

GURUKULAM

VOLUME I • 1985

THIRD QUARTER



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GURUKULAM

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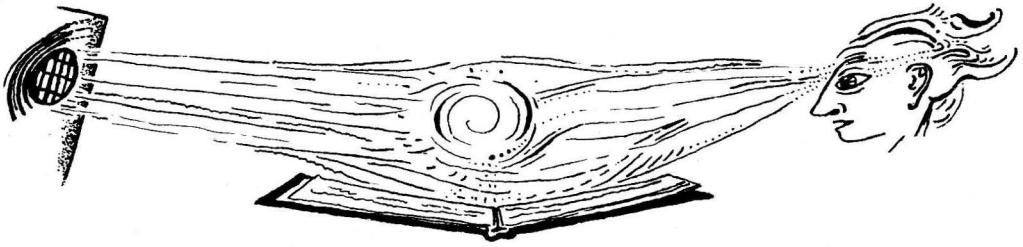
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COVER: Tibetan diety Tara. Photograph by Peter Oppenheimer.

The Love of Wisdom



Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines philosophy as: "Literally, the love of wisdom; in actual usage, the science which investigates the facts and principles of reality and of human nature and conduct."

In common parlance, the word "philosophy" is likely to conjure up images of hair-splitting academicians, ivory towers and dust-covered tomes. Philosophy, like many aspects of human exploration, has become the province of a certain specialized section of society, persons devoted to the exhaustive study of their field and debate of its long-standing questions.

But throughout history, philosophy has also been the domain of the great lovers of humanity such as the Buddha, Jesus Christ and Lao Tse. They, and many others like them, lived lives of simplicity, even poverty. They did not frequent the halls of academia; their days were not filled with the reading and writing of scholarly treatises. They lived with and for humanity, walking by the sea, in mountains, jungles and villages, responding with compassion to the needs of all whom they encountered, speaking sweet, profound words of wisdom.

In their lives, as in the lives of sages, seers and teachers of all ages and cultures, philosophy is the truth and light which they see and experience, transmuted into palpable form by their words and living example. Thus lived in love, philosophy has the power to inspire, to transform, to console, to heal. The physical presence of such teachers is necessarily limited in distance and time. They can be known by only a few. But their words have become imperishable. Recorded and elaborated, they are passed down

through the ages. Sometimes the elaborations obscure the very truth they attempt to reveal, sometimes the life of the proselytizer belies the example of the one in whose name he or she speaks. Still, wisdom perseveres.

In sixth century Rome, a respected official, advisor to the King, at the height of his career and social attainment, was unjustly accused of treason and thrown into prison, there to await execution. Out of this dire fate emerged The Consolation of Philosophy, a dialogue between Boethius, bemoaning his fate, sick with a morbid sense of pervasive evil, and Philosophy in the form of a woman whose "countenance was full of majesty, whose eyes shown as with fire and in power of insight surpassed the eyes of men, whose color was full of life, whose strength was yet intact though she was so full of years that none would ever think that she was subject to such age as ours."

This dialogue, as in many other philosophic texts such as Plato's Dialogues or the Bhagavad Gita, becomes the mechanism through which Boethius turns from despair to hope, from darkness to light. Philosophy chides and coaxes Boethius like a prodigal son. Loving compassion permeates her reasoned discourse on dialectics, brimming over now and then into sheer poetry. As he tunes himself to her healing song, Boethius is cured of his morbidity, again joined to a profound sense of the good, the principle of love from which all else flows. As we read Boethius' words, it takes some effort to remember that, in fact, both Boethius' plaintive suffering and Philosophy's lucid response emanated from a solitary man, alone in his cell. Philosophy is a symbol of that light within each of us, de-

scribed by Narayana Guru as that which shines by itself in the dark. Boethius portrayed it as a radiant woman filling his cell with hope and compassion. Yet, the expression of that hope and compassion took the form of dialectical reasoning, progressing from point to point, examining opposing forces and contradictory experiences, then resolving them in a unitive understanding.

This is the stuff which composes, if not all philosophic texts, at least the great works of philosophy preserved through time by grateful persons throughout the world. It is these words and those who utter them, stirring the fire of wisdom in the human soul, which bridge the gap between the science which investigates reality and the love experienced in and generated by the living knowledge of that reality.

Philosophy came to Boethius not as a stranger but as the nurse who had suckled him in his youth and the guide who had girded him with weapons to face adversity. Because of this previous intimacy with Philosophy, he brought with him into his prison of darkness and doubt both stamina and skills gained through discipline and

training, as well as inspiration and guidance gained through absorption of the cream of human thought.

Boethius did not invent his plight as a poetic or rhetoric convention - his prison was literal, his destruction imminent. Yet Philosophy came to him then, bringing great consolation, the proof of which we can hold in our hands today, his immortal words bringing solace through the ages. That is why we love wisdom - because it nourishes and protects us, giving guidance through the dark nights of the soul.

In this issue we begin a three part series written by Guru Nitya on his personal philosophy of life. As he shares his education and reflections, we are aided in the process of developing our own personal philosophies, nourished as he was by the creative visionaries of all cultures and times. He thus enables us to release philosophy from its ivory tower, wipe away the dust, and re-discover it as the well-spring at the core of human life and happiness.

Nancy Yeilding



The Daiva Daśakam of Narayana Guru

Translation and Commentary by
Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

VII. You are Truth, Knowledge and Bliss.
You are the present, past and future.
Even the word with which we praise You
is You, Yourself.

On hearing the word "truth," two ideas come to mind. Truth is imperative, and therefore it is to be accepted. From that it follows that whatever is true cannot be rejected. Truth is irrefutable. The irrefutability of truth also brings certitude. Therefore truth is recognized as, "This is." Instead of saying, "Oh God, You are Truth," you can also say, "Oh Truth, You are God."

People may deny the truth and existence of many things, but nobody can refute the fact of their own existence. The human mind is such that when it comes to a truth which it cannot deny, one must bow one's head in reverence. One must have some vision of truth, no matter how inadequate, incomplete or distorted, even to utter a single word. Recognizing factual existence is truth, and the denial of it is falsehood.

On the ladder of life our foothold at each step is the affirmation with conviction, "This is." When a person slips from any of his or her previous convictions or certitudes, that person will feel confused and may even doubt his or her ability to comprehend. If in the place of such a disillusionment another acceptable truth or at least a postulate cannot be found, that person may even go mad.

Where is truth? In the Upaniṣads we read, "We speak satyam; we speak ritam." The Absolute principle of truth is satyam, and its applicability in a given situation is ritam.

