

Theosophy IN AUSTRALIA

ISSN No. 1038-1139

December 2015 volume 79, number 4



INSIDE Why Freedom of Thought?
 Drugs and Spirituality: an Occult Perspective
 A Christmas Story
 2016 National Convention Programme

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Subscriptions: non-members \$25 p.a. within Australia, \$30 p.a. overseas

We invite articles or other items of no more than 2,300 words

email: pres@austheos.org.au

Cover photo: Hibiscus panduriformis Photographer: Dr Helen Lambert

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Printer: Kwik Kopy, 320 Pitt St, Sydney. Recycled paper.

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Published quarterly by: The Theosophical Society in Australia.





December 2015
Volume 79 no. 4

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.

CONTENTS

- I 10 From the National President
- I 11 Why Freedom of Thought?
- I 18 Drugs and Spirituality:
an Occult Perspective
- I 26 A Christmas Story
- I 30 Nature is Your Best Friend (poem)
- I 31 Communication - Creating Shared Meaning
- I 32 2016 National Convention Programme
- I 34 National Calendar of Events
- I 35 Results - Election of State Representatives
- I 36 Annual Index
- I 38 Theosophical Order of Service
- I 39 Reviews
- I 40 News and Notes
- I 43 Section Directory

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 National President

Linda Oliveira



The Christmas Season is upon us again. It means a great deal to many people but to others, very little. In this issue, former National President Beverley Champion shares some of her enquiries into the significance of Christmas and its inner meaning. This places it within a deeper and more universal perspective, quite removed from the superficial trappings with which we are all too familiar.

Other offerings in this issue include an article explaining why freedom of thought has held sustained significance in the TS since its infancy, including a compelling quotation from former International President Annie Besant. This points out, among other things, that differences of opinion among members are actually safeguards. Other items include a perspective by Dr Pablo Sender on drugs and spirituality – an area about which relatively little has been written to date within the TS.

Thinking further about differences of opinion, their ability to act as safeguards is significant. How we express personal opinions, and respond to those

of others, matters. Yet opinions are simply beliefs or assessments made on grounds which fall short of proof. Our Objects embrace the broader function of investigation. Consider that the living quest for *Knowledge*, in the deepest sense, is ultimately likely to be far more significant than any personal opinions. And if we can allow the same freedom to others that we enjoy for ourselves, then the TS will remain vital.

As one year draws to an end, many people take the opportunity to reflect upon the year that was. From one point of view, there is only this moment; the past is finished and the future an undiscovered country. Yet useful insights may be gleaned through reflection on certain aspects of the last twelve months – both personally and collectively. I wish you all a fulfilling year ahead and look forward to meeting many members at the National Convention in January, sure to be an energising start to the next TS year.

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

Why Freedom of Thought?

Pedro Oliveira

Why has freedom of thought been an important policy of the Theosophical Society since its beginning in 1875? Why is it that the books published by the different publishing houses within the Society, over more than a hundred years, have not been presented as its thought and teaching? And why have the writings of Madame Blavatsky – the main co-Founder of the TS – not been adopted as the official teaching of the Society? In order to address these questions we may have to go back twenty-five centuries.

Buddha and the Ending of Views

In the *Aggivacchagotta Sutta* ('To Vacchagotta on Fire') the Buddha explains to the wanderer Vacchagotta, who was questioning him, the reason why he did not cling to any form of views:

Vaccha, the speculative view that the world is eternal is a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a vacillation of views, a fetter of views. It is beset by suffering, by



Source: Wikimedia Commons

vexation, by despair, and by fever, and it does not lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna. ... Seeing this danger, I do not take up any of these speculative views.¹

Let us return to the twenty-first century. In spite of great advancements in the many fields of science and technology, religious and ideological wars have darkened the world. In Europe, political parties with openly racist and xenophobic platforms are gaining momentum amongst sections of the electorate. So-called 'Islamic' extremists are attempting to hold

the world to ransom and wreaking havoc in different countries, causing indescribable suffering, particularly to women and children. Business dominated social media are enlarging the limits of hedonism to unprecedented levels – they have become a kingdom of ‘selfies’. In the midst of all this scenario daily relationships are still plagued by confusion, inflexible attitudes and a hardened sense of self. At the heart of every conflict at the present time is a world view dominated and activated by relentless, undiminished self-centredness.

Vacchagotta replies to the Buddha: ‘Then does Master Gotama hold any speculative view at all?’ The Master explains:

Vaccha, ‘speculative view’ is something that the Tathāgata has put away. For the Tathāgata, Vaccha, has seen this: ‘Such is material form, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is feeling, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is perception, such its origin, such its disappearance; such are formations, such their origin, such their disappearance; such is consciousness, such its origin, such its disappearance.’ Therefore, I say, with the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of all conceivings, all excogitations, all I-making, mine-making, and the underlying tendency

to conceit, the Tathāgata is liberated through not clinging.²

Working with ideas and concepts is a necessary part of many aspects of life. If you are a surgeon, an engineer, a physicist, a teacher, a student or even a handyman, learning how to deal with concepts and ideas is important. The problems arise when we try to convince others that *my idea, my solution or my concept* is the only right one. Division and fragmentation set in and communities and relationships suffer. In the search for Truth any attempt to dictate terms to others is not only unhelpful – it renders such a search devoid of meaning.

Absolute and Relative Truth

This is what HPB wrote when considering the question of absolute and relative truth:

To sum up the idea, with regard to absolute and relative truth, we can only repeat what we said before. *Outside a certain highly spiritual and elevated state of mind, during which Man is at one with the UNIVERSAL MIND – he can get nought on earth but relative truth, or truths, from whatsoever philosophy or religion.* Were even the goddess who dwells at the bottom of the well to issue from her place of confinement, she could give no man

The mind is constantly enamoured with its own creations, its own content. As the great mystics throughout the ages have declared, the experience of Truth – whether we call it Brahman, Nirvana, God or the Eternal – is a profoundly transformative one, from which the personal self – pride, envy, comparison with others, attachment to desire – does not survive.

more than he can assimilate. Meanwhile, every one can sit near that well – the name of which is KNOWLEDGE – and gaze into its depths in the hope of seeing Truth’s fair image reflected, at least, on the dark waters. This, however, as remarked by Richter, presents a certain danger. Some truth, to be sure, may be occasionally reflected as in a mirror on the spot we gaze upon, and thus reward the patient student. But, adds the German thinker, ‘I have heard that some philosophers in seeking for Truth, to pay homage to her, have seen their own image in the water and adored it instead.’³

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transformative one, from which the personal self – pride, envy, comparison with others, attachment to desire – does not survive. Instead of hankering after that experience we are advised by the sages to purify our hearts and to learn how to listen to life’s perennial song. Humility is a cornerstone of a real search for Truth.

