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Theosophical Order of Service International Newsletter

Issue 24 – December 2012

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

2012 has been a year in which our TOS community has worked with energy and dedication to make a difference in our world. Individually and collectively we have endeavoured to put theosophical principles into action in our service to the One Life in all.

As we celebrate our achievements, we look forward to a vibrant 2013. We wish you peace, harmony and spiritual fulfilment, and a New Year filled with happiness and many opportunities to work together in service.

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

Please also consider sending photographs of your TOS activities and news items that might be of interest to fellow TOS members. We would welcome your contributions by email to the editors at carolyn.tosinternational@gmail.com.

With best wishes,

Carolyn, Diana and Geoffrey



The editorial team (L. to R.)

Diana Dunningham Chapotin - International TOS Secretary, Geoffrey Harrod is the International TOS Webmaster, and Carolyn Harrod is the past TOS National Coordinator in Australia.

To make a difference is not a matter of accident, a matter of casual occurrence of the tides. People choose to make a difference.

Maya Angelou



Update on the International TOS Conference in 2013

You are warmly invited to participate in our International Conference if you are an active worker in your TOS Group at local or national level. The three-day conference will be held at Olcott, the national centre of the TS in America in Wheaton, Illinois from the evening of Tuesday 23 July to Friday 26 July, 2013. The TOS Conference is preceded by a five-day Summer National Convention of the TS in America from 19 July to 23 July. All are invited to attend this event as well.

Registration details have now been finalised and a registration form is available here:

[Form for USA members](#) | [Form for international members](#).

The TS in America is managing the registrations for us and is looking forward to receiving them.

The program is almost finalised and an outline is available [here](#). We are delighted that Maria Parisen, Director, Krotona School of Theosophy and Vic Hao Chin Jr, President of the Golden Link College, have agreed to be featured presenters.

If you'd like to learn more about the TS in America's headquarters in Wheaton, you may be interested in watching the ten-minute program about its history and facilities. (YouTube)

[View the video....](#)

Hungarian TOS Group launches their newsletter

The Hungarian TOS Group, MA-TESZ, has recently celebrated another initiative: the publication of an English language electronic newsletter. Members of our international TOS family are invited to access the newsletter at

<http://ma-tesz.forras.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/hirlevel-julius-en.html>

and to register to receive further copies.

In this issue of their newsletter, the Hungarian TOS Group reports on two current activities that reflect their interest in healing. They have established a healing group that meets weekly, using the Healing Ritual developed for the TOS by Geoffrey Hodson. MA-TESZ has



also been collaborating with another healing group, Classic Cosmoenergy, that uses a spiritual healing method devised on theosophical principles by Nicolas Roerich. As well as learning this healing method, members of MA-TESZ have led theosophical seminars with other students of cosmoenergy.

MA-TESZ continues to be active in a wide range of social and animal welfare projects. They are supporting animal shelters in their area with the collection of bandages needed for veterinary care.

Their other service initiatives include:

- making 'hygiene packs' from donated toiletries for homeless patients of a psychiatric facility
- collecting books for a village library
- establishing a telephone help-line for spiritual assistance.

Congratulations to all Hungarian TOS members on your energy, imagination and initiative.

[Read more...](#)



Brisbane TOS, Australia, organises its first Art Exhibition

The Art Exhibition that they organised in 2012 has been one of the Brisbane TOS Group's most successful fundraising activities.

One of their members, Karen Cipressi, is an artist with a great deal of experience in collaboratively organising exhibitions. She suggested the idea of holding an art exhibition to raise funds for a major TOS project and led the team that organised it.

Once her enthusiastic team was established, the first decision to be made was the beneficiary, because that would help create a theme for the exhibition.

The Brisbane TOS members were inspired by the drought relief and water-bore project of the Kenyan TOS so decided that the funds raised through the exhibition would be donated to that project. Australia is one of the driest continents on our planet, so most Brisbane TOS members had had experiences of water shortages. Another attraction of this project is that it aims to build community cooperation and sustainability so that the village in Kitui has long-term benefits. The theme they chose for the exhibition was *Water for Life*.

[Read more...](#)



Fundraising news in brief

Famine relief in our Kenyan village

It is surprising how varied the activities have been in support of our Kenyan village. While the TOS in Brisbane was planning its Art Exhibition, Mr and Mrs Hornung, the parents of the General Secretary of the TS in Germany, Manuela Kaulich, were sending us the impressive sum of 1900 euros (approx. \$US2300) raised by selling sweets in their shop. We send them special thanks for this amazing individual effort.

