colombia. I have already said how impor-

tant close relationships seem to me in the health and wellbeing of patients...

The Service Link: How did you manage to get the bank to spend so much money?

Dr Martínez: That was the hard part but fortunately an improvement in employee performance at work appeared as a result of the extended medicine and from then on, the bank was interested...

The Service Link: Have other banks in Colombia followed suit since?

Dr Martínez: Yes, two others and a number of companies as well.

The Service Link: That's excellent.

Dr Martínez: For the past 40 years, I have also had the pleasure of participating in a cooperative called SOMECA – SOLidaridad, MEDico, ECONómica. This is a kind of inter-professional association in which 2,800 citizens collaborate to help each other in numerous ways – creating enterprises, giving mutual support with financial and emotional difficulties after the death of a loved one, the raising of small loans... The cooperative employs 40 people to implement its projects. Values of brotherhood, solidarity and a sense of the human family are emphasised. I was recently elected coordinator of the education committee whose job it is to initiate projects uplifting to the community.

The Service Link: Such as?

Dr Martínez: Such as the organisation of workshops to improve communication amongst employees, members and their families. Such as teaching productivity, efficiency and cooperation in the workplace. The cooperative is like an experiment in the creation of a 'nucleus of brotherhood'. It is like an application in a miniature way of the First Object of the TS. At least that is how I see it and live it.

The Service Link: Have you made any contribution to the cooperative in the medical domain?

Dr Martínez: Yes, by writing about holistic health in the cooperative's magazine. I forgot to say that ecology is one of my passions. In the cooperative, we have organised 'ecological tourist' trips for city dwellers to visit the countryside, to learn about environmentally-friendly land development and management, about compassionate handling of animals, and about herbal medicine.

The Service Link: Your wife Julia is the Director of the TOS in Colombia. Do you help her in any of her work? It doesn't sound as though you have the time!

Dr Martínez: Of course I do, because in latter years I have reduced my private medical practice. Theosophical service is at the heart of our life together in fact. I would say that my entire career and all my volunteer activities are an expression of a commitment to service on the spiritual path. For me, personal and social transformation are inseparable. For a time I was President of the Academy of Paediatricians of Colombia and took advantage of the position to lecture my fellow health professionals about, and to lobby the government and universities for, a holistic approach to healthcare for children. They must have got sick of me hammering the need for integrative medicine, including attention to the psychosomatic, ecological and social factors. I didn't hesitate to talk about the spiritual dimension and needs of the human psyche either.

With Julia, I am constantly encouraging our TS members to engage in service, both within the TS and in society at large. The challenge is to get to know them well, to discover their skills and find avenues to allow them to share those skills within the TS and TOS. For example, we found that a number of younger members loved theatre so we encouraged them to create a group for the writing and performing of theosophical plays. They performed their plays not only within the TS but also for poor children in the community.

With Julia, I am constantly encouraging our TS members to engage in service, both within the TS and in society at large. The challenge is to get to know them well, to discover their skills and find avenues to allow them to share those skills within the TS and TOS.

This has been a way of communicating theosophical ideas and values.

The Service Link: Obviously there are more than 24 hours in a day in the TS and TOS in Colombia! Is there anything else you do?

Dr Martínez: We have a big piece of land which we hope our fellow Theosophists will develop with us in an ecologically sound way, seeking to develop a relationship with the local community similar to that in the cooperative I mentioned. We have already collaborated in the construction of an aqueduct to bring clean drinking water to the villagers. I also give free medical treatment to those willing to serve the community in their turn.

The Service Link: Thank you very much for sharing with us, Dr Martínez. We wish you and Julia all the best in your service work in Colombia.

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1908-2008



Please take advantage of the commemorative year 2008 to present some special opportunities to your fellow members to participate in our work.

You might consider:

- Submitting an announcement to the editor of your national TS magazine or newsletter mentioning the centenary in 2008, reminding members of the work of the TOS and inviting them to get in touch with you.
- Announcing the formation of a new group within the TOS: healing, arts and music, peace, theosophical parenting...
- Publishing a booklet in the name of the TOS on one of our themes: animal protection, ecology, prison reform, theosophical education, etc.
- Organising a group to do something for your local TS branch: the planting of a tree, for instance.
- Producing a play illustrating theosophical principles.
- Proposing the 'adoption' of a child in a TS or TOS school (payment of their annual fees and in some cases a daily meal).
- Making a special, centennial gift to a charitable cause that your TOS group supports.
- Organising an afternoon tea for members and friends of the TOS.
- Celebrating the Dance of Service in which you participate: do something new and uplifting to experience afresh the joy of the work you so faithfully do in serving others. Honour yourself. Celebrate the fact that Annie Besant's TOS has lasted 100 years. Take a day off to go to the seaside, the mountains, the lake, the park or the desert. Join a dancing class or choir, nature study, drawing or creative writing class – or just allow the creative energy to flow and make your own style – be you.
- Celebrating the centennial by hosting a peace ceremony for members and/or the general public. Open with a group meditation for peace, emphasizing the wish that peace, not war, might prevail over the next 100 years. Present a speaker on a relevant peace topic, followed by a brief question and answer period. Close with some beautiful music and refreshments.
- Hosting an art show or photographic display celebrating 100 years of theosophical service. Remember to send an announcement with photos to your local newspaper.
- Taking one month to host weekly, hour-long member workshops. Focus on a different, TOS-related topic each week: animal welfare, peace issues, healing, ecological concerns, or social work, for example.
- Highlighting one aspect of the variety of TOS work that is done around the world. If your branch members show a general interest in the environment, plan a clean-up day at a local park or littered highway, or restore a nearby hiking trail to its natural beauty.



TOS WEB SITES

**The Theosophical Order
of Service in Australia
National TOS web pages:**
<http://www.austheos.org.au/tos>

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.tssydney.org.au/tos.htm>

Formed by Annie Besant in 1908, the TOS 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 taking an active part in a variety of local service activities, writing to international bodies and governments about human rights issues (in association with Amnesty International),

and donating to various causes. Members of the Brisbane TOS group are working, either individually or collectively, on 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.

**TOS in New Zealand
Web address:**
<http://www.theosophy.org.nz/tos>

The TOS in New Zealand is a small group dedicated to acting as the service arm of the Theosophical Society. We are actively engaged in humanitarian assistance, giving support, particularly educational, to TOS groups in places such as India, Pakistan and the Philippines.

**TOS in Pakistan
Web address:**
www.tospakistan.com

The TOS has been actively involved in the field of social work in the city of Karachi since the early 1950s. Its areas of work include a large educational sponsorship programme for school and college students, several literacy centres, relief to indigent senior citizens, families and widows and education for the welfare of animals. It also works to promote tolerance and goodwill in a city facing enduring conflict.

The website provides comprehensive coverage of the opportunities to support the work in Pakistan and an excellent coverage of the basic principles of Theosophy.

**TOS in 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 programmes is welcome to contact us.

**TOS in Spain and South America
Web address:** www.otshispania.org

TOS Spanish language coordinator, Fernando Pérez Martin and Raul Dorado Basso, continue to develop this 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, and good citizenship. An illustrated section on the role of the devas in healing and ecol-

ogy is the newest feature.

TOS in USA

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

The TOS-USA website has recently been re-cast as a dynamic, user-built community website. Site members can easily comment on any article and even post their own articles. There is also a TOS member forum. The interactive features of the website allow it to serve as an effective networking and communication tool for TOS members and friends

around the world.

TOS in England

Website: www.tos-uk.org.uk

Over the decades, the TOS in England has achieved much work of social significance and its fund-raising efforts have resulted in consistent support for selected charities within England and TOS projects overseas. For many years now, members of the TOS and TS and their families have knitted teddies for Teddies for Tragedy, an International Charity offering support to children facing difficult circumstances. Mem-

bers and friends also fill empty shoeboxes with gifts and wrap them up as presents to be distributed to needy people of all ages all over the world through The International Aid Trust.

O O O

You are invited to visit the international website of the TOS at <http://international.theoservice.org>. Miles and Lloyd Standish of the USA and Geoff and Carolyn Harrod of Australia have collaborated in its creation and look forward to input by e-mail from members around the world. Please send feedback and questions to gharrod@cad-assist.com, with copy to tosinternational@wanadoo.fr.



Miles Standish, assistant webmaster for the TOS in America's website, prepares second hand computers for donation to Native American communities like the Hualapai Indian Reservation in Arizona. He has a lot of help from members of his local computer club. Miles is also coordinating efforts to supply donated survival items such as blankets, clothes and other household necessities.

Miles Standish, asistente encargado de la página web de la OTS en EE.UU., prepara ordenadores de segunda mano para ser donados a comunidades de indígenas, como la Reserva Indígena de Hualapai en Arizona. Don Miles recibe mucha ayuda de los miembros de su club local de usuarios de computadoras. También esfuerzos para facilitar artículos de supervivencia, como sábanas, ropa y otros productos para el hogar.

USEFUL WEB ADDRESS

I thought my fellow TOS members might like to know of an interesting web site which my son Leigh pointed out to me. It is www.responsibleshopper.org and gives very good information about hundreds of companies and their record on ethics, pollution, animal testing etc. It's an American site but a handy reference for people elsewhere in the world too because of the number of multinational companies around the globe today.

Linda Oliveira
Sydney, Australia

What is Our Role in Education?



*Rekha L. Nahar
President, TOS Foundation
Philippines*

Every time I ask myself what a Theosophist's role is in providing tangible solutions to the problems of the world, my answer seems to be: let us put up more schools. For over 20 years, I have been working as a social worker in many communities in both Bangladesh and the Philippines. Through the TOS, we have systematically undertaken projects to meet needs in health and nutrition, to develop livelihood skills, and so on. These projects help improve the material conditions of the underprivileged. Something more is necessary, however, something that addresses the selfishness and sense of separateness at the root of social problems.

Many times I ask myself: why do some people grow up to become kind and altruistic while others grow up to be just the opposite? I am convinced that education plays a major role in the kind of person we are as adults. By education I mean not only education in a formal school but also what we learn in the home, because everyone's education begins at home.

What is the role of TOS members in helping to add a different dimension to education? In my understanding there are several ways we can contribute.

First, as adults, we can serve as role models in the lives of children, whether it be in the school or home setting. Children learn from what they see at home, in the community

Something more is necessary . . . something that addresses the selfishness and sense of separateness at the root of social problems.

and in school. Therefore if we want our children to be kind, then we need to display acts of kindness. And if we want our children to be honest, then we have to learn to be honest. This may seem obvious.

Second, during parents' meetings in the schools our children attend, we can influence school management and suggest changes in certain practices. Even if we do not have children of school age, we can still volunteer for activities in a local

school and try to bring a different dimension to the educational environment.

Similarly, we can design and offer resource material for the teaching of individual and planetary peace and of religious understanding and tolerance. We can even offer teachers training in stress management (incorporating simple techniques of meditation), or in how to teach without the use of fear. We have to invest a lot of time and energy in teacher training – and in learning how to be of real use to them – because what a teacher is, that also is what the pupils will become. Each lodge could even adopt a local school.