The Masters on Freedom of Thought

While corresponding with the members of the London Lodge of the TS in 1883, Mahatma KH gave them a practical demonstration of why freedom of thought is important in the TS. He also showed them that he knew how to walk the talk:

It seems necessary for a proper study and correct understanding of our Philosophy and the benefit of those whose inclination leads them to seek esoteric knowledge from the Northern Buddhist Source, and in order that such teaching should not be even virtually imposed or offered to those Theosophists who may differ from our views, that an exclusive group composed of those members who desire to follow absolutely the teachings of the School to which we, of the Tibetan Brotherhood, belong, should be formed under Mr. Sinnett’s direction and *within* the ‘London Lodge T.S.’ Such is, in fact, the desire of the Maha Chohan. ... Every Western Theosophist should

learn and remember, especially those of them who would be our followers – that in our Brotherhood all personalities sink into one idea – abstract right and absolute practical justice for all. ... Thus, the Theosophists of Mrs. K.'s [Anna Kingsford's] way of thinking, – were they even to oppose some of us personally to the bitter end, – are entitled to as much respect and consideration (so long as they are sincere) from us and their fellow-members of opposite views, as those who are ready with Mr. Sinnett to follow absolutely but our special teaching. A dutiful regard for these rules in life will always promote the best interests of all concerned. It is necessary for the parallel progress of the groups under Mrs. K. and Mr. S. that neither should interfere with the beliefs and rights of the other. And it is seriously expected that both of them will be actuated by an earnest and sleepless desire to respect the philosophical independence of each other, while preserving at the same time their unity as a whole – namely the objects of the Parent Theos. Society in their integrity – and those of the London Lodge, in their slight modification.⁴

When universal brotherhood – the oneness of all humanity and indeed of all life – begins to become a reality in our hearts it will naturally generate the acceptance of differing views, while keeping the focus on the purpose for



which the Theosophical Society was established: to let people 'know that such a thing as Theosophy exists'.

Annie Besant's View

In a statement from 1913, Annie Besant elaborates this point in a passionate presentation of one of the pillars of the TS work – Freedom of Thought:

Before dealing with investigations, let me make clear my own position with regard to all questions of opinion and belief within the Theosophical Society itself. Some of our members echo the statements of one seer or another, and seem to consider that such a statement ought to preclude further discussion. But no one in the TS has any authority to lay down what people shall think, or not think, on any subject. We are not in the position of an orthodox Church, which

has certain definite articles of faith, which imposes certain definite creeds in which all faithful members are bound to believe. The only point which we must accept is Universal Brotherhood, and even as to that we may differ in our definition of it. Outside that, we are at perfect liberty to form our own opinions on every subject; and the reason of that policy is clear and an exceedingly good one. No intellectual opinion is worth the holding unless it is obtained by the individual effort of the person who holds that opinion. It is far healthier to exercise our intelligence, even if we come to a wrong conclusion and form an inaccurate opinion, than simply, like parrots, to echo what other people say, and so put out of all possibility intellectual development.

In fact, differences of opinion among the members ought to be regarded as safeguards to the Society rather than as menaces, for our one greater danger, as HPB recognised, is the danger of getting into a groove, and so becoming fossilised in the forms of belief that many of us hold today; ... The Society is intended, always has been intended, to be a living body and not a fossil, and a living body grows and develops, adapting itself to new conditions; and if it be a body which is spiritually alive, it should be gaining continually a deeper and fuller view of truth. It is absurd for

If the Society is to live far into the future, as I believe it will, then we must be prepared to recognise now, quite frankly and freely, that our knowledge is fragmentary, that it is partial, that it is liable to very great modifications as we learn more and understand better; and especially is this true of everything which goes under the name of investigation.

us to pretend, at our present stage of evolution, that we have arrived at the limit of the knowledge which it is possible for men to obtain. It is absurd for us to say that the particular form into which we throw our beliefs at this moment is the form which is to continue for ever after us, and to be accepted by those who follow us in time. ... If the Society is to live far into the future, as I believe it will, then we must be prepared to recognise now, quite frankly and freely, that our knowledge is fragmentary, that it is partial, that it is liable to very great modifications as we learn more and understand better; and especially is this true of everything which goes under the name of investigation.⁵

The essential spirit of the TS is not a set ideology but, as its very name indicates,

Divine Wisdom. Dr Besant's vigorous elaboration makes it clear how vitally important for the Society freedom of thought is. Although now more than a century old as an institution, the TS remains unique by affirming that an open mind is a crucial qualification in the search for Truth.

A Letter from a Great Adept

However, the core mandate of the TS is not just encouraging an unbiased and undogmatic search for Truth. It seeks to address the fundamental causes of human suffering and fragmentation which have turned the earth into a valley of tears. The well-known 1881 letter from the Mahachohan – the Mahatmas' Master – points to the deeper nature of Theosophical work:

To be true, religion and philosophy must offer the solution of every problem. That the world is in such a bad condition morally is a conclusive evidence that none of its religions and philosophies, those of the *civilised* races less than any other, have ever possessed the *truth*. The right and logical explanations on the subject of the problems of the great dual principles – right and wrong, good and evil, liberty and despotism, pain and pleasure, egotism and altruism – are as impossible to them now as they were 1881 years ago. They are as far from the

solution as they ever were; but to these there must be somewhere a consistent solution, and if our doctrines will prove their competence to offer it, then the world will be the first one to confess that must be the true philosophy, the true religion, the true light, which gives truth and nothing but the truth.⁶

The Theosophical Society became an early custodian of a universal, regenerative teaching. As one of the Mahatmas told Mr Sinnett, 'this Theosophy is no new candidate for the world's attention, but only the restatement of principles which have been recognised from the very infancy of mankind'. Although in its teaching aspect, articulated through ageless concepts, Theosophy studies and explains universal processes – in the human being, in Nature and in the universe – in its deeper, numinous nature, it is Wisdom, a direct, non-mediated perception of the undivided oneness of all existence and a way of life informed by this life-transcending experience.

Freedom of thought is the beginning. If rightly nurtured it can lead to meaningful study and reflection. But even these are ultimately transcended when we truly come to know what Theosophy is in its essential nature, through the full realisation of our first Object.

Endnotes:

1. *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, a translation of the *Majjhima Nikaya* from the Pāli, original translation by Bhikkhu Nānamoli; translated, edited and revised by Bhikkhu Bodhi, Third Edition, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 2009, pp. 590-594.

2. *ibid.*

3. 'What is Truth?', *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India, 1962, vol. IX, pp. 40-41.

4. *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, chronological sequence, edited by Vicente Hao Chin Jr., The Theosophical Publishing House, Manila, The Philippines, 1993, Letter 120, p. 411.

5. Excerpted from 'Investigations into the Superphysical', *Adyar Pamphlets*, No. 36, Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, 1913.

