

Historical Background & Structure of the Theosophical Society

1. The Theosophical Society is an international organisation with world headquarters in Chennai, India. It was founded in New York in 1875 by HP Blavatsky, HS Olcott and WQ Judge, among others, and now has branches in around seventy countries throughout the world. Most of the branches are organised in 29 National Societies and Sections.

The Theosophical Society worldwide consists of Sections (with 7 or more Lodges), Regional Associations (less than 7 Lodges) and Presidential Agencies (where a Presidential Representative is appointed in special circumstances by the International President). Some isolated lodges may also be attached directly to the International Headquarters. The Indian Section is the largest, followed by the American Section and then the Australian Section.

Main periodical: *The Theosophist*.

Publishing House: The Theosophical Publishing House.

<u>International Officers:</u>	President	Mrs Radha Burnier
	Vice-President	Mrs Linda Oliveira
	International Secretary	Mrs Kusum Satapathy
	International Treasurer	Miss Keshwar Dastur

Governing Body: The **General Council**, comprising the above officers and General Secretaries (National Presidents) of Sections, plus 5-12 Additional Members.

Federations

Certain Sections have combined to form Federations which can help promote interaction and foster brotherhood within Sections in certain areas around the world. They are not part of the formal structure of the TS according to the International Rules. The present Federations are:

Indo-Pacific Federation	President:	Mr John Vorstermans
Inter-American Federation	President:	Mrs Terezinha Kind
European Federation	Chairman:	Miss Tran-Thi-Kim-Diêu
Pan African Federation	Chairman:	Mr Kiran H. Shah

The Australian Section is part of the Indo-Pacific Federation, which holds meetings every three years in different countries.

2. The Theosophical Society in Australia was founded and chartered on January 1st 1895. It is an unincorporated association with headquarters in Sydney. It has 11 Lodges/Branches and 7 Certified Groups.

Main periodical: *Theosophy in Australia*.

Associated Organisations:

—**The Australian Section Theosophical Trust (ABN 35 000 016 446):**

A trust company which holds and administers property on behalf of The TS in Australia.

—**The Theosophical Foundation Pty. Ltd. (ABN 43 000 409 343):**

A trust company which holds and administers property (Theosophy House) and investments of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust, and of The Blavatsky Lodge of the Theosophical Society (ABN 48 000 014 442).

National Headquarters: 4th Floor, 484 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 2000

<u>Officers:</u>	National President*	Dr Dara Tatray
	National Vice-President	Mrs Denise Frost
	National Secretary*	Mrs Zehra Bharucha
	National Treasurer*	Mr Donald Fern
	Education Coordinator	Dara Tatray
	Editor, <i>Theosophy in Australia</i>	Dara Tatray

Governing Body: the **National Council** which consists of the *ex officio* officers indicated with asterisks above*, plus six State Representatives elected by the members, each of whom serves a two year term of office. The National Council meets twice a year.

Current State Representatives:

NSW/ACT:	Ms Dianne K. Kynaston
Queensland:	Mr Geoffrey Harrod
SA/NT:	Ms Patricia Hale
Tasmania:	Mrs Denise Frost
Victoria:	Ms Kari Torgersen
Western Australia:	Mr George Wester

Executive Committee of the National Council consists of *ex officio* officers indicated with asterisks above*, plus the following other appointed members: Beatrice Malka, Dianne Kynaston, Dai Trandang, Marlene Bell, and Ken Edwards. It meets once a month.

Lodges, Branches and Groups: 11 Lodges/Branches and 7 Certified Groups.

Types of Membership: Member of a Lodge/Branch or National Member.

Rules: National Rules need to comply with the International Rules, Lodge/Branch Rules and Rules of Certified Groups need to comply with the National Rules.

Development of The Objects of the Theosophical Society

1875

The objects of the society are, to collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which govern the universe.

1878

The objects of the Society are various ... to acquire an intimate knowledge of natural law ... study to develop his latent powers ... exemplify the highest morality and religious aspiration ... to make known among Western nations ... *facts* about oriental religious philosophies ... disseminate a knowledge of that pure esoteric system of the archaic period, and finally and chiefly, aid in the institution of a Brotherhood of Humanity...

1879

The Theosophical Society is formed upon the basis of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity... The Society's plans are declared to be as follows:

1. To keep alive in man his spiritual intuitions.
2. To oppose and counteract —after due investigation and proof of its irrational nature—bigotry in every form, whether as intolerant religious sectarianism or belief in miracles or anything supernatural.
3. To promote a feeling of *brotherhood* among nations and assist in the international exchange of useful arts and products, by advice, information, and co-operation with all worthy individuals and associations; provided, however, that no benefit or percentage shall be taken by the Society for its corporate services.
4. To seek to obtain knowledge of all the laws of Nature and aid in diffusing it; and especially to encourage the study of those laws least understood by modern people and so termed the Occult Sciences...
5. To gather for the Society's library and put into written forms correct information on ancient philosophies, traditions and legends ...
6. To promote in every practicable way, in countries where needed, the spread of non-sectarian education.
7. Finally, and chiefly, to encourage and assist individual Fellows in self-improvement, intellectual, moral and spiritual...