Social life is not possible if our fellow-beings cannot be sure of our integrity. Such an integrity can come only when we consistently adhere to what we know to be the

whole truth. When a truthful person is in trouble, all those who adore him or her as a truthful person come to that person's aid as if they want to pay their homage to truth.

According to Emmanuel Kant, "That which cannot be practiced forever is immoral." One can deceive another person once and some other people a few times more. But one cannot deceive all people for all time. A lie once told does not only cause damage to one person's trust; it can cause the distrust of many. This should be a great moral lesson for all. In one of the prayers of Kumaran Asan, he asks for God's favor that the worshipper should never be tempted to tell a lie, even as a joke. The worship we give to God is the justice we are doing to truth. We are speaking truth, not as a part of our entertainment, but as a daily discipline of bringing perfection to our truthful vision and integrity. One of the disciplines given as a first step for the attainment of yoga is taking the pledge of truthfulness and then guarding oneself against the breaking of that pledge.

If inadvertently one lie is told, the mind is immediately assailed with an irrepressible sense of guilt, and one feels pressurized to invent further lies to support the lie that was already spoken. Only by knowing truth in all its details can one tell a efficient lie. As truth is self-luminous, it proclaims its substantiality without anyone's aid. The national motto of India is: "Truth alone becomes victorious and not untruth." This maxim was given to the Indian nation by C. Rajagopalachari, who took it from the Upaniṣads.

What impels a person to say, "This is"? There is a glow of truth inwardly experienced as the truthful existence of whatever is relevant in that given moment. Thus there is an inseparability between truth and its conscious recognition. This conscious recognition is termed, in this verse, "jñanam." When we pass from truth to the knowledge of truth, there is the likelihood of a confusion assailing our mind. Pure awareness is one thing, and representative awareness is another thing. Only presentative or direct and unconditional knowledge is called jñana. Illuminated awareness is called bhāna. Our sensory knowledge and ratiocinative conjectures are cases of bhāna and they are to be clearly distinguished from jñana.

When we think of the source of consciousness, it is to be seen operating in all sentient beings. How it manifests in each mind may be different, but the faculty of awareness in all beings arises from the same source, jñana.

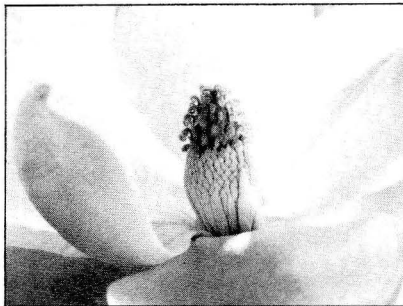
Consciously or unconsciously, we are applying a norm to discern the truth and right knowledge. That normative notion is ānanda. Pleasurable affectivity is called priyam. Just as there is a difference between bhāna and

jñāna, there is a difference between priya and ānanda.

Without the recognition of a value, truth cannot become binding. Thus God is truth, the knowledge of it, and the norm that validates truth. In fact, God-Realization is the only ānanda that we can speak of. Individuals as separate entities cannot have a personal criteria to discern universals. The mythological coloration given to God by various religions is given up here in preference to a universal concept which is binding on all, irrespective of their racial, cultural or religious background. Truth, knowledge, and its normative notion operate the same way for the theist and the atheist.

After defining God as Truth, Knowledge, and the normative Absolute, the worshipper comes to the direct experience of realizing God as an eternal presence. Vartamānam means "measuring, knowing, and evaluating in the present." Literally the word means "measurably existing." From the self to the senses there are several devices to measure. The eye measures in terms of dimension and the uniqueness of forms. The ear measures in terms of pitches and word modulations that connote meaning. The actual world is thus meticulously measured, classified and categorized with sense data, and their affective qualities are experienced as a here and now reciprocal feeling. The witnessing consciousness moves between the general and the particular and weaves the tapestry of wakeful experience. The process implies both analysis and synthesis, in which each sensation is a thread of consciousness analytically arrived at, and the composite overall picture is a synthetic envisioning.

The real, in itself, is not a static entity. It is a source of time and space and the endless projection of mass. In an individuated mind it is experienced as the actual here and now. Nobody lives in the past or the future. "What is" is the present. When we ask how big the present is, the Buddhist Vijñānavādins think it is only a fraction of a moment. Plato, on the other hand, has no objection to seeing eternity in the present. These are philosophical speculations. Nothing is more actual than the existence of



our personal awareness and what is presented within the horizon of that awareness. The focal attention of awareness now can be of a flower here or of a far-off star or of a blissful union with the beloved or can equally be of the pain in the crevice of a tooth. The actual accomodates anything. It can shrink into a mathematical point or expand into the envisioning of infinity.

The same consciousness has the ability to freeze an experience and preserve it in the unconscious. The periodic revival of it is recognized as the past. The remembering of the past is happening in the present.

The formative aspect of the present is the most dynamic aspect of creation or projection. The mud on the potter's wheel is presenting to the onlooker and the potter an entirely new vista of creation. This continuous annexation of new possibilities into the actual is the future. Considering all this the eternal presence of God is described here as "the present, the past, and the future."

What the worshipper undergoes at this point is neither experiential or imperiential, but an unnamable merger into the total. Here the act of adoration comes to its peak, and the worshipper says, "Oh God, the very word with which I adore You, is also You."



VIII. Your glorious state
which fills inside and outside,
we adore.
Oh God, victory to You.

The first verse of Narayana Guru's Ātmopadeśa Śataka (One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction) begins with an adoration of karu, the functional Absolute which shines as the inward world of the spirit and the outward world of physical phenomena. From the previous verse we have learned how the Absolute fills everything as Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, and that not even a word can be uttered which is not permeated with the glory of the Absolute.

An aspiring yogi is confronted with the outside world which is presented to him/her as sensory stimulation. He or she is also experiencing the continuous flow of his/her stream of consciousness in the form of cogitation or memory. It is as if two parallel rivers are flowing - one out-

side and one inside. When the subject and object are properly integrated in the unitive understanding of yoga, there is no cognizer separate from what is cognized. This brings a person to what is called savitarka samadhi. Similarly a union can be effected with the stream of consciousness in the process of cogitation so that a cogitator does not exist separate from the passing stream of ideas. There one enters the state of savichara samadhi.

As the integration further advances, vithirka (specific form of objective confrontation) becomes an objectified version of the Absolute. Even though it is of a conditional state, it is filled with a joyous feeling of beauty and wonder. A similar state prevails when the mind is filled with an idea which is most inspiring and elevating. As the yogi progresses in the power to unite the external and internal, he or she is filled with a state of ecstasy which is at once of the outside world and of the inward cognition of the self.