'What input would a school system or individual school possibly allow on the part of members of the TS or TOS?', I hear you ask. It is in fact surprising what successful relationships can be developed where there is a will to do so and through a gentle, respectful, patient approach with a view to the long term. Possibilities will vary from country to country, of course, but I am convinced that each can find a way to connect with the educational establishment if s/he tunes in and adapts to local conditions.

An interesting example of constructive collaboration is provided by a wealthy foundation in the Phil-



*Elementary students in the classroom in Golden Link School
Estudiantes de elemental de la Golden Link School en clase*

ippines. The Andres Soriano Foundation has been working in the remote islands of the province of Palawan. Its principal work is coastal resource management. In addition, the Foundation has lately taken on the establishment of seven pre-schools (for 3- to 6-year-olds) for the children of fisher-folk. The Palawans are really remote islands where there are no public utility vehicles to transport passengers. The executive director of the Foundation (whom I have known for some time) invited me to go over to one of the islands to conduct one week's training for the teachers of those seven schools. They have difficulty in finding resource speakers because of the remoteness of place; trainers generally charge high fees. Since we in the TS/TOS do not charge any fees, it is very easy for anyone to invite us. I agreed to go, not really knowing the

conditions of the place. In fact it is without telephones and has electricity for only a third of the day. Drinking water comes from the spring on the mountain. There are no vehicles except motor bikes owned by a few rich people. The organisers could offer all kinds of sea food but no vegetables or fruit. They had to bring them from Manila for me as I am vegetarian. The teachers from seven islands came together on one island to where I was brought from the mainland by a fishing boat.

For seven days I helped the teachers review the curriculum. I presented the latest information to them about classroom management, assessment procedures and so on. It was a really meaningful stay for me.

A third way in which we can contribute – and this is my favourite – is by the establishment of as many spir-



itually-oriented schools as we can afford. As of now, we already have three kindergarten or elementary schools in the Philippines. I am not talking about starting yet another school where children simply learn how to read and write to equip them-

selves to find a good job – and in the process learn how to compete with each other. I am talking about schools where spiritual principles are communicated. We have a Muslim pupil who transferred to our Golden Link School in Manila. When I asked his father why he transferred his son from another school to ours, the father said because in that other school, every day, at the start and end of classes there would be a religious prayer different from the Muslim way of praying. During prayer time the Muslim boy was asked to leave the classroom. Instead of teaching little ones the fundamental oneness of religions, schools are unwittingly teaching a sense of separateness.

What kind of school, then, are we to establish? I'd like to quote here a letter from a TS member in South Africa: 'I was most interested to read in an interview with Vicente Hao Chin, Jr. of the wonderful work of the TOS in the Philippines, especially to read

Allow me to quote a few of the stated aims of the Golden Link School:

The school associates high academic standards and drive for excellence with wholesome character development.

Motivation does not come through competition or fear but instead through an atmosphere of trust and friendliness that favours the love of learning.

The school personnel show an example of social maturity and concern for the common welfare.

Pupils learn mastery over physical, emotional and mental habits.

Pupils learn to see themselves and each other as souls on an evolutionary journey.

of the progress of the Golden Link School. It is a tremendous innovation for the education system to create an awareness of the spiritual dimension of life amongst the children. I hope and pray that many schools around the world will follow your example.

The Golden Link School has a special place in my heart for it gives new life to old and outdated educational systems.'

What is the vision of the Golden Link School, started in 2002 in a sub-



One of the student presentations of the Golden Link School

Una representación de los estudiantes de la Golden Link School

urb of Manila? It is to create an education system in which individuals can discover the core values of their lives for themselves, free from fear, coercion and prejudice. Through innovative teaching methods that respect and nurture the individuality and creativity of students, it attempts to integrate the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects of their growth in a well-rounded programme. Teaching students to embrace their common humanity and to recognize their place in the web of life, the school strives to honour many faiths. It holds the conviction that individuals who are at peace with themselves will ultimately create a world at peace. In short, the school is an experiment in transformative education.

By using the three objects of the Theosophical Society as the fundamental educational philosophy of our schools, we can create a beautiful educational system for coming generations, where little children live in a brotherly environment – no competition, no need to learn to be self-centred. They can learn to appreciate each other’s differences by studying different religions, guided by a Theosophist teacher who understands the unity of all life and recognizes the divine nature of the human being. If we could have schools with an educational philosophy such as this, then one day we could hope for a society where people live in peace and harmony with each other and with all living beings.

A practical aspect in the development of such schools is the need to offer quality education at affordable prices. Yes, there are a few schools with very good educational philosophies. However, they are very expensive and beyond the reach of the marginalized sectors of society. Is quality education meant for children from rich families only?

Is this an impossible dream? If we all gather together our energies and resources, it isn’t! What is needed most of all is devoted workers, peo-



Golden Link School teacher, Eiren Aquino, with the students

ple whose heart and head are in the same place. What do I mean by this? There are times when our heart wishes to be of service to others but our head says to the heart, ‘You are foolish! What are you gaining from this?’ and so on. Therefore our heart and head need to sing the same song.

Putting up a school is not an easy job. It requires not only huge funds but also individuals engaged over the long term, in both the teaching and management aspects of the school. I have finally come to see, however, the truth of the saying, ‘Money will come if the work is worth it’. I have found that there are individuals and organizations willing to contribute if they feel there are genuinely motivated, strongly committed people behind a project.

While constructing the Golden Link School, the thought has sometimes popped up in my mind that we are witnessing history in the making. We are writing our own history, not

using paper and pencil but with the power of our love, which will last well beyond our lifetime.

Theosophists have before them the opportunity to undertake a life work:

- to act as a model to young people;
- to inspire existing schools and help them evolve;
- to build as many schools as possible that will train children and young adults to live for the benefit of all.

I long for a time when hundreds and thousands of young people will graduate from theosophical schools with these words from the ceremony of the Round Table engraved in their hearts: ‘I am a Link in the Golden Chain of Love that stretches around the world and I promise to keep my link bright and strong’.



Helping Theosophical Schools

OLCOTT MEMORIAL SCHOOL

If you would like information on a theosophical school such as the Olcott School in Adyar, Chennai, write to:

Miss Keshwar Dastur
International Treasurer
Theosophical Society
Adyar, Chennai 600 020
India
E-mail: ts_treasury@sify.com

To donate directly to the Olcott School, you may make an electronic transfer from your bank account to:

Standard Chartered Grindlays
Bank Ltd.
Sorrento Branch
Adyar, Chennai-600020, India
Account name: The Theosophical
Society
Account number: 42810001582
Swift code: SCBLINBBXXX

Please be sure to send full details of the transfer to the treasurer as soon as the remittance is made:
ts_treasury@sify.com

GOLDEN LINK SCHOOL

If you would like more information on the Golden Link School, write to:

Theosophical Order of Service
Foundation
1 Iba Street
Quezon City
1114 Metro Manila
Philippines
E-mail: philtheos@gmail.com

To donate directly, you may make an electronic transfer from your bank account to:

Metropolitan Bank and Trust
Company
Welcome Rotonda Center
Quezon City, 1114 Metro Manila
Philippines
Account name: Theosophical

Order of Service Foundation, Inc.
US Dollar Account No.:
2 177 00240-7
Swift Code: MBTCPHMM

Please be sure to send full details of the transfer to philtheos@gmail.com

Another possibility for supporting the school is to sponsor a child.

Costs:

Pre-school – Pesos 8,000 per year
or US\$170.00
Elementary – Pesos 11,000 per
year or US\$240.00
High School – Pesos 14,000 per
year or US\$300.00

The conversion rate is around P47.00 per US dollar, rounded to the nearest ten dollars.

International Secretary's suggestion: When making donations myself, I always add some extra dollars to cover variations in exchange rates and also bank fees at the receiving end.



For over ten years now, members of the TOS in England have been participating in the project, Teddies For Tragedy. Bears are knitted and sent to refugee camps, orphanages and hospitals overseas, where children in need are comforted and cheered by them. Members from Liverpool and Burnley, Ivy Pope and Maureen Atkinson, make sure they get to their destination, sometimes via another association. Maureen recently enlisted a fellow member to accompany her in delivering a load. Sheila recounts...

Sheila Banks

As our usual Tuesday afternoon Blackburn TS Lodge meeting was cancelled, Maureen suggested that we use the time to deliver teddies to the International Aid Trust warehouse — ‘somewhere in the west’ (Maureen waved her arm in a vaguely westerly direction but seemed relaxed and confident). We first had to find a man on Withnell Way designated as ‘Bill in the porta-cabin’, she said, who knew exactly the location of the great storage depot. After a couple of missed turnings we happened upon this gentleman who was pleased to see us and directed us to our destination. He gave us a map, specially printed out from his computer, and the reassurance that ‘it’s very easy to find, only a quarter of a mile away’. I felt some little disquiet on glancing at the very sparse map but Maureen had a triumphant look on her face as she firmly seized it. We said our good-

A TOS Mystery Tour in England

byes with due thanks and proceeded on our way.

It was a glorious ‘June is bursting out all over’ afternoon which conjures up for me a ‘strawberries for sale’ country road sign. In my mind the greenness of the countryside, which I never take for granted, enhances the glistening luscious redness of freshly gathered berries. I mentioned a sudden wish for strawberries but Maureen had her mind on other things — such as which turning to take — and wondered out loud if we would ever find the International Aid Trust place. It had been well over half an hour (!) since we left the resourceful Bill and Maureen was not going down the strawberry path. Committed as ever, she was all out to reach the elusive goal. We eventually stopped at a garage to ask for help in deciphering the map and/or getting on the right road. I, knowing my place, stayed in the car. Maureen came bubbling back with renewed enthusiasm. ‘The garage man says this map has a lot missing’, she said, ‘but he has confirmed my inkling of the right track.’ We agree we would like to look round the great warehouse and my strawberries are on the back burner.

After about another quarter of an hour — mainly on a fast road — by now I have no idea at all where we are, though I have faith we are still in the northwest of England — we see a sign ‘Industrial Estate’. Serene and as confident as ever, Maureen glides in like a homing pigeon. A man driving a removal van gives us the nod as if we were bona fide — which we are of course, with teddies and a dubious map to prove it. After another

quick inquiry, we are directed to the entrance of “the great space”. The Great Mystery Tour proves to be worth it. I am speechless as I behold a vast warehouse containing enough objects to fill a thousand charity shops: first and second hand goods of all descriptions including furniture, food, clothing, wheelchairs, zimmer frames (walkers)... These are destined to go abroad, and to charity stores all around England to be sold to raise money for the needy, currently mainly in former U.S.S.R. countries and in Africa.

Maureen tells a man of our mission with the teddies ready for dispatch overseas and asks if we can look around. Both Maureen and I are humbled and inspired by the size of the enterprise. Here is human service at its professional best. We are invited into an office staffed by a pleasant couple who confirm that our map is useless and could have got us right to Scotland if we had remained faithful to it right to the bitter end — and give us a welcome (and very British, I know) cup of tea. You’ll be pleased to know that we stopped in Southport on the way home and enjoyed delicious strawberries and cream. We had a good feeling of mission accomplished.