Update on donations for the Kern matching grant

A special, short newsletter appeared last month with a lively photographic report on the completion of our famine relief project for the village of Kaamba in Kenya. An exceptional, urgent request for donations was made to help us qualify for the Kern matching grant in support of the Golden Link College in the Philippines. We would like to thank members in England and New Zealand for their kind response to this appeal. We are happy to inform you that we are now just \$2000 off our target. It is not too late to donate. If you are able to help before December 31, please write to our international secretary at tosinternational@wanadoo.fr. She will be grateful to hear from you.

What's new on the International TOS website?

Our **Latest News** this month provides details about the two featured presenters, Maria Parisen and Vic Hao Chin Jr, at our International Conference for active TOS workers in July 2013. Both Maria and Vic will present a talk and conduct a workshop during the conference. You'll also find the latest program outline and the registration form on the website.

The new **Featured Article** is the second in a series by Pamela Zane Keys, the current editor of *TheoSophia*, the magazine of the Theosophical Society in New Zealand. In *Finding a different way, Part 2*, she talks of the healing effects of making inner harmony her first priority.

In our **Featured Project** we bring news of a new project initiated by the Chennai TOS. The **Strength, Health & Energy (SHE)** Project was commenced on August 12, 2012, on the birth anniversary of H. P. Blavatsky, following the success of the Seeing Eyes for Everyone (SEE) Project. The SHE Project aims to address the health and vitality issues of the underprivileged. The first step has been to conduct a battery of tests as part of a 'Master Health Check-up' package for employees and contract workers at the Adyar Headquarters.

You'll also find additions to the TOS photo gallery and an expanded Inspiration section that



Some of the Adyar workers holding their medical reports outside the TS Dispensary

now has quotations, stories and video links. We look forward to adding new stories and videos over the coming year. Go to <http://international.theoservice.org>



Our newest TOS Group – in the Dominican Republic

Enthusiastic members of the Theosophical Society in the Dominican Republic have recently formed our newest TOS Group. They have already got their first project underway. Through their contacts, they have been collecting donations of books for an Educational Centre named 'Los Rieles II' at Puerto Plata city. We have just received a video of them delivering the books to the great excitement of the students who helped with the carrying and unpacking.

[View the video](#) (MP4 movie 1m 30sec, uses your media viewer)



Insights through service

Many TOS members have found that their service to others has brought with it a deeper understanding of themselves, of relationships and of the theosophical principles that inspire their service. In the fourth article in this series, TOS member, Gracia Fay Ellwood shares an insight into working alongside people with seemingly opposing viewpoints to one's own.

She writes, "I have come to see the apparent enemies of animals and of vegetarianism as potential friends who in time will open their hearts to the suffering of farmed animals, just as they have undoubtedly already done in other areas of their lives. They have things to teach us too; we need to remember that we are all still growing, and that the Spirit can speak through any one of us to any other. Instead of responding to the hostility some of them showed with hurt and hostility of my own, I can now respond in peace, and work with increasing confidence that the spirit of love will in time prevail. [Read more...](#)"



Food shortages could encourage vegetarianism

Scientists are warning that water scarcity is likely to have such an impact on food production that radical steps will be needed to feed a world population expected to reach nine billion by 2050. In a recent article in The Guardian, a UK newspaper, the environmental editor, John Vidal, reported that scientists are warning that we live in an increasingly climate-erratic world. One third of the world's arable land is currently used to grow crops to feed animals. Since animal protein-rich food consumes five to 10 times more water than a vegetarian diet, changing to a plant based diet is a logical option for making better use of our scarce water resources for food production. [Read more...](#)



Humorous and creative videos to make us stop and think

How can you make people aware that the meat they are eating was once a living creature? This **humorous** video shows a clever idea that seems to work with most people. Just watch the horrified looks on many faces. [View the video...](#) (YouTube)

Animals Australia's campaign against factory farming is having a significant impact on consumer choices and as a result the factory farming industry is in damage control. A major Australian supermarket group, Coles, has recently announced that by 2013 all of their 'home brand' pork, bacon and ham will come from farms where mother pigs are not kept in tiny crates (called sow stalls) during pregnancy; and all of their 'home brand' eggs will be cage free.

Animals Australia has produced a creative and touching video to accompany a well-known song. To be inspired by what is possible, [view the video...](#)

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Hungarian TOS Group launches their newsletter

The Hungarian TOS Group, MA-TE SZ, has recently celebrated another initiative: the publication of an English language electronic newsletter. Members of our international TOS family are invited to access the newsletter at <http://ma-tesz.forras.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/hirlevel-julius-en.html> and to register to receive further copies

In this issue of their newsletter, the Hungarian TOS Group reports on two current activities that reflect their interest in healing.