Like the inside and outside, there can also be an above and below experience. We speak of a peak experience and a depth experience. In the second verse of the Ātmopadeśa Śataka, the self is realized as a numinous source of light in the firmament of consciousness, and the here and now world is seen as a modulated manifestation of the pure light of the self.

If we use the vertical/horizontal scheme of correlation, God is to be seen as the neutral zero where the x-axis and the y-axis intersect. The horizontal plus and minus can be taken respectively as the outside and inside. In the vertical parameter, the phenomenal is at the alpha, and the noumenal is at the omega.



When all our experiences are thus fully coordinated, nothing falls outside God. God is at once visible and invisible. To describe such a God, pronouns such as he, she or it are totally inadequate. Even the worshipper is not there. There is only the glory of the One that is presenting itself as the ever-proliferating and ever-changing manifoldness of the physical and the spiritual. This is the adorable Absolute.

IX. Victory be to You, Light of lights,
ever intent on saving those in need.
Victory be to You, Blissful Intelligence
through and through.
Hail, Oh Ocean of Kindliness.

Light is victorious over darkness. In all world religions this idea comes in so many forms. Several rituals have this theme. A burning light is a symbol of enlightenment removing the misery caused by ignorance. The well known prayer of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, "Lead us from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, and from death to immortality" also enshrines this idea.

In the Markandeya Purana a sixteen year old youth named Markandeya clasps the Śiva-linga at the hour when he was destined to die. Yama, the God of Death, stands bewildered unable to claim the life of Markandeya who was thus united with Śiva. This is an Indian myth and an iconographic depiction of devotion bringing victory over death. St. George spearing a dragon to save the life of a young maiden is the Christian counterpart of the same theme. In such instances the person in distress enters into bi-polarity with God, the savior.

In Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, and Sikhism, God is looked upon as the Universal Savior. Like the expressions "King of kings," "Physician of physicians," "Guru of gurus," God is addressed here as "Mahadeva (The Light of all Lights)."

In the Koran, Allah is described with a double epithet - al Rahmān and Rahīm. We have already alluded to their significance in an earlier verse. Similarly in this verse the Lord of Mercy is also called the Ocean of Kindliness. In one of the temples installed by Narayana Guru, instead of consecrating a deity in any traditional form, he placed a brass plate on which was inscribed, "satyam, dharmam, daya (truth, righteousness and kindliness)."

In verses six, seven and eight the worshipper is brought into full union with the Supreme or the worshipped.

One who meditates on the Absolute is said to become the Absolute. This brings a great responsibility to the worshipper who now belongs to the Savior, the most benign and compassionate Lord. He or she is God's instrument. In the Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite religions, a person's highest duty is to act on behalf of God. If God is the Savior, then the worshipper – as God's instrument – should be engaged in the act of saving. In Christianity, partaking in the mission of the savior probably began with the brilliant example of St. Francis, who like Jesus Christ, claimed the lepers. And today there are several thousands of pious Christians who are continuing that tradition. To be totally submissive to the will of Allah is the main thrust of Islam.

A man can engage in tireless activity. Such activity can be monstrous such as inventing and manufacturing bombs. Instead, his intelligence should be in resonance with divine intelligence. In the opening chapter of Genesis, God creates, and even he was convinced it was good. The word "cidānanda" implies the delight shown in an intelligence which is benevolent and purposeful.

Before entering into any deep beatitude of divine bliss, there should be a total eradication of misery and ignorance, the cause of misery. Victory of God, the Savior, connotes the abolition of ignorance and consequently the evil that is always at war with righteousness.



X. In the deep ocean of Your glory,
immersed, let us all become,
there to dwell, dwell everlastingly
in Happiness Supreme!

This prayer began with a reference to the ocean of phenomenal becoming, which is feared by all and is likened to bondage, ignorance, obligatory action, the evil of necessity, hell and the regions reigned over by Satan (Judaism and Christianity), Mara (Buddhism), Maya (Hinduism), and Iblis (Islam), etc. God is pictured in that verse as the great captain who navigates all to the shore of liberation.

In verse four there again occurs another simile of the ocean. There the ocean is the totality of experiential knowledge, and each person is likened to a wave that rises and falls. The horizontal surface alone is relegated in it to the play of maya. The vertical depth is identified with God.

As the worshipper progresses from the first verse toward the tenth verse, the concept of the ocean changes. In verse nine the ocean is divine benevolence, and all are within the loving care of God. That was interpreted as the full glory of the light of love dispelling the darkness of evil. God and his glory are not two. It is like the sun and the sunlight. To the fearful, darkness itself can be seen as manifesting into ghosts and goblins. But to those who are living in light, there is nothing to fear. Living in the Glory of God is the same as actualizing the ānanda of the Self.

Attaining buddhahood, christhood or the enlightenment of the fully liberated (jivan mukta), need not necessarily be a state of the hereafter. For one who has resolved the puzzle of maya, the thorny problems of life are the enjoyable tasks to attend to. The labors of Hercules were difficult, but he took immense delight in carrying them out. To be humiliated, dragged in the road to Calgary and to be nailed on the cross could not have been a delightful experience for Jesus. But in that sacrifice lies the entire meaning of the saviorhood of Christ. The absolution of the sins of millions is directly related to the blood given by Christ as God's innocent lamb. Buddhahood did not cease with the nirvana of Gautama. The illumination he had under the bodhi tree is continuing through millions of compassionate minds which see their happiness in the happiness of others, and the happiness of others in themselves. A jivan mukta or a fully illuminated master is like one who woke up from a dreamworld where all his fellowbeings are still asleep. In their sleep they are groaning and shrieking, being assailed by irrational nightmares that belong to the dream state. The awakened one rouses all around and thus shares his illumination with others.

The merging of the happy one in the glory of the Lord is like the little leaven that leaventh the whole lump. Realization is giving the status of the eternal to the otherwise transient experience of each moment. The transient (anitya) is shrouding the eternal (nitya). Realization is the process of its reversal. This is not anything foreign to people. The flower that blooms in the morning will droop in the evening. A rainbow, pleasing the eye with its spectrum of colors, will fade out in a few moments. That does not stop people from glorifying the eternal beauty of the flower and the perennial wonder of the rainbow.

The eternity spoken of here is the ever-fresh and ever-new wonder to which we go in our companionship with God. The prayer began with God, and it ends with happiness. The alpha and omega come together, and it does not matter which is given primacy, because without enlightenment there is no happiness, and true happiness is characteristic of enlightenment.

Thomas Merton: The Free - Lance Monk

Thomas Palakeel



Thomas Merton came to me. I don't know why he keeps on coming to such a greedy young man. It all started when a brilliant, mad friend referred to Merton's Pebble as the most significant writing he had ever read. Since then Merton's books have been flooding into me as if in a divine conspiracy.