The aim of this tale is to get the support of English readers for the International Aid Trust which has an increasing number of charity shops where you may buy or deposit second hand goods. You may also deposit your knitted teddies there, in addition to sending them through my trusty driver, Maureen, through your Lodge, Federation or the TOS. Thank you, Maureen, for such an enriching time out.



Planting near the picnic area, April 2005. Plantando cerca del area de esparcimiento, Abril de 2005.

Interested in doing something for the environment? This project undertaken by the TOS in Brisbane, Australia could well give you a useful idea.

by Geoff Harrod

At the Brisbane TOS, we have established several areas of local service activity in which members who wish to give of their time and skills can take part. One that has been enthusiastically supported is the field of environmental improvement. This in-

cludes maintenance of parks and other public areas. The Brisbane City Council and Federally organised bodies such as Greening Australia have set up support organisations for these purposes and they invite local individuals and groups to work with them. The authorities mainly provide the plants, mulch and cartage of rubbish.

After taking part in several weekend activities in various locations or-

Bringing Beauty to the Land

ganised with the City Council, we asked if we could be allocated one particular area that Brisbane TOS would be especially responsible for, on an on-going basis. This way our members would be able to see the longer-term results of our work and develop a strong commitment to that place.

We were allocated a park in an inner industrial area. Moorhen Flats lay for many years as an industrial waste-

land and dump. The present park development is intended not only to provide a pleasant public area but also to protect the creek banks from scouring and to provide a stable flood overflow area. The park aims at re-establishing the original plant species that prevailed before the area became an industrial zone.

Since we started our involvement at Moorhen Flats around two and a half years ago, we have drawn great satisfaction from observing the improvements. It is quite amazing how quickly the trees have grown since we planted them. Also birds are already returning in large numbers to this formerly desolate area to feed and nest.

We meet one Saturday afternoon a month and between us we usually

plant some 500 trees or shrubs. The local coordinator, Damian, and his organisation have developed an overall plan and he organises us to work in particular areas each month. He also arranges preparatory work by City Council teams who remove major industrial leftovers, large weed growth and pieces of concrete, grade the area and spread mulch. Then Greening Australia delivers trays of seedlings from their nursery for us to plant. (The Greening Australia organisation is a federally funded body that grows plants for revegetation projects, and Brisbane TOS has another link with them in that one of our elderly long-term members, Elsie Richter, who now lives on Bribie Island just north of Brisbane, does a lot of volunteer work in their nursery on the island.)

We work from 2pm until about 5pm and bring food to share at the picnic tables already built in the park. As well as TOS members, several others who regularly help Greening Australia come. Most of those are university students. The park has already become popular with joggers and people exercising their dogs, and several of those people have joined in the work on a fairly regular basis. Often they ask about the group we belong to and show interest in the ideas of the TOS and the Theosophical Society.

Damian was invited to the Theosophical Society's Annual Convention that was held in 2006 in Brisbane, where he presented an illustrated talk about the project and its history.

Amateur Artists: serve with your brush!

Many of us enjoy painting for leisure, pleasure or to express our deeper nature in some way. We don't necessarily hold the ambition of becoming professionals and selling our work. We may not feel that our creations are of a high enough standard. Yet our art can benefit

others, if we choose to let it.

For the past several years, a TS member in Auckland, New Zealand has donated one of her paintings for sale, auction or raffle at the annual convention of the Theosophical Society in aid of the projects the TOS supports. Elizabeth Sell is modest and doesn't expect a huge sum to be raised from the sale, but every penny counts. So far her work has raised US\$750.

Here is how the TOS sets up the sale. Offers are made for the paintings directly to the sale organiser or else they are raffled. Another approach – one that has also been used recently by the TOS in America to raise funds for the Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund – is that of a 'silent auction'. Offers are put into a box and the highest offer accepted or they are entered into a notebook,



'Lilies' by Elizabeth Sell
"Lirios", por Elisabeth Sell

one after the other, starting from a given minimum price and increasing gradually. When a certain time limit has expired, the last entry wins the painting.



'Birds of Paradise' by Elizabeth Sell
"Aves del Paraíso", por Elisabeth Sell



A Far-Flung TOS Outpost



Mr Jatindra Nath Patowary, Regional Secretary in Assam & Arunachal Region, India.

El Sr. Jatindra Nath Patowary, secretario regional en Assam y la región de Aruanachal, India

The Assam & Arunachal Region of the TOS in India is situated in the easternmost tip of the country between Bhutan and Burma, surrounded by the Himalayan ranges in the north and east. It is one of the most far-flung areas where the TOS is active and a long way from the International Headquarters of the TS at Adyar in Chennai (Madras) in the south. In the past eight years, seven new groups have sprung up, making a total of nine groups working under the Regional President, Dr Kishori Mohan Pathak, and Secretary, Mr Jatindra Nath Patowary.

The Service Link asked Mr Patowary what the co-ordination work involves, what interesting service initiatives feature in the region and what opportunities there might be for us to support them.

The Service Link: Mr Patowary, is your work mainly administrative or does it involve hands-on action?

Mr Patowary: Both forms of work. The TOS exists primarily to put theosophical principles into action i.e. Theosophy studied must be Theosophy practised. My main work is to co-ordinate the nine groups, advise on the nature of TOS work to ensure that what is being undertaken is in harmony with our principles, examine new schemes and decide on their feasibility and to furnish reports regularly for the National TOS on what is being done. This takes only about half my time. The other half is spent out in the field helping all nine groups – some more than others – to put their practical schemes into action.

TSL: What kinds of projects are undertaken?

Mr Patowary: The list is long and varies according to the needs determined in the field at a given time. Our workers offer medical treatment to the poor, schooling assistance to many children and mobility aids to the physically handicapped such as tricycles, elbow crutches, wheel



Feeding the footpath dwellers.



Presentation of tricycles to men in need. Behind left hand recipient: Bro. R.N. Chowdhury, Secretary of the Assam Theosophical Federation; standing in the middle: Major S.B. Lahkar, President of Guwahati Lodge.

Entrega de triciclos a hombres en necesidad. Detrás, a la izquierda del receptor, ele hermano R.N. Chowdhury, secretario de la Federación teosófica de Asma. De pie, en el centro, el comandante S.B. Lacar, presidente de la Rama de Guwahati.

chairs, special shoes etc., according to medical advice given. They visit homes for the aged to enquire about health conditions and provide consolation to strengthen them morally through theosophical discussions, and also perform Reiki treatment for those in need. On certain days of the year, such as the Assamese festival of Bihu, Independence Day etc., we visit homes for the mentally retarded, for vagrant women, social welfare probationers, abandoned children and footpath dwellers, and deliver goods and sweets. Some members of the TOS again visit the Tuberculosis Hospital to distribute sweets and fruits and give patients a much-needed moral boost. In several orphanages we organise sports days, drawing and painting competitions etc. and offer meals or distribute fruits along with school uniforms, sweaters, books and stationery as and when needed. We organise health camps where free medical check-ups and medicines are offered.

In some TOS groups the members arrange 'warming camps' (animal welfare information meetings) and a

special type of vaccination camp for poultry. They also provide nutritive supplements and vaccinations to the affected larger animals.

A few years ago, we participated in the campaign against a resolution of the Govt. of India's Tenth Five Year Plan to develop the meat industry by exporting to other countries. We have donated to relief work after disasters in other states. During annual floods in our own state of Assam we participate in clean up operations including supplying clothes, utensils and various food-stuffs. Also we give yarn to the women weavers for their own use or for sale as a source of much-needed revenue. In the un-declared Kargil War in Kashmir, the TOS in Assam offered help to army family casualties.

TSL: That is indeed a long and varied list of activities. What do you enjoy the most?

Mr Patowary: I particularly love participating in the medical camps and orphanage work. It is very heart-warming to help orphans and indigent adults feel that society cares for

Our workers offer medical treatment to the poor, schooling assistance to many children and mobility aids to the physically handicapped.

and loves them, that they are not marginalized and forgotten. Thinking about it, though, there is something else from which I get as much if not even more joy.

TSL: What is that?

Mr Patowary: The Region has created a 'Madame H.P. Blavatsky Book Grant' consisting of a cash award every year to meritorious but economically disadvantaged students enrolled at Gauhati University. We offer 1000 rupees [approx. US\$25] to a small number of carefully selected students whose parents would normally have to withdraw them prematurely from their studies and send them into the work force.

Applications are received and reviewed by a committee. It is a great joy to see the expression on the faces of the students when they learn they can continue their studies. At the presentation ceremony, they express their pleasure in a short speech and this is touching to us all. I should add that a by-product of making the book grants in the name of H.P.B. is that it stimulates interest in Mme Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society.

It is also worth mentioning that one TOS group (Pragjyotishpur TOS group) has been running an informal school since September 1994, providing free education, study materials, uniforms, etc. The students are selected from very poor, uneducated families residing in slums. After receiving education for a year, the successful students are integrated into Lower Primary schools. It is an immense pleasure when these students

express desire for higher studies.

TSL: What is the social problem that worries you the most and moves you the most to action?

Mr Patowary: In winter it gets cold in Assam. We provide warm clothes, shawls and rugs to the extent we are able but I tear my hair out trying to find ways to do more. Once people's hearts are touched, they support us, but how to touch their hearts in the first place? That is where the teachings of Theosophy are vital because they provide a worldview that gives rise spontaneously to compassion. When people are touched deeply, they participate in our activities. That makes us very happy. We welcome them with open arms.

TSL: Our best wishes to you and your fellow servers.

Mr Patowary: Thank you and you are most welcome.

Schoolboy receiving study material. Sitting: Dr Kishori Mohan Pathak, President of the TOS in Assam & Arunachal; standing in middle: Mr Allauddin Ahmed, Secretary Pragjyotishpur Group; on right: Mr J.N. Patowary.

Estudiante recibiendo material de estudio. Sentado, el Dr. Kishori Mohan Pathak, presidente de la OTS en Assam y Arunanachal. De pie en el centro, el Sr. Allauddin Ahmed, secretario del Grupo de Pragjyoyisspur. A la derecha el Sr. J.N. Patowary.

HOW TO HELP

Would you like to support the work of the TOS in the eastern-most tip of India?

1. Cost of a shawl: 120 rupees or approx. US\$3.00;
2. Cost of a blanket: 130 rupees or approx. US\$3.25;
3. Cost of a tricycle: 800 rupees or approx. US\$16.00;
4. Cost of an H.P. Blavatsky book grant: 2000 rupees (until now 1000 rupees have been given which is too meagre) or approx. US\$50.00.

If you would like to donate one of these items, please contact the international secretary of the

TOS, being sure to specify your selected item. See inside front or back cover for the address.



Meditation for World Peace

O God of many names,
Lover of all nations,
We pray for peace:
In our hearts
In our homes
In our nations
In our world.
The peace of your will
The peace of our need.

