

RESPONSIBILITY TRANSFORMS — COMPASSION TRANSCENDS

Trần-Thi-Kim-Diêu

(Summary of Short Lecture delivered on 1.1.2016)

An excerpt from the little book *At the Feet of the Master* reminds students that 'God has a plan, and that plan is evolution'. This reminder is worth to be pondered upon through a lifetime while endeavouring to put into practice one's own understanding.

Evolution implies change for the better of all. It embraces the one stream of consciousness without distinction, including all kingdoms and all beings. The Divine Wisdom or Theosophy teaches that each of the various kingdoms in Nature has its own destiny and role. The 'devas', or angels, are meant to comply with the universal law and execute the Divine Will on the theatre of manifestation. Humans have a different destiny; they are meant to understand the same universal law and apply it consciously at their level. This is called the Dharma of each kingdom. The same Wisdom explains the difference between angels and humans. While the former is designated to accomplish God's plan without reason-

ing, the latter is to use the faculties of reason and intuition, to understand and feel the Divine Will in order to rightly accomplish it.

Working on oneself to develop understanding about the Divine Will and applying this understanding to serve evolution corresponds to realizing *universal responsibility*. This part is the fundamental duty of a human, the first step on the spiritual path. This responsibility calls for transformation, transformation outside for improvement of the world and transformation inside for self-reform leading to one's spiritual path.

Yet something is unhappily lacking. There is a dawning in consciousness which makes everyone easily feel that there must be more, because a duty even perfectly fulfilled is never enough. Interestingly, *At the Feet of the Master*, after the exhortation for the practices of discernment, desirelessness and good conduct, emphasizes that all these qualifications without love

would never be sufficient. In a similar way, one can feel that all transformations incurred by responsibility would not be enough to lead humans to the completion of their dharma. To move beyond the human kingdom, human consciousness needs to be transcended, and this transcendence which makes a human a god is gained as a consequence of compassion.

Perceiving things through the eye of compassion implies no distinction

because this perception is not done either through the organs of senses nor through the mind; thus while there is seeing of forms and characteristics there is no seeing of separateness caused by forms and characteristics.

Compassion is the Divine germ which is enshrined in the human consciousness and which works from within, leading it to its blossoming and in due time to the state of adeptship, the 'efflorescence of humanity'.



COMPASSION STARTS AT HOME

Carol Nicholson

(Summary of the Short Lecture delivered on 2.1.2015)

The Buddha is reported to have said, 'if your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete.'

How compassionate are we with ourselves? It is easy to feel compassion when we are sitting in meditation in a group or alone. But when we are in traffic are we as kind and loving? How are we with ourselves? Are we mean to ourselves? Are we judgmental or harsh? It is important for us to listen to that still, small voice within us. When we are not kind to ourselves the small voice goes unnoticed and is sometimes

scared into silence. What can we do to encourage ourselves to live from the heart, to live from the soul, as Madame Blavatsky suggests?

It is easy to believe that we do listen to ourselves and to ignore how we treat ourselves. We fool ourselves into thinking we are doing better than we are because we have some self-awareness and we are on the path. But I believe it is important for us to truly delve into these issues and not shy away from them. These issues are important to be addressed.



Number of delegates registered Friday, 1 January: 919

THEOSOPHY AROUND THE WORLD

The TS is present in four countries in **East and South East Asia**. The Singapore Lodge is the largest in the region, with around 400 members. It had a visit by international President Mr Tim Boyd and his wife Lily, and is the base for the Chinese Project Team, which develops the Chinese website and translates theosophical literature into Chinese. The Selangor Lodge, in Malaysia, has 83 members. Japan has the Nippon Lodge in Tokyo with 37 members, and Myanmar (formerly Burma) has the Olcott Lodge with 45 members. Each Lodge has its own website. Their total membership is 555, an increase of 8.

There are 5 Lodges and 239 members in **Bangladesh**. Kusum Lodge continued its monthly study of *At the Feet of the Master*, and Chittagong Lodge organized biweekly meetings and meditation programmes. Olcott Lodge in Dhaka organized four meetings during the year and 6 members of this Lodge attended the international Convention at Adyar last year. Comilla Lodge continued periodical meetings. Mr B. L. Bhattacharyya, the Presidential Representative, visited Dhaka and Comilla in December, speaking at the various Lodges. On the 5th he attended the meeting as Chief Guest organized by Comilla Lodge. On the same day a new Lodge, 'Maynamati' was formed at Comilla, with 19 members composed of young advocates, professors, and teachers. On 7 December another new Lodge, named 'Proactive TS Lodge', was formed at Dhaka.