6. *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, First Series, trans. and comp. by C. Jinarājādāsa, The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, 1988.



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Surely our difficulty is that most of us have lost this sense of creativeness. To be creative does not mean that we must paint pictures or write poems and become famous. That is not creativeness – it is merely the capacity to express an idea, which the public applauds or disregards. Creativeness is not a continuous state, it is new from moment to moment, it is a movement in which there is not the 'me', the 'mine', in which the thought is not focussed on any particular experience, ambition, achievement, purpose and motive.

J. Krishnamurti
The First and Last Freedom



Drugs and Spirituality: an Occult Perspective

Pablo Sender



Ours is a time when pleasure and amusement seem to be the new god. In fact, according to Michael J. Wolf in his 2003 book *The Entertainment Economy*, entertainment has become the driving wheel of the global economy. The cause for this is not new. Nineteenth-century philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer argued that there must be something wrong with our very existence, because we are not happy with simply being. We are in a condition of eternal frustration, continually striving to find satisfaction. This search has led humanity to try different avenues: religion, knowledge, power, wealth, fame, pleasure – and drugs.

In our culture psychoactive drugs are used by some people for recreation, as a source of pleasure, or as a means of escaping reality. But there are also those who, whether they are fully aware of it or not, hope to find something

deeper – something that can fall into the category of *spirituality*.

Most spiritual teachers have said that the way to attain real happiness is not by external achievements but by changing our lives, that is, by altering our perception of, and reaction to, the world. But this is quite difficult, as anybody who has tried it can attest. It is not surprising, then, that, since ‘magical pills’ are available to alter our states of consciousness at any time and with no effort on our part, some people claim that drugs are a valid means towards spiritual experience.

This claim seems to be supported by the fact that some of the experiences induced by psychoactive drugs resemble some of the mystical states traditionally attained by means of purification, meditation, prayer, and devotion. And yet most spiritual traditions, including Theosophy, dis-

courage or even forbid the use of drugs.

Since most religions rarely state clearly why they are against the use of drugs, all a practitioner can do is either accept or reject this blanket statement. But here a unique feature of the Theosophical teachings becomes crucial – its ability to explain many spiritual phenomena in a more or less scientific manner. This is due to the rich history of occultists and clairvoyants within the Theosophical Society, a number of whom are regarded as among the most influential in recent times, such as H.P. Blavatsky, Annie Besant, C.W. Leadbeater, Geoffrey Hodson, and Dora Kunz.

The Psychedelic Experience

The experiences generated by the use of psychedelic drugs have generally been interpreted in two alternative ways – as hallucinations or as spiritual experience.

For mainstream science, there is only one objective world – the one perceived by our senses. By this view, the psychedelic experience can be nothing but a hallucination produced by altering the chemical environment of the neurons.

The Theosophical view disagrees with this conclusion, stating that the cosmos

Many of the experiences undergone under the influence of drugs can be the result of opening the doors of perception to some aspect of reality that is usually beyond the reach of the physical senses. This, however, does not mean that these experiences are spiritual.

has a nonphysical side that is as real and objective as the material one. Thus many of the experiences undergone under the influence of drugs can be the result of opening the doors of perception to some aspect of reality that is usually beyond the reach of the physical senses.

This, however, does not mean that these experiences are spiritual. Generally speaking, we could say that there are three planes of perception ‘above’ the physical that are of a *psychic* nature; and three more above these, which are, properly speaking, *spiritual*. By the psychic dimensions, we mean realms in which a person exists in a nonphysical state, but is still affected by ignorance, a sense of separateness, and self-centredness. It is only when consciousness works in the spiritual dimensions that it is really free from all these limitations, and the person expresses qualities such as peace, wisdom, love, and compassion.



Which of these planes becomes available to our perception under the influence of drugs? According to Mme. Blavatsky, it is the one immediately above the physical, generally called the ‘astral plane’ (Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, 12:662).

‘Super-sensuous’ perception on the astral plane is quite different from normal awareness. As a result, when a person first gets in touch with this dimension, there is a sort of ‘perceptive shock’ that is frequently interpreted as a mystical experience. Colours and forms, space and time, identity and personal boundaries – these are all different from the ones we are used to and may dazzle the inexperienced mind.

This bewilderment need not be permanent. Those who develop the ability to freely open their consciousness to the astral plane without the artificial aid of substances can experience it in a more continuous

way. These people eventually adjust themselves to this new dimension, and sooner or later this perception starts to feel normal. Then it can be observed that there was no lasting mystical transformation, but only an extension of the field of personal experience.

Blavatsky regards this realm with scepticism. Not only does she deem it a plane of illusion, but she also writes in *The Voice of the Silence* that it is ‘dangerous in its perfidious beauty’. She warns: ‘Beware, Lanoo [disciple], lest dazzled by illusive radiance thy Soul should linger and be caught in its deceptive light’ (Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence*, p.8).

Why is the astral plane regarded this way? C.W. Leadbeater wrote:

[Drugs] bring again into the physical consciousness indiscriminate impressions from the astral world. These come generally from the lower part of the plane, in which are aggregated all the astral matter and all the elemental

essence concerned with exciting the lower passions and impulses. Sometimes they come from slightly higher regions of sensuous delight ... but these are scarcely better than the others. (Leadbeater, *Talks*, 2:34)

When spiritual seekers become aware of this delightful plane, they are in danger of getting caught in this world and abandoning any higher search. For this reason, Christian mysticism interpreted such perceptions, which frequently occur to mystics, as temptations put in their way by Satan to lead them astray.

The perception of astral realities will eventually come to those who are pursuing a spiritual discipline. But this in and of itself does not constitute a spiritual experience. In fact, opening oneself to this perception prematurely and artificially is an unnecessary risk for those who are seeking to tread the spiritual path. True spiritual realities are beyond the realm of sensual stimulation, whether physical or astral. In her article ‘Sham Asceticism’, Mme. Blavatsky remarked:

A *Sadhu* [religious ascetic] who uses *ganja* and *sooka* – intoxicant drugs – is but a sham ascetic. Instead of leading his followers to *Moksha* [liberation], he does but drag them along with himself into the ditch, notwithstanding his

walking and sleeping on spikes. A pretty business that, for a religious teacher! (Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, 4:352)

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The drugs known in India as *ganja* and *sooka* (or *sukha*) are derived from cannabis (marijuana). In the West there has been a long debate about whether this substance is harmful or not. Marijuana has been banned mainly on the grounds that it is a gateway to harder drugs. But this argument, being ambiguous and difficult to prove, is losing strength, and this substance is being legalised in some parts of the world, including some states in the U.S. Today it is often regarded as a ‘soft’ or relatively harmless drug.