Wings of A Dove



If you had to list some great concerns you have for the planet today, what would they be? The chances are that you would mention the lack of global peace amongst them. Yet most often we feel powerless to do anything about it, don't we? So is there anything we can do to help build a safer planet? At the invitation of the international TOS, long time peace activist, Deni Gross, shares some suggestions.

Almost everyone wishes to work in some way to promote peace. However, the task may seem so daunting that it's difficult to know where to begin to put our efforts. First of all, it's important to realise that we can work for peace in a variety of ways. Creativity is the key. It also helps to first break down this concept of peacework into two equally important parts, each requiring different approaches: (1) **personal peace**, which includes not only finding peace within ourselves, but also practising peaceful relationships with our family members, friends, co-workers, etc. and within our immediate, local environments; and (2) **global peace**, or working to bring peace to the entire planet, usually associated with ending warfare and/or

correcting other social injustices and inequalities. This article will attempt to offer practical, easy-to-do suggestions for work on both levels. We invite you to try one or more of the following and see what works best for you.

PERSONAL PEACE

Achieving a sense of personal peace is a very subjective thing; however, most people seem to feel that it means finding some sort of calmness and happiness both within ourselves and in our relationships with others, which causes us to lose any desire for domination or ill will. In fact, when we reach that point of achieving personal peace, we stop looking to either the past or the future for happiness, for we find joy in the present moment. When things do go wrong, we no longer blame others; neither do we look to others to fulfil us. All we desire, we find within ourselves, in whatever place we happen to be at that moment. What are some ways to work towards achieving this beautiful state of personal, inner peace?

PEACE WITHIN

1. Take some time each day to go 'into the silence'. Meditate, pray or otherwise quieten the mind for at least a few minutes to find that peaceful place within, where we contact our own higher Self and make a

connection with the source of all life. If possible, use this time to also send peaceful thoughts to others.

2. Make our homes places of peace. Turn off the television and radio. Eliminate distractions. Listen to the beautiful sounds of silence instead. Open the windows and invite nature's symphony indoors. Clean up clutter and keep the house spotlessly clean. Bring plants indoors and make the home an oasis of beauty and calm. All these actions attract positive energies and increase the flow of helpful prana throughout the home's atmosphere, contributing to a feeling of peacefulness which is immediately noticeable to visitors who enter.

3. Spend time in the sunshine and soak up its beneficial energies. Not only is it good for our physical health, but it also balances the atoms in an upset aura. Nervousness dissipates in the sunshine and is replaced by a feeling of calm that only nature can provide.

4. Avoid tobacco, alcohol and recreational drugs. They attract upsetting, unhealthy and negative energies. Consider a vegetarian diet. Much cruelty to animals occurs in order to perpetuate meat-based diets, and this significantly contributes to a lack of peacefulness, not only in our

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bodies, but in the planet's atmosphere as well.

5. Read uplifting literature, listen to beautiful music, and refuse to be drawn towards crass, chaotic or violent images, such as those which are shown in movies or on television shows. Start the day by reading an inspirational thought. Whenever something occurs which threatens to destroy our peacefulness, we can refer back to that uplifting image from the beginning of the day and bring ourselves back to a feeling of centredness.

PEACE WITH OTHERS

1. Salute the divinity in others. There is no surer way to 'keep the peace' than by remembering that we all issue from the same source and harbour a spark of divinity within.

2. Be the first to say 'I'm sorry'. When family arguments arise, be the negotiator who tries to find an amicable solution which suits everyone. If all else fails, we can always say we're sorry. The argument is probably not worth perpetuating anyway. Certainly, 'winning' an argument is not more important than winning the love of cherished family members.

3. Be a good listener. Give family and friends our full attention. Then share. Share our thoughts, share our love, share our energy, share our stuff. Peace is a two-way street.

4. Put ourselves in the other person's shoes. It's always easier to compromise when we try to see the situation from the other person's perspective. With enough will-power, creativity, hard work and cooperation, even the most diffi-

cult situation can usually be worked out to everyone's satisfaction.

PEACE IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY

1. We can use our personal talents, such as our love of art or gardening, to promote peace. We can ask others in the community to join us in planting a community peace garden. Here we can hold monthly gatherings to celebrate peace by working on the garden together, hosting a public peace ceremony, playing music, putting on skits that promote non-violence or reading our poetry.

2. Remember the children. Raising peace-loving children is an important part of a secure future for everyone. We can talk about the importance of peace and non-violence to children through religious education classes, scouting events, or school functions. Advertising works, and we can certainly 'advertise' peace. We can write 'Promote Peace!' on our correspondence, the envelopes of monthly bill payments or our e-mails. We can wear t-shirts or badges with slogans promoting peace. We can join or promote local organisations that advocate a peaceful lifestyle. Better still, we can start our own local peace groups. It can be as simple as a few friends promising to gather regularly for coffee and discuss an issue related to non-violence.

3. We can start peace groups at our local houses of worship to keep peace issues in the forefront of congregational life. The format can include a brief period of meditation for peace, a discussion on a related issue, and a brief comment period. Adding food and beautiful music at the end of the gathering is sure to

promote success. The group might then consider hosting the same type of event for the entire congregation and/or the public, or sponsoring a speaker or panel discussion on pertinent peace topics.

GLOBAL PEACE

Working to achieve global peace requires that we adjust our thinking and widen our horizons to include not just our immediate circle of family, friends and local community, but the whole world. The most important first step we must take is to educate ourselves, by keeping abreast of global affairs and being informed global citizens. This requires a tolerant, open-minded and accepting attitude towards countries and cultures other than our own. The most important trait of a successful worker for global peace is an intense and unselfish interest in everyone and everything outside our own little personal lives.

1. We should take every opportunity to publicize peace initiatives. The International Day of Peace is celebrated every September 21 and provides an excellent opportunity to bring peace issues to the public's attention. United Nations Day, October 24, is another alternative. Or we can make peace issues the focus of any recognized holiday, celebration or public event.

2. We can join forces with one of the many organised, non-profit peace groups in existence. A recent internet search yielded more than a million entries on the topic, 'peace groups'.

3. We can learn about cultures other than our own and then pass that knowledge on to others by sharing a meal from another country, demonstrating the dance and music of another culture, or recommending

a book written from the perspective of someone totally different from ourselves.

4. VOTE! Whenever possible, we should exercise the power of our individual votes to elect candidates to public office who promote peace over war, sharing over hoarding, global human rights over selfish national interests.

5. We can write and circulate among our fellow citizens petitions for global disarmament and a change from a war-based economy to one that serves human needs. Mailing the signed petitions to government leaders around the world sends a strong message that the majority of the world's people want to live peacefully with each other and to use our limited global resources for constructive rather than destructive purposes.

6. We should also keep abreast of current legislative bills that are due for action by our government officials. It is important to take time to write to our legislators expressing our concerns. Experts estimate that every letter received by legislators is assumed to represent the opinions of at least 25 other citizens.

7. We can voice our support of all individual and local, national or international group efforts to bring peace to the planet. May Peace Prevail on Earth!

We can only touch briefly here on a few examples of how to put theosophical principles into practice to help make this a more peaceful world. In future issues, however, we will continue to present articles that examine various aspects of the peace process, both personal and planetary. We welcome readers' comments on this article, questions, suggestions for projects and more. Please address correspondence to: Mrs. Deni Gross, 2668 Plow Road, Birdsboro, PA 19508-8247 USA, or send an e-mail to cfpeace@hotmail.com with 'LINK' in the subject heading. Space permitting, we will include your comments in a future issue.



DARA FEROZE MIRZA

It is with deep sorrow that we report the death in tragic circumstances in September 2007 of the Presidential Representative of the Theosophical Society in Pakistan, Dara Feroze Mirza. Dara was a member of the Management Council of the TOS and gave unfailing support to his sister Fareeda (Honorary Secretary) and her husband Amanullah Amir (Honorary Treasurer) in their work for the TOS in Karachi. He was a member of the Managing Committee of the Poor Patients' Relief Society and very active and generous in the area of animal welfare.

Dara was a gentle, compassionate human being of true humility and quiet inner strength, a shining light for those who knew him. His loss is deeply felt by his family members, the TOS and TS in Karachi and the Indo-Pacific Federation of the Theosophical Society of which he was a past vice-president.

The international TOS notes many tributes in response to the news of his death:

The world has lost a loving and generous man. The Theosophical Society in Pakistan and the international Theosophical Society have lost a sincere, dedicated worker for the cause of Theosophy, the world-wide Theosophical Family has lost a loving brother.

Dara was ready for any vicissitude in life, including death. He was a true philosopher, a dedicated Theosophist and a kind-hearted and generous man.

We were not privileged to have met Dara. That is entirely our loss, as we would have gained so much from the love, friendship and wisdom that he possessed. The Theosophical Society in Pakistan, and the International Society too, has lost a sincere, hard worker for the cause of the Masters. We have the knowledge that the Masters always look after their workers and Dara will be working to the best of his abilities in whatever plane of consciousness he finds himself.

Although we did not know Dara (consciously, at least), we feel great friendship and love for this valiant brother of ours and will hold him close in our hearts. Let us all be worthy of his example of courage and service.

Many more tributes received by the international TOS express affection for Dara and horror at the way he died. He left for work on the morning of September 14, 2007 but never reached the office. The next day his body was found lying in an outlying area of Karachi. He had been shot. Whilst we are all aware of the greed and viciousness rampant in the world, our Theosophical Family seems rarely to lose one of its own in such circumstances. It is a dreadful reminder of our responsibility to work for the reduction of violence in the only way that can possibly be effective in the long term: by going to its roots in human nature and combating their outward symptoms at as many levels as possible.



A man who never gave up on anyone



The TOS notes the passing of the Rt. Rev. Joseph Lesage Tisch, Director of the Social Service Department of the TOS in the USA for some 27 years. As a retired director of Human Services for the city of Melbourne, Florida, Rt. Rev. Tisch devoted himself tirelessly to community service, showing outstanding devotion to those whom life had dealt a difficult hand. His greatest enemy was social injustice in all its forms: poverty, sub-standard housing, inhumane prison conditions, illiteracy, and worker exploitation. His friends remember him as someone who, 'never gave up on anyone including, and especially, the down and out'.

As a worker for the welfare of those less fortunate, Rt. Rev. Tisch lived an extremely simple life in a two-room dwelling with few amenities and a sparse wardrobe. Thus, he was able to devote his time and energy to helping prisoners when they were released by supplying them with clothing and basic toiletries, and helping them find a home and employment.

In addition to acting as a Bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church, Secre-

tary of his local TS branch and lecturer for the Florida Theosophical Federation of the TS, Bishop Joseph was involved in many community help associations. He was, for example, a Loan Executive for an association called United Way, famous for its programme 'creating pathways out of poverty'.

For the last five months of his life, Bishop Joseph was in a nursing home. Due to age and illness, he had much trouble breathing and sometimes slipped into coma-like states. His description of one of his early episodes follows:

Unrecognized illusions begin, and

the mind says that the whole of reality is trapped in an endless labyrinth. Familiar scenes pass before one but there seems no escape. The mind alternates between a desire for death and a desire for life. One moment the attitude is 'Lord, take me now, take me', and the next minute, 'Heal me, Lord, heal me'. These hallucinations are an awesome experience, giving the impression that a gate has opened into another world, a world as real as the one in which we live. Suddenly without warning, the hallucinations disappear, and the mind is restored to some stability, but less sure of itself.

