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New Course on Exploring the Psychic World

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The Theosophical Society welcomes students or seekers, belonging to any religion or to none, who are in sympathy with its Objects. The motto of the Society is 'There is no Religion higher than Truth'. The word Religion in this statement is a translation of the Sanskrit *dharma*, which among other things means practice; way; virtue; teaching; law; inherent nature; religion; and that which is steadfast or firm. The word Truth in the motto is a translation of the Sanskrit *satya*, meaning among other things, true, real and actual. It derives from the root *sat*, sometimes translated as boundless unconditioned existence.

Theosophy is not defined in the Constitution of the Theosophical Society, or in any official document. It literally means Divine Wisdom, *theosophia*, but members of the Society are left to discover what it is for themselves, taking as guides whatever religions or philosophies they wish.

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The Three Objects of The Theosophical Society

- I. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity
without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
- ~
- II. To encourage the study of Comparative Religion,
Philosophy and Science.
- ~
- III. To investigate unexplained laws of Nature
and the powers latent in the human being.

From the International President

Tim Boyd



As a long-time member of the Theosophical Society, I remember the feeling of enthusiasm and upwelling of aspiration I felt when joining.

Inwardly I knew I had taken an important step. We all have various reasons for joining. For some it is because our parents were members. We grew up in a home where the value of the work that this organisation is undertaking and its approach to Truth played upon us constantly. It was not something we had to think about or analyse. Theosophy pervaded the atmosphere of our home, and became part of the fibre of our being. There are others who came upon the Society's teaching later in life and found in it a powerful conceptual structure, rich in information about the planes of Nature, the meaning of spiritual evolution, and a history of great people who have associated themselves with this wisdom and with the movement of the Perennial Wisdom throughout time. There are others who encountered the teachings of some person who was alive with a profound connection to these truths and found that something

moved them. Something inside of them responded to the life that flowed through that individual.

Once we join, the actual work begins. Nobody who finds their way here is a young soul. In order to have an appreciation for this there must have been many lifetimes of effort towards unfoldment. We do not get here by accident. Many join with the idea that now they find themselves among a group of holy people who have overcome the shackles of the world and can be looked up to for faultless guidance on the spiritual path. Instead they find themselves amidst people just like us, people who have had an experience that confirms a deeply sensed Truth, but who are far from perfect. In joining the TS we are saying 'yes' to something: 'yes', there is an abiding, overarching, ever-present Truth, 'yes', I believe I can link myself to that Truth and express it in my life. And, 'yes', the three Objects of the Theosophical Society ring true to my inner consciousness. Even if two out of three of the Objects do not yet ring true, it suffices as long as the

first one does: that this Society came into being to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without regard to any of the humanly created separations along lines of race, creed, gender, caste or colour. We refer only to a small number of distinctions in the first Object of the TS, but we all know that the levels of discrimination and limitation in our thinking are endless. So we say ‘yes’ to that, that it is a possibility, that it is also possible to shape our life in such a way that it can express this great Truth, first in ourselves, then in our homes, and then in the world.

This is not an other-worldly teaching demanding that we abandon our family and friends, and go off to some secluded place. Ours is a much more difficult approach to Truth than just walking away to a cave. What it demands from each one of us is that we find some measure of realisation right where we are. In the middle of all the conflicts and strife that every normal life involves. Truth is not absent from ‘normal life’. It is not a retreat from the world. The great challenge for us is that this path demands that we learn to embrace the world with all of its imperfections. That is a much more demanding and difficult task. The beauty of it is that we say ‘yes’ knowingly to all of this.

The TS is a powerful organisation, and its power is not just in its members. It came into being from a much more profound source. The Masters of the Wisdom, the Mahatmas, the Elder Brothers – these are the real founders of this movement. We, its members, are certainly imperfect. In our work within the TS it is helpful to remember that we will always find imperfections and difficulties with the various personalities encountered within this organisation, but behind every person who joins something greater is standing. If we can train ourselves to look for it, we will certainly see the signs of a guiding presence – the awakening Higher Self.

When I joined the TS, the step I was taking was described as forming another link in a golden chain – one more link has been added to this chain. It is a chain that extends from the very low to the highest heights of consciousness, from a distant past to an unimaginable future. As new members of the Theosophical Society, this is an important step that you are taking. I salute you for the step, for your courage and willingness.

**From *The Theosophist*, March 2015.
Extract of talk to new members
delivered after the closing of the
International Convention in Adyar,
31 December 2014.**

From the National President

Linda Oliveira



The TS is moving forward in new ways compared with, say, fifty years ago, especially with today's ubiquitous use of electronic communications.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge a generation of members who have given a great deal of their time and energy to the TS during this period (much of it without our time-saving devices), and who are gradually passing. In this issue, some space is therefore dedicated to two former officers of this Section who passed to peace recently: Ruth Beringer, a former General Secretary, and Dr Hugh Murdoch, a former National Treasurer. The tribute to Hugh speaks for itself, but it is also fitting to say here a few words about Ruth.

Ruth joined the TS in Dublin as a young woman after the second world war. She moved to Australia and at one time was the Business Manager of Blavatsky Lodge in Sydney. She also helped the then General Secretary, Helen Zahara, at the National Headquarters (located at that time in North Sydney), before becoming the General Secretary of this Section from 1965 until 1973.

Subsequently she supported meetings and gatherings until increasing frailty intervened, eventually living out her days quietly in the North of Sydney until her passing a few months ago.

So, what contributed to Ruth's enduring commitment to the TS? She identified this factor as 'the spirit of the Society, the spirit of Theosophy', describing it as:

that indefinable, that eternally young, extraordinary sense of life, which we can contact in our moments of silence and our moments of being together - where that one life has a total meaning for us. (*T in A*, September 2010)

A thoughtful article by her follows.

Another article in this issue deals with a contemporary and sobering subject – the profound impact of humanity on the climate of this planet. Given our seamless connection with all planetary life and our consequent responsibility towards it, this piece may even cause us to rethink some aspects of our lifestyle.

Comments of up to 200 words on any items in this issue are welcome and may be published.

Spiritual Shrines & Centres of Holiness

Ruth Beringer



Buddhist Shrine, Adyar

The qualities of holiness, sacredness, or even spirituality, are most difficult to define. Descriptions in words and pictures are wholly inadequate, and what I am attempting through this article is to convey a feeling, an inspiration, rather than an idea or abstraction. We become aware of the Sacred or Holy when we pause in our everyday activities and realise that there is something totally different, entirely other than what we are commonly used to. It is not so much outside ourselves, but inclusive in and around us. It engenders wonder and awe, but not fear, for we cannot be frightened of that which we really are if we approach it in the sense of wanting to understand and embody it. Yet we cannot completely familiarise ourselves with it, because there is always distance – a space – between ourselves and the Sacred. Hence,

we feel the need for adoration and worship. The Sacred or Holy is equivalent to power – it is the truly REAL. Mircea Eliade described it as ‘saturated with being’.

The theosophical viewpoint postulates that man is essentially Spirit and has a mind, a soul, and a body. Spirit is that which permeates everything, even the finest and subtlest things, and yet it is without substance or materiality of any kind. The religions of man have recognised this spirituality in their various expressions – call it God, the Divine, or what you will. Followers of religions or cults have built shrines to this, and have worshipped therein, in the endeavour to fulfil an essential human need. Mystic poets have even lauded it, and declared the need for the Spirit to be more urgent than breathing or quenching thirst with water.

The Significance of Space

Now we must turn our attention for a moment to the significance of space. A shrine is a place situated in space. A spiritual shrine and centre of holiness provides a terrestrial focus for spiritual power. It is a meeting place down here on earth for human upward-reaching worship and adoration, and down-pouring of the heavenly or Divine. The question arises: can there be a divine spiritual influence without a human request for it? Perhaps the answer is that the influence is there whether we feel or know it, or not. However, the act of worship and adoration is an opening to the spiritual influence and therefore, I suggest, the response will be in proportion to our sensitivity, earnestness, and devotional attitude in such places. But to return to the significance of a locality, the selection of a place on our earth for a sacred shrine, we have to look at space as such.