But modern science is restricted in its ability to experiment systematically on human subjects. Moreover, science has no capacity to assess the influence of drugs on the hidden aspect of human beings. This can only be done by those who are versed in the occult science and have developed the appropriate means of observation.

Thus Mahatma Koot Hoomi, one of Blavatsky's teachers, seems to differ with the view of marijuana as a harmless drug. Discussing how blind credulity kills the possibility of developing intelligence, he mentions 'the old creeds and superstitions which suffocate in their poisonous embrace like the Mexican weed nigh all mankind' (Hao Chin Jr., p.39). Geoffrey Hodson also believed that the idea of marijuana being 'soft' is erroneous.

As we are going to see, the use of drugs is denounced in Theosophical literature not because of blind prejudice or a moralistic attitude, but based on the 'scientific knowledge' derived from clairvoyant investigations by highly trained individuals.

Admittedly, these reports do not attempt to distinguish the effects of one drug from those of another. In fact, as we will see, on occasions the clairvoyants describe similar effects even for alcohol, which is quite different from psychedelic drugs, marijuana, and narcotics.

Effects on the Brain

Blavatsky observed that 'the habitual use of hashish, opium, and similar drugs' are 'destructive to the development of

the inner powers' (Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, p.262). The reason for this may be connected to two glands in the brain – the pineal and the pituitary, which are directly related to so-called 'altered' states of consciousness.

According to Blavatsky, psychic vision is caused by the 'molecular motion' of the pituitary gland. When artificially stimulated, it 'gives rise to hallucinations' (Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, 12:698).

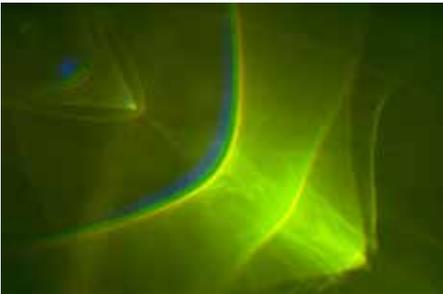
She identifies the pineal gland with the 'third eye' which, she says, 'is the chief and foremost organ of spirituality in the human brain'. The occult activity of this gland 'gives Spiritual Clairvoyance' and can take the soul 'to the highest planes of perception' (Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, 12:619, 698; 'Dialogue', p.409).

One of the effects of drugs (and to a lesser extent, of alcohol) is the overstimulation of these glands so that they can be artificially open to the perception of subtler planes. But this is a forceful method that eventually damages them.

Similarly, Dora Kunz, co-developer of the energy healing technique known as Therapeutic Touch, observed 'a disturbance in the relationship between the thyroid, the adrenals, the pituitary

gland, and the hypothalamic region' in drug-addicted patients (Karagulla and Kunz, p.150).

When the organs that bridge the gap between the brain and the spiritual nature are permanently damaged, the waking consciousness becomes isolated from its true source. This can produce a lack of spiritual feelings and aspirations, an absence of any sense of responsibility, a self-centred attitude, depression, and anxiety.



In discussing any of the ill effects of the use of drugs we must keep in mind that the degree of the consequences will depend on how much our nature is affected. Sometimes the damage is small and can be repaired. In more extreme cases it can be permanent. Although generally speaking the more a person uses drugs the worse the consequences tend to be, the extent of the effects will be different in each one.

Effects on the Etheric Web and the Chakras

Between the physical and the astral bodies there is a layer of etheric matter, which, while allowing the vitality (*prana*) and the spiritual influences to come down into the body, keeps the forces and entities of the astral plane outside the field of waking consciousness. This, as Leadbeater explains, is an important protection for those who are not ready to deal with this challenging world.

This 'etheric web' may be harmed in several ways. One kind of damage is produced by the excessive use of alcohol and tobacco and the consumption of drugs, and it is due to the chemical nature of these substances, which may produce two different effects according to an individual's constitution. They may burn away the web, leaving 'the door open to all sorts of irregular forces and evil influences', or they may produce 'a kind of ossification of the web, so that instead of having too much coming through from one plane to the other, we have very little of any kind coming through' (Leadbeater, *Chakras*, pp.77-78).

The first result produces people over-sensitive to nonphysical influences.

The second effect makes a person insensitive, even to spiritual influences.

Dora Kunz observed that ‘the effects of narcotics such as morphine and heroin begin at the etheric level and then reach the physical’. Although opiates are useful in medicine, she says that their continued use adversely affects the chakras. In these cases, ‘the direction of movement within the chakras is reversed by the drug, and it is this that causes the addiction. In turn, this physiological change in the chakras produces a condition of fear and anxiety in the patient’ (Kunz and Karagulla, p.151).

Effects on the Higher Consciousness

The ill effects possibly affect even higher principles than the astral body, as can be gathered from this statement by Leadbeater:

The taking of opium or cocaine ... from the occult point of view it is entirely ruinous and fatal to progress ... Nearly all drugs produce a deleterious effect upon the higher vehicles, and they are therefore to be avoided as much as possible (Leadbeater, *Hidden Side of Things*, pp.358-59).

Final Words

Speaking of the points explored in this article, Geoffrey Hodson said:

This has led [my wife] Sandra and I to severely warn people: if you want spiritual experience get it by the safe means of meditation. Unfortunately, for many young people they want instantaneous results and therefore continue to experiment with drugs – a very serious mistake!

Warning against psychoactive drugs may make us unpopular among certain people interested in spirituality. But then the Theosophical Society has a history of upholding truths that were unpopular at the time, such as the ideal of universal brotherhood, the connection between science and spirituality, and wisdom of ancient cultures, and others.

Free will can be intelligently exercised only when one has enough information to make a conscious choice between alternative courses of action. It is the opinion of this author that our organisation can render a great service to humanity by making this knowledge available.

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This article is condensed and reprinted with permission from *Quest*, Winter, 2015.



Pablo Sender, PhD, is a Microbiologist and has a doctorate in Biological Sciences. He became a member of the Theosophical Society in his native Argentina in 1996. He lived and worked for almost two years at the International Headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, India, and currently lives and works at the National Centre of the TS in America. Pablo has presented theosophical lectures, seminars, and classes in India, Europe, and several countries in the three Americas. He has published two books in Spanish and a number of articles, both in Spanish and English, in various theosophical journals.



The search for wholeness thus needs alertness and constant awareness. But it is just this kind of conscious control that the drug-induced experience usually lacks. The discriminating mind tends to be bypassed.

Emily Sellon

A Christmas Story

Beverley Champion

Extract of an interview by Nancy Inkster with a former National President of The Theosophical Society in Australia, Beverley Champion, on Adelaide Lodge's radio programme:

NI: The title you have chosen this morning is 'A Christmas Story'. Can you tell us more about that?