Rt. Rev. Tisch passed into his higher life on August 25, 2007.

A DEVOTED WORKER

The TOS acknowledges the passing in July 2006 of Chennai TOS member, Sri L.V. Jayaraman, at the age of 71. He faithfully and discreetly served the cause of Theosophy for several decades, generously making his expertise as a chartered accountant available to the TOS and to TS Lodges and Federations within India. Well-read in Theosophy, he was an excellent resource person for members and Lodges and provided the TOS with photocopies of a great deal of interesting information on its history. May he enjoy his rest period!

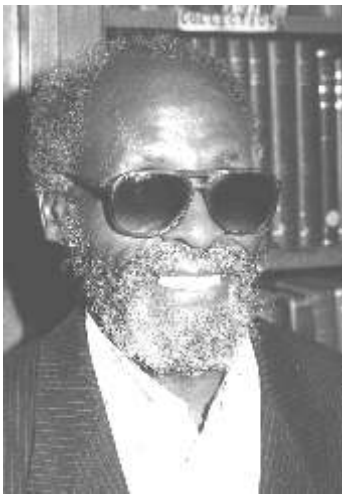


Sri L.V. Jayaraman (third from left) and friends

Sri L.V. Jayaraman, tercero por la izquierda, y amigos



REUBEN THUKU, A SERVANT OF HUMANITY



Reuben Thuku

The Theosophical Society and Theosophical Order of Service in East Africa pay tribute to a member they loved dearly, Reuben Thuku, who passed away on June 23, 2004 in Nakuru, Kenya after contracting cerebral malaria. The suddenness of his death shocked and saddened his family and friends. He was 58 years old and is survived by four children.

Reuben lost his sight as a

A gentle and modest man and a treasure trove of knowledge and wisdom, he was able to speak inspiringly in a way that was easy to grasp. He was very popular with young people.

five-year-old after falling ill with measles. After studying at Thika School for the Blind, he worked for 13 years as a telephone operator. He found his vocation after joining the Theosophical Society in 1967 when he was able to plunge into deep study and reflection on life and its purpose. The TS sponsored a stay for him at its international HQ in India where he studied intensively for 18 months.

He then devoted his life to the upliftment of humanity. He travelled

widely as a lecturer in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia and was also invited to speak in Zimbabwe, South Africa, England and the USA. In 1995, he attended the first Hindu World Conference in Durban, South Africa to present a paper at a plenary session on 'Similarities of African and Hindu Cultures'. He received a standing ovation. In the East African Section, in addition to lecturing frequently to all the Lodges, he spoke regularly in secondary schools, teachers' training colleges, nursing schools and community centres. As a TOS activity, he visited and spoke to the inmates and officers of a prison in Kitale.

A gentle and modest man and a treasure trove of knowledge and wisdom, he was able to speak inspiringly in a way that was easy to grasp. He was very popular with young people. He will be remembered by all as not only a deep student but also a great soul who touched other souls and filled their lives with light and knowledge. The TS and TOS in East Africa salute Reuben's life of service.

The Clean-Up of the Adyar River

*Dr Srinivasan,
Member of the Chennai
branch of the TOS*

I consider myself to be extremely fortunate to have had the privilege of growing up in the Adyar estate (during the forties and fifties), as both my father and two elder brothers worked for the TS. I did my entire schooling in the Besant Theosophical School under the tutelage of the late Rukmini Arundale. At that time the teenagers of the estate had their own boat to ply in the river. I remember swimming in the Adyar River as late as the early fifties. President Jinarajadasa had installed a spring diving board right behind the headquarters hall and we had fun with that too.

I vividly remember an overnight boat trip along the Buckingham Canal (sometime during the 40s) to Mahabalipuram, (to see the famous shore temples located about 50 kms from Chennai) which the school had organised. There were about 50 kids and perhaps two or three boats in the convoy. What an enjoyable and adventurous trip that was!

On completing my University education in Chennai, I left for Bombay (now Mumbai) to take up employment at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre. On retirement from government service, I came back to live in

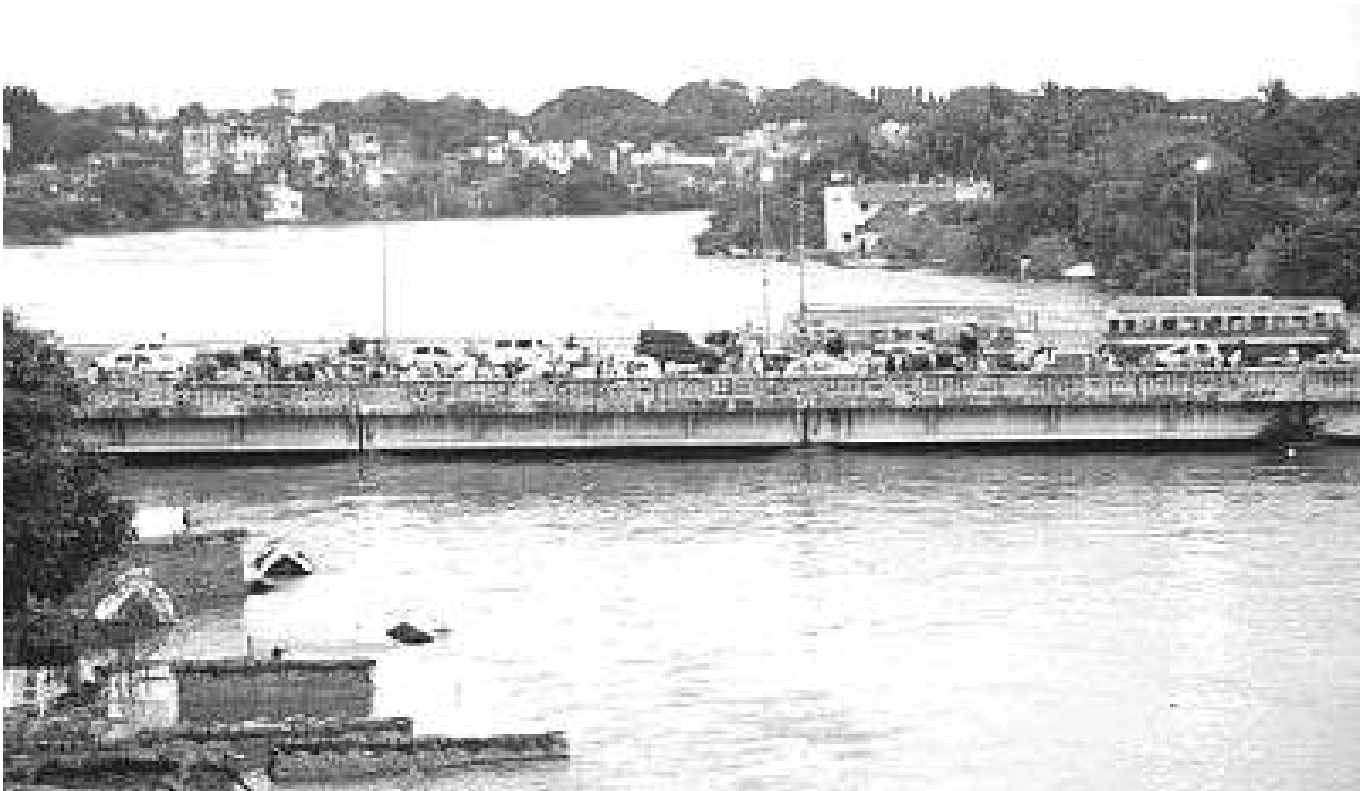


El Dr. Srinivasan, miembro de la OTS en Chennai

Chennai after a gap of four decades.

On my return to Adyar, I was pained to see the level of pollution of the river and decided that something had to be done about it! I identified the appropriate agencies and authorities and tried to find out for myself where exactly the problem lay and why nobody else was concerned about the state of the Adyar River. It was then that I was pleasantly surprised to discover that indeed many concerned citizens of Chennai had been working to save the river as also the other polluted waterways of Chennai such as the Cooum River and the Buckingham Canal. Exnora, the well known and very successful NGO of Chennai, had under the leadership of its dynamic founder,

M.B. Nirmal, led the campaign to get the politicians and bureaucrats to move on the matter. Exnora and other NGOs such as the 'Citizens' Alliance for Sustainable Living' had set up in 1991 what was known as the Chennai Waterways Monitoring Programme or WAMP for short. WAMP was essentially a citizens' monitoring group to pressure the powers that be to get their act together. During the decade of the nineties, several technical studies were carried out, including one funded by the World Bank. By the turn of the 21st century, the main sources of the pollution had been clearly identified (there were 422 sewage outfalls into the river) and a plan of action finalized, resulting in the establishment of the Chennai City River Conservation Project (CCRCP) early in 2000. Funded primarily by the Federal government and executed by the Tamil Nadu state government agencies, the Rs. 492 crore (approximately US\$110M) project was initiated at the dawn of the new millennium. Details of the scope of this project and the works completed to date are available on the internet at www.chennaietrowater.com and www.envis.tn.nic.in. An "Environment Management Agency of Tamil Nadu" (EMAT) has been setup under the Department of Environment of the Government of Tamil Nadu with effect from 22nd January 2003 to monitor the project works of



Chennai City River Conservation Project (CCRCP). It may be noted from the above sites that as of today all the sewage entry points into the Adyar river have been plugged and the sewage lines diverted to newly set up sewage treatments plants. Most of the 30 new sewage pumping stations and 60 kms of interceptor units are in an advanced stage of construction.

Unfortunately the works related to 'de-silting of the waterways and bund-forming' on the banks are being somewhat delayed on account of court cases coming in the way of evicting the slum dwellers living along the river and canal banks. Relocating the slum dwellers is a politically sensitive human problem as it involves providing acceptable alternative accommodation.

Another area of concern in the context of the Adyar river clean-up, is the restoration of the very delicate ecological balance of the 'estuarine ecosystem' associated with the Adyar River estuary. It is known, for example, that over seventy species of

migratory birds visit the Adyar estuary, some coming all the way from Eastern Europe! Not many are aware of the large number of academic studies that have been carried out to assess the degree of pollution of the Chennai city rivers. Taking heart from the manner in which the Thames River in London has been successfully restored, the environmentalists are confident that the clean-up projects that are underway can succeed in restoring the river.

We 'Adyarites' are indeed happy that at last there is a glimmer of hope and the residents of the TS estate (especially the 'migratory human species' who come to Adyar to attend the annual conventions) can look forward to a clean and unpolluted Adyar River in the not too distant future!