A pictorial biography of Thomas Merton, written by his friend Edward Rice, always shocks me and absorbs me into a world of mystery. Whenever I have a crisis, I open the book, am shocked and wing away from the world.

I have not yet understood Thomas Merton fully, though I have read most of his works. But why this Merton mania? For Jean Leclercq, Merton's appeal is that he excelled in making the reader feel that he was close to him. As an author Merton was able to create a transparency between himself and the reader, at the same time enjoying the opaqueness of his monastic life. His twenty-seven years in the material world, contrasted with the twenty-seven in the Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemane, a Trappist monastery in Kentucky, leave us with the enigma of his life and vision.

Thomas Merton - born on January 31, 1915, in Prades, France, of American parents - lost his mother when he was six and his artist father when he was seventeen. He went to Oakham School and to Clare College, Cambridge, England, and finally to Columbia University, New York, where he did a lot of reading, writing, drawing, drinking, singing of bawdy songs as well as editing a magazine. He was so much with the world that he hardly thought of God. But in a time of transition he entered a Trappist monastery in Kentucky and gave up everything in order to possess everything. Reducing his needs to the minimum, the once terrestrial Merton immersed himself so deeply in the "waters of silence" that he hardly thought of the world, especially at a time when the world was crazily after him. His autobiography had sold 400,000 copies immediately after publication and several other books appeared in quick succession.

His early writings were highly monastic but his later works were a comeback to the world and to Buddhism. Edward Rice described Merton's evolutions as "the making of a beatnik, peacenik, Trappist, Buddhist monk." This Merton is that mysterious wind that beats at the doors of my mind with his brooding on God, religion, war, silence, poetry, philosophy, life, action and Zen. Perhaps my unconscious mind is being pricked at by Merton, who lived and left the life which I am living at present.

Thomas Merton has bequeathed to our generation the whole of the wisdom that he acquired through his experience in two worlds. Everyone thought that the dynamic life pictured in The Seven Storey Mountain had been brought to an end by his monastic commitment, but it was only the beginning of a revolutionary life which was transformed radically by communism, Catholicism, monasticism and, ultimately, Buddhism.

One who reads The Sign of Jonas can understand the hard life he led so happily in the abbey, churning out book after book "because of his desire to disappear into God, to be submerged in His peace." It saved him from what William Faulkner calls "a frantic steeple chase toward nothing." Soon he was to realize that the only joy on earth is to escape the prison of one's own selfhood. When his autobiography became very popular he was afraid of losing his humility and solitude. But he could ignore it as what William James calls "a big blooming buzzing confusion." The author, who made two million dollars for the monastery, continued his humble, lonely life producing such profoundly beautiful books as No Man Is An Island, Bread in the Wilderness, Zen and the Birds of Appetite and thirty others.

These works showed a distinct development in his vision which became more purified and calm as he grew from the time of The Ascent to Truth to the period of Monk's Pond. He even revised his books according to the patterns of this change. Seeds of Contemplation later came out as New Seeds of Contemplation. He realized that people were not just "the wicked world," as it was portrayed in the monastic view. Merton wrote in The Sign of Jonas: "Perhaps the things I resented about the world when I left it were defects of my own that I had projected upon it. Now on the contrary everything stirred me with a deep and mute sense of compassion...I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all those people...The whole illusion of a separate holy existence is a dream."

The Bhagavad Gita proclaims tyaga (sacrifice) and sannyasa (renunciation) as the same. When one goes to the forest renouncing the world, he becomes a sannyasi and there he becomes equipped to sacrifice his life for the well-being of others. Merton's life is also characterized by renunciation and return.

Thomas Merton believed that silence was the substance of sanctity and humility the surest form of strength. That was why he chose the way of silence even in a time when it was considered to be escapism. He saw that sol-

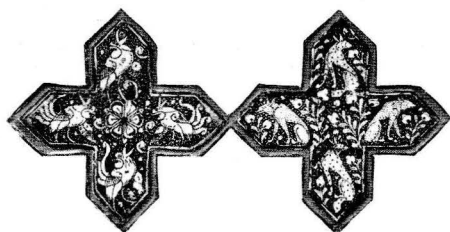
itude spiritualized the whole man, transforming his body and soul from a carnal into a spiritual being. He did it not to escape reality but to find it.

Merton also believed that Christian virtue was far from stoic resignation to social injustice and ignorance. His contemplative life was a concatenation of the interior and exterior. He was one of the few well-known Catholics in America to raise his voice against such issues as racism and war in the turbulent Sixties. Being a contemplative, his justification for social responsibility was that, "there is no true interior solitude for anyone who doesn't accept his place in relation to other men."

The silent monk soon became the center of controversy. His books were bluntly censored and withheld by his superiors. At the same time there sprang up Thomas Merton clubs and a strong personal following.

Merton wanted to make his whole existence an affirmation of peace, of non-violence, and a silent protest against any form of tyranny, against every compromise of Christianity with a secular world. At the same time he wanted to encourage everything good, beautiful, pure and free in man and the world. He openly spoke his opinions on nuclear war and other current issues. He was called a "talkative Trappist" and a "free-lance monk."

A brahmachari, or Indian ascetic, who Merton and friends sheltered in their rooms at Columbia University had sown seeds of Eastern thought in them. It was he, however, who advised Merton to dive deep into the rich monastic tradition of Christianity itself. Merton renewed his Eastern contacts after his ordination, and in the course of time his writings became more and more humanistic and less traditionally monastic. His correspondence with Dr. D. T. Suzuki was a turning point in his hermetic life. Zen and Buddhism, which were until then an undercurrent, became an integral part of his thinking.



There began a 'Zen-sualization' of his life and literature. He translated Zen texts and a pervading sense of Zen is evoked by such proverbs of his as:

The madman runs to the East
and his keeper runs to the East;
Both are running to the East.
Their purposes differ.

Everything Merton wrote tended to become an extended haiku. As he observes in Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander, "The taste for Zen in the West is in part a healthy reaction of people exasperated with the heritage of four centuries of Cartesianism. Descartes made a fetish out of the mirror in which the self finds itself. Zen shattered it."

Later Zen became a fad of the Counterculture in America. In a serious study of this phenomenon, The Making of a Counterculture, Theodore Roszok left Thomas Merton unscathed as a mind far more gifted than Allen Ginsberg, another Zen follower, and one that had mined the dominant religious traditions for great treasures rather than being just a part of the popular Zen hulla-baloo of the decade. Merton's journal Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander shows his later development as a Buddhist and as a sympathizer with blacks and Gandhian thought.

