

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

There are great men and women who have lived in this world, who have experienced and tried to point us toward Truth. Knowing that Truth cannot be communicated, in different ways they have spoken of a deeply hidden potential within us — a Divine Seed, and tried to describe our role in nurturing it. The experiences of those who have taken up this experiment confirm the possibility of a consciousness that can bring order and healing to an individual's life and to the world.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

*To the 144th Convention of the Theosophical Society (TS)
Varanasi, 31 December 2019*

Welcome all to the 144th Convention of the Theosophical Society, this time being held, after a 30-year interval, in the recently renovated national headquarters of the Indian Section of the TS in Varanasi, while Leadbeater Chambers, the Western accommodations building at the TS international headquarters in Adyar, is undergoing its own renovation, as I speak. Now let us please rise for the invocation to the Great Ones who protect the Society with their energy and strength:

**May those who are the embodiments of Love Immortal
bless with their help and guidance this Society,
founded to be a channel for their work.**

**May They inspire it with their Wisdom, strengthen it
with their Power, and energize it with their activity.**

I am now pleased to open this 144th Annual Convention of the TS.

This year we gather for the 144th annual International Convention of the Theosophical Society (TS). One of the benefits of our relative longevity is that it affords a vision of a sweep of time — global changes, changes within the Theosophical Society, and the impact of the Ageless Wisdom on both. The relentless changes brought about by natural impulse and the application of human will,

reveal a pattern to the observant mind. These patterns are part of a larger cycle. Nature, human and otherwise, is abundant in its production of seed potentials. There are trees that produce millions of seeds each year in order for one or two to find fertile soil, take root, and grow, assuring the future of the species.

In recent times we as a human family have come to the view that we are some special creation, apart from the natural world, and have behaved accordingly, forgetful of the greater life in which we are imbedded. This is a pattern of thought and behavior which has become a characteristic of our time. As members of an organization formed to stem the tide of this current of thought, we need to consider this moment carefully.

The current of 'brutal materialism' and 'degrading superstition' which the TS was intended to address, has grown and taken on a variety of threatening forms since the TS's founding. What has been the impact of the work we have done in the world? What has been the impact of the world on our work? We cannot afford to lose sight of the fact that the relationship between 'the world' and ourselves is reciprocal. If we are not vigi-

lant in our awareness, our surroundings affect us powerfully, mainly because we are unconscious of its pervasive influence through culture, social norms, and education. The idea was well expressed by J. Krishnamurti when he said: 'We are the world.'

It is the nature of seeds that those which are nurtured grow more prolifically. The first line in the *Dhammapada* quotes the Buddha as saying: 'All that we are is the result of our thoughts.' Having spent countless lives feeding the seed of a separate, independent identity, we find ourselves inheriting the world shaped from that current of thought. At this point there is a dawning clarity that this collective creation is both unsustainable and unsatisfactory. From the theosophical point of view, it is also clear that the Ageless Wisdom tradition can move us toward an experience of a dramatically different inner potential capable of invoking a brighter future.

In our brief time together let us pay attention. Let us hear beyond the inadequate words we share. Let us look and see in each other and ourselves the seed of an unfolding divinity. Let us commit to nurture that seed regardless of appearances.



THE COLLEGES AND HOSTEL RUN BY THE INDIAN SECTION

Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya (VKM)

The college was inaugurated on 10 July 1954 by Dr C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyer, the then Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University (BHU). The postgraduate

institution has withstood the challenges of time to leave its imprint in the world of women's education because of the fact that it draws sustenance from the vision

of Dr Annie Besant, Mahamana Madan Mohan Malviya, Dr Rohit Mehta and others who worked to link up education with culture, and balance freedom with responsibility. With a holistic end in mind, the college pursues the motto 'Education as Service', so that the students become responsible citizens, able to serve the community.

At present the College has a group of 46 extremely efficient, committed and qualified teachers under the able administration of an open-minded principal and manager. Presently, the college is offering 14 subjects in Arts and Social Sciences at UG level and 5 subjects at PG level. However from the session 2020–21, with the approval of BHU, the college will be introducing Geography at UG level and Post graduation in AIHC & Archeology, Philosophy, Sanskrit, Economics, History & Political Science. The college also runs two certificate courses under self-financing scheme — spoken English and Fashion Designing.