From one of the basic works in theosophical literature, *The Secret Doctrine*, by H.P. Blavatsky, we learn that ‘Space is the Universe in toto, the boundless, frontierless ALL in which all takes place’. Plato, when speaking of the Oneness of the Universe (the ALL), calls space the ‘unique Being who has always been, is, and for ever will be’.

In endless eternal Space there are no directions, no inside, no outside, no here, no there, nor is there a foundation on which to build. Many creation myths begin with the search for a firm basis or limit to Space, without which there can be no concentration of energy.

A spiritual shrine and centre of holiness provides a terrestrial focus for spiritual power. It is a meeting place down here on earth for human upward-reaching worship and adoration, and down-pouring of the heavenly or Divine.

The emergence of all content from the zero point at the dawn of creation concentrates a tremendous energy. In contrast, the eventual disappearance and dissolution of a manifested creation – a universe – into the zero point, releases tremendous energy and this scattered, dissolved energy may be called Space in its undimensional aspect.

We must, of course, beware of restricting our concept of energy merely to the electro-magnetic, or even nuclear, variety of science, for the energies of creation include the whole range of desire, as well as psychic and mental forces, quite apart from the far

subtler levels and more potent energies of the spiritual realm.

Symbolism and Holy Centres

The serpent symbol, as an analogy of energy and wisdom, is universally used in all religious expressions connected with creation, or, if you like, emergence or emanation. The serpent breaks from its egg, as does a line from a point, and when the head and tail meet, it forms the circle, such as is depicted on the emblem of the Theosophical Society. The unlimited expansive power of space is embraced or circumscribed, and thereby content becomes knowable.

Such symbolic examples are the mythological symbol of the ouroboros, the devourer-serpent of its own tail which is the eternally recurrent cycle; the Egyptian Nile God in his serpent-enclosed cavern; the constrictor about the Mithraic Kronos; and the snake-garlanded Indian god Shiva.

For religious man, nothing can be done or take place without previous orientation, and orientation implies acquiring a fixed point which is tantamount to centring, and thence laying a foundation. Many early temples were built on a four-square foundation, resembling the emblematical stability of the world's man-made mountains,



Horus the Child within the sun disc, surrounded by an ouroboros. Papyrus of Dama-Heroub, 21st Dynasty. Source: *Wikimedia Commons*

the ziggurats of ancient Persia, the pyramids of Egypt, Central America and China, and the Buddhist stupas, all being structures that express this stability. But they are more. The square is a unique figure, capable of precise division into two. It may be further divided into four squares, each fastened to the four cardinal points of direction (north, east, south and west). How do we find the four cardinal points? By looking into space, namely the heavens above. The sun, the pole star and other heavenly bodies and constellations are indicative points.

Why are some places more significant than others?

Now to the question, why is one spot on earth more significant than

another and often re-used for a holy purpose again and again by successive religions? Several lines of conjecture may lead to answers.

A commonly known theory is that of the leys, or ley-lines as they were called by Alfred Watkins, an English archaeologist, some sixty years ago. They are straight tracks connecting several points in a landscape. There is also the knowledge of telluric forces, or earth's subtle energies, which were known and used by the ancients, the ancient Chinese having a particularly deep understanding of them. They established shrines and temples on important points of intersection of these telluric energy lines. One could call them the veins of the living body of the Earth. On the whole, our early ancestors were much more aware of the spirit of the living earth than modern man, who is so tragically ignorant in this regard to his, and his environment's, sad loss.

Furthermore, the very landscape itself provides man with natural indications of spiritual centres. Rocks, trees, mountains, wells and springs were recognised as receptacles for the Spirit. The ancients had no pretensions to cleverness; they were quite prepared to observe and listen with their simple wisdom to a rock, an oak tree, a water

source, the forest, or the mountain. To them these natural formations represented the living aspects of Nature through which the Divine would be channelled. But the most enduring Holy places are those with solar and celestial connections on high mountain tops or huge rocks, and on slow-changing sea shores. At certain spots next to rivers Holy places were established because the river, although changing its course sometimes, is seen as a life-giving element. Water itself plays a significant part in connection with a Sacred place, for Spirit needs to be upon the waters, or by the waters – and not only in the abstract, mythical sense. Other reasons include purification, and the calm reflective property of still water.

So, the forces of earth (earth and water) and heaven (air and fire) combine in contributing to the formation of a Holy place, as much as human participation in the process of the movement of the Spirit. According to Mircea Eliade, there are two methods of making a habitation or place sacred; the first is by assimilation of the cosmos into the point, and then projecting from that centre to the four quarters of the horizon, and the second is through a ritual reconstruction, repeating symbolically the creation of the world.

Why are ancient sites re-used?

As to why ancient sites have been re-used by succeeding religions and cults, this is more or less obvious, being a matter of conserving energy. What has worked before may work again and again, so re-consecration is the most economic method. We can see it happening even in our days; for instance, in the use of churches in communist countries as museums and places of propaganda and indoctrination. In some cases, such ideologies have to a certain extent replaced the old religion.

In Plato's *Republic* the advice is given to settlers in a new country to discover the ancient shrines first, and to re-consecrate them to their own religious Spirit. Would that we had heeded that advice when colonising Australia two hundred years ago. Perhaps it is not yet too late, and more harmony could be brought about between the original inhabitants and the newcomers to this ancient land with the recognition of Uluru (Ayers Rock) and other sites as sacred places for ALL Australians.

Also, we know for a fact that many Christian churches throughout Europe have been established on sites of early temples and places of worship of older deities.



Chapel-shrine from Butajnova, Slovenia.
Source: Wikimedia Commons

Mount Meru

One of the most well-known and universally significant centres of sacredness is Mount Meru. It is that most spiritual and holy mountain referred to in Eastern religions and literature. A mythical mountain of tremendous height and circumference, it is to Hindus, Jains and Buddhists alike the *axis-mundi* – the axis of the world. In their cosmology the seven continents are said to radiate outwards from its base, each separated from the other by a sea of exotic liquid. A wall of mountains forms the outer boundary

of this world, beyond which is the Great Void. The mountain top is the home of the highest god, like Mount Olympus for the ancient Greeks and Valhalla for the northern gods. The Pole Star stands directly above its summit, indeed, the North Pole and Mount Meru are always connected, or even synonymous. A beautiful legend has it that seven golden and seven silver steps lead to its summit. Four sacred rivers issue from the Holy Mountain, and flow in the four cardinal directions.

The legendary holy Mount Meru is believed by many to be a high peak in the south-western region of the Tibetan Himalayas, called Mount Kailas. Pilgrims have been making the arduous journey to and around this holy mountain for centuries. It is the seat of the Hindu god Shiva, and home of Kuvera, Lord of the Earth, a holy place where sacred reality penetrates the profane world, where time meets eternity and where all dualities are resolved.

The summit of Mount Meru is, figuratively speaking, always placed in the centre of a mandala used in Eastern meditation and sacred magic practices. Ultimately, it is also a symbolical representation of circling the square, or squaring the circle. Titus Burckhardt observed that the classic Hindu temples are built in the form of

a mandala according to a cosmic plan. Likewise the Buddhist monumental temple structure, the Borobudur in Java, is laid out on such a plan.

When we journey through our land, and other lands, we should visit as tourists of a special kind – rather like pilgrims – the spiritual shrines and centres of holiness. Some sites may be active centres of worship, while others are of ancient people, and are now no longer in active use. Nevertheless, through our interest and our attempt to understand, we can contact that quality of Divinity which endures all ages.