BC: The story of Christmas, or the 'Christ Mass', can be regarded as the story of the human journey towards perfection. World Teachers have been born on earth during this period to help assist with the process. Christmas is an ancient festival and legends about it mention the Winter Solstice. We celebrate this by giving gifts to each other, the goodwill we demonstrate at this time of year reflecting the gifts brought to the Holy child.

However, questions are often asked: 'Have we allowed Christmas to become just a chore, a time of feverish activity relating only to the material world? Has spiritual tradition, which we are supposedly celebrating, become lost in the fervent activity of the



Source: Wikimedia Commons

holiday season? Have 'Holy' days, as they formerly were, simply become 'holidays'?

Once 25 December has passed, do we feel refreshed and renewed in spirit, or exhausted and wondering what the fuss was all about? Today, are we richer or poorer with the advent of Christmas? In one sense, we are certainly poorer once the commercial world has dipped into our pockets. Is it any wonder that this can leave people dissatisfied and rather cynical?

Christmas is a celebration of the birth of the Holy Babe in Bethlehem more than two thousand years ago, the baby Jesus eventually growing up and becoming the vehicle for the appearance on earth

of the Christ. Subsequently, a new religion was born.

NI: I think we can all relate to this feverish activity. What is the true significance of Christmas?

BC: In her book *The Mystery of the Christos*, author Corinne Heline tells us that the Advent Season, extending through the month of December, has also been called ‘The Feast of Lights’ because spiritual impulses of the Season prepare humanity for a downpouring of the heavenly forces which accompany the annual rebirth of the Cosmic Christ into our earthly sphere. She goes on to say that the true significance of the Christmas season lies in the birth of the Christ Consciousness within the individual, which is the great gift to humanity at this time of the year.

The author speaks also of ancient legends in which a high Initiate, in feminine form, periodically comes to earth to become the mother of a World Teacher during a particular age. In every instance this has been a Holy birth, preceded by angelic annunciation and an immaculate conception.

NI: That is an amazing statement. Does she give any examples of these events?

Yes, she does. In Egypt, the feminine Goddess Isis gave birth to the Holy Babe, Horus, on 25 December – the Winter Solstice. The occasion was celebrated with great pageantry, the people chanting ‘The Virgin has brought forth’.

On Holy Night in Ancient Greece legend has it that Kore, the Virgin, was heralded as having borne Aeon, the New Age or Year.

Mithra, the Holy One of Persia, was said to have been born on 25 December.

The Winter Solstice was also observed in ancient Rome, commemorating the marriage of the earth and the sun; and initiations of mystics were celebrated as new births at that time.

Lord Krishna – often referred to as ‘The Christ of India’ – was born, like the baby Jesus, in humble surroundings while his mother and father were on a mystical journey to the hills. It is interesting to note that in this story cowherds, rather than shepherds, came to adore the child. At that time the sun was in Taurus, which is the sign of the bull, and the cow is still regarded as sacred in India today. The author explains that when the Holy Birth occurred in Palestine, the sun had passed from Taurus into Aries,

the sign of the lamb. Therefore it was shepherds who came to worship the infant Jesus.

NI: What does the Theosophical tradition say about the appearance on earth of the Christ?

BC: It is said that the wondrous Being who holds the office of the Christ, the World Teacher, came to earth two thousand years ago. Some Theosophists consider that this event was facilitated by the willingness of the great Adept, whom we know as the Master Jesus, to incarnate thirty years earlier, so that a suitable vehicle would be available for the descent into matter of this great spiritual Being, the Christ. The overshadowing of the Master Jesus for the last three years of his life formed the basis for what we know today as the Christian religion, the ‘Christ Mass’ being celebrated annually.

There is a similarity with the *Bhagavadgītā*, the Hindu *Song of the Lord*, which has a timeless message. More than twenty-five centuries ago the World Teacher incarnated in the form of Krishna or the Christ consciousness. This book contains a beautiful discourse between the Lord Krishna and Arjuna, who represents humanity. Krishna says to Arjuna: ‘In every age I come back, and he who



Source: Wikimedia Commons

knows the nature of my task and my Holy Birth, is not reborn.’

NI: How do Theosophical writers interpret the life of Christ?

BC: In his book *The Christ Life from Nativity to Ascension* one writer, Geoffrey Hodson, provided some interpretations of the life of the Christ two thousand years ago. He approached the subject from three perspectives:

- Firstly, its cosmic or universal application;
- Secondly, its application to the human experience; and
- Thirdly, its relationship to the esoteric or hidden meaning of this well-known story from the Nativity to the Ascension.

On a cosmic scale, he suggested that the story depicts the dawning of the eventual fulfilment of a creation with the glorious Being, the Christ, as the

spiritual sustainer of the manifested universe.

In the second instance, the application to humanity, he suggested that the Nativity story refers to the conscious choice by the human being to accept a world cooperation of brotherhood and world unity – in other words, a conscious choice to cooperate for the common good. Hodson interprets the Nativity story as pointing to the birth of humanity's recognition that all life is One and humanity, as One Race, being born into a new level of consciousness which includes a global vision, a planetary outlook, a plan for all life.

Thirdly, he proposes that the pathway from Nativity to Ascension describes in detail the experience of the individual seeker at the time of entry on the 'Path of Holiness'.

NI: Can you tell us more about the future growth and evolution of humanity in the Nativity story?

BC: To draw once again on Geoffrey Hodson, he commented that the Nativity story represents the beginning of a new cycle, whether on a planetary or an individual level. Further illumination will come about as the present life cycle progresses. The pursuit of

satisfaction will necessarily change to the pursuit of knowledge of our Divinity. This Truth, once grasped by a sufficient number, will bring peace to our world.

He spoke of the awakening of the Mystical Christ, which is latent in every human being, as a 'New Birth'. Each Spiritual Soul, through human experiences, has its Nativity and Ascension – that is, its birth and so-called death – in *each* incarnation. The life of the Christ, through the Master Jesus, revealed this Truth to humanity.

Vast celestial forces play between the spheres and the Earth at this period of the year, which is a truly enchanted time. Corinne Heline suggests that a threefold birth occurs: the rebirth of the Cosmic Christ on Earth, the raising and cleansing of the vibrations of the Earth, and the periodical, historical birth of great World Teachers.

Peace to All Beings.



Beverly Champion is a former National President of the Australian Section.

Nature is Your Best Friend

Worship Nature because it brings out what is beautiful and wonderful within you. Nature follows its own rhythm. It doesn't know rush and stress. It knows its timing, its seasons and subjects itself to different rhythms and influences.

But modern man has lost contact with spontaneity and naturalness. That is why so many feel lost and unhappy in spite of material prosperity. Live a simple and uncomplicated life, because life is not artificial, mechanical and complicated. Life is like a streaming, happy creek which winds happily along green meadows and beautiful forests. It does not resist its natural drift towards the ocean and its source.