In The Way of Chuang Tzu Merton presented the vital thinking of the Chinese sage who wrote out of his own direct grasp of reality. Unlike other Christians, Merton accepted the validity of Buddhism and tried to incorporate it into his Christian doctrine. He also contended with Buddhism's image of negativity and tried to vindicate it as a way of being in the world rather than a philosophy or a religion of the negation of life.

If Thomas Merton had not been a monk, he would still have been remembered as a great poet and a brilliant prose writer. Along with his contemplative works, Merton published volumes of poetry with William Blake and Gerard Manley Hopkins his poetic forefathers. It was due to the persistent encouragement and pestering of good people like the poet Mark Van Doren and publisher James Laughlin (New Directions) that Merton was able to be a prompt poet as well. He published a

dozen books of poetry with such remarkable titles as A Man in the Divided Sea, The Tears of the Blind Lions, and The Behavior of Titans. His poetry is part of his evolution that began in his school years; his poetry began as bawdy limericks and grew along with him, culminating in haiku brevity and diamond versatility.

Merton finally went on his much-awaited pilgrimage to the East. He had a sort of romantic approach to Asia which had grown up in him since his years with the brahmachari. On his trip he travelled extensively in India and in Tibetan refugee areas, where he had extensive conversations with the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama and other Buddhists he met considered him as one who had passed beyond ordinary experience. P. Lal, the Indian English language poet and translator of many scriptures, asis, "Tom was very, very Buddhist in his thinking. Completely Buddhist."

During this trip Merton went into a deep forest and sat in meditation for four days. Edward Rice writes: "Merton had an experience which transcended time and space and reality. I think at this point he must have realized how far he had come up the seven-storey mountain; his ascent had reached its climax; unexpectedly in a mountain jungle on the edge of the Himalayas."

Merton wished to settle down in the East as a hermit. But death came to him in Bangkok on December 10, 1968. Dom Francis Acharya of Kurisumala Ashram in Kerala showed me a photograph of himself taken with Merton just one day before Merton's death, while they were attending a Trappist conference. The photograph has arrested a moment in the life of a man about to diffuse in the greater reality.

Many Buddhists consider Thomas Merton a sort of Buddha. The tradition is that a Buddha is recognized only after his death. Yet Merton never thought of himself as a potential subject for a unique vision and he rejected all kinds of special experiences. A Zen koan expresses these sentiments with the statement, "If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him." Whenever Merton met the Buddha, he killed him. There is another Zen saying, "A mind to search elsewhere for the Buddha is foolishness

in the center of foolishness." Merton's achievement is that he nurtured a Buddha in himself. His life was a living parable of commitment. It spiced the lives of hundreds of contemplatives, skeptics, poets and other men of action and inaction. He taught them to synthesize the traditional and the transient and to translate universal truths into contemporary terms. He initiated an eclectic search for the wisdom of all peoples and all times.

As Raymond Bailey concludes in his thesis Thomas Merton on Mysticism: "Merton was not a reformer, though he contributed much to reform;

he was not a teacher, though many made him their mentor; he was not a prophet, though he often spoke prophetically; he was not a philosopher, though his life reflects a definite philosophy; he was not a theologian, though his works are rich in theological insight." He was a mystic poet who belonged to a "breed that realizes the rhythm of the universe and discovers inside their beings a constant call to surpass the self and possess certain prophetic awareness."

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The Christian is, I believe, one who sacrifices the half truth for the sake of the whole truth, who abandons an incomplete and imperfect concept of life for a life that is integral, unified and structurally perfect. Yet his entrance into such a life is not the end of the journey, but only the beginning. A long journey must follow: an anguished and sometimes perilous exploration. Of all Christians the most professional is the monk. His journey takes him through deserts and paradises for which no maps exist. He lives in strange areas of solitude, of emptiness, of joy, of perplexity and of admiration.

- A Thomas Merton Reader

No matter how ruined man and world may seem to be, and no matter how terrible man's despair may become, as long as he continues to be a man his very humanity continues to tell him that life has meaning.

- No Man is an Island

Rooted in the biological riches of our inheritance, love flowers spirituality as freedom and as a creative response to life in a perfect encounter with another person. It responds to the full richness, the variety, the fecundity of living experience itself: it knows the inner mystery of life.

- Notebooks

Evening: Cold winter wind along the walls of the chapel. Not howling, not moaning, not dismal. Can there be anything mournful about wind? It is innocent and without sorrow. It has no regrets. Wind is a strong child enjoying his play, amazed at his own strength, gentle, inexhaustible and pure.

- Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander

If you don't want the effect, so something to remove the causes. There is no use loving the cause and fearing the effect and being surprised when the effect inevitably follows the cause.

- The Seven Storey Mountain

I have always known poverty as infinite: riches I love not at all. Prisons within prisons within prisons. Do not lay up for yourselves ecstasies upon earth where time and space corrupt, where the minutes break in and steal. No more lay hold on time, Jonas, my son, lest the rivers bear you away.

- The Sign of Jonas

Our life's journey is interior, it is a matter of growth, deepening an ever greater surrender to the creative action of love and grace in our hearts.

- The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton

Sitting in
 the early dawn light,
 reassembling the pieces of self; after a
 night charitably described as confusing. The flow of awareness
 roams toward its limits.
 At one level there is
 the awareness that all
 is well and as it should
 be. It always was and
 always is. The question is
 how does one continue to make
 this awareness a reality in
 their own life?.... moment
 by moment... day by day.
 As I place these thoughts into
 symbols and words, freeze dried into
 language, I look up just in time to see a
 beautiful Great Blue Heron as it walks along
 the river bank; only a few feet away. Elegance
 and beauty with its feet stuck in the mud. There
 it is sloshing along knee deep in water searching
 for food. How does this creature of such grace and
 stature rise up from the mud and soar; free on the
 wind? As if reading my thoughts, it chooses that
 moment to spread its wings. In a flash, with
 one swift motion this huge winged
 creature rises above it all
 and skims across the water.
 After witnessing such
 a sight, could I do
 less than give my
 awareness wings,
 that it might
 chance to
 soar,

the reflecting beauty of being

The Heron

John Griffin

My Personal Philosophy of Life

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

I am writing this preliminary sketch of my philosophy with the hope that others will also try to evolve a personal philosophy of life. We can say philosophy implies two aspects – the theory of knowledge and the art of life. The theory of knowledge is the science of life while the art of life is the application of that theoretical understanding in everyday life. I believe that whether a person is aware of it or not, he or she has certain personal convictions. One may be very docile in following or imitating the example of another person; even so, there is a philosophy of life emitted. When we become mature in our understanding, we examine the examples of other people as well as the theories that are given to us by others. We become both skeptical and critical, accepting only well-examined theories and valuable applications. Thus, one, who has come to his or her maturity can legitimately claim to have a bonafide philosophy.