1881

The Objects of The Theosophical Society are:

1. To form the Nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity.
2. To study Aryan literature, religion and science.
3. To vindicate the importance of this enquiry and correct misrepresentations with which it has been clouded.
4. To explore the hidden mysteries of Nature and the latent powers of Man, on which the Founders believe that Oriental Philosophy is in a position to throw light.

1885/6

The Objects of The Theosophical Society are:

1. To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed or colour.
2. To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions, and sciences.
3. A third object, pursued by a portion of the members of the Society, is to investigate unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers of man.

1888

1. To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
2. To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions, philosophies and sciences.
3. A third object, pursued by a portion of the Fellows of the Society, is to investigate unexplained laws of nature and the psychic powers of man.

1890

1. To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
2. To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions, philosophies and sciences, and to demonstrate their importance to Humanity.
3. To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the psychic powers latent in man.

1894

Only the Second Object was changed to read: To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions, philosophies and sciences, and to demonstrate the importance of study.

1896

1. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
2. To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.
3. To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.*

The Objects, as amended and formulated in 1896, have remained unchanged since that date.

** A Motion was adopted at the 1999 Convention Business Meeting of the Australian Section to change the word man in the Third Object to the gender-neutral the human being. This was approved by the General Council for use in the Australian Section.*

SELECTED SIMILAR AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS which are independent of the Theosophical Society and of the TS in Australia: (This does not include discontinued organisations)

Ever since the General Council passed a Resolution concerning the Freedom of the Society in 1949 the TS has maintained a policy of non-affiliation with other groups or organisations. There are only two organisations legally or constitutionally associated with the Theosophical Society in Australia: the Australian Section Theosophical Trust and The Theosophical Foundation Pty Ltd, the two trust companies administering our properties. However, a number of other organisations are sometimes mistakenly associated with the TS. A number of these are listed and briefly described below. Some of them are “breakaway” movements, others may have been started by prominent members or officers of the TS. Incidentally, some of the organisations with which the TS was affiliated in its early years include The Literary Society of Benares Pandits and the Arya Samaj. How relevant or not such connections might be today may serve as possible comment on the wisdom of our policy of non-affiliation.

Anthroposophical Society, The

Formed in 1913 by Dr Rudolph Steiner, former General Secretary of the TS in Germany, who strongly disagreed with the formation of the Order of the Star in the East and left the Society on that account, taking most members of the German Section with him. The Anthroposophical Society has made important contributions in the fields of education (the Steiner schools), agriculture (biodynamics) and healing and is now established in many countries including Switzerland, Germany and Australia.

Arcane School, The

Created in 1923 by Alice and Foster Bailey, who originally were active at a senior level of the American Section of The TS. Alice Bailey was a National Secretary of the TS in America, and a resident at the Krotona Theosophical Community in Hollywood. She claimed that in 1919 she established communication with a Master of Wisdom whom she called “The Tibetan” and with whom she produced over 24 books.

Associated organisations: Lucis Trust, Lucis Press, Lucis Publishing, World Goodwill.

Main Periodical: *The Beacon*.

Bailey, Alice - see The Arcane School

Blavatsky Trust, The

Established in 1974 in England as a public trust and charity by Geoffrey Farthing, Christmas Humphries and others, to promote what it regards as “classical theosophy”, mainly the teachings of HP Blavatsky and her teachers.

Co-Freemasonry, The Order of International

The Ordre Maconnique Mixte International Le Droit Humain was started in 1893 in Paris, where the Headquarters are still located. It admits both men and women.

Known as Le Droit Humain or The Order of International Co-Freemasonry.

Annie Besant was initiated into the Order in 1902 and promoted the Order, especially in the English speaking world.

It has both TS and non-TS members, and it is administratively quite separate from the TS.

Edmonton Theosophical Society

Was a Lodge of The Theosophical Society in Canada but left it in 1995 or 96 to become an independent Society.

Has published reprints of a number of rare theosophical publications.

Periodical: *Fohat* (since 1997).

Esoteric School of Theosophy, The (“ES” or “EST”)

First organised as the ‘Esoteric Section of The Theosophical Society’ in 1888 with HP Blavatsky as its head. In 1889 the name was changed to ‘The Eastern School of Theosophy’. Later, it became ‘The Esoteric School of Theosophy’.