Nature brings out your originality and naturalness as well as a peaceful mind. If you, like a child, can marvel over Nature and its greatness, and how a leaf or a flower is created, then you are not far from all that is.

You are part of Nature, and Nature is part of you. If you ignore Nature and its beauty and naturalness you are blocking off your own deeper, beautiful and marvellous nature, because both are connected. Nature is your best friend because it teaches you about the unity of life and solidarity.

Preben Patrick Sorensen



Communication - Creating Shared Meaning

Barry Hora and Friends



This statement on ‘Shared Meaning’ is meant to be mind-stimulating – to raise questions in those who have not contemplated its creation; short and to the point for those who have.

The creation of shared meaning is part of what it is to be human. Undertaken mindfully instead of accidentally, it would be beneficial in all communication, meditation and prayer groups. Being non-confrontational it does not play into the conflict of concepts, beliefs and agendas. This leaves room for creativity. There is just one requirement – openness – the dropping of concepts, beliefs, agendas and goals; to have a deliberate intent, a passion to be open, and to practise it. Then understanding is formed. Once understood it can be forgotten, so any time you meet with people the conversation will be new; in that now. Even without having to agree to be open together, meaning will be there to share.

Dropping concepts, beliefs, agendas, goals and paying attention inwardly, opens us to all possibilities and to shared meaning. As David Bohm put it:

... the possibility to make ‘in common’; i.e., create something new together by communicating freely in a creative movement in which no-one permanently holds to, or otherwise defends his/her ideas.

Silent periods can occur in this atmosphere, allowing the feeling of the stillness energy. To quote again from Bohm:

Only sacred silence can reveal truth. That silence is the language of the whole, the universe expressing itself through us in a life of integrity rather than fragmentation.

Collectively sharing this silence with others, the feeling of stillness, and the feelings in stillness, opens many doors and allows the flow of love, thus giving love a very good chance. It’s not something to be done, but the doing. That openness sets the scene for shared meaning and the process of sharing is love.

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2016 CONVENTION PROGRAMME

The Theosophical Society in Australia

16-23 January University Hall, Perth

‘Today’s World Problems: Insights from
the Wisdom Tradition’

Key Speaker: TIM BOYD, International TS President



Sat 16 January

- 7.30pm Welcome, Introduction – Key Speakers, Workshops
Greetings to the Convention
Reception – Light Refreshments

Sun 17 January

- 7.30am Morning Attunement
9.15am Official Opening of Convention
ANNUAL CONVENTION BUSINESS MEETING OF THE
THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AUSTRALIA
The agenda of this meeting was posted to every member
of the Australian Section during November.
INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION SESSION
2.00pm The Theosophical Order of Service
‘The Power of Service – Insights from the Ancient Wisdom’
4.00pm PUBLIC TALK – KEY SPEAKER, International President, Tim Boyd
Venue: Woolnough Theatre for this presentation only
‘Urban Spirituality: the Ageless Wisdom in a Crowding World’
7.30pm DVD: ‘Sunrise/Sunset’ – a day in the life of H.H. the Dalai Lama

Mon 18 January

- 7.30am Morning Attunement
9.15am ‘Science and Religion: Can they be Reconciled?’ – Dr Brian Harding
11.00am Short Talks:
‘Kali Yuga: the Rise and Fall of Narcissism’ – Linda Oliveira
‘Till the Last Tear’ Phillipa Rooke
4.00pm ‘The Five Seeds: Applying the Principles’
KEY SPEAKER: Tim Boyd
7.30pm ‘Once Roman Gods and Hairy Stars: New Dimensions of the Solar
System’, PowerPoint presentation – Kevin Davey

Tues 19 January

- 7.30am Attunement
9.15am ‘Seeking the Holy Grail in the Modern World’ - Dianne Kynaston

- 11.00am 'Journey into Islamic Spain and Dubai',
PowerPoint presentation – Dr Helen Lambert
- 4.00pm Workshops
Perry Coles: 'The Mahatma Letters'
Tina Hentisz: 'Approaches to Spirituality'
Gailene Wester: 'Yoga'
- 7.30pm Q and A:
Carolyn Harrod with Pamela Peterson, Dr Graham Crookham,
Lynette Muller and Lucille Crocker

Wed 20 January

- 7.30am Attunement
OUTING AND PICNIC LUNCH
- 7.30pm Classical Concert - The Walker Trio
guitarist Ray Walker; conductor and violinist Jessica Gethin;
soloist and chamber musician Sophie Curtis

Thurs 21 January

- 7.30am Attunement
- 9.15am Talk/Discussion
KEY SPEAKER: Tim Boyd
- 11.00am Short Talks:
'Unity in Diversity – Possibility or Paradox?' – Gerard Brennan
'What's Cooking in my Backyard?' – Helen Steven
- 2.00pm The Theosophical Order of Service: AGM
- 4.00pm 'Sitting near the Teachings: The Upaniṣad-s' – Dr Dara Tatrav
- 7.30pm 'George S. Arundale – the War President',
PowerPoint presentation – Pedro Oliveira

Fri 22 January

- 7.30am Attunement
- 9.15am 'Treading the Path of Peace: What is essential Buddhism
and how does it work?' – Sue Lee
- 11.00am Workshops
George Wester: *At the Feet of the Master*
Marie McArdle: 'The Obvious and Subtle Healing Benefits
of Water'
Gailene Wester: 'Yoga'
- 4.00pm Perspectives on the Convention
Invitation to 2017 Convention, Hobart
Closing of Convention (National President)
- 7.30pm Acoustic Guitar and folk Music Concert - Keith Anthonisz

Sat 23 January

Departures

National Calendar of Events



**Springbrook Centre, 2184 Springbrook Road, Springbrook, QLD
Wednesday 20 - Tuesday 26 April 2016
2016 SCHOOL OF THEOSOPHY**

**Theme: 'The Spiritual Path in Daily Life:
Exploring *The Mahatma Letters*'**

For TS members



Guest Presenter: John Vorstermans,
President of the Indo-Pacific Federation
and National President of the New Zealand Section

Join us in the tranquil Gold Coast hinterland to explore some fascinating letters which deal with the Spiritual Path. John Vorstermans is an experienced student of Theosophy and facilitator, one of his special interests being *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*.

Cost: \$250 includes registration (non-refundable \$10 registration fee), accommodation, meals and all sessions

Enquiries to: National President, pres@austheos.org.au or 02 9264 7056

Canyonleigh Centre, Bolitho House, Tugalong Road, Canyonleigh,

The next event to be held at the Canyonleigh Centre will be announced in the new year in the e-Bulletin, on the national website, and in the March 2016 issue of *Theosophy in Australia*.