From early boyhood, I gave great attention to higher values of life and followed the teachings of my teachers, sometimes accepting them with great admiration and sometimes trying to understand, even when certain theories looked very intriguing and un-understandable. I even tried to imitate the examples of some great people. But after some time these were all put into the crucible of critical thinking. Many ideas were given up because they were not relevant to my life. I have considered others to be most important for me to experiment with my whole life or to uphold with great conviction. The people or the teachers who have influenced me come from several fields. In the religious field I was very attracted to the Lord Buddha and, to some extent, Jesus Christ. But when I hold before me the religious examples of Śrī Krishna, Lord Buddha and Jesus Christ, I'm most drawn to the cheerful, ever-joyous, intelligent, absolutist attitude of Krishna which directly contrasts with the agonizing, painful example of Jesus Christ.

Looking at the two civilized worlds of Europe and India we can see that Europe has for its center piece the example of Jesus Christ while the example for India is Śrī Krishna. All the music, art and melancholic evaluation of life in the West are woven around the crucifix. If you look into the art books of Europe, it is very sad to see thousands





and thousands of versions of the gruesome murder of Jesus Christ. I still do not see the relevance of the crucifixion of Jesus as the saving factor of the world because Jesus was not the only person who was crucified by the Romans or the Jews. Even on the very day Jesus was crucified, two other people who were considered to be robbers or evil people were hanging on two crosses next to Jesus. At least Jesus escaped having his knees broken which the other two men suffered. Also, Jesus was taken by force to the cross; he did not go and give a sacrifice. Therefore, extolling the singular example of Jesus as taking upon himself all the sins of the world and thereby saving the world does not appeal to me. To me, it is a cock and bull story rather than something to be taken seriously. The crucifixion aspect of Jesus Christ offends rather than touches me. It has been vulgarized, especially by the Church's effort to make capitol out of it. I consider the poetry, music, painting, and various kinds of sculpture based on that theme a falsification of truth with which I have no sympathy. But there is another Jesus Christ, the gentle person of great love and compassion, with a clarity of understanding, whom I adore. That Jesus is not to me a savior but one of the best of human beings, most loveable, most adorable. It is that Jesus I love, not the Jesus of art, music, literature and the Church. All that, I consider a puss-producing, puerile aspect of the human mind. It gives me nausea. These are my most intimate, honest, frank thoughts. I am not writing this to please anyone but to put on record somewhere exactly what I think about these things.

When I think of Lord Buddha, the first part of his story is of a naive, innocent person unused to this world and its treacheries. There I see a kind of romantic idealism in a young man. Still, it has its beauty, the way in which an innocent person in all his naivete sets out to find a value which is more for the world than for himself. I consider this more valuable the crucifixion. There is an earnest effort of renunciation and sacrifice on the part of Gautama Siddhartha which affected me very much. Then came his great penance, and after the penance, his Buddhahood. All the great halos put around Buddha do not make any sense to me, I consider that as the exaggerations of his followers. Reading about Buddha's life in the Nikayas is very fascinating. I don't believe one word of the Jataka

Tales of Buddha. They are like fairy tales, very enjoyable but not believable. I take only one idea from them - that we are not just born for a few years and then die, but there is a continuity in our personality which is probably beginningless and endless. I always place Lord Buddha in life situations where he had interactions with people. He never wanted to fill people's minds with things which cannot be directly perceived, directly meditated upon and directly experienced. In all such situations, we get a maximum of his humane qualities which means they are very exemplar. After reading any such parable of Lord Buddha, a person is likely to feel peace at heart, a sense of reverence, not only to Buddha, but to everything around us. The sacredness of life is immediately felt, without bringing in any kind of religious concept of a god or some deity, only through human experience. That is enough to satisfy one aesthetically, morally, intellectually, spiritually and transcendently. This is what I see in the example of Buddha which has influenced me very much.

Another person I have come across who represents the same kind of compassion is Guru Nanak. The later stories of the Guru do not impress me. But I am deeply touched by the personal life of Guru Nanak and his song of visions. Somehow the later story becomes more and more corrupted with politics, narrowmindedness and bigotry, so I do not care much for that.



Confucious may have been even greater than Lao Tse, but my mystical temperment makes me go to Lao Tse in great sympathy. The teaching of Lao Tse has a dialectical flavor and is deeply mystical. There is poetic insight in it. Some of the teachings are like conundrums, enigmatic, but the enigma itself is so beautiful that it takes you to a certain depth which is within you rather than outside. For contrast, one can read Confucious who is meticulously realistic in assessing the merits of the external world and the society in which we live. But I have not given full justice to Confucious as I have read him very little. These are the religious founders who are still very dear to me. I go from one to the other as occasion demands.

I have also been influenced by certain spiritual masters of India, some of the remote past and some of the near past. Those of the remote past come first from the Upanishads. Two such personalities that stand out in my mind as

very fascinating are King Janaka and Yajñavalkya. King Janaka was not a sannyasi or rishi but in him I find a correct model for life in this world. I think of him as even greater than Yajñavalkya, even greater than other rishis. Legends have shrouded the personalities of rishis such as Viśvamitra, Vashistha, Valmiki, and Vyasa. The two great epics of India, which have shaped the life and destiny of the Indian people, continue to exert an influence in the unconscious of the Indian people (by Indian people I also mean the Malaysians, the Indonesians, and the people of Thailand and Cambodia). They are the Ramayana and the Mahabharata written respectively by Valmiki and Vyasa. To me, they are two great reservoirs of nourishment, not only spiritual nourishment, but also poetic nourishment.



I'm not a great worshipper of Rama, although I come from the land where Ramayana has been eulogized and divinized. I am more at ease with Valmiki's Ramayana, in which Rama is described as a human being, not as God. I have a great weakness for the Ramayana of Valmiki because of the great depth of its emotional or aesthetic beauty, its feeling content, along with its philosophy. I am struck with the structural beauty of the composition which probably has no parallel in world literature. The poetic justice which Valmiki demonstrates in it is a marvel. If anything wrong is done, it is not mitigated, it is not excused, it is frankly described. Anyone who reads the Ramayana can see the sentimental failure of Dushyanta, the agony of Kانشilya, the selfish, but motherly affection of Kaikeyi. Measuring out the minds of these people and honestly depicting them, was such a master stroke that one cannot write a similar book. Rama failed several times, such as in the killing of Bali and the banishment of Sita, his wife, neither of which can be justified. Valmiki never attempts to justify these failures. Bali speaks to Rama and Bali's wife speaks her mind about the treacherous deed of Rama so succinctly that we feel the poet does not take any side. The correct evaluation is made by Valmiki himself through these poetic devices. Yet, at the same time, he preserves the personal integrity of Rama as a very loveable person. Every time I read Ramayana, after reading 10 verses I have to wipe my tears, my throat cracks and I cannot continue. I become emotionally stormy and my heart palpitates. Such an experience has never come to me from another book. So I

consider Ramayana the greatest book in my life inspite of the fact that I am not a Rama worshipper.