The **Philippine** Section participated in the international Convention at Adyar through its delegate, former General Secretary, Mr Vic Hao Chin, Jr, who gave a Convention talk and facilitated the strategic planning activities which took place at Adyar in a two-day meeting held right after the Convention. On the national front, Self-Transformation Seminars (STS) and workshops were held and well received during the year in the Mindanao State University, at the Section headquarters in Quezon City, and at various private companies. Many other lectures and study programmes were held throughout the country during the year, mostly by Mr Hao Chin. Two new Lodges were formed during the year, the Golden Link and Logos. Enrolment in TS schools during the school year reached landmark gains, with a total of 895 students enrolled in four schools and one college.

The TS in **America** (TSA) reports that under their Library Director, Marina Maestas, the Henry S. Olcott Memorial Library collection can now be accessed nationally through a cooperative inter-library loan arrangement, and often internationally. The TSA public programmes operate seven days a week on a range of theosophical subjects with growing attendance. During the year, their IT/AV department increased the number of live webcasts of their Thursday night lecture series. They are realizing the goal of their IT department head, Mr Chris Bolger: almost every talk is streamed live on the Internet.

Now their online attendance is equal to or greater than the number of people physically attending the talk, and some are tuning in from other countries. Their TS Wiki — a Wikipedia-style reference on Theosophy and the TS, is approaching 4 million visitors to the site, which has now migrated to a new domain: <www.theosophy.wiki>. A growing body of Internet resources are being made available to the theosophical world through the TSA website, <www.theosophical.org>.

After almost 50 years in operation, publication of Quest Books will be ending at the close of the year. The TSA Board of Directors decided that substantial further investment of TSA resources in Quest Books would not be financially responsible. However, this creates new possibilities in the area of online activities. The TSA will continue to publish Theosophical books through their Theosophical Publishing House. The Audio-Video (AV) Department recorded 74 new titles comprising 89 audio CDs, and 70 new titles comprising 79 DVDs. Most of the titles may be purchased at <www.questbooks.com>. The TSA National Secretary, Mr David Bruce, reports that during the year 20 speakers gave over 60 presentations, most of which were well attended and enthusiastically received. Courses for the National Lodge, now in its 18th year of existence, are also selected and edited by Mr Bruce. The membership of the National Lodge remains steady at 370 and total membership for the Section is 3,357,

a slight increase over the previous year.

The National President of the TS in **Brazil**, Mr Marcos de Resende, writes that they have 757 members, a decrease of 11, with 32 Lodges, making it the largest Section in Latin America. Their 34th Summer School was held over 6 days in January-February, with about 150 in attendance from 16 states. There were lectures, panels, and study groups about themes from Annie Besant's *A Study in Consciousness*. The Section has three active Theosophical Institutes and a Centre. The Brasilia Institute, directed by Mr Resende, held various lectures, seminars, and workshops. Its main event was the 19th International Theosophical School in July on 'The Transforming Path: In Search of the Diamond'. The visiting lecturers were Mrs Linda Oliveira, National President of the TS in Australia, and Mr Pedro Oliveira, former International Secretary of the TS. The event was a success, with about 170 participants. The Raja Foundation Centre (Sao Paulo), held various activities, including a 4-day retreat with various lectures on 'Universal Compassion — the Practice of Brotherhood'. The Pitagoras Institute (SP) conducted 'An Introductory Course on Theosophical Thought'. Their bimonthly magazine *Sophia* has reached its 13th anniversary this year, publishing its 57th issue of 5,500 copies per edition.

The **Cuban Section** is the second largest in Latin America. It has 558 members, a slight decrease, in 12 Lodges. Their National President,

Mrs Barbara Fariñas Piña, states that their two-day Annual Convention was celebrated in January with the theme 'Devotion'. The Lodges in Havana organized a two-day Summer School on the 'Gayatri Mantra' for more than 30 members. Some of the books studied by the Lodges were Annie Besant's *Thought Power, its Control and Culture* and *A Study in Consciousness*; Besant and Leadbeater's *Talks on the Path of Occultism*; and others. Their quarterly e-magazine, *Revista Teosófica Cubana*, continues to be published.