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

Results – Election of State Representatives



Election of State Representative for Tasmania, Queensland, South Australia/Northern Territory

The deadline for receipt of nominations in the above named election was 11 September. As there was only one Candidate in each of these States, the following were elected unopposed, in accordance with Rule 19(5):

Helen Steven	Tasmania
Phillipa Rooke	Queensland
Travis James	South Australia/Northern Territory

The term of office for State Representatives is for a period of two years from the declaration of the election result. The State Representative will represent the Lodges (Branches), Groups and Members in the 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.

Election of State Representative for Victoria

With the sudden resignation of the sitting State Representative for Victoria on 27 August, a call for nominations was sent to Melbourne Lodge, Certified Groups in Victoria, the National Council and the national Executive Committee, in accordance with Rule 18(3)(a). The deadline for receipt of nominations to fill the casual vacancy was 23 October. As there was only one Candidate in this election **Gary Betts** was elected unopposed. His term of office coincides with the normal term of office for that state, towards the end of 2016, at which time he will be eligible for renomination.

Annual Index

Allan, Dr David: A Synthesis of Science, Religion and Spirituality	83	Gostin, Dr Olga: Menticulture: A Key to Understanding	
Annual Index	136	Aboriginal Cultures	77
Anthropocene, The:		Gostin, Dr Victor: The Anthropocene	47
Dr Victor Gostin	47	Harding, Dr Brian: The Steep and Thorny Road	21
Arunachalam, Dr Kandasamy: Can we Change? The Conscious Will	11	Hora, Barry and Friends: Communication – Creating Shared Meaning	131
Beringer, Ruth: Spiritual Shrines and Centres of Holiness	41	Living Centre of Peace, A: Sara Cohen	90
Calling all White Magicians: Tim Wyatt	14	Menticulture: A key to Understanding Aboriginal Cultures: Dr Olga Gostin	77
Can we Change? The Conscious Will: Dr Kandasamy Arunachalam	11	National Calendar of Events	28, 59, 102, 134
Champion, Beverley: A Christmas Story	126	National Convention, January 2016, Perth	101
Christmas Story, A: Beverley Champion	126	News and Notes	33, 70, 105, 140
Cohen, Sara: A Living Centre of Peace	90	Oliveira, Linda: The Good Life: Dream or Reality?	4
Communication – Creating Shared Meaning: Barry Hora and Friends	131	Oliveira, Pedro: Why Freedom of Thought?	111
Convention 2015: Annual Business Meeting Minutes	60	Poem, extract: <i>Paracelsus</i>	100
Convention 2016: Advertisement	101	Poem, Nature is Your Best Friend:	
Convention 2016: Programme	132	Preben Sorensen	130
Drugs and Spirituality: an Occult Perspective: Dr Pablo Sender	118	Q and A:	23, 54
Education	29, 56, 103	R We There Yet?: Milan Sejka	97
From the International President	38, 74	Rare Books – Perth Branch	31
From the National President	2, 40, 76, 110	Reviews	69, 104, 139
Good Life, The: Dream or Reality?: Linda Oliveira	4	Section Directory	35, 71, 107, 143
		Sejka, Milan: R We There Yet?	97

Sender, Dr Pablo: Drugs and Spirituality: an Occult Perspective	118	Synthesis of Science, Religion and Spirituality, A: Dr David Allan	83
Some Images - 2015 Convention	58	Theosophical Order of Service	68,138
Sorensen, Preben: Nature is Your Best Friend (poem)	130	Tony Fearnside, OAM	27
Spiritual Shrines and Centres of Holiness: Ruth Beringer	41	Tour, Australian – International	
State Representatives: Call for Nominations (Tas, Qld, SA/NT)	66	Speaker Vic Hao Chin Jr.	57
State Representatives: Election Results (Tas, Qld, SA/NT)	135	Tribute to Dr Hugh Murdoch, A	67
Steep and Thorny Road, The: Dr Brian Harding	21	Viewpoint	99
		Wyatt, Tim: Calling all White Magicians	14
		Why Freedom of Thought?: Pedro Oliveira	111

Members and friends of the Blue Mountains Group during a visit of the Education Cooodinator in September.



Perth Branch members and friends with the National President in November.

Theosophical Order of Service



Welcome, friends, to our Theosophical Order of Service update. By the time this goes to print our Cambodia tour participants will have returned home after looking at projects that our groups in Australia support. We reached our target of twenty participants plus one. TOS National will receive more than \$600 from this event. These funds will be distributed amongst our annual national projects that will be decided at our 2016 Annual General Meeting in Perth.

One of the National Projects that TOS has been supporting annually since 2005 is the Qandeel Home Schools in Pakistan, and providing funds for 31 scholarships. (Qandeel means 'a lantern spreading light'). These schools certainly do just that, in an environment where education for girls is not always accepted. These brave, courageous teachers are truly committed to service *without self*, despite forces of darkness working against them.

We at the TOS Australia feel honoured to support such a noble cause. In fact, the Pakistan education ventures are the only constant project that the TOS Australia supports on an annual basis. Each year at our AGM we add two other national projects for our nine state groups to support. This year marks the tenth anniversary of our involvement with Pakistan Qandeel schools. The TOS management team in Pakistan annually

provides updates on the childrens' progress and expresses their gratitude to our TOS. This year we learned that they are also able to support graduating students and have devised a programme of outreach assisting parents as well as children. The TOS from New Zealand and Italy also contribute towards these schools so they may go forth spreading the light.

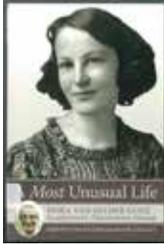
Another project that we support at a national level is the Animal Welfare Centre on the Adyar Campus in Chennai. This year we sent A\$2000 to assist in their efforts of offering free veterinary support to those unable to pay. Our funds may also assist in reaching their goal of providing a new ambulance for animal community work.

Our team of Carolyn Harrod, Treasurer, Travis James, Secretary, and Jean Carroll, National Coordinator, hope to meet as many of you as possible at the upcoming Theosophical Society Convention to be held in Perth. We are fortunate in that the International President of the TOS, Mr Tim Boyd, will be the keynote speaker at this event. Congratulations everyone for making such a rewarding year of service, helping those less fortunate than ourselves.

Yours in service, Jean Carroll
National Coordinator, TOS Australia
tos.australia@gmail.com

Reviews

***A Most Unusual Life:*
Dora van Gelder
Kunz, Clairvoyant,
Theosophist, Healer,
Kirsten van Gelder
and Frank Chesley,
Quest Books, Wheaton
2015, 358pp, pb,
RRP \$44.95.**



This book is about Dora van Gelder Kunz, whose remarkable life is a true testament to the theosophical spirit. Born of a colonial Dutch family in Indonesia, she was as a child quite gifted clairvoyantly, and developed a rapport with the fairy world around her. At the age of twelve she was invited to Sydney to be the only girl in a group of young men who were being trained by C.W. Leadbeater. Two years later the rest of her family moved to Sydney and in 1922 her father, Karel, was the co-founder of the Manor community at Mosman. Apart from her work with CWL she took on many aspects of theosophical work including, together with Oscar Kollerström, helping to create the Young Theosophists which grew into a world-wide organisation.