They have established a healing group that meets weekly, using the Healing Ritual developed for the TOS by Geoffrey Hodson. In his words, "*Disease will never be banished from the earth by curative medicine alone, but rather by the progress of spiritual and occult learning. The greatest antidote to all disease is a recognition of unity and its expression through love and service.*"

Copies of this ritual are available by contacting the International TOS Secretary at tosinternational@wanadoo.fr

MA-TE SZ has also been collaborating with another healing group, Classic Cosmoenergy, that uses a spiritual healing method devised on theosophical principles by Nyikolaj Rerich. As well as learning this healing method, members of MA-TE SZ have led theosophical seminars with other students of cosmoenergy.



MA-TE SZ continues to be active in a wide range of social and animal welfare projects.

They are supporting animal shelters in their area with the collection of bandages needed for veterinary care.

A recent project has been collecting donations of toiletries to make 'hygiene packs' for homeless patients of a psychiatric facility.

They are also continuing their work with the community in the village of Borsodnádásd by organising programmes that support children. This is the flood-affected village in northern Hungary that they 'adopted' with the blessing of the town's municipal officers. Its population contains a great number of poor people with little or no education. Another village they have supported is Kiseccset settlement for whose library they have collected and delivered donations of books.

Yet another valuable initiative of the Hungarian TOS has been the establishment of a telephone help-line for spiritual assistance. It operates every Monday evening.

Congratulations to all Hungarian TOS members on your energy, imagination and initiative.



Brisbane TOS, Australia, organises its first Art Exhibition

The Art Exhibition that they organised in 2012 has been one of the Brisbane TOS Group's most successful fundraising activities. One of their members, Karen Cipressi, is an artist with a great deal of experience in collaboratively organising exhibitions. She suggested the idea of holding an art exhibition to raise funds for a major TOS project and led the team that organised it.



President of the Brisbane TOS, Tina Fiedler, with one of the art works. It was painted specifically for the theme: 'Water for Life'.

Once her enthusiastic team was established, the first decision to be made was the beneficiary, because that would help create a theme for the exhibition.

The Brisbane TOS members were inspired by the drought relief and water-bore project of the Kenyan TOS so decided that the funds raised through the exhibition would be donated to that project. Australia is one of the driest continents on our planet, so most Brisbane TOS members had had experiences of water shortages. Another attraction of this project is that it aims to build community cooperation and sustainability so that the village in Kitui has long-term benefits.

The theme they chose for the exhibition was *Water for Life*.

The Brisbane Theosophical Society was happy to provide its heritage building for a weekend as the venue for the Art Show. Once the dates, venue and theme had been arranged, Karen wrote to a large number of local artists who worked in a wide variety of media and whose work was generally considered by peers to have artistic quality. Other members of the team contacted potential sponsors who might fund advertising costs, the banner to attract passers-by and raffle prizes. Yet other team members organised the menu and catering materials needed to provide snacks for sale to visitors to the exhibition.



Participating artists were charged a small fee for exhibiting and paid a commission on all art work sold. Two days were needed to hang the art work or display it on tables. Everyone who saw the exhibition prior to the official opening was impressed by the quality and variety of work. There were oil paintings, water colours, mixed media, photographs, pottery, sculpture, weaving, felting, embroidery and jewellery.



Linda Oliveira, the President of the Theosophical Society in Australia, opened the art exhibition. During the weekend, TOS members were rostered to various tasks including chatting to people who came to see the exhibition, handling sales and serving snacks. A TS member, who is also an artist, donated her expertise by drawing portraits throughout the weekend, with the payment going to the TOS.



At the end of the exhibition, unsold work was returned to artists, equipment was packed and the rooms were returned to their usual layout. Of course, the work didn't end there, with numerous thank-you letters and cheques to be sent to artists and others who had helped.

Not only did the Art Show raise approximately US\$3400 for a TOS project, but it also raised awareness of the aims and the work of the TOS. Awareness of the Theosophical Society was also promoted and many visitors picked up leaflets and visited the TS Bookshop on the premises.

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Insights through service

Many TOS members have found that their service to others has brought with it a deeper understanding of themselves, of relationships and of the theosophical principles that inspire their service.

In the fourth article in this series, TOS member, Gracia Fay Ellwood shares an insight into working alongside people with seemingly opposing viewpoints to one's own.



When I began to explore the issue of the oppression and suffering of animals, especially farmed animals kept for their products and killed for food, I had for some years been a member of a spiritual denomination that emphasises mystical oneness and the presence of the Divine in all persons, values similar to those of the TS. Like the TOS, the group has a history of opposition to violence and of social action on behalf of the oppressed.