The ES has no official, administrative or corporate connection with the TS, but membership of the ES is open only to persons who have been active members of the TS for at least two years, who remain as TS members in Good Standing and are willing to abide by the rules of the School.

Halcyon - see The Temple of the People

Krishnamurti Australia Inc.

Branches in mainland States.

Periodical: *Krishnamurti Australia Bulletin*.

Krishnamurti Foundation (Trust)

This Foundation was established in 1968 to help Krishnamurti to carry out his work, including organising travel, meetings, as well as publishing his talks and the *Krishnamurti Foundation Trust Bulletin*.

There are Krishnamurti schools in India, UK and USA.

Liberal Catholic Church, The (“LCC”)

Established in London in 1916 by JI Wedgewood from the British province of the Old Catholic Church of Holland. CW Leadbeater later became Presiding Bishop and helped develop its liturgy.

Established in several countries, including Australia, England, USA and Holland.

It has both TS and non-TS members, and it is administratively quite separate from the TS.

Lucis Trust - see The Arcane School

Manor Foundation Ltd., The

The Manor is a large residence on Sydney harbour. It was leased in 1922 and purchased in 1925. Initially it was held under a trust deed, but in 1951 the trusteeship was transformed into The Manor Foundation Ltd. All control is vested in the Outer Head of the Esoteric School of Theosophy who appoints his/her residential representative. Residents of this community must have been members of the ES for at least two years.

It is administratively quite separate from the TS.

Pasadena - see The Theosophical Society (Pasadena)

Point Loma Publications, Inc

Established 1971 by Iverson L Harris, W Emmett Small, L Gordon Plummer and others.

Published *The Eclectic Theosophist* 1971-95.

Still publishing important theosophical material.

Point Loma Society - see The Theosophical Society (Pasadena)

Round Table, The International Order of the Knights of the

Founded in 1908 by G Herbert Whyte under the inspiration of Annie Besant and CW Leadbeater. Its aim is to revive ideals of chivalry among young people.

Steiner, Rudolf - see Anthroposophical Society

Temple of the People, The (Halcyon)

Established in 1898 or 99 in New York, the group moved to California in 1903 and formed a community called Halcyon.

Periodical: *The Temple Artisan*.

Theosophical Fellowship

Established in 1994 by Ananda Tara Shan (1946-2002)

Centre at Daylesford, Victoria.

Theosophical Order of Service, The

Formed by Annie Besant in 1908. Although independent of the TS, it provides an opportunity for members and non-members of The TS to participate in activities which promote the first object of the TS through practical and humanitarian action in a theosophical spirit. Provides a forum for airing of views of public interest.

It is administratively quite separate from the TS.

Theosophical Society in Canada

Established in 1919. Was a Section of the TS until it became an independent Society in January 1992. Has headquarters in Ontario, Canada.

Periodical: *The Canadian Theosophist* (since 1920).

Theosophical Society, Pasadena, California, The

Established by Katherine Tingley at Point Loma, California, in 1897, some two years after the American Section, with WQ Judge as its leader, seceded from the Theosophical Society with headquarters at Adyar. From 1897-1929 the Society was called the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society. In 1900 the Society established its headquarters at a theosophical community at Point Loma in California which continued until 1942 under Tingley and her successor, Gottfried de Purucker. In 1942 the headquarters moved to Covina and later to Pasadena, California. Its current leader is Grace F. Knoche.

Objects similar to those of the TS.

Established in a number of countries, including America, Australia, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden, and United Kingdom.

Publisher: Theosophical University Press, which has published a number of theosophical books.

Main periodical (defunct since the end of 2008): *Sunrise* (Published in English, German and Dutch)

United Lodge of Theosophists, The

Formed in 1909 by Robert Crosbie in Los Angeles, California. Crosbie had worked closely with WQ Judge. The original declaration of the ULT states that "the policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organisation." It strongly emphasizes the teachings of HP Blavatsky and WQ Judge as the authentic Theosophy. In other respects its objects are similar to those of the TS.

Established in a number of countries, including USA, India, UK, Canada, Sweden, France and Belgium (Previously also Australia).

USA: Publisher: The Theosophy Company, Los Angeles, California

Periodical: *Theosophy* (since 1912)

India: Publisher: Theosophy Company (India) Pty. Ltd., Mumbai, India

Periodical: *The Theosophical Movement* (since 1930)

(The Theosophy Company has published facsimile reprints of many original editions of the books of HP Blavatsky and WQ Judge)

Universal Theosophy Fellowship, Inc.

Established 1969.

Objects similar to those of the TS.

Publisher: Universal Theosophy Fellowship, Inc., Santa Barbara, California.

(Previously: Concord Grove Press)

Periodical: *Vidya* (from 1989. Previously *Hermes*, 1975-1989.)

World Goodwill - see Arcane School