No discussion of the Adyar River would, however, be complete without taking note of the impact of the devastating tsunami that hit Chennai on December 26th, 2004. The delegates attending the 129th annual convention of the TS will recall the

sudden whiff of an unusually foul smell, even as we were listening to the inaugural address being given by our International President. The estate manager even walked out to see if he could find the cause, which proved to be the overflow of the river, with its polluted sludge. It is now recognised that the Adyar river estuary served to take up the devastating energy of the tsunami thereby saving the TS estate, especially the sea facing compound wall. Of course the consequent spill over of the river onto the estate inundated vast tracts of low lying areas up to a distance of a few tens of metres, as happens every time there is a major cyclone in Chennai. Satellite pictures taken on the day after the Tsunami show how the mouth of the river had widened to 200m and helped substantially flush out the river basin. The tsunami thus had a positive impact on the pollution level of the river by draining out the sludge accumulated over the years. The last time the river mouth was so widened by powerful tidal waves was during a major cyclone in October 2002.

The Dog Brigade at Adyar

**Geetha Jaikumar,
Member of the Chennai
branch of the TOS**

Many Theosophists around the world are aware of the existence of an animal welfare dispensary near their international HQ, but not many are aware that animal welfare activities are also part of the daily routine at Adyar itself. Around 48 (fortunate!) dogs that had strayed into the compound at various points and times have been 'officially' adopted as canine residents! Each dog has a name and number, mentioned on the collar it proudly wears.

Food is cooked twice a day, behind the residence called Bhojanasala, by Deenan, a young man specially appointed for the purpose. The cooked food (consisting of various combinations of rice, pulses, wheat, ragi and milk) is cooled and then taken by Deenan on his cycle to various feeding stations on the compound where it is put into earthen pots kept there for this purpose.

There is a three-member animal welfare committee which oversees all matters relating to the canine residents – food, vaccinations, medical

*The Doggy Food Express –
Deenan on his cycle!*

*El distribuidor rápido de comida para
perros, Deenan, en su bicicleta*

treatment when required etc. A register of dogs is also maintained giving the name, vaccination dates and other information about each dog.

The dogs on the campus are a happy lot. Their food requirements are met and they spend their days snoozing, chasing squirrels, mongoose and jackals and occasionally barking insults and squabbling with one another. Many have struck up friendships with the walkers who come to the campus in the morning and evening and who bring along some biscuits and other snacks for their four-legged friends.

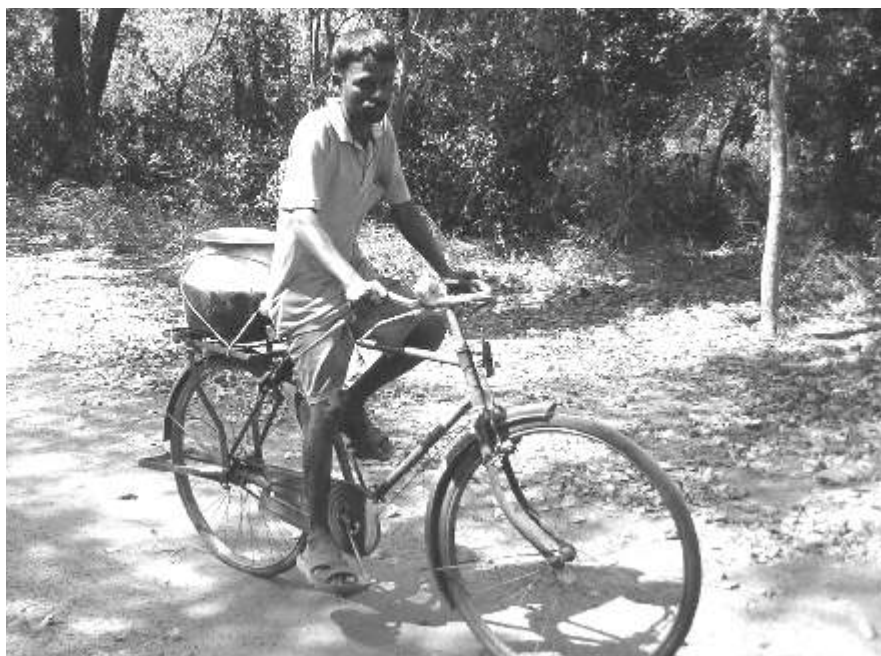
There is lots more that needs to be

done for less fortunate stray animals in the area. Maybe a local community outreach programme could address this problem.



Luigi Marsi, National Director of the TOS in Italy, outside Leadbeater Chambers at the world TS HQ at Adyar, Chennai, India, with one of the dozens of dogs that live on the estate and are cared for and fed by the staff and volunteers.

Luigi Marsi, Director Nacional de la OTS en Italia, en el exterior de Leadbeater Chambers durante la Convención anual de la ST en Adyar, Chennai, India, con uno de los perros que viven en la finca donde son cuidados y alimentados por los empleados y voluntarios.





TO SNAP EVERY YOKE

*René Wadlow**

“Is not this what I require of you . . . to snap every yoke and set free those who have been crushed?”

Isaiah, 58 v. 6

There are many ways in which we are held in chains: through our own desires and actions and by the structures of society. Our task is to help snap those bonds of slavery, both our own, through our efforts at self-realisation, and those of others who are often in situations where the power of individual will is not enough. Social forces are strong, and violence is often used to keep the chains in place.

The United Nations has created a ‘Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery’ as part of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in

which I participate as a Non-Governmental Organisation representative. Snapping the yoke of contemporary forms of slavery provides a framework for TOS social action. We can usefully divide contemporary slavery into five types, though there are often links between them.

The first is debt bondage, especially practised in South Asia. It is estimated that there are some 20 million people held in debt bondage. Debt bondage is largely a rural practice, and local government officials and police often overlook its consequences. The debt is usually contracted in an emergency such as sickness or to cover expenses between harvests. However, the persons going into debt with money lenders or richer farmers cannot read, and therefore have no idea what ‘rates of interest’ mean, nor do they know when they have worked off the debt. It is often a child or younger member of the family who is ‘given’ to work

to pay off the debt.

Debt bondage leads us to the second category which is child labour. The U.N.’s International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that there are some 180 million children who are in the worst forms of child labour — work that is hazardous to their mental and physical health. There is currently an important effort of the ILO to deal with the problem. However, these efforts need to be carried out with care as many families depend heavily on income from children’s work.

The third type also concerns youth. This is early and forced marriages. Women and girls are married without choice and often forced into lives of servitude, accompanied even by physical violence. A good reference in this connection is Jaya Sagade’s work, *Child Marriage in India: Socio-legal and Human Rights Dimensions* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005, 257pp).



Fourth is the use of children as child soldiers. There are estimates that there are some 300,000 child soldiers, some as young as ten years old, in some 20 areas of conflict in the world. Child soldiers can fight on the front lines where they are sometimes given drugs to overcome their reluctance to kill. Girls are often obliged to be 'soldiers' wives' and end up in prostitution when conflicts end. Reversing the dehumanisation of children involved in conflicts is a long-term and time-consuming effort, but it is a necessary undertaking that post-conflict societies have to assume. Family-based and community-based rehabilitation are urgent

necessities for these children.

It is the fifth type, human trafficking, often linked to prostitution, that is the fastest-growing means by which people are enslaved today. As Nicholas Kristof of the New York Times wrote, 'Sex trafficking at its worst is the slavery of the 21st century, yet it has become one of the world's growth industries... In the 19th century, the civilised world recognised that slavery was a moral blot on humanity and rose up against it. So why should we acquiesce in the 21st century slavery, when 15-year-old girls are imprisoned in brothels and sentenced to death by AIDS?'

No part of the world is free from these forms of contemporary slavery. Many societies live with one or more forms and do not take firm and sustained action until the results appear in violent and dramatic ways. Prevention, protection of the vulnerable, and recovery are the three levels of necessary action. There is a need for a sound knowledge of the areas and familiarity with the social groups most exposed to risks of servitude. There is a need to develop awareness and political will so that

police and social welfare officials carry on systematic protection. There is a need to develop capacity for recovery through the creation of shelters, workshops for psychological care, education, and training. In the long term, it would be a good thing if the TOS could develop a strategy to deal with these related issues in a holistic way.

Reviews of books on each of these categories of slavery can be found on the website of the TOS in America: www.theoservice.org in a subsection of the book review section entitled 'To Snap Every Yoke'.

** René Wadlow is a regular book reviewer for the TOS website www.theoservice.org and the editor of a web journal of world politics: www.transnational-perspectives.org. Since 1973, he has been a Non-Governmental Organisation representative to the United Nations, Geneva, where he works on issues of human rights, disarmament and conflict resolution. From 1992 to 1998, he was President of the French child welfare organisation Partage, with projects in Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, Bangladesh and India: www.partage.org.*

Pause For Thought

The best service is that which makes the burden light, not that which takes it away.

If people reject the way in which you wish to serve them, try to find out another form of service. Your desire is to serve them, not to dictate to them the way in which they must be helped.

Do not be too shy to offer your help to those in need, whether you know them or not. Their need makes them your brothers and sisters, but your shyness is a form of pride which deprives them of a helper in the time of their trouble.

Never allow people's rejection of your offer of service to be an excuse for refusing any further help. Those who refuse acts of service end by needing them all the more.

George S. Arundale

The Future of Africa



Tom Davis
Chairperson of the Pan African
Theosophical Federation

Politically, 2004 was a watershed year for the continent of Africa with the first full meeting of the African Union and the inauguration of the African Parliament in South Africa. South Africa's President Mbeki has carried out a great deal of shuttle diplomacy as current Chairman of the African Union, helping to bring an end to conflicts in several regions, as part of the work of NEPAD (the New Partnership for African Development). This organization works for democracy and good governance, poverty eradication and toward the ultimate responsibility of the African people for their own issues. The next phase will be to ensure regional cooperation

and then encourage the replacement of the remaining old dictatorships and corrupt regimes with genuine democracies. The most difficult obstacle will be the gradual eradication of rampant corruption and gross inefficiency, which have mainly been responsible for the failure of African states to function well economically and to alleviate poverty. Africa has enormous natural resource wealth which, if properly managed and equitably shared, could transform the continent.

The resurgent interest in Africa by the industrialized world is not only because its members believe in NEPAD and wish to help Africa. It is also to do with the looming shortage of oil and other natural resources. As South-East Asia and Eastern Europe continue to expand industrially, their demand for raw materials, coupled with that of the rest of the industrialized world, will soon outstrip supply.

This will ultimately lead to a scramble for resources. It has been predicted by scientists and environmentalists that at the current rate of growth in consumption, in 40 to 50 years all oil and most minerals will have been mined out, large forests decimated and certain seas fished to exhaustion.

Governments of first world and developing countries are obviously unwilling to introduce unpopular measures to reduce consumption and to restrict industrial growth in the short to medium term, because these could lead to economic stagnation or reverses and thus political suicide. However, unless there is a concerted effort to reduce global consumption of oil and minerals and introduce a system that uses sustainable resources, the current global economic system will gradually collapse and eventually an alternative system will be forced on governments to manage the mess.



A way to avoid what appears to be a desperate situation is to change consumption patterns by such means as the following:

- * Achieve negative population growth in *all* countries. (Many industrialized countries have negative birth rates already.)

- * Encourage a reduction in the consumption of non-renewable commodities in all regions of the world. It may be necessary in the medium term to restrict or ration supply of some commodities.