I became a vegetarian in 1985 after participating in Far Horizons camp, one of the beautiful summer gathering places of Theosophists in the USA. I studied the animal issue for several years, increasingly convinced that I had to share what I was learning with other members of my religious group.

I learned that the great majority of animals were kept in such dreadful conditions that they suffered miserably all their lives as well as at their terrifying and violent deaths. I learned that eating animal products can trigger chronic illnesses like coronary heart disease and certain cancers; that raising vast numbers of animals for their flesh and milk was contributing substantially to global warming, pollution, water shortages, deforestation and the like. I learned that because of the crowded and unsanitary conditions in factory farms, the meat, milk and eggs were often tainted, sickening or even killing those who consumed them, and fostering antibiotic-resistant microbes which were setting up humans and animals for out-of-control plagues of frightening proportions. I also learned that the system leads to grain and other food resources being so unjustly distributed as to increase hunger and death among the people of developing countries.



These evils are similar to those that our denomination has stood up against over the years. So I was confident that when I followed the proper procedure of forming a committee to study them and to inform other members, their sense of compassion would be aroused, and they would agree that justice requires that we stop supporting this destructive system by ceasing to buy and eat its main product, meat. I did this in mid-1992. Nineteen people attended the first committee meeting; we put books and other materials in the group's library, and we began in various ways to report our findings to them. After several years of such activities, we proposed that our group experiment with making a couple of its 'potluck' (buffet-style) meals meat free.

Many people said nothing, and some sympathetically supported us, but to my astonishment, some spoke up against the experiment and the whole concern. The terrible suffering and destruction the system causes to animals, humans and the planet were ignored; they said things like "That would violate our liberty", or "Don't make rules for us", or "If a new person came to a potluck bringing a meat dish, I would feel upset." One person even refused to acknowledge that what happens in slaughterhouses is violence! The denomination doesn't practice voting; when doing business, members seek to reach a kind of consensus, which means that one or two determined objectors can scuttle any proposal. Our group was thus (officially) unwilling even to experiment with a vegetarian potluck. As time went on, other proposals met much the same fate. Occasionally one or two members even made personal attacks on members of the committee

I felt stunned. When this resistance unfolded I had been a member of the denomination for 16 years, and was strongly convinced that we were always on the side of the oppressed, the defenceless and the victims of violence. That they would ignore the victims and support a heartless system which violated almost everything we had traditionally stood for made me feel that the roof of my spiritual home had fallen on my head. But I did not see how I could terminate my membership and go elsewhere; probably the same situation would crop up in other churches or spiritual groups, and in any case, I was still committed to the principles of the oneness of all beings and of compassion which these decisions of the group had trampled on.

Some months later I found a kind of solution; I did not leave the denomination, but my spouse, Robert and I joined Krotona in Ojai, about 90 miles distant, where the long-term vegetarian atmosphere was comforting. This move gave me a chance to gain perspective on what had happened and to heal. The process was also helped by the presence in Ojai of a small worship group of my denomination, which I soon joined. Several people here were vegetarians; no one objected to our occasional potluck luncheons being meat free. The same was true of the dinners that for several years we served once a month to homeless people.

Probably the most important factor in my coming to understand my fellow travellers on the path was reading a book by Carol J. Adams entitled, *Living Among Meat Eaters*. Adams proposes that people who oppose vegetarianism with hurtful words and actions are in fact blocked vegetarians, decent folk who become anxious when someone's nonviolent diet stirs a vague awareness that something terribly wrong underlies their own. They then project their disquiet upon the vegetarian in defensive or hostile ways rather than facing up to their own inner conflict. This basic idea caused me to see the resisting members of my former group in a new light. However, the light wasn't really new, because it was in keeping with the view I (and they) had always held, that all of us are, at our deepest level, one with the Divine Spirit. They were indeed compassionate, as I had originally assumed, but in this particular respect they were closed off to their true selves at present. Eventually they would break through their blocks, and bring their diet into harmony with their hearts – in either the present lifetime or a later one.

Robert and I still travel back each month to attend the meetings of the Animal Kinship committee, which not only continues to function after 20 years, but has come a long way. Among other activities, we distribute literature, sponsor an online journal and are now creating a vegan cookbook. The present chair

of the committee is an excellent cook, who together with supporting friends has made many a vegan dinner for members of the group (and sometimes for homeless people in the area). Several of the resistant members have moved away, and many new people have come in. Thanks mostly to experiencing these delicious, ahimsa-based meals, members now know that vegetarianism does not mean being deprived – just the opposite! As a result, the atmosphere in the group has changed greatly, and resistance is much lower. Vegetarian and even vegan potlucks are held from time to time, and many people come.