A new building of the college to accommodate new classes is coming up in an area of 635 sq. m. in the premises of the Theosophical Society, Indian Section HQ. The building comprises 19 rooms (11 classrooms, 3 labs, 1 staff room, 4 store-rooms, with lift and stilt-parking facility.) A new hostel building, Rohit Mehta Bhavan, was constructed in the premises of the Theosophical Society, with a capacity to accommodate more than 150 college students. The hostel was inaugurated on 24 July 2019 by Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, BHU, Prof. Rakesh Bhatnagar.

In the academic session 2018–19, 1296 students were enrolled in the

undergraduate and 268 students were enrolled in the postgraduate courses, whereas in the current session 2019–20, 1357 students were enrolled in UG and 295 students in PG level.

Besides, 21 students were enrolled in Fashion Designing certificate course and 15 students in Spoken English certificate course in the session 2018–19.

In 2018–19, one new Research Scholar was enrolled in the Department of Home Science and at present the total number of Research Scholars is 59.

Each year, prestigious scholarships and gold medal awarded by alumni and retired teachers of the College, are given to meritorious students. Eighteen such prizes and scholarships were given in 2018–19.

Four students of the college were awarded BHU gold medals in the convocation for securing highest marks in their respective subjects — English, Music Vocal, Home Science and Psychology.

Apart from being scholars in their respective fields, the faculty members of the College are always in continuous pursuit to enhance and update their subject knowledge. This year three research projects were awarded by ICSSR under IMPRESS Scheme to our faculty members: Prof. Rachna Srivastava, Principal, in Political Science, and Dr Anshu Shukla and Dr Sunita Dixit in Home Science. Four books, 40 chapters in books and 20 papers in peer-reviewed journals were published by faculty members. Besides, 180 papers were presented by our faculty in national and international seminars.

Various lectures, workshops and visits

KULGEET (College Song) of Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya

This prayer was written by Sri M. G. Kanetkar of Theosophical Society and composed by Sri M. V. Kalvint, the first teacher of Department of Music Vocal of Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya. The song has been sung almost since the time of inception of the College. It is an ode to the spirit behind Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Dr Annie Besant, who is praised for her work for mankind.

The Translation

O! revered mother Vasant, standing salutations.
We sing thy unfailing glory with floral adoration.
Dispelling darkness with the light of wisdom, thus redeeming ignorance,
O! divine mother, thou planted the little sapling,
That's a full grown tree, the bodhi tree.
Under its shelter, blissful knowledge is spreading, enlightening humanity
O! revered mother Vasant . . .

The esteemed peerless embodiment of lofty wisdom,
Enthroned in the temple of learning,
You lit the lamp spreading light,
Blessing each and all with real knowledge,
Your inspiring power, education as service, nurturing love and peace,
Promoting universal brotherhood,
O! revered mother Vasant . . .

Body and soul together seeking sublimity of passion and thought,
Obtained through the light of profound wisdom,
You indulged in deep devotional meditation,
Accepting, surrendering and assimilating
the omnipresence of Supreme Sovereignty in every atom.
Serving undisputedly the oppressed humanity,
You defined the highest true religion.
O! revered mother Vasant . . .

were organized, both at the UG and PG levels, to impart the latest information to students and to spread awareness among them regarding recent trends, so as to enlighten and empower them in their academic pursuits. In all 30 lectures and 11 workshops were organized by various departments and committees

in 2018–19. Apart from this 2 fairs were organized by the Department of Home Science and a book fair by the Library.

Two national seminars were organized during this academic session, one of them being sponsored by ICSSR on 'Land Acquisition, Development and Social Justice' on 5–6 October 2018, and

the other by NAAC on 'Fostering Global Competencies along with Value System among Students' and 'Role of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)' on 24–25 January 2019.

An international workshop on teachers' training was organized on 26–27 November 2018 in collaboration with Theosophical Society, Varanasi. Two seven-day workshops were organized, namely, Yoga Workshop organized by Department of Philosophy and E-Content Development organized by IQAC. A one-day workshop on Life-Skill Training for Geriatric Mental Health was organized by the Department of Psychology. These

workshops proved beneficial for the students and the faculty members.

These seminars and workshops were graced by eminent guests and resource persons as well as participants from and outside Varanasi making the events successful.

Various outreach programmes and educational visits were organized by the college to make the learning more sustainable and interesting. This year 14 educational tours were organized including a visit to Ardhha Kumbha, Prayagraj, and Himalyan Study Centre, Bhowali.