With respect to the Mahabharata, I do not know if all 100,000 verses were composed by Vyasa, but it is a compendium of the psychological types of human beings, the like of which does not exist anywhere else. The brightest insights of man, the wildest designs and cunningness of crooked minds, are all paraded there with utmost realism. It is not a story of a few Indians; it is a story of mankind. The wisdom in it is very penetrating, but many other things in it which pass for a general acceptance of dharma are puerile, meaningless, and a blemish on the dignity of man. I even think there are places in the Mahabharata which are such a shame to human minds that they should be expunged. That is why I am not sure that those lines were written by Vyasa. Whatever are the faults of certain aspects of the Mahabharata, everything can be excused when we come to the Bhishma Parva and read the Bhagavad Gita inserted in it. To me, the historical persons Krishna and Vyasa may seem to be different, but the essential teachings of Krishna and Vyasa are the same. I do not go along with the pranks of a mythological Krishna, as a wooer of the gopikas, or lover of Radha. These stories have so much mythology in them that I do not take them seriously. I have written about the love between Radha and Krishna, as depicted in the Gita Govinda by Jayadeva, in my book, Love and Devotion. Their relationship is elaborated as a model relationship, an archetypal relationship, between lovers. Krishna and Radha are thus only names; they are the eternal features of lovers. Therefore, Radha and Krishna are not important to me, but the archetypal lovers Radha and Krishna are very important.

In India's more recent past, three great teachers were Sankara, Ramanuja, and Madhva. I have made an effort to understand these three masters. I have great admiration for the valiant spirit of Sankara who formulated a monistic philosophy in a very profound manner. It became the model for monistic thinking, at least in India. In his attempt he established two things. One is the non-dual state of the Absolute, and the other is the value of sanryasa. He played many other aspects of life on a low key and it is there that I consider his philosophy lacking. I am not a total admirer or follower of Sankara.

Wherever I found Sankara's philosophy lacking, I have adhered to Ramanuja, although my bhakti (devotion) is not a religious devotion to any Godhead as such. It is almost impossible for me to think of God as here or there. To me, the totality of all itself is a small affair within God. My God is infinitely vast, great and majestic, while at the same time clad in the rags of a poor man. This does not fit in with any religious concept. To that extent I am not a

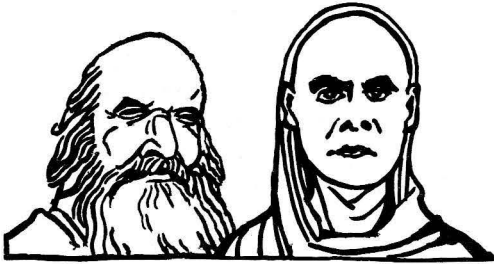
religious person and I do not have a religious devotion to God at all. When I stand with my hands folded before an altar where a Krishna, a Rama, a Śiva, a Śakti, a Guru Narayana, or any such image is placed, I am showing my homage to my brothers and sisters who are fond of that. When they show their love by folding their hands, I appreciate that they value something. I do not despise it, so I also fold my hands. It is not that I get or am trying to get anything from those images or altars.

Madhva is quite a different story. Of the three philosophers Śankara, Ramanuja and Madhva, I consider Madhva as the most thorough-going logician. He satisfies my reason absolutely. It may look rather odd that I accept Śankara, Ramanuja and Madhva instead of standing with Śankara alone or Ramanuja alone or Madhva alone. Certain terminology which Madhva uses comes because of his historical placement. When he labels Vishnu or Narayana as the Absolute, I say "It's OK, but I don't accept it." So I leave that there. Madhva wrote a confrontation primarily of Śankara and here and there of Ramanuja. I should confess that every time I read it, I was astonished by the force of argument that he put forward, its reasonableness and its impeccable logic. I feel very privileged to be born in India where these three great masters lived.

In the very recent past, there is Śrī Ramakrishna, and bracketed with him, Swami Vivekananda, Ramana Maharshi, Narayana Guru and Śrī Aurobindo. Śrī Ramakrishna was mostly a representative of the Vaiśṇava kind of love and devotion but he did not totally identify himself with the cult of Vaiśṇavism. He was a free soul who broke all the barriers of convention; he was like an incarnation of spiritual freedom. I spent several years pouring my whole attention into the life and teachings of Śrī Ramakrishna. I adore the book The Gospel of Śrī Ramakrishna written by Master Mahendranath Gupta, through which you can directly listen to the word of Śrī Ramakrishna. Whatever he says is like an elixir to your spiritual ears. I don't think the same of the writings of Swami Vivekananda. In Vivekananda we see a youthful intelligence which interprets certain teachings of his master, plus the youthful vigor of Bengal. He was a very humane liberalist, a great son of India speaking with great warmth and great emotional empathy with the spirit of the people of India. He inspires me, but I should admit that in my spiritual growth, Vivekananda's teachings had very little space. If Śrī Ramakrishna influenced me to degree of 90%, Vivekananda inspired me 10%.

In reference to Śrī Narayana Guru, the most unfortunate part of my earlier upbringing was that I was surrounded by a group of people who loved and worshipped him for the wrong reason - because he was born in their community. They never tried to understand him, but rather

indulged in a lot of emotional, sentimental eulogizing which was quite against all his teachings. So I consider everything I learned about Narayana Guru from the age of 5 to the age of 30 as stupid, of no meaning or of no value to me. After coming to Nataraja Guru, I had to pull out all my previous beliefs, everything I had heard of Narayana Guru; I had to restructure a new version of the Guru in myself, this time based essentially on Nataraja Guru's book, The Word of the Guru and on Narayana Guru's own writings. Ātmopadeśa Śataka, Advaita Dipika, Brahmaṇḍa Pañcaka, Daiva Daśakam, Darśana Mala, Arivu, Śiva Śatakam - through works, taken one by one, and studied in the light of Nataraja Guru's teachings, I started seeing a Guru, who to me is always a marvel. I have yet to find someone who excels in any one aspect. I can think of many as parallels but none as excelling though I may someday find someone who excels him.