I have come to see the apparent enemies of animals and of vegetarianism as potential friends who in time will open their hearts to the suffering of farmed animals, just as they have undoubtedly already done in other areas of their lives. They have things to teach us too; we need to remember that we are all still growing, and that the Spirit can speak through any one of us to any other. Instead of responding to the hostility some of them showed with hurt and hostility of my own, I can now respond in peace, and work with increasing confidence that the spirit of love will in time prevail.



"Let us take the adventure that is sent us." – Sir Thomas Malory

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Food shortages could encourage vegetarianism

Scientists are warning that water scarcity is likely to have such an impact on food production that radical steps will be needed to feed a world population expected to reach nine billion by 2050. In a recent article in The Guardian, a UK newspaper, the environmental editor, John Vidal, reported that scientists are warning that we live in an increasingly climate-erratic world. One third of the world's arable land is currently used to grow crops to feed animals. Since animal protein-rich food consumes five to 10 times more water than a vegetarian diet, changing to a plant based diet is a logical option for making better use of our scarce water resources for food production.

Vidal's article appears below.



Leading [water scientists](#) have issued one of the sternest warnings yet about global [food supplies](#), saying that the world's [population](#) may have to switch almost completely to a vegetarian diet over the next 40 years to avoid catastrophic shortages.

Humans derive about 20% of their protein from animal-based products now, but this may need to drop to just 5% to feed the extra 2 billion people expected to be alive by 2050, [according to research](#) by some of the world's leading water scientists.

"There will not be enough water available on current croplands to produce food for the expected 9 billion population in 2050 if we follow current trends and changes towards diets common in western nations," said the report by Malik Falkenmark and colleagues at the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI).

"There will be just enough water if the proportion of animal-based foods is limited to 5% of total calories and considerable regional water deficits can be met by a ... reliable system of food trade."

Dire warnings of water scarcity limiting food production come as Oxfam and the UN prepare for a possible second global food crisis in five years. Prices for staples such as corn and wheat have risen nearly 50% on international markets since June, triggered by severe droughts in the US and Russia, and weak monsoon rains in Asia. More than 18 million people are already facing serious food shortages across the Sahel.

Oxfam has forecast that the price spike will have a devastating impact in developing countries that rely heavily on food imports, including parts of Latin America, North Africa and the Middle East. Food shortages in 2008 led to civil unrest in 28 countries.

Adopting a vegetarian diet is one option to increase the amount of water available to grow more food in an increasingly climate-erratic world, the scientists said. Animal protein-rich food consumes five to 10 times more water than a vegetarian diet. One third of the world's arable land is used to grow crops to feed animals. Other options to feed people include eliminating waste and increasing trade between countries in food surplus and those in deficit.

"Nine hundred million people already go hungry and two billion people are malnourished in spite of the fact that per capita food production continues to increase," they said. "With 70% of all available water being in agriculture, growing more food to feed an additional two billion people by 2050 will place greater pressure on available water and land."

The report is being released at the start of the annual world water conference in Stockholm, Sweden, where 2,500 politicians, UN bodies, non-governmental groups and researchers from 120 countries meet to address global water supply problems.





Competition for water between food production and other uses will intensify pressure on essential resources, the scientists said. "The UN predicts that we must increase food production by 70% by mid-century. This will place additional pressure on our already stressed water resources, at a time when we also need to allocate more water to satisfy global energy demand – which is expected to rise 60% over the coming 30 years – and to generate electricity for the 1.3 billion people currently without it," said the report.

Overeating, undernourishment and waste are all on the rise and increased food production may face future constraints from water scarcity.

"We will need a new recipe to feed the world in the future," said the report's editor, Anders Jägerskog.

A separate report from the [International Water Management Institute \(IWMI\)](#) said the best way for countries to protect millions of farmers from food insecurity in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia was to help them invest in small pumps and simple technology, rather than to develop expensive, large-scale irrigation projects.

"We've witnessed again and again what happens to the world's poor – the majority of whom depend on agriculture for their livelihoods and already suffer from water scarcity – when they are at the mercy of our fragile global food system," said Dr Colin Chartres, the director general.

"Farmers across the developing world are increasingly relying on and benefiting from small-scale, locally-relevant water solutions. [These] techniques could increase yields up to 300% and add tens of billions of US dollars to household revenues across sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia."

John Vidal, environment editor
The Guardian, Sunday 26 August 2012

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