Vasant Kanya Inter College (VKIC)

Vasant Kanya Inter College is run under the control of 'Besant Education Fellowship', a constituent body of the Theosophical Society, Indian Section, Varanasi since 1955. It is a Hindi medium girls' inter college from class VI to XII under grant-in-aid by UP Intermediate Board of Education of UP government.

The total strength of the college was 768 last year (2018–19) and increased to 794 this year (2019–20). It has a teaching strength of 1 principal, 6 lecturers, 6 assistant teachers and 7 supporting staff.

Results of academic year 2018–19 were excellent. In Class X, 100% of the 124 students that appeared had passed, with 109 in first class and 38 with honours. In Class XII, the result was 96.29% with 37 first class and 3 honours. In the Science Stream, the result was 100% with all 43 students passing. There were

34 first class and 2 honours. In the Trade Section the result was 94.44% where 80 students appeared, 70 received first class with 6 getting honours.

Apart from academics students take part in extracurricular activities such as sports (volleyball, kabaddi, kho-kho, swimming, athletics), science exhibition, debates, quiz programmes at all levels upto zonal and state level. They have won many prizes. Our students take part in almost all the cultural programmes organized by the State and Central Governments throughout the year. Scouts and Red Cross programmes are regularly conducted in the college.

Last year (2018–19) the college was able to construct a new classroom costing Rs 6 lakhs. The Principal's room and Teachers' room were renovated. In the current year (2019–20) it is planned

to change the temporary roof of 3 classrooms to RCC roof costing Rs 11.50 lakhs as the school has applied for new

courses — Commerce in high school and Social Science and Commerce, in intermediate.



THEOSOPHY AROUND THE WORLD

In the **Indo-Pacific** region, the highlight of this year was the much-needed and long-awaited restoration of **Blavatsky Bungalow** in the Adyar Campus in Chennai, India. The refurbished building was inaugurated by me on the evening of 1 January 2019. After two years of meticulous work done with painstaking attention by a group specialized in renovating historical buildings, it was open again to students.

The **Indian** Section has 10,703 members as of September 2019 (a net drop of 441 over last year), distributed over 486 Lodges and Centres under 16 Federations. Its website <theosophy-india.org> was recently upgraded and provides basic information about Theosophy and recent events in the Section. A recent Internet-based system has helped in efficiently managing membership, financial data, and so on. The Indian Section's 127th convention was inaugurated at Adyar by me on 1 January 2019. It was chaired by international Vice-President Dr Deepa Padhi. Pradeep Gohil, president of the Section, welcomed the delegates and delivered the state of the Section address. The second part of the convention was chaired by Yogendra Desai, with talks by Shikhar Agnihotri, S. U. Mahesh, N. C. Krishna, S. P. Malini, and Dr M. A. Raveendran. In order to motivate Feder-

ations and Lodges to propagate Theosophy, a unique goal-setting meeting of Federation leaders was organized on 6–7 October 2018 at Bhowali, attended by my wife Lily and me. Progress was continuously tracked and reported every month. The Section was able to achieve 90% of the planned goals by the end of the year. The Rohit Mehta Bhavan hostel was built in record time with a capacity of 146 students. A 100-kW solar power generator was installed resulting in significant electrical power savings. It is expected to break even in 5 years. Other buildings were revamped too with the help of the city authorities, and all these helped to accommodate the delegates to the TS International Convention 2019–20, being hosted by the Indian Section after a gap of 30 years. Shifting the Convention location this year is also enabling the Leadbeater Chambers building in Adyar to be upgraded.

The National Study Camp on self-transformation led by Vicente (Vic) Hao Chin, Jr, was held at Varanasi during 23–25 November 2018 with an attendance of 105. An international workshop on teachers' training was attended by about 140 delegates from all over India. Ven. M. Mehoankara Thero of Sri Lanka and Vic were the faculty. The 96th Easter Theosophical Conference on 'The Real

Purpose of the Theosophical Society' was held from 19–21 April 2019 in the recently renovated Blavatsky Bungalow in Adyar under the auspices of the Kerala Theosophical Federation. International Treasurer Nancy Secrest inaugurated the conference and I presided. About 124 delegates from various Federations attended. Study camps were conducted by the Telugu, Kerala, Marathi, Karnataka, Gujarat, Bombay, Utkal, Assam, Bengal, Bihar, UP, MP/Rajasthan, Tamil, and Rayalaseema Federations at the Bhowali Himalayan Study Centre, from March through September 2019 on a variety of theosophical topics. Other study camps and classes were conducted by various Federations around the country. Also the National Lecturers conducted visits and talks at

various locations during the year.