- * Develop and introduce more efficient and extensive mass transportation systems in order to reduce the use of motor vehicles.

- * Phase out the use of fossil oils and fuels as soon as possible, by cre-

ating and manufacturing in huge volumes renewable and sustainable synthetic fuels and lubricants. At the same time design and produce new means of land, air and sea transportation and modify current means of transport to run on these synthetic fuels, or on power from sustainable generation methods such as hydro-electric, wind, geothermal and solar power, or on fuel cells using methanol which can be produced from human, animal and plant waste. A large Jumbojet aircraft with a full load of fuel uses approximately 80 tons or 100,000 litres of fuel to fly from Johannesburg to London. The very latest design of Jumbo jets will use approximately 60 tons of fuel.

- * Increase the use of audio and visual conferencing for meetings to obviate travel. Governments could provide very low cost internet access and broadband technology to permit global webcam usage, so that people communicating can see each other. There should be government sponsored e-mail communication centres for those who cannot afford a computer.

- * Devise a new system of managing the global economy in a way that benefits all and not just a select few.

- * Encourage industries to manu-

facture products that last for at least ten years and with parts easy to repair or replace. The throw-away, 'new-new' fashion mentality is partly responsible for the rapid depletion of natural resources, so throw-away products should be banned. The lower rates of production will displace employees but more staff will be required in repairing and servicing. (Rationing will ultimately have to be applied to ensure that purchases of new consumer durables are only authorised when absolutely necessary.)

- * Stop mass destruction of large forests, which are the main source of the earth's oxygen and plant more trees than those being cut down, until balance is restored.

- * Protect wildlife and halt the decimation of species.

As Theosophists actively embracing the First and Second Objects of our Society, we need to be very much aware of these crucial matters, not just for the immediate future of our children and the continent of Africa but for the benefit of the planet and the entire scheme of evolution. Action must follow awareness.

PTF Newsletter No. 6 March 2005

*They hang the man and flog
the woman,
Who steals the goose from off
the common,
Yet let the greater villain
loose,
That steals the common from
the goose.*
Seventeenth-century English
protest rhyme

AROUND THE TOS WORLD IN PHOTOS

TOS Brazil

Right: Participants in Salvador-Bahia at one of the national TOS gatherings organised by Terezinha Franca Kind, until recently National Director of the TOS.

Participantes en Salvador-Bahia de uno de los encuentros nacionales de la OTS organizados por Terezinha Franca Kind, que hasta fecha reciente ha sido Directora Nacional de la OTS.



Radha in Nairobi, March 2005

Above: In March 2005, Mrs Radha Burnier visited the TS in Kenya for its Centenary Convention and, while in Nairobi, presented 45 Theosophical books to the library of the Starehe Boys' Centre where the TOS sponsors the education of five needy students. Starehe Boys' Centre is one of the top national boarding schools and is entirely sustained by local and overseas donations.

En Marzo de 2005 la Sra. Radha Burnier visitó la ST en Kenia con motivo de la Convención de su centenario y estando en Nairobi ofreció 45 libros teosóficos a la librería del Centro de Jóvenes Starehe en el que la ST apadrina la educación de cinco estudiantes necesitados. El Centro de Jóvenes Starehe es una de las escuelas principales y está enteramente sostenida por donaciones locales e internacionales.



Every year, the TOS in Kenya donates over 7 tons of foodstuffs together with cooking fat, stationery and medicines to a number of homes looking after orphans, the aged, needy people and HIV/AIDS infected children. Here we

see the presentation of material in early May 2005.

Cada año la OTS en Kenia dona más de 7 toneladas de productos alimenticios, grasa para guisar, objetos

de escritorio y medicinas a hogares que se ocupan de huérfanos, personas mayores necesitadas y niños infectados por el VIH/SIDA. Podemos ver la entrega de material al inicio de Mayo de 2005.



Durante casi 30 años, Candi Phillips ha estado encargada de la sección de Bienestar de los Animales de la OTS en los EE.UU. A lo largo de todo este tiempo ha contribuido con artículos para la revista de la organización nacional For The Love of Life y también ha editado el boletín Love All Creation de su propio departamento. La popular sección de Bienestar de los Animales atrajo siempre muchos participantes como consecuencia de la cálida experiencia de Candi, experta en asuntos relacionados con el bienestar animal. Se jubiló en Febrero de 2006 siendo muy querida y apreciada servidora durante mucho tiempo, tanto en la OTS como en la comunidad mayor. Aunque la puedan echar de menos sus muchos amigos de la OTS, ella continúa con su trabajo voluntario en otros lugares y siempre será una verdadera adalid por el bienestar de los animales.

For almost 30 years, Candi Phillips served as the head of the Animal Welfare section of the TOS in the United States. Throughout that time, she contributed articles to the organisation's national magazine, For the Love of Life, and also edited her own department newsletter,

Love All Creation. The popular Animal Welfare section always drew many participants, because of Candi's warmth, experience, expertise with animal welfare issues, and the fact that she offered such practical suggestions on how to help the animals. She retired in February

2006, a much-loved and appreciated long-time server of both the TOS and the greater community. Though she will be missed by her many friends in the TOS, she continues her volunteer work in other areas and will remain ever a true champion of the welfare of animals.

Children's Home TOS Brazil

Lar das Crianças Nossa Senhora das Graças (Our Lady of Grace)



Since 1994, Zeneida da Cereja Silva has been managing a Children's Home on the premises of the Theosophical Institute, one hour's drive from Brasilia. Anywhere up to 20 youngsters, even toddlers, are entrusted to the Home by the Children's Court. They have been either abandoned or removed from their parents because of bad treatment. The Home has recently had to engage in more intensive fundraising efforts than ever before because of increasing costs. It has organised afternoon teas, dinner dances and lunches and been trying hard to find more local sponsors. Brazilian currency is chronically weak,

which means that donations from overseas go a long way. For information, write to Zeneida at editorateosofica@editorateosofica.com.br with copy to Jan Kind at jnkind@terra.com.br

Desde 1994 Zeneida da Cereja Silva dirige el Hogar de Niños en la propiedad del Instituto Teosófico a una hora de camino de Brasilia. Hasta 20 jóvenes, e incluso niños de corta edad, están confiados en el Hogar por el Juzgado de Menores, al haber sido

abandonados o separados de sus padres por maltrato. El Hogar se ha visto involucrado en la adquisición de más fondos como nunca antes a causa del incremento de los costos. Para ello ha organizado tes vespertinos, comidas y cenas y trata corajudamente de conseguir más padrinos locales. La moneda brasileña está crónicamente muy baja lo que significa que las donaciones del exterior ayudan mucho. Para obtener más información escribir a Zeneida a editorateosofica@editorateosofica.com.br r enviando copia a jnkind@terra.com.br



Wrapped with love

Canberra TOS members – with their coordinator, Janice Scarabottolo (front left) – admiring their handiwork of knitted squares destined for the Wrapped with Love Project. This project provides hand knitted blankets to trouble spots worldwide. The aim is not only to provide warmth to refugees and the homeless, but also to give them a message that someone cares enough about them to make a blanket for them.

Los miembros de la OTS en Canberra, con su coordinadora, Janice Scarabottolo, en la primera línea a la izquierda, admirando los cuadrantes tricotados para el Proyecto Envuelto con Amor. Este proyecto facilita mantas tricotadas para lugares con dificultades en todo el mundo. El propósito es no solamente suministrar calor a los refugiados, sino facilitarles el mensaje de que alguien se ocupa lo bastante de ellos como para hacerles las mantas.

Service in Action

TOS members in Auckland, New Zealand organise a working bee to help beautify their local TS branch. Great idea!

Servicio en acción. Miembros de la OTS en Auckland, Nueva Zelanda, organizan un trabajo conjunto para embellecer el local de su Rama teosófica. Buena idea.

O O O

A little help actually given out of your own existing resources is worth more than the thought of how much better you would be able to serve were your resources greater.

— G.S. Arundale





Diana's Centre for Street children

Children at a Centre for street children in Riga, Latvia, receive clothes and shoes from the TOS in Sweden.

Niños en un centro para niños de la calle en Riga, Letonia, reciben ropas y zapatos de la OTS en Suecia

TOS SLOVENIA



VOJKA ROČEVAR
TOS
CORRESPONDENT
SLOVENIA



IRENA ZALAR
ADYAR LODGE
LIUBLJANA



CVETKA MAHER
LODGE SURYA-SVIT
MARIBOR



MARIJA LUSA
SURYA LODGE
KOPER



BLANKA BLAJ
BORSTNAR
LODGE
UNDERSTANDING
CELJE



TOS Sweden

The TOS in Sweden now gives support to three projects: a community home for some 36 parentless teenagers, a centre for street children in Riga, Latvia and an orphanage in Lauferi, Latvia (very close to the Russian border). In this photo we see TOS National Director Birgitta Stålhammar ((far left) at the teenage community home. She and her husband Jan have made several trips by van in the last three years, delivering large household items and goods.

La OTS en Suecia facilita ahora ayuda a tres proyectos: un hogar comunal para unos 36 jóvenes entre 10 y 20 años sin padres; un centro para niños de la calle en Riga, Letonia, y un orfanato en Lauferi, Letonia (muy cerca de la frontera rusa) En esta foto podemos ver a la directora nacional Birgitta Stålhammar (última a la izquierda) en el hogar comunal. Ella y su marido Jan han hecho varios viajes durante los últimos tres años para entregar artículos de hogar y otros productos.

Each of the four TS Lodges in Slovenia has its own TOS representative and they are supported in their work by the National Correspondent, Ms Vojka Hočevar.

Cada una de las cuatro Ramas en Eslovenia tiene su propio representante de la OTS que son ayudados en su trabajo por la Corresponsal Nacional Srta. Vodka Hočevar.



TOS fundraising sale team

The Theosophical Order of Service in France organises a fund raising sale in Paris in October or November every year. Started 30 years ago under Mrs Perrette Domer who retired recently at the age of 92 (!), the sale allows the TOS to make donations to service projects principally in India but also in Africa and within France. Until recently two Indian sacred dance programmes were always scheduled to attract the public, who enjoy browsing at the sale

before and after the programmes. Hundreds of spiritually-oriented books are sold at low prices along with art and craft, cakes, crêpes, etc.

La OTS en Francia organiza una venta para la captación de fondos, en París en Octubre o Noviembre de cada año. Organizada desde hace 30 años por la Sra. Perrette Domer, quien se retiró sólo recientemente a la edad de 92 años, la venta permite a la OTS hacer

donaciones para proyectos de servicio especialmente en India, pero también en África y dentro de Francia. Siempre se ofrecen dos programas de danzas sagradas para atraer público que se entretiene en la venta antes y después de los programas. Cientos de libros de carácter espiritual se venden a bajo precio así como objetos de arte, artesanía, tartas, crêpes, etc.