Ruth Beringer joined the TS in Ireland. After moving to Australia, she was a member of Blavatsky Lodge in Sydney from 1950 until her passing on 20 February 2015. General Secretary of the Australian Section for eight years, she was later made an Honorary Life Member of The TS in Australia. This is one of many fine articles by Ruth which were published in several theosophical magazines during her lifetime. Reprinted from the September 1988 issue of *Theosophy in Australia* with some editing.

The Anthropocene

the present epoch when humanity became a major environmental agent

Dr Victor Gostin



Toxic algae bloom in Lake Erie. Source: NASA

Earth scientists now recognise that our species is a geophysical and ecological agent of unprecedented power, albeit with unsustainable growth expectations. Some authors suggest that humanity's control of fire, some 2 million years ago, ushered in a totally new controlling element, overriding nature. A further stage was the extensive development of agriculture and horticulture (Glikson, 2015). However, an emerging group of scientists now propose that:

the second half of the twentieth century is unique in the entire history of human existence on Earth. Many human activities have accelerated sharply towards the end of that century. The last 50 years have without doubt seen the most rapid transformation of the human relationship with the natural world in the history of humankind (Steffen et al., 2015).

Landscape Changes by Nature and Human Activity

Our mining, road, rail and dam building have modified the earth's surface at a

greater rate than all the natural geological agents. Glaciers and rivers have been estimated to have moved about 10 billion tonnes of sediment each year over geological time. In comparison humans mine about 7 billion tonnes of coal and 2.3 billion tonnes of iron ore each year. Add the same amount of overburden plus construction materials and we have become a major contributor to altering our landscape (Sandiford, 2011).

Since 2007, more than half of all people now live in cities, compared to just 15% at the turn of the 20th century. This has resulted in an exponential increase in demands on infrastructure, fresh water, and sewerage. Just the delivery of fresh water has necessitated the construction of more than 45,000 dams (>15m height) that together hold back some 15% of total annual global river runoff. In turn this has decreased the sediment carried to the ocean, which has increased coastal erosion (GWSP Digital Water Atlas, 2008). In many cases dams simply terminate

river ecosystems. An extreme example is the total drying of the Aral Sea in central Asia (area of 68,000 km²), where intense cotton farming has used up all the river waters flowing from the Himalayas.

The filling and emptying of large dams may generate earthquakes, such as one Indian dam that resulted in a magnitude six quake, and the Thomson Dam in Victoria creating a magnitude five quake. Meanwhile a big increase in seismicity of small earthquakes has resulted from intense injection of wastewater from oil and gas extraction and hydraulic fracturing [fracking].

Planetary and Human Energy Release

All earth systems (apart from the atmosphere) are energised by the release of interior planetary heat in the form of volcanoes, thermal springs, and in the movement of tectonic plates resulting in earthquakes and the uplift of mountains. This natural metabolic rate is estimated to be about 44,000 billion watts.

For comparison, humanity generates some 16,000 billion watts from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas. Significantly, this is already more than a third of the earth's natural rate, and with humanity's energy use doubling every 34 years, it would surpass the

natural rate by about 2060 (Sandiford, 2011).

Deforestation and Decreasing Biodiversity

Agriculture, deforestation and population growth are interconnected. The whole Mediterranean was once surrounded by extensive forests with a very rich ecosystem, until the establishment of the Greek civilisation. Wood was used as a major fuel for cooking and heating, in kilns for tiles and bricks, in mining and smelters, and as a building material for houses, public buildings, carts, chariots, boats and sailing ships (Attenborough, 1987).

Back in the 4th Century BCE, Plato wrote:

What now remains, compared to what existed, is like a skeleton of a sick man, all the fat and soft earth wasted away and only the bare framework of the land being left.

As the classical empires spread from east to west along the Mediterranean and north into Europe the forests were demolished. The creation of large cities contributed to deforestation. Overcrowding forced citizens to move to the hillsides where forests once stood to build their homes.

The provinces of North Africa were, originally, among the richest in all the

Roman Empire. Six hundred cities flourished along the shore from Egypt to Morocco. The biggest was Leptis Magna with 100,000 people. By the end of the first century AD, North Africa was producing half a million tons of grain every year and supplying the growing city of Rome with most of its wheat (Attenborough, 1987).

Deforestation and relentless agriculture weakened the soil, allowing it to be eroded by rain into the sea, filling the estuaries and harbours. Ports like Ephesus were abandoned as the shoreline moved seaward some 5km. Urbanisation and the resulting degradation of the environment ultimately weakened the Roman Empire.

Deforestation on a similar scale to that which occurred in the Mediterranean also prevailed in the Indian subcontinent, in China, and in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, accelerated by increase in population.

South America suffered the largest net loss of forests in the decade to 2010 – about 4 Mha/yr (equivalent to 0.5 per cent of total forest cover) – followed by Africa, which lost about 3.4 Mha/yr. Although the rate of global deforestation has recently slowed, it continues at a high rate in several

countries, especially Indonesia, where, by 2012, primary forest loss (0.84 Mha/yr) was estimated to be higher than in Brazil (0.46 Mha/yr), (Brack & Bailey, 2013).

In addition, Indonesia's forests contain high floral and faunal biodiversity including 10% of the world's plants, 12% of the world's mammals, 16% of the world's reptile amphibians, and 17% of the world's bird species. The forest's high biodiversity places Indonesia among the world's mega-diverse countries. Therefore extensive clearing of Indonesian primary forest results in habitat loss and associated plant and animal extinctions. The orang-utan, the Sumatran tiger and countless other endangered species are being pushed to the brink of extinction (Margono et al. 2014).

Human desire for ivory is also threatening the survival of elephants and hippopotami. The exaggerated value of limited supply leads to disproportionate exploitation of rare species, rendering them even rarer and thus more desirable and ultimately leading them into an extinction vortex. While not reaching the extreme of a mass-extinction, in the palaeontological sense, humanity has achieved extinction rates that are much higher than would be expected from

the fossil record, highlighting the need for effective conservation measures.

Food Requirements

The right to food is clearly not negotiable. Feeding our growing population and reducing hunger will only be possible if agricultural yields can be increased significantly – and sustainably. It is clear that an improvement in the management of agricultural soils and water becomes key to the achievement of global food security. There is in fact plenty of food. But too much of it is going to feed animals, too much of it is being converted to fuel and too much of it is being wasted.

FAO estimates that the world's growing population will require about 60 percent more food by 2050 compared to 2006. Over the next 35 years, 70 percent of gains in cereal production are expected to come from irrigated land. In some areas the shortage of surface water has led to unsustainable over-exploitation of artesian or fossil waters.

Soil is a non-renewable resource, and its preservation is essential to our food security. Yet overgrazing in marginal lands and much traditional agriculture has degraded and salinised the soil. Major droughts and storms have then blown these soils away. The loss of

prime agricultural land by urbanisation has also resulted in increased runoff and pollution of nearby streams and seas (Kaushal et al., 2010).

Pollution

In India air pollution from ozone and soot caused far more loss of crop yield than climate change. From 1980 to 2010, the increase in temperature and change in precipitation as a result of anthropogenic climate change has caused a 3.5% decrease in wheat yield. However, air pollution has caused more than a 30% decrease in wheat yield during the same period.

Since the emission of soot and ozone precursors is significantly larger in China than in India the impact of air pollution on Chinese agriculture is expected to be even larger. China is now the world's largest food importer.

The overall effect of human activities on the air, water, soils and rocks has extended beyond the continents into the surrounding seas. As it is not illegal to dispense with rubbish on the high seas it was found that half of all marine debris apparently comes from the land while the other half is from boats and ships.

Observations from 24 expeditions (2007–2013) across all five oceanic sub-

tropical gyres, plus the Mediterranean Sea, coastal Australia and Bay of Bengal, involved 680 surface net tows and 891 visual survey transects of large plastic floating 'islands' of debris. The results suggest that a minimum of 233,400 tons of larger plastic items are afloat in the world's oceans plus 35,540 tons of microplastics. These range in size from being invisible to the naked eye to just a few millimetres in diameter, and are produced as large plastic items ultimately degrade into millions of microplastic grains.