National President Gohil was invited to address the Belgian Section in Brussels where he spoke on 'The Source of Spiritual Energy' on 26 June 2019. He also visited Naarden to attend the General Council and Strategic Planning Meeting last summer. An initiative was taken to propagate Theosophy amongst students by introducing theosophical and moral values among students and exposing them to the aims and objectives of the TS. A 6-month certificate course was designed on 'Self-realization through Theosophy' in October. The TOS annual camp was held in Bhowali during 11–13 June 2019. TOS International and the Indian Section jointly contributed towards flood relief and cyclone relief during the year.



BEAUTY WITHOUT CRUELTY

The Chennai Centre of Beauty Without Cruelty (BWC) has organized a poster exhibition during the Annual Convention this year. On display are easy-to-read posters that give extensive details about the suffering inflicted upon innocent animals at factory farms, in the cosmetic industry, and so on. BWC is an international educational trust dedicated to the total abolition of the abuse of animals and their exploitation for commercial purposes. It is a way of life which causes no terror, torture or death to any creature of land, sea or air. It

encourages people to follow a lifestyle of minimum harm by eschewing products containing animal ingredients. Anyone may become a BWC member. Life membership of the BWC costs Rs 300 (Rs 600 outside India).

All are welcome to visit the stall at the Teacher's Hall, Ground Floor, Annie Besant School, during 31 December 2019–5 January 2020. The Poster Exhibition is open for 24 hours during this period. The stall was inaugurated by Mr Tim Boyd, President of The Theosophical Society, after the opening of the Convention.



Number of delegates registered as on Monday, 30 December: 1484

THE THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

MISSION

Our mission is to disseminate theosophical literature by increasing the number, availability and readership of the publications of the Theosophical Publishing House (TPH) and the Adyar Library and Research Centre (ALRC).

We will work towards this mission by distributing more extensively both in-house publications as well as selected compatible publications of other reputable publishers and ensuring customer satisfaction, in conformity with the best international publishing practices and the ideals of the Theosophical Society.

* * * * *

The Theosophical Publishing House (TPH), Adyar, welcomes you to the 144th International Convention being held at the Indian Section Headquarters of the Theosophical Society, at Varanasi. TPH appeals to you to contribute your best to the cause of Theosophy and the Theosophical Society by buying its books, and subscribing to the journals published by TPH and the Adyar Library and Research Centre (ALRC). Theosophical publications and journals make a precious gift to your friends and relatives, spreading awareness about our great organization, that attempts to mould world thought towards universal brotherhood, harmony and peaceful coexistence.

Discount Sale from 31 December 2019 to 5 January 2020

OUR PRESTIGIOUS JOURNALS

***The Theosophist* (Monthly)**

A journal for all serious students of Theosophy

Started in 1879, with HPB as Editor, *The Theosophist* has continued without a break, linking each succeeding President and readers throughout the world. Articles in the journal represent the views and insights of leading Theosophists worldwide. The President's column each month gives insight of his deeper understanding of Theosophy.

***Adyar Newsletter* (Quarterly)**

Adyar Newsletter brings up-to-date news to members about the International Headquarters. You can keep in touch, wherever you are, with events, publications, programmes of the School of the Wisdom, the work of the departments, information about Adyar's wonderful trees and other aspects of Nature, personalities who visit or stay, educational activities and brotherhood in action through welfare work.

***Wake Up India* (Quarterly)**

The journal of the New Life for India Movement, a movement for Right Citizenship, Right Values and Right Means, focuses attention on current issues of social, environmental and ethical relevance and sensitizes the public on these matters.

***Theosophical Digest* (Quarterly)**

This magazine, published by the Theosophical Society in the Philippines, contains very interesting and illuminating articles with insights into the higher life, practical wisdom, and Eastern and Western philosophies. It is of interest to students of Theosophy as well as to the general public.

Subscribe to Our Prestigious Journals

either for yourself or as gift subscriptions to your friends and relatives. Subscriptions to our journals will be accepted at the TPH and at the Adyar Bookshop, and are much appreciated.

Printed at Ratna Offsets Private Limited, B-21/42A, Kamachha, Varanasi-221010, India