She befriended the American theosophist, Fritz Kunz, and they eventually married and settled in America. Together they founded the theosophical centre known as Camp Indralaya in Washington State, and were involved in many aspects of the theosophical work in America, including Dora's Presidency of the American Section between 1975 and 1987.

However, the major work of her life was the development, with Dolores Krieger, of the healing system known as Therapeutic Touch, which found its way into mainstream medicine, especially amongst the nursing fraternity. Australian member, Shirley Stack Tolhuis of the Mornington Peninsula Group has been teaching this healing technique for many years. [see also page 141 - Ed.]

This book provides us with many insights into Dora's amazing life, as well as the theosophical world in which she moved, and is an inspirational read.

Dianne K. Kynaston

News and Notes



2016 Indo-Pacific Conference

The President of the Indo-Pacific Federation, John Vorstermans, has confirmed dates for the next Conference of the Indo-Pacific Federation of the Theosophical Society. This will be held from **14-18 October 2016** in **Auckland, New Zealand**. As soon as more information comes to hand, members in this Section will be informed. Information will also be placed on the Federation's website at: <http://www.ipf-ts.org/>.

A Profession Worked along (Unorthodox) Spiritual Lines: Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin



Source: Wikimedia Commons

Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony

Tony Fearnside of Canberra Branch reports:

The influence of Theosophy on the work of Marion and Walter Griffin made an interesting theme for Dr Jenny McFarlane's presentation to the Canberra Chapter of the Griffin Society on 25 October. In turn, their lifestyles reflected the inspiring nature of the Sydney 'theosophical circle' in its heyday (mid 1920s to later 1930s).

As Jenny said:

The Griffins' spiritual trajectories connect them to many Australian and international artists who took similar journeys. Their close partnership, their commitment to town and landscape planning and their sympathy for the ambitions of western Unitarianism and the Theosophical and Anthroposophical Societies, for an alternative, utopian, spiritualised future might be recognised as fundamental to the ideas that informed their joint practice.

The brief discussion that followed showed that many of those present would like to know more about Theosophy and its influence on so many Australian artists as well as the Griffins.

We understand that a record of Jenny's presentation will be posted at www.griffinsociety.org

Mornington Peninsula Group - Thirtieth Anniversary



Shirley
Stack
Tolhuis

2 August 2015 was the thirtieth anniversary of the Mornington Peninsula Group, Victoria. The first meeting was held in 1985 at the same venue which is used by the Group today. The following is an extract of a letter received from Shirley Stack Tolhuis (pictured above), the Group's founding Coordinator, on the occasion of its thirtieth anniversary. She spoke to the Group, describing how it all began, with some brief history:

I spoke of how I met my first Theosophist, and consequently joined the TS, which was in 1967. I mentioned the wonderful people I met at that time.

Five of us, a married couple from Mt Eliza who were Theosophists, a lady and gentleman who showed Krishnamurti videos in Melbourne, and me, met in this same venue, to discuss starting a group. I never thought at that time beyond the next month's meeting, never thought for a moment that it would still be active thirty years on!

I handed out to our group a list of most of the talks, workshops and speakers that we had shared over time. I shared with them the privilege of being sent to Krotona. I also shared an account of my first conventions from 1985 onwards after leaving full-time work. I attended around twenty-five conventions and met interstate and international members.

I included a brief history of HPB and the legacy we carry on including our Objects, especially the Third one.

For the last fifteen years Daphne [Standish – Ed.] and I worked together as Coordinator and Secretary respectively, a most productive and rewarding time, always in tune, working side by side.

It is difficult to believe that thirty years have gone by, but I am pleased and content with it all.

Vic Hao Chin Jr. in Far North Queensland

Favourable reports have been received from various TS centres after visits

by International Lecturer, Vic Hao Chin Jr., during his recent tour of the Section. Atherton Lodge reports:

The topic, 'Six Ingredients of a Happy Life', was much appreciated by the audience. Several people were able to have further discussions with Vic after the presentation or during the shared luncheon before the talk.

He used his final spare day to attend to some Theosophical Society related work as well as have a tour of some of the Atherton Tablelands with lodge members, Frank Burton and Chris Pang Way. Frank often works as a tour guide for several of North Queensland's tour guide operators so Vic's tour had all the hallmarks of being professionally organised, covering the old mining towns of Irvinebank and Herberton, the rainforest area of the Crater (Mount Hypipamee), a walk around Lake Eacham and the Curtain Fig Tree.

A well-deserved trip out after an intensive tour!

Blavatsky Lodge, Sydney Talks Available

Blavatsky Lodge has begun preserving valuable talks which have been given over the years and making them available to members due to the initiative of Lodge member, Keith Howes. The Secretary, Pamela

Peterson, mentions that since the Lodge moved to the centre of Sydney in 1987, an average of forty talks have been presented annually at Blavatsky Lodge on Wednesday afternoons.

At this stage six of the Lodge's 'Voices and Vision' vintage talks are available:

- Ruth Beringer (former General Secretary of the Australian Section):
'Ahimsa' - 1994
'Towards Brotherhood' - 2003
'The Tree in the Timeless Wisdom' - 2004
- 'Annie Besant in Australia' - Lyn Collingwood, 2000
- 'Beyond Borders: The Power of Meditation' - Milos Stefanek, 2006
- 'The Magic of the Adyar Library' - Molly Kennealy, 2001

Orders can be made through the Lodge Secretary, Louise Proudman: PO Box 319, St Leonards, NSW 2065 tel. 02 92647056

or

email: adyar@tssydney.org.au

Cost: \$5.00 per talk, including postage.

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 in this way are printed as originally written. This applies both to older writings and some contemporary ones.

Section Directory

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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:

Postal Address: PO Box 319, St Leonards NSW 2065
Meet: Suite 8, 599 Pacific Highway, St. Leonards
NSW 2065 (entrance in Albany Street)
Telephone: 02 92676955 Fax: 02 9283 3772
Email: contact@tssydney.org.au
www.tssydney.org.au
Meet: 2.00pm Wednesdays
President: Howard Gregg
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.
President: Kevin Davey
Secretary: position vacant

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: Jenny Haslem
Secretary: Denise Frost
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: Ken Edwards
Secretary: Edward Sinclair

Mornington Peninsula Group:

Meet: Mount Eliza Neighbourhood House,
Canadian Bay Road, 1st Sunday
of the month 11.00am - 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: tsp Perth@iinet.net.au
<http://www.tsp Perth.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)*