According to the first rigorous global estimate published in *Science* (Jambeck et al. 2015) around 8 million tonnes of plastics go into the oceans each year. Around a third of this likely comes from China, and 10% from Indonesia. Most of the worst offenders are developing nations, largely due to fast-growing economies but poor waste management systems.

Microplastics are easily ingested by fish, mussels and other sea animals, and probably are linked to the passage of deadly, persistent chemicals through the environment, such as the pesticide DDT and toxic PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls). One third of dead turtles from Moreton Bay in Queensland were found to have ingested mainly soft plastic items, as they mistake them for jellyfish.

Marine pollution by chemical wastes is an increasing problem. According to NOAA, 80% of pollution to the marine environment comes from the land. One of the biggest sources occurs as a result of runoff. This nonpoint source pollution includes many small sources like septic tanks, cars, trucks and boats, plus larger sources, such as farms and forest areas. Millions of motor vehicle engines drop small amounts of oil each day onto roads and parking lots. Much of this, too, makes its way to the sea. The burning of fossil fuels, but also mining, have boosted the mercury levels in the upper 100 m of the ocean by a factor of 3.4 since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. The highest levels of anthropogenic mercury are in the Arctic and North Atlantic oceans. Marine disposal of nuclear wastes has been ongoing. The former Soviet Union alone dumped 16 submarine reactors and 17,000 containers of radioactive waste into the Kara Sea, all slowly decaying. Eventually these will release their contents into the Arctic Ocean.

Shipping is a major contributor to ocean acidification. Cargo ships burn some of the nastiest fuel on earth: bunker fuel. Cheap and untaxed, it is low-grade oil, the dirtiest variety that ships burn when on the open ocean – and it is 4.5% sulphur by weight. The

largest SOX and NOX production from shipping is seen in parts of the northern hemisphere, resulting in concentrating the sulphuric and nitric acids within a relatively shallow surface mixed layer (Hassellöv et al., 2013).

The Great Acceleration

The International Geosphere - Biosphere Programme (IGBP 1999-2003) produced a graphic synthesis of socio-economic indicators and human activities on the Earth. Graphs published in an updated report by Steffen et al. (2015), *The trajectory of the Anthropocene: The Great Acceleration*, suggest that the Earth has left the Holocene and entered a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene, an epoch driven by the impact of human activities on the Earth System. The dominant trend of socio-economic graphs shows that economic activity continues to grow at a rapid rate. Meanwhile the Earth System indicators generally continue their post-industrial rise, especially carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, ocean acidification and surface temperature. The post-1950 acceleration in these indicators remains clear and 'are (1) beyond the range of variability of the Holocene, and (2) driven by human activities and not by natural variability' (Steffen et al., 2015). The human

and natural environments have now become completely intertwined, and it is our responsibility to make people aware of this situation so that we can make rational community decisions for actions that would reduce the damage and improve our environment.

Humanity's undeniably major impact on Earth therefore justifies the naming of a new Anthropocene epoch, and the current exponential growth in human population and use of resources is simply not sustainable. Steffen and colleagues propose 1950 as the start date for the Anthropocene from an Earth System science perspective. The detonation of the first atomic bomb in the New Mexico desert, on 16 July 1945, and the worldwide spread of radioactive isotopes, now provide a unique signal of human activity at the start of the Great Acceleration, and of the Anthropocene.

Conclusion

Reflecting on the Anthropocene and its grim environmental context, it is important to remember that not all societies have been equally impacted by the factors discussed above. While the developed world has enjoyed major increases in personal wealth, the developing third world has been largely left behind.

As OXFAM has reported: inequality is one of the defining problems of our age. In a world where hundreds of millions of people are living without access to clean drinking water and without enough food to feed their families, a small elite have more money than they could spend in several lifetimes. The consequences of extreme inequality are harmful to everyone – it robs millions of people of better life chances and fuels crime, corruption and even violent conflict. Put simply, it is holding back efforts to end poverty.

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Dr Victor Gostin is a retired Associate Professor in Geology and Geophysics, Adelaide University. He has an asteroid named after him. A long-time member of the TS, he is the national convenor of the Australian Theosophy Science Group and editor of the Theosophy-Science newsletter.

Q and A: Soul Wisdom, Mainstream Forces, Satellite Study Groups



Below are some summarised responses to several questions which were asked of the Q and A panel during the 2015 National Convention. The panel included Harry Bayens (Perth - Moderator and participant), Ilze Gorell (Sydney), Jean Carroll (Sunshine Coast) and Nancy Inkster (Adelaide).

Q: What is your definition of soul wisdom?

IG: There is no right or wrong answer. I consider it to be that intangible inner self that somehow knows the answer. It knows the situation but doesn't know why.

JC: This is a difficult one because I think it's one of those things that you cannot really put into words. We just need to do the work to be able release this wisdom. We already have the wisdom, we just don't know it.

NI: I like the image of a jewel seen in our hearts which is clouded over. Every time we polish it a little it shines a little bit more. It is a different journey for all of us. At times we feel that we are

standing still for a while, and at other times we move forward.

Q: What are the forces in mainstream society that tend to draw it away from soul wisdom?

IG: As far as I can see it is the *misuse* of technology, because technology in itself is neither good nor bad. Used properly, it could help people towards soul wisdom. However, it's the misuse and the overuse of technology that draws people away from it, sapping their time and their energy.

JC: I think it is the misunderstanding of individuals about how their mind works; the problem is in our minds. We all have the power to see what our quickening culture has done to us and if we were to study, meditate and give service, we would perhaps be able to see this. So we need to get our message out into society. Society has problems but they are all individual and cultural.

NI: I think the problem is busyness for most people who are not fortunate enough to be retired or have some extra

time. People are already busy, and are kept even busier with technology, although there are some really good sides to technology that can unite us all.

HB: I think the problem is materialism which has become the absolute – the need for the big house and the big car. The focus of my children is very strongly attached to materialism. Marketing, et cetera, draws you away from the soul because all ‘happiness’ is seen to be outside of ourselves.

Q: Do you think that satellite study groups in the suburbs of our large cities may be a more effective way to spread the Theosophical message? It is often difficult to attend central lodges at night and on weekends.

NI: How we engage people is an ongoing problem. There is no easy answer to it. People do have trouble coming into central areas in larger cities and so how do we get the message out there? Certainly movement onto the Internet is important. A lot of people do not want to come to meetings; they just want to read their electronic devices. However, you can read for so long but then you actually do want to engage.

JC: Satellite groups could be the answer to a lot of our declining

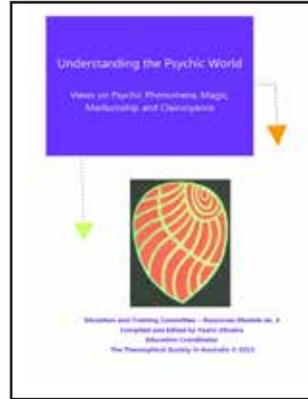
numbers. But of course it depends on where you are meeting. Where I live on the Sunshine Coast it's very easy. The cost of parking in a big city, if you are retired, is significant, and there are some safety issues with train travel. In such cases, e.g. Sydney and Melbourne, I really think you have got to get out into the suburbs.

IG: The question seems to be made for Sydney. Yes, I think there is a place for the satellite groups. However, in Sydney it actually works that we are centrally located, with people coming long distances – even from the central coast. There is the community of people coming in each week to see their friends, sit down and have a cup of tea. It's that human touch. I would like to see satellite groups as supplementary to our major group.