Veggie T-shirts in San Rafael

Vegetarians Willy, Carina and Ernesto Martínez in San Rafael, Argentina have produced their own T-shirt to advance the cause of animals. María Rosa, the fourth member of the family involved in the project, is behind the camera. María Rosa has also translated into Spanish a booklet, Are Animals our Neighbours?, by Gracia Fay Ellwood of the TS in America, and she and Ernesto have helped with its printing for distribution amongst Spanish-speaking Theosophists.

Los vegetarianos Willy, Carina y Ernesto Martínez de San Rafael, Argentina han creado su propia camiseta para avanzar en la causa de los animales. María Rosa, el cuarto miembro de la familia implicada en el proyecto, estaba detrás de la cámara. María Rosa también ha traducido al español el librito ¿Son los animales nuestros vecinos? De Gracia Fay Ellwood de la ST de EE.UU., que ella y Ernesto han ayudado en la impresión y distribución entre los hispano hablantes teósofos.



Developing bonds of friendship and cooperation



C.V.K. Maithreya in Europe

C.V.K. Maithreya, the President of the TOS in Chennai, visited TOS members in Paris when he was in Europe on a business trip in 2006. He answered questions about the tsunami relief work undertaken in the previous 18 months. Such visits help develop bonds of friendship and collaboration in the TOS work.

C.V.K. Maithreya, presidente de la OTS en Chennai, visitó a los miembros de la OTS en París cuando estuvo en Europa en viaje de negocios en 2006. Respondió a preguntas acerca del trabajo de socorro por el tsunami llevado a cabo los 18 meses anteriores. Estas visitas ayudan a desarrollar lazos de amistad y de colaboración en el trabajo de la OTS.

Geoffrey & Carolyn Harrod visit Paris

2006 also saw a visit to Paris by the President of the TOS in Australia, Carolyn Harrod, and its webmaster, Geoffrey Harrod, who lunched with the International Secretary in a vegetarian restaurant and chatted about the TOS work.

2006 también recibió la visita en París de la presidenta de la OTS en Australia, Carolyn Harrod y del encargado de su página web Geoffrey Harrod, quienes almorzaron con la secretaria internacional en un restaurante vegetariano y charlaron acerca del trabajo de la OTS.



Vicki and Vicente

Sterling New Zealand TOS worker, Vicki Jerome, chats with Vic Hao Chin of the TOS in the Philippines. Vic spoke to the Annual Convention of the TS 'Downunder' in January 2007.

La muy válida trabajadora de la OTS en Nueva Zelanda, Vicki Jerome, charla con Vic Hao Chin de la OTS en Filipinas. Vic habló en la Convención Anual acerca de la ST en Nueva Zelanda en Enero de 2007.



Fareeda and Aman in New Zealand

New Zealand has been blessed lately with several international TOS visitors. Here we see Aman and Fareeda Amir of the TOS in Pakistan flanked by NZ TOS stalwarts, Richard & Renee Sell, Valerie White & John Vorstermans.

Nueva Zelanda se ha beneficiado últimamente por varios visitantes internacionales de la OTS. En la foto se puede ver a Aman y Fareeda Amir de la OTS en Pakistán flanqueados por los baluartes de la OTS en Nueva Zelanda Richard y Renee Sell, Valerie White y John Vorstermans.



Tibetan Volunteers for Animals

If you are devoted to the protection of animals and also interested in the preservation of Tibetan culture and spirituality, here is a group you will be happy to learn about: **Tibetan Volunteers for Animals.**

Since 2000, a group of young Tibetans have been reminding their compatriots of the importance of compassion in their eating habits. Vegetarianism amongst Tibetan Buddhists is not traditional, largely because rugged mountain conditions have made the cultivation of a variety of vegetables difficult. However, these volunteers have been visiting Tibetan settlements, monasteries, schools, etc. all around India distributing free booklets and showing documentary CDs (The Remedy

for a Cold Heart, The Voice for the Voiceless, Love and Mercy). In 2005, the group became a registered organisation with a small volunteer-staffed office in Bangalore. Its aim is to spread the message that all animals should be treated with respect and compassion and to awaken people to the vegetarian way of life. In 2005 a magazine was launched: *Semchen – for the love of all sentient beings.*

Tibetan Volunteers for Animals reports an overwhelmingly positive response amongst the Tibetan community, with thousands committing themselves in a written pledge to become vegetarian. The Private Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama has financed the re-print of 20,000 copies of *The Voice for the Voiceless.* The

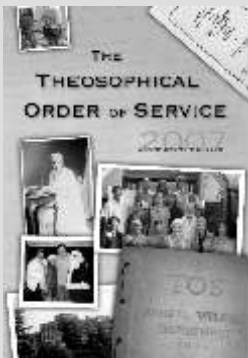
Prime Minister of the Tibetan Government, Venerable Samdhong Rinpoche, a life member of the TS India has sent a message of support to the Volunteers. The timing for this initiative seems to be favourable.

Dr C.V. Agarwal, a Theosophist known for his tireless work for animals, drew our International President's attention to Tibetan Volunteers for Animals and she asked him to write a text about it for *The Theosophist*. It appeared in the September 2005 issue. Dr Agarwal provided this information for readers:

The TVA team welcomes articles and poetry on animal rights for publication in their journal, as well as comments, suggestions, and editorial and financial assistance for their publications. They may be contacted c/o Mr Rapsel Tsariwa, President, Tibetan Volunteers for Animals, P.O. Box 11, Head Post Office, Mysore 570 001, India.

Website: www.semchen.org
E-mail: semchen@rediffmail.com
Phone: +91 9880 367619.

COMMEMORATING OVER 40 YEARS OF DEDICATION



The TOS in the United States has brought out a special issue of beautiful quality of its national journal, *For the Love of Life*, to commemorate Jean Gullo's more than forty years of service as President. Originally conceived to cover Jean's time, the final product is very different than imagined. After a year of research by editor Ananya Rajan, helped by TOS membership director and treasurer, Jeanne Proulx, archivist of the TS in Amer-

ica, Janet Kerschner, and graphic designer, Kirsten Hansen Pott, it covers not only the work of the TOS during Jean's presidency but also the founding and early history of the TOS, both within the USA and internationally. Fascinating historical information has been located and reproduced with a great variety of photographic documents. This 48-page issue reports on service projects that are a veritable source of new ideas and inspiration for us today. The International TOS congratulates the TOS in America for this publication that will help us to celebrate the organisation's



Nothing less than a trumpet fanfare of acknowledgment and appreciation is due to Jean Gullo who retired in 2007 as President of the TOS in the USA after more than 40 years in the role! She is still going strong in an advisory capacity, helping her successor, Tim Boyd, develop fresh ideas. Here we see Jean participating in the second International TOS Conference held in 2007 in the United States.

No menos que el brillante resonar de una banda de trompetas merece Jean Gullo, que el año 2007 se ha retirado del puesto de Presidente de la OTS en USA después de más de 40 años en el cargo! Aún mantiene un importante papel consultivo, ayudando a su sucesor, Tim Boyd, a desarrollar ideas frescas. Aquí vemos a Jean participando en el Segundo Congreso Internacional de la OTS que ha tenido lugar en los Estados Unidos el año 2007.

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 that promote the first Object of the Theosophical Society:

To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity 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 where members may air their views on matters 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 organised 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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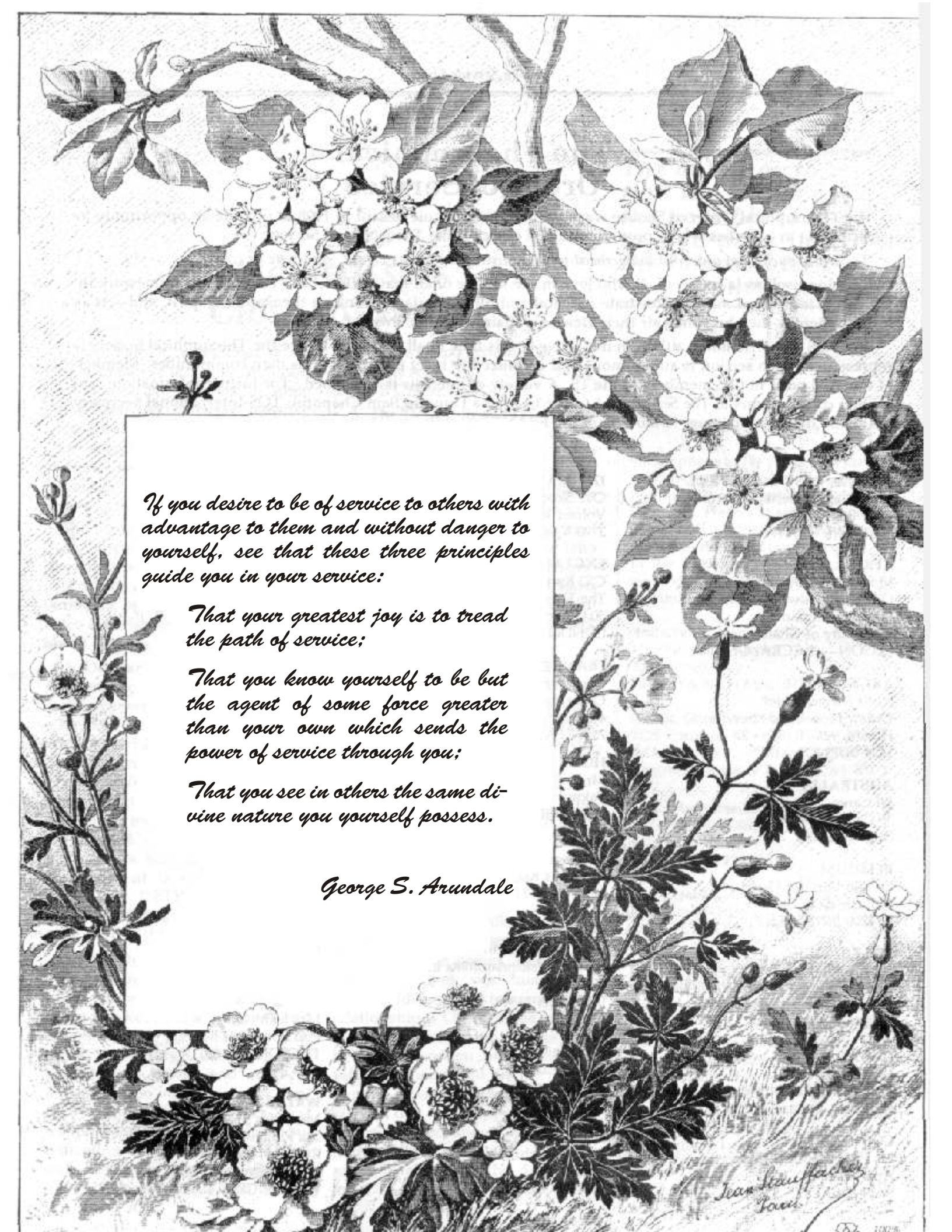
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If you desire to be of service to others with advantage to them and without danger to yourself, see that these three principles guide you in your service:

That your greatest joy is to tread the path of service;

That you know yourself to be but the agent of some force greater than your own which sends the power of service through you;

That you see in others the same divine nature you yourself possess.

George S. Arundale

*Jean Stauffer
Paris*