The General Secretary of the TS in **Argentina and Paraguay**, Mr Jorge García, tells us that in January they held a public conference given by visiting speaker from Canada, Dr Ravi Ravindra, on 'The Scientific Mind and the Religious Mind'. It was held in San Rafael, with about 300 persons attending. This was followed by their five-day 51st Summer School, with Dr Ravindra giving two seminars: 'The Yoga of Christ' and 'The Yoga of Krishna'. Their National Congress, held in January on 'The Golden Stairs and Our Task' was enriching. Their six-day Winter School was on 'The Value of Silence', consisting of introspection and reflection by 29 participants who were asked to remain silent from the end of dinner until after lunch the next day.

The TS in **Bolivia** achieved Section status. Their General Secretary, Mrs Guillermina Rios de Sandoval, says that they also opened three new study centres with many young members in Sucre, Santa Cruz, and La Paz,

representing the future of the TS in the Section and the growth they are experiencing. The TS in **Chile** had their Convention on 3 October with the theme 'The Truth: Essence of our Being', during which Mr César Ortega was elected Presidential Representative. Their Theosophical Electronic Brochure and the Chilean Theosophical magazine are sent monthly to different Spanish-speaking countries. The Presidential Representative of the TS in **Peru**, Mr Julio Pomar, reports that their two Lodges, 'HPB' and 'Verdad', gave a total of 17 public talks during the year. The Agency offered a free internet course on Theosophy to the public. Also, Lodge 'Verdad' offered a 'Basic Course of Theosophy', with 12 attending. Lodge 'HPB' also offered the course 'The Basis of Esoteric Philosophy' with 18 in attendance. They lost two members, but gained 10 new ones, for a total of 37. The Organizing Secretary of the TS in **Uruguay**, Mr Ramón García reports that all five Lodges met weekly. Books studied included HPB's *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Voice of the Silence*, and Eckhart Tolle's *The Power of Now*. The TS in **Mexico**'s new National President, Mr Enrique Sánchez, writes that their 155 members worked in 12 lodges and 5 study centres across the country, all of which he visited, giving a conference about the first Object of the TS. At their national headquarters, Mrs Lissette Arroyo gave nine courses on Theosophy during the year. They have been updating their webpage, <www.sociedadteosofica.mx>, every month and next year they are planning

to have a new link with a bookstore online where enquirers can buy some books and receive other books free of charge. Mrs Magaly Polanco, the Presidential Agent for **Puerto Rico**, writes that every Sunday morning they offered talks on theosophical subjects given by different members in Spanish, the language mostly spoken in Puerto Rico. In May they welcomed Mr Gaspar Torres, former National President of the Cuban Section. His talks generated interest and enthusiasm among the many who attended. The workshop he conducted on 'The Management of Emotions in Inner Development' was very fruitful. Their Agency building was thoroughly renovated. Mrs Polanco is also the Presidential Agent for the **Dominican Republic**. She reports that Atma Lodge, in Santo Domingo, received Mr Terry Hunt as guest speaker, who gave a successful public lecture with about 60 active participants. Mr Hunt also offered a retreat-workshop in Jarabacoa on *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, with around 40 in attendance. The Lodge studied HPB's *The Key to Theosophy*, the *Dhammapada*, and began to study W. Q. Judge's *The Ocean of Theosophy*. Nueva Aurora Lodge in Puerto Plata focused on the

study of the Mahatma Letters. The approximately 450 books belonging to the library of this Lodge have been indexed and members always have access to library services.

The Presidential Representative of the TS in **Costa Rica**, Mrs Maria Orlich, writes that they have had a decrease of two members, bringing their membership to 64 in 5 Lodges that meet regularly throughout the year. In addition to several study courses based on classic theosophical texts, two three-month courses were offered freely to the public during the year: an introduction to Theosophy given by Mrs Orlich and others, and a Self-Transformation Seminar based on Vic Hao Chin Jr's book.

The TS in **Central America** gave monthly public video lectures on a variety of theosophical subjects. It has 13 members in two Lodges, one in Nicaragua and the other in El Salvador, which manages its own web page: <www.sociedadteosoficaelsalvador.org>.

The TS in **Venezuela** has 14 members in two Lodges that have been giving Sunday lectures three times a month, including a study on Annie Besant's *The Path of Discipleship*, given by Mrs Nelly Nouel.



There is no dead substance, and the rock which seems to your eyes lifeless is alive with a kind of life which you cannot see or feel. The life of the plant, of the animal, of man, is evident to your senses, but it is not different in kind from that invisible life which exists in the stone.