HB: I do not think it is a question of satellite groups; it has to do with the quality of the message and good resources. Then you will get people coming. Perth is very lucky in that we are a smallish city, compared to Sydney and Melbourne, without the higher parking costs. If we wish to get our message out effectively we have to have a quality product delivered well, with theosophical concepts presented in plain English.

Education:

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Compiler and Editor:

Education Coordinator, The Theosophical Society in Australia.

Grow as the flower grows, unconsciously, but eagerly anxious to open its soul to the air. So must you press forward to open your soul to the Eternal. But it must be the Eternal that draws forth your strength and beauty, not desire of growth. For in the one case you develop in the luxuriance of purity; in the other you harden by the forcible passion for personal stature.

Light on the Path

Australian Tour – International Speaker Vic Hao Chin Jr.



Vicente Hao Chin Jr. is the President of Golden Link College Foundation, a theosophical school in the Philippines. He has served as President of the Theosophical Society in the Philippines as well as the Indo-Pacific Federation of the TS. Editor of the chronological edition of *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, he has also published several books. Vic has conducted the Self-Transformation Seminar in eighteen countries around the world, and has served as Director of the School of the Wisdom in India. [See also page 59.](#)

2015 NATIONAL TOUR DATES

Tues 18 August	Perth Branch, members' meeting 'The Power of Awareness', lecture	7.30pm
Wed 19 August	Perth Branch, public meeting 'Exploring Intuition', lecture	7.30pm
Fri 21 August	Adelaide Lodge, members' meeting 'The Power of Awareness', seminar	10.30am
Fri 21 August	Adelaide Lodge, public meeting 'Exploring Intuition', lecture	7.00pm
Sat 22 August	Adelaide Lodge, public meeting 'Six Ingredients of a Happy Life', lecture	10.30am
Sun 23 August	Melbourne Lodge, public meeting 'Six Ingredients of a Happy Life', lecture	1.30pm
Mon 24 August	Hobart Branch, public meeting 'Exploring Intuition', lecture	8.00pm
Wed 26 August	Blavatsky Lodge, Sydney, public meeting 'Exploring Intuition' Venue: Mitchell Theatre, Sydney Mechanics School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney	4.30pm
Tues 1 September	Brisbane Lodge, public meeting 'Six Ingredients of a Happy Life', lecture	6.30pm
Thurs 3 September	Atherton Lodge, public meeting 'Six Ingredients of a Happy Life', lecture	6.45pm

Some images of the 2015 Convention



Group photo, St. Mark's College, Adelaide



Drs Victor and Olga Gostin
- our key speakers



Left: Vicki Kapatos (Sydney)
Right: Carmen French, Sunshine Coast



Jean Carroll (Sunshine Coast)
with Travis James (Adelaide)



Kevin Davey (Adelaide)

National Calendar of Events



Canyonleigh Centre, Bolitho House, Tugalong Road, Canyonleigh, NSW Fri 28 – Sun 30 August 2015

Theme: Self-Transformation Seminar

A comprehensive workshop on personal and spiritual growth. Through self-awareness and meditation this workshop seeks to integrate and harmonise the ideals and realisations of the higher life with the behaviours of the personal life.

Presenter: International Speaker, Vic Hao Chin Jr.

Cost: members \$130/\$160 single room; non-members \$160/\$200

Further enquiries: Linda Oliveira
pres@austheos.org.au tel. 02 9264 7056



2016 National Convention

Dates: Sat 16 – Sat 23 January

Theme: ‘Today’s World Problems:

Insights from the Wisdom Tradition’

Special Guest Speaker: International President, Tim Boyd

Venue: University Hall, Perth,

Cost: \$95/night SINGLE ROOMS ONLY AVAILABLE

Earlybird registration fee: \$20 if received by Monday 31 August

All registrations received after Monday 31 August: \$40

Deadline for live-in registrants (required by venue): Friday 10 October

Enquiries to: Jennifer Hissey, Convention Secretary

email: tshq@austheos.org.au

Members are encouraged to register soon to attend this special event as Tim Boyd will have a limited time in Australia.

We look forward to you joining us in Perth.



Registration forms for all events organised by the National Headquarters are at: [www.austheos.org.au/what's on](http://www.austheos.org.au/what's_on)

The Theosophical Society in Australia Minutes of the 2015 Annual Convention Business Meeting



The Convention Business Meeting of The Theosophical Society in Australia commenced at 9.18am on Sunday 25 January 2015 at St Mark's College, Adelaide. Notification had been provided in accordance with Rules 12 and 13 of the Rules of The Theosophical Society in Australia.

CONVENTION CHAIR

The Meeting was chaired by the National President, Linda Oliveira.

OBSERVERS

A motion that New Zealand TS member Vicky Jerome be admitted as an observer was carried (moved Dianne Kynaston; seconded Pamela Peterson).

1. ROLL-CALL OF VOTING DELEGATES AND PROXIES

In accordance with Rule 15(2) of the National Rules, the names of the voting delegates and proxies must have reached the National Secretary on Form 4 by 11 January 2015 at the latest. Only those delegates so named by the due date were eligible to vote at the present meeting. They were noted as follows:

- Marlene Bell or failing her Kevin Davey for Adelaide Lodge

- Pamela Peterson or failing her Peter Brereton for Blavatsky Lodge
- Brian Harding or failing him Phillipa Rooke for Brisbane Lodge
- Peter Fokker or failing him Tony Fearnside for Canberra Branch
- Kari Torgersen for Melbourne Lodge. Kari was not present and there was no second voting delegate (but the votes of Melbourne Lodge had arrived on time so there was no issue).
- Dianne Kynaston or failing her Tony Buzek for Newcastle Lodge
- Janet Blake or failing her Carmen French for Sunshine Coast Lodge.

No Form 4 was received from Atherton Lodge, Hobart Branch, Launceston Lodge or Perth Branch.

[Note to these minutes: Launceston Lodge's signed Form 4 was found in its unopened envelope on return to Sydney. Though it was dated 3 January 2015 (and thus valid) the date of receipt is unknown.]

The National Secretary reminded the delegates present that the Australian Convention Business Meeting is the governing body of The Theosophical

Society in Australia. The members of the ACBM, that is, the Lodges/Branches in the Section, already voted through their Lodge/Branch Convention meetings. She added that no new significant motions can be moved at the present meeting. However, minor modifications of motions that were carried at Lodge/Branch Convention Meetings may be voted upon by the voting delegates present at the ACBM.

Vote Allocation 2015

It was noted that each Lodge/Branch has one vote at the Australian Convention Business Meeting irrespective of the number of members it has. In addition to that, each Lodge/Branch is entitled to one vote for every fifty members in Good Standing for two years as at 31 August 2014. The National Secretary stated that, unfortunately, she was unable to access the database to retrieve those records, due to the fact that since January 6 the National Headquarters

was a building site and the relevant equipment could not be left on in order to maintain remote access. However, as there would have to have been a significant increase or decrease in the number of members in Good Standing, the previous year's membership statistics were used as a guide. In any case, there were no notices of motion, and the voting Lodges voted in unison, so any minor alterations in the voting allocation would not have had a material effect.

Finally, it was pointed out that irrespective of how many votes a Lodge has, all of its votes must be cast either for or against each item. The majority decision of the members eligible to vote at the Lodge/Branch convention meeting is taken as the vote of that Lodge, for or against, and noted on Form 4 accordingly. The Lodge/Branch votes as one. The vote allocation based on that of 2014 was as follows:

Lodge	Members in Good Standing last year	Votes
Adelaide	62	2
Blavatsky	178	4
Brisbane	61	2
Canberra	15	1
Melbourne	133	3
Newcastle	15	1
Sunshine Coast	62	2
National	105	3

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE 2014 CONVENTION BUSINESS MEETING

The Minutes of the Convention Business Meeting held on Wednesday 22 January 2014 at The Women's College, 15 Carillon Ave, Newtown, were published in the June 2014 issue of *T in A*. The National Secretary reported that all the voting Lodges/Branches voted for the Minutes of the 2014 Convention Business Meeting. There was no discussion on those Minutes.

3. NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2014

It was noted that the National President's Annual Report for the Year ended 31 August 2014 had been published in the November 2014 issue of *Theosophy in Australia*. The National Secretary reported that all the voting Lodges/Branches voted for the Annual Report at their Convention Meeting. The Chair called for comment. The Secretary of Blavatsky Lodge thanked the President, adding that the report was very comprehensive and unifying.

4. NATIONAL TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2014

It was noted that the National Treasurer's Report for the Year ended 31 August 2014 had been published later than usual,

on 4 December, due to the relocation of the National Headquarters. It was sent to Lodges/Branches by email and to each member in the post. The National Secretary reported that all the voting Lodges/Branches voted for the National Treasurer's Report for the year ended 31 August 2014, except Newcastle Lodge and the Sunshine Coast Lodge which did not vote on this matter due to the report having been sent after the Lodge convention meeting.

Peter Brereton remarked that the Treasurer's report in the financial statement made no mention of the amount for the sale of Theosophy House. The reply given was that this was indicated elsewhere in the report, and that in the opinion of both the National Secretary and the National Treasurer this would best be dealt with in the financial statements for the year ending 31 August 2015 because the property settlement did not occur in the year covered by the present statements.

5. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2014, AND AUDITOR'S REPORT THEREON

The Financial Statements, Balance Sheet for the year ended 31 August 2014 and the Auditor's Report thereon were published on 4 December and

distributed by email and post. The National Secretary reported that all voting Lodges/Branches had voted for the Financial Statements and Balance Sheet for the Year Ended 31 August 2014 and for the Auditor's Report, except Newcastle Lodge and the Sunshine Coast Lodge which did not vote on this matter due to the report having been sent after the Lodge convention meeting. Peter Brereton commented that on page 1, income would normally be presented on the left and expenses on the right, whilst in our reports they are reversed. He then complained that there is no cash flow statement to give members an idea of actual cash income from investments. After a brief discussion on this point it was agreed that, at the very least, the financial statements in future could provide a definition of what income means in our reports.

Tina Hentisz, from Perth Branch, asked why the salaries and wages of the headquarters officers and staff are not apparent from the financial statements. The National Secretary replied that these are plainly disclosed in two lines of the financial statement, and that she has made the financial statements as transparent and user-friendly as possible. Ms Hentisz said that she wanted to know what individual staff members were paid, not the total for wages and salaries. In reply, it was pointed out that wages and salaries for

TS employees have always been treated as confidential.

6. BUDGET FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 AUGUST 2015

The budget was published on 4 December and distributed by email and post along with the other financial statements normally sent out in November. A motion that the budget be received was carried (Brian Harding moved; Marlene Bell seconded).

It was noted that the National Council approved the Budget at its meeting in June 2014 and authorised the national Executive Committee to approve any subsequent minor amendments after the completion of the annual accounts.

The National Secretary reported that all the voting Lodges/Branches voted for the Budget for the year ended 31 August 2015, except Newcastle Lodge and the Sunshine Coast Lodge which did not vote on this matter due to the report having been sent after the Lodge convention meetings had taken place.

7. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

It was noted that Storey Blackwood was reappointed as Auditor for 2015 by the National Council at its meeting on 20 January, under Section Rule 23(4): 'The Convention shall appoint an Auditor or failing such an appointment it shall be made by the National Council which shall determine the remuneration.' It

was noted that recent practice has been for the Council to appoint the Auditor. Provision would have to be made on Form 4 for the Lodges to vote on the Auditor. It seems more appropriate for the Council to do so, however, the Convention may direct the Council to appoint a different auditor if it so wishes.

8. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEWLY APPOINTED OFFICERS

The Chair reported that the following appointments had been made by the National Council at its meeting on 22-23 January 2015, and by the national Executive at its meeting on 9 December 2014:

National Vice-President:	(NC)
Denise Frost	
National Treasurer:	(NC)
Beatrice Malka	
Assistant Treasurer:	(EC)
Dianne Kynaston	
Editor of <i>Theosophy in Australia</i> :	(EC)
Linda Oliveira	

9. ANNOUNCEMENT OF BALLOT RESULTS

State Representatives for NSW/ACT, Victoria and Western Australia:

The National Secretary reported that in accordance with Rules 17(1)(c) and 19, the terms of office of the State Representatives for NSW/ACT (Dianne Kynaston), Victoria (Kari Torgersen) and Western Australia (Franco Guazzelli) expired at the appointment of the new State Representatives

towards the end of 2014. They were all eligible for re-election. The election was duly called on 23 May 2014, with nominations to reach the National Secretary no later than close of business 12 September 2014. There being only one nomination from each of these states, the three candidates were elected unopposed, and the results declared on 19 September.

National President 2015 to 2017:

The National Secretary reported that in March 2014 she called for nominations for the office of National President in accordance with Rule 20(2) of the Rules of The Theosophical Society in Australia. One nomination was received by the close of nominations on 25 July. There being only one, an election was not called. Instead voting slips were sent to each eligible member, affording them the opportunity to register a vote for or against the candidate. Deadline for receipt of those voting papers having passed on 26 September, the votes were counted by the Treasurer and the Membership Secretary. The results were as follows: of the 736 members eligible to vote, 316 were in favour and 7 were against. It was thus declared that Linda Oliveira was re-elected National President for a term of three years, commencing at the Convention Business Meeting in Adelaide January 2015, in accordance with Rule 21(2). Linda was warmly congratulated.

10.VOTE ON NOTICES OF MOTION

There were no notices of motion.

11.PLACE AND TIME OF NEXT CONVENTION

The Chair announced that the 2016 Convention will be held at University Hall in Perth, Western Australia, from Saturday 16 January to Saturday 23 January.

12.RESOLUTIONS OF GOODWILL

The Chair stated that postcards addressed to absent friends and well-wishers had been prepared ready for Convention delegates to sign during the week. Delegates were given the opportunity to suggest other possible recipients.

13.ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- From the floor, a question was raised about the rationale of selling Theosophy House. This was answered by the National Secretary, who pointed out that in 2012 the Section had been approached by Blavatsky Lodge, with whom it shared the property, with a request that it be sold. It failed to sell at that time and was withdrawn from the market. Over the next two years various agents asked whether they could show a prospective buyer through, and they were all denied the opportunity. However, in 2014 an excellent unsolicited offer was made,

and accepted, because it appeared to be in the best interests of the Lodge and the Section.

- A question was raised concerning the emails circulating around the Internet with various accusations concerning the sale of Tekels Park in England and about the election of the International President. A brief reply was given, to the effect that we are not in a position to comment on these matters other than to say that there is a lot of rubbish traded on the Internet.

- A comment was made on the declining membership of the TS—six per cent in the past year—at which rate it would soon be halved. The Chair stated that this was a matter of great concern and that she was well aware of it. As part of an approach to the problem, she would be seeking marketing advice during 2015.

- The Chair then announced the names of the members of the national Executive committee for 2015: National President, National Secretary, National Treasurer (ex officio), Dianne Kynaston (Assistant Treasurer), Ken Edwards, Marlene Bell, Dai Trandang and Marie McArdle.

- Finally, a brief overview of the sale of Theosophy House and the purchase of new premises for the National Headquarters was given.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 10.24 am.

Call for Nominations- State Representatives



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE ELECTION OF STATE REPRESENTATIVES FOR EACH OF THE ELECTORAL STATES OF TASMANIA, QUEENSLAND, SOUTH AUSTRALIA/NORTHERN TERRITORY

In accordance with Rules 17(1)(c) and 19, the current terms of office of the State Representatives for Tasmania (Denise Frost), Queensland (Phillipa Rooke) and South Australia/NT (Travis James) will expire at the appointment of new State Representatives towards the end of 2015. Accordingly, nominations are invited for the election of one State Representative for each of the named states. Of these, the State Representative for Tasmania is not eligible for re-election.

Nominations may be made by a Lodge (Branch) in the relevant Electoral State, or by any two Members resident in the relevant Electoral State who have been Members in Good Standing for the last two years prior to the nomination. To be eligible for election as State Representative, the candidate must be resident in the relevant Electoral State, must have been a Member in Good Standing for the last three years, and have served for at least one year on the Executive Committee of a Lodge (Branch) by the time of the election.

The State Representative elected in each State will represent the Lodges (Branches), Groups and Members in that State in all meetings and affairs of the National Council. They shall also liaise with all Lodges (Branches), Groups and National Members in their Electoral State and shall represent their views to the National Council and to the National Society Officers, as appropriate. As well, they shall receive and deal with representations from individual Members within their Electoral State, and shall refer the representations where requested or deemed necessary.

A photograph of the candidate, curriculum vitae, relevant biographical data, and a personal statement by the candidate, which may be edited as necessary for distribution in consultation with the candidate, must accompany all nominations. If in doubt on any of the requirements please call the National Secretary.

All nominations should be on Form 8, endorsed with the consent of the Nominee, and reach the National Secretary no later than close of business 11 September 2015. Copies of Form 8 can be obtained from the National Secretary, The Theosophical Society in Australia, Level 2, 162 Goulburn Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010. natsec@austheos.org.au

A tribute to Dr Hugh Murdoch



Dr Hugh Murdoch passed away – rather auspiciously, as it turns out – on 8 May, White Lotus Day. At his funeral it became apparent that three strands of his life had held great importance to him: his family, his academic life and his TS life.

Hugh's early life included a period in the army, towards the end of which he married Elaine Morton, who eventually became the General Secretary of this Section from 1973-1981. After qualifying in accountancy, Hugh eventually took a Ph.D. in astrophysics. He was described by a colleague as a 'quiet achiever', having discovered a number of quasars and black holes. This was news to me.

Hugh attended numerous national Conventions. His honorary service as National Treasurer of the TS in Australia lasted for an unlikely-to-be-repeated fifty years. In this regard, he was notable for his meticulous attention to detail, his substantial experience and intimate knowledge of the running of the Section, of which he was made an Honorary Life Member.

In addition to his administrative work for the TS, Hugh was the Convenor of the Australian Theosophy-Science group. He produced its newsletter from 1965 until 2011, when Dr Victor Gostin took over.

Our deep gratitude goes to Hugh for his many years of tireless and dedicated service.

Linda Oliveira

As Theosophists, we do not see death as the existential terror that many people do. Rather, something more akin to a liberation and a reaffirmation of our true inner nature. In that sense, Hugh's passing is a deeply positive event. Nevertheless, I will feel sadness and miss Hugh's steady hand, wisdom and dedication and most of all, his friendship when we caught up at TS meetings.

Prof. Richard Silberstein

Theosophical Order of Service



Once again at the beginning of the year we came together for our annual AGM at the Theosophical Society Conference held in the beautiful city of Adelaide. It is a much anticipated and joyful occurrence to come together and connect with our fellow TS and TOS members.

During our AGM delegates endorsed the following three projects of support for this year.

1. Continue supporting four Home Schools in Pakistan
2. Support for the Animal Dispensary at Adyar, including funds for a proposed animal ambulance
3. Support for the vocational training programme for women in Nairobi, Kenya, and provide funds for solar lighting at schools and hospitals.

Our local groups not only contribute to the above national projects but also support local charities in their regions. They enthusiastically support specific international projects of their choice as well.

Following the success of our TOS group tour in Indonesia subsequent to the Indo-Pacific Conference in 2013, it was suggested that we once more travel together. This year TOS has organised a fund-raiser Sacred Sights and Service Tour to the Ancient Kingdom of Cambodia. The tour commences in Siem Reap on 11 October and covers the three major temples, visits to service projects and a visit to the capital, Phnom Penh. All are welcome. You do not have to be a member of the TS or TOS to participate. Full details are on our website: <http://australia.theoservice.org/newsletters/CambodianItinerary.pdf> You may need to cut and paste this address into your browser or contact me at tos.australia@gmail.com for details.

Jean Carroll,
National Coordinator

Delegates at the
recent TOS AGM
held in Adelaide,
January 2015



Reviews



***The Secret Doctrine Würzburg Manuscript* by H. P. Blavatsky, the 1885-1886 Version of the Stanzas and HPB's Accompanying Commentaries. Edited by David and Nancy Reigle, Eastern School Press, Cotopaxi, Colorado, 2014.**

After Madame Blavatsky passed away, on 8 May 1891, Annie Besant found among her papers an unpublished manuscript which contained material intended as an additional volume for *The Secret Doctrine*, published in 1888. In the Introduction to the present volume we read:

The so-called 'Würzburg manuscript' is a partial copy of H.P. Blavatsky's early manuscript of *The Secret Doctrine*, written in Würzburg, Germany and Ostende, Belgium. (...) In it we have unrevised translations of the stanzas from the Book of Dzyan. (...) In it, we have also much of the material that was later published as 'Volume 3' of *The Secret Doctrine*. This shows us that, contrary to widely held Theosophical opinion, this material was indeed originally intended by Blavatsky to be part of *The Secret Doctrine*.

When Annie Besant published Volume 3 of *The Secret Doctrine* in 1897, she

wrote in the Preface:

This volume completes the papers left by H.P.B., with the exception of a few scattered articles that yet remain and that will be published in her own magazine *Lucifer*.

However, probably also due to the controversies surrounding the Theosophical Movement at that time, the book published by Besant met with a pronouncedly critical reception from writers outside the Theosophical Society with Headquarters at Adyar.

The Editors did painstaking work in studying and researching the Würzburg manuscript. Their work vindicates, almost 120 years later, Annie Besant's view that this was indeed intended by HPB as the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine*. Their volume also contains two articles by Daniel H. Caldwell: 'The Writing of *The Secret Doctrine*: A Chronology' and 'The Myth of the "Missing" Third Volume of *The Secret Doctrine*'. This book belongs in every Theosophical library.

Copies may be ordered through the National Headquarters. Cost including postage: \$32.00. Pedro Oliveira

News and Notes



2016 Convention, Perth

Members are encouraged to come to Convention in January, at which there will be an opportunity to meet the **International President, Tim Boyd**. He will be in this country for a limited period only. Register soon to avoid disappointment (see page 59).

School of the Wisdom, Himalayas Special session to be held in Bhowali 7-17 September 2015

Theme: Ancient Wisdom - Modern Insight

Director: Prof. R. C. Tampi, retired Professor of English and former National Lecturer of the Indian Section.

Venue: Himalayan Centre of the Indian Section, Bhowali, India

Further information, Bhowali session:
<http://www.ts-adyar.org/content/school-wisdom-himalayas>

School of the Wisdom, International Headquarters, Adyar

Dates and sessions of the School of the Wisdom at Adyar for late 2015 - 2016 are now to hand:

2-13 November 2015

Theme: The Yoga of Theosophy

Director: Dr Pablo Sender, U.S.A., International TS speaker with doctorate in biological sciences.

16 - 27 November 2015

Theme: Life's Deeper Aspects

Director: Prof. R.C. Tampi

2-12 December 2015

Theme: Self-Transformation and the Spiritual Life

Director: Vicente Hao Chin Jr.,

former President of the TS in the Philippines and the Indo-Pacific Federation

11-22 January 2016

Theme: Glimpses on Chinese Philosophies in the Light of Theosophy

Director: Miss Trân Thi Kim-Diêu

General Secretary, TS in France and President of the European Federation.

Further information, Adyar sessions:
<http://www.ts-adyar.org/content/school-wisdom-classes-2015-16>

Note to intending applicants: Please contact the National President, whose signature is required on the SOW application form.