C. Jinarajadasa

THE RITUAL OF THE MYSTIC STAR

The Ritual of the Mystic Star was created in 1911 at the behest of Annie Besant, by Bro. C. Jinarajadasa.

The Ritual was held in the Headquarters Hall at 7.30 pm, on Thursday 31 December 2015. The participants were from India and overseas, and those who work in the Adyar Headquarters. The Ritual was performed smoothly with attention to detail creating an atmosphere of beauty, light and love. Elsie Ashton's article, 'A Note on the Ritual of the Mystic Star', explores the inner meaning of the ritual:

The purposes of this beautiful Ritual, as pointed out to us by its author, are four: *First*, to give a teaching as to the great faiths of the world; *Second*, to make clear that all great spiritual teaching descends from One Source; *Third*, to add an element of purification to the world by making it clear that a man's means of livelihood is one door to his highest spiritual realizations; *Fourth*, to create an atmosphere of understanding and tenderness to all that lives.

The first two purposes have been covered many times by our speakers and writers, and so let us look at the third purpose regarding man's means of livelihood.

The Most High is to be found not only by prayer and meditation but is to be sought in the faces of our fellow-men by making whatever *righteous* profession or occupation we follow into a loving gift of service to the community. 'For inasmuch as ye have

done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.' And in the words of the Ritual: 'Where even one labours in the name of the Mystic Star, the Power of the Most High is with him.'

In the circle we have the five chief Officers, placed at the five points of the Star, representing the five Aspects of Divinity: Power — Wisdom — Joy — Beauty — Love. Each of these is made to represent also one of the main lines of livelihood and service. In addition, each has its reflex or associated line of work opposite, across the circle, in one of the five who sit between the points. It seems to me that each of these is an extension of the first coming under the same aspect. When looked at in this way, we find that in order to make the profession or activity a real door to spiritual realization the worker along that particular line must pay special heed to developing the aspect with which it is linked in the Ritual.

The Teacher and the Healer will best serve with Love, working to integrate the pupil or patient, for Love is the integrating force, the expression here among individuals of the Oneness within.

Priest and Scientist in different ways bring knowledge of the laws of the world and of the spirit to men, and they will be saved from the sterility of mere intellectualism when the Wisdom of the intuition illumines their knowledge.

The Merchant and the Servant are to bring Joy to their work,

joyousness to save them from the sins of dishonesty and meanness in commerce, or grudgingness in personal service. Industriousness springs from joy.

Great Artist or humbler Craftsman draws his inspiration from his inner perception of Beauty and Harmony, and giving it freely to his fellow men he opens wider and wider the door of his own perception of spiritual truth.

The Ruler and the Judge for their best expression and service have great need of strength drawn from the one great power of the pure Will, for these two lines of work are beset with great

temptations in the shape of bribery and corruption.

As each worker learns to bring into his daily activity one aspect of Divinity, he begins to align himself with the Good Law and to understand and work with the Divine Plan for the helping of the world. His idealism grows, and by selflessness and service he treads the safest and swiftest path to spiritual realization. So let each worker, not only now but at every moment of every day, dedicate his activity to the Glory of the Mystic Star and to the helping of his fellow men.

(From *The Theosophist*, December 1947)



THE BHARATA SAMAJ TEMPLE

The Bharata Samaj Association was formed in 1921 under the direction of Dr Annie Besant. J. Krishnamurti felt that the Hindus should have a *puja* (worship) in which the congregation could also participate. The Association works to spread Hinduism, devoid of superstition in thought and action, and uses only the essential mantras.

Both men and women conduct the *puja* and people of any religion may participate in the worship.

The Temple in Adyar is called *Jyotir Alayam* or the Temple of Light and was consecrated in 1925 by Krishnaji.

The *puja* is performed daily at 6.00 am as the sun rises, at Bharata Samaj Temple, near the west gate.



‘O Hidden Love, embracing all in Oneness . . .’ From the polarity of Life and Light there now springs creative activity, Love. Wherever there is polarity, relationship between the poles comes into existence and the purest of all relationships, the one relationship that is not sullied in any manner by any object of either attachment or repulsion, is the relationship of Love. This we may call the underlying ‘glue’ which holds together all manifested things, all parts of the universe, all elements that appear with manifestation; so it is Love that ‘embraces all in Oneness’.

Joy Mills

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