The use of one gender to cover both genders is avoided as far as possible in this magazine. However, quotations from writings in which one gender is used this way are printed as originally written. This applies both to older writings and some contemporary ones.

Section Directory

Australian Section National Headquarters

Level 2, 162 Goulburn Street,
Surry Hills NSW 2010
Ph: 02 9264 7056 / 9264 6404
Fax: 02 9264 5857
www.austheos.org.au
Campbell Theosophical Research Library:
campbell@austheos.org.au

Australian Capital Territory

Canberra Branch, Chartered 17/7/1971:

Postal Address: c/- 27 Reveley Crescent,
Stirling ACT 2611
Meet: Friends Meeting House, cnr Bent & Condamine
Streets, Turner ACT 2612
7.30pm 1st Monday of month
(Please confirm by email or telephone)
President: Peter Fokker
Tel: 02 6236 3170
Email: fokkerbakker@gmail.com
Secretary: Tony Fearnside
Telephone: 02 6288 7656
Email: janton@netspeed.com.au

New South Wales

Blavatsky Lodge, Chartered 22/5/1922:

3rd Floor, 484 Kent Street,
Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone: 02 9267 6955 Fax: 02 9283 3772
Email: contact@tssydney.org.au
www.tssydney.org.au
Meet: 2.00pm Wednesdays
President: Simon O'Rourke
Secretary: Pamela Peterson

Newcastle Lodge, Chartered 3/12/1941:

Meet: Charlestown Community Centre, Charlestown
Square, 81/30 Pearson Street, Charlestown NSW
2290
8.00pm 2nd Friday each month
(excluding January)
Study group (members) confirm dates
with Lodge
<http://www.austheos.org.au/newcastle/>
President: Melanie Ball
Tel: 02 4948 1733 - please leave message

Blue Mountains Group:

Meet: Senior Citizens Meeting Rooms
Upper level, Central Arcade
81-83 Katoomba street, Katoomba
Meetings every Monday, 2.00pm
1st Monday of month - Public Meeting
Subsequent Mondays - *Secret Doctrine* Study Group
Coordinator: Donald Fern
Tel: 02 4757 1910

Gosford Group:

Meet: The Neighbour Centre,
Pandala Road, Narara NSW 2250
8.00pm 2nd Tuesday each month
Coordinator: Marianne Fraser
Tel: (02) 4339 7118, 0400 713 273
Email: marifraser256@gmail.com
Secretary: Roni Ostergaard
Telephone: 02 4358 1413

Northern Beaches Group:

Postal address: c/- The Manor,
2 Iluka Road, Mosman NSW 2088
Meet: c/ 22 Laitoki Road
Terrey Hills
NSW 2084
8.00 pm 3rd Friday each month
Coordinator: Dai Trandang
Tel: 0438 357 522

Queensland

Atherton Lodge, Chartered 27/4/1950:

Postal Address: 14 Herberton Rd,
Atherton QLD 4883
Meet: Meeting Room, Community Services
Tablelands, 38 Mabel St, Atherton
2.00pm 2nd Saturday of month except Jan.
President: Max Brandenberger
Secretary: Chris Pang Way
Tel: 07 4091 5156

Brisbane Lodge, Chartered 21/1/1895:

355 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane QLD 4000
Tel: 07 3839 1453
Email: brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au
www.theosophyqld.org.au
Meet: 7.30pm Fridays
President: Brian Harding
Secretary: Phoebe Williams

Sunshine Coast Lodge, Chartered 1/4/2004

Meet: Buderim Croquet Club,
Syd Lingard Drive, Buderim QLD 4556
7.00pm Thursdays
7.00pm Fridays
President: Janet Blake
Tel: 0416 442962
Email: theosunshinecoast@gmail.com
Secretary: Joyce Thompson

Toowoomba Group:

Meet: 49 Lindsay Street, Toowoomba
1st Wednesday at 7pm and 3rd Sunday at 2:30pm each month
(Meditation 1pm & Study Group at 1:30pm)
Annual Springbrook Retreat each winter
Coordinator: Barry Bowden
Tel: 0427 751 464

South Australia*Adelaide Lodge, Chartered 26/5/1891:*

310 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000
Tel: 08 8223 1129
Email: president@tsadelaide.org.au
<http://www.austheos.org.au/adelaide>
Meet: Members Meeting 10.00am 4th Friday of every month. Please contact Lodge for additional meeting dates.
Acting President: Marion Peters
Secretary: Irene Banfield

Tasmania*Hobart Branch, Chartered 7/6/1889:*

13 Goulburn Street, Hobart TAS 7000
Tel. 03 6294 6195 (please leave message)
www.theosophicaltas.websyite.com.au
Meet: 8.00pm Mondays
President: Helen Steven
Secretary: David Giffard
Email: helen_steven@live.com

Launceston Lodge, Chartered 12/1/1901:

Until further notice meetings are being held at:
The Harry Abbott Scout Centre,
1 St George's Square,
East Launceston (off High Street)
email: rmholt@gmail.com
www.austheos.org.au/launceston
Meet: Wednesday — for timings
please see programme at above url

President: James Deavin
Secretary: Ruth Holt
Tel: 0448 397 246

Victoria*Melbourne Lodge, Chartered 9/12/1890:*

126 Russell Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
Tel: 03 9650 2315 Fax: 03 9650 7624
email: meltheos@bigpond.com.au
Meet: Saturdays
President: Harriet Cornfeld-Fraser
Secretary: Edward Sinclair

Mornington Peninsula Group:

Meet: Mount Eliza Neighbourhood House,
Canadian Bay Road, 1st Sunday
of the month 11am - 3.30pm
(meditation - lunch - Theosophy)
Coordinator: Daphne Standish
Tel: 03 9589 5439
www.austheos.org.au/centres/mpg

Wodonga-Albury Group:

Meet: Shop 6, Tower Place, High Street,
Wodonga VIC 3690
1st Tuesday each month
Library hours Mon-Fri 10.00am-2.00pm
Coordinator/Secretary: Denis Kovacs
Tel: 02 6024 2905

Western Australia*Perth Branch, Chartered 10/6/1897:*

21 Glendower Street, Perth WA 6000
Tel/Fax: 08 9328 8104
Email: tsperth@iinet.net.au
<http://www.tsperth.com.au>
Meet: 7.30pm Tuesdays
President: Harry Bayens
Acting Secretary: Anne Bower

Mount Helena Retreat Centre:

1540 Bunning Road, Mt Helena WA 6082
All enquiries to Perth Branch
Tel: 08 9328 8104

**Theosophical Education
and Retreat Centre, Springbrook, Qld**

2184 Springbrook Road,
Springbrook QLD 4213
Tel: Office/Hall 07 5533 5211
email: info@tsretreat.com.au
Caretaker: Kay Schiefelbein

Freedom of Thought

As the Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasise the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none of which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership. No teacher, or writer, from H.P. Blavatsky onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought, but has no right to force the choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held, or because of membership in any school of thought. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties.

The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of the Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of the Society, and also fearlessly to exercise the right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.

*Resolution passed by the General Council
of the Theosophical Society (1924)*



Freedom of the Society

The Theosophical Society, while cooperating with all other bodies whose aims and activities make such cooperation possible, is and must remain an organisation entirely independent of them, not committed to any objects save its own, and intent on developing its own work on the broadest and most inclusive lines, so as to move towards its own goal as indicated in and by the pursuit of those objects and that Divine Wisdom which in the abstract is implicit in the title, ‘The Theosophical Society’.

Since Universal Brotherhood and the Wisdom are undefined and unlimited, and since there is complete freedom for each and every member of the Society in thought and action, the Society seeks ever to maintain its own distinctive and unique character by remaining free of affiliation or identification with any other organisation.

*Resolution passed by the General Council
of the Theosophical Society (1949)*