Of India's recent teachers, I have not seen Śrī Rama-krishna or Narayana Guru but I have seen Ramana Maharishi. I lived with him. Everything I read in the Upanisads came to assume a human form in Ramana Maharishi. I used to fondly call him Bhagavan. Now that word is offensive because all kinds of people have become Bhagavan, but when I think of Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi, there is nothing Bhagavan about him. He was the simplest of all human beings. He wore only a loincloth which was the dress of every farm hand in the Thiruvananthapuram area. It was not that he had thrown away his clothes and wore only a cowpena. If you go into the paddy fields around where he lived you find all the Tamil men there wearing only a cowpena as they worked, because the climate is so hot that you cannot put on many clothes. So his dress wasn't anything unusual. He never had any kind of pretension; he never tried to catch the attention of anyone; he never made any claim to spirituality. He was like a simple villager sitting there, just as he was, and yet in that simplicity I saw all the profundity of the spirit. Whatever I read in the Upaniṣads came true for me through the example of Ramana Maharishi. Otherwise I would never have believed some of the great statements in the Upaniṣads. In his presence I could see with my own eyes that those teachings can be

lived and lived so vividly, so remarkably. I consider it to be my great fortune that I could change my name and my clothes, and accept a new pattern of life before his eyes, making me what I am today. So my great gratitude and reverence to Narayana Guru and Nataraja Guru also goes to Ramana Maharishi.



When I was in the Ramana Ashram, it was easy for me to go to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. But when I went to the Aurobindo Ashram for the first time, it was an utter contrast to the Ramana Ashram. Ramana Maharishi was very exposed to the public. He sat in an open bamboo shed thatched with coconut palm leaves, on a wooden couch with a simple mat on it. He had a pillow and one towel. On three sides of him, anybody could go and sit anytime. Even at midnight you could go to Ramana Maharishi. There was no screen or anything around him. I have never seen a person living so openly - a man with no secrets, a man with no private life, a man with no private relationship with anyone - everything so open. But when I went to the Aurobindo Ashram I was told that Sri Aurobindo was in a certain building and it's very difficult to see him. I was told to write everything on a printed form: my full name and address, where I came from, my educational background, what questions I would like to put to Sri Aurobindo if I were allowed to see him. I was so young, very egoistic, so this offended me to my very bones. I just tore up the paper and left. Now I think that was very foolish. I should have taken the chance to see Sri Aurobindo, but my ego was so offended because I had just come from Ramana Ashram where everything was so free and so wonderful. So I missed the chance of seeing Sri Aurobindo. It was only after his death that, by sheer chance, I was taken to the Sri Aurobindo branch in Delhi. There I started reading the books of Sri Aurobindo because some days I was asked to give talks about Sri Aurobindo. One by one I started reading his books. Synthesis of Yoga, was the first series I read, then Future Poetry and Life Divine. Then I read Savitri. When I came to Savitri, I cursed myself that I had not seen Sri Aurobindo. A person who could write this kind of wonderful work, how could I miss seeing him? Then I read more of his other poetry. At that time, there was a very

wonderful person living in the Ashram, K.R. Sreenivasa Iyengar. Previously, he had been the chancellor of Andra University. He was a great admirer and follower of Śrī Aurobindo and the Mother. He had recently completed a biography of Śrī Aurobindo which he gave me. I read the whole biography and I felt very, very sad that some outward conditions had betrayed me and I had not seen him. I did not excuse myself. That helped me to go with a deep veneration into his life's works many times. Each Sunday morning I had to give a class at the Delhi ashram on Śrī Aurobindo. At first, I was very diffident but after I became more and more confident, I also read the works of the Mother. The Mother has the same catholic vision as Śrī Narayana Guru. She never thought of one particular religion, one particular country, or one particular section of people as more noble than the other, but saw all of humanity as one.

I said I have no difficulty in associating myself with Śrī Aurobindo and the Mother because of the similarity of their teaching with Narayana Guru, but I must also confess that Nataraja Guru never liked Śrī Aurobindo, never. At first it was a great puzzle to me that Nataraja Guru could not like or appreciate Śrī Aurobindo and his genius. But there is a crispness in Nataraja Guru's writings, a factual presentation which he has taken from his own master, Narayana Guru. Nataraja Guru once read out the Gitanjali of Śrī Tagore to Narayana Guru and gave its Malayalam translation. Narayana Guru said: "The verses sound like conundrums. Never write like this. If you want to present philosophy, present it clearly and do not mask it with poetic embellishment, where truth is lost in the beauty of words." This is very practical advice which Narayana Guru gave to Nataraja Guru. Narayana Guru had the utmost respect and love for Tagore. He always told Nataraja Guru, "do great things, live great lives, like Tagore." When Tagore came to see Narayana Guru, Narayana Guru gave him a royal reception. I heard, straight from the mouth of Nataraja Guru how Narayana Guru behaved that day, honoring Tagore. In spite of that, Narayana Guru never liked the style of Gitanjali and warned Nataraja Guru not to attempt anything like that. If there is a little embellishment in the writings of Tagore, that embellishment is one hundred percent greater in the writings of Śrī Aurobindo. So Nataraja Guru read out many lines to me and asked me what factual correspondence there was to those sentences. I had to admit there was none. So, in a sense, Śrī Aurobindo is very acceptable to me, but I forgo many things in his presentation as part of his poetic mind.

Naturally, the next person who influenced me was Nataraja Guru. He was like an architect who took me apart brick by brick and then put the bricks back— such a

meaningful thing. In spite of this, some of his heroes are not my heroes, such as Rousseau and Bergson. I partially appreciate Rousseau and partially appreciate Bergson, but I think every disciple has a right to build his own philosophy and personality being true to himself, rather than simply imitating a certain frame of mind of his Guru's. So I do not claim that I am a replica of Narayana Guru or Nataraja Guru. That is why I am here giving my personal philosophy instead of the philosophy of others. Although all these masters have influenced it, I think I have my own philosophy.



My source of inspiration has not only been philosophers, but scientists as well. This is mainly because of my association with Nataraja Guru who was himself a physicist and a good mathematician. I do not know anything of mathematics. For my school-leaving certificate examination, I made only 18% out of 100, not even 20%. And yet somehow I passed. Otherwise, I would never have got into college. My mathematics is so poor, yet when I studied logic, I found the basis of logic is mathematics. It is not algebra, not arithmetic, not geometry. It is a mathematical logic. That gave me a new chance to get into the world of mathematics, through logic. And it amply rewarded me. I have given my best efforts to study the best minds of science. The first two people to whom I was drawn were Sir James Jeans and Sir Arthur Eddington. When I was studying Eddington, that led me to Einstein and Heisenberg. Nataraja Guru introduced me to Erwin Schrodinger and De Broglie. So that gave me a grounding in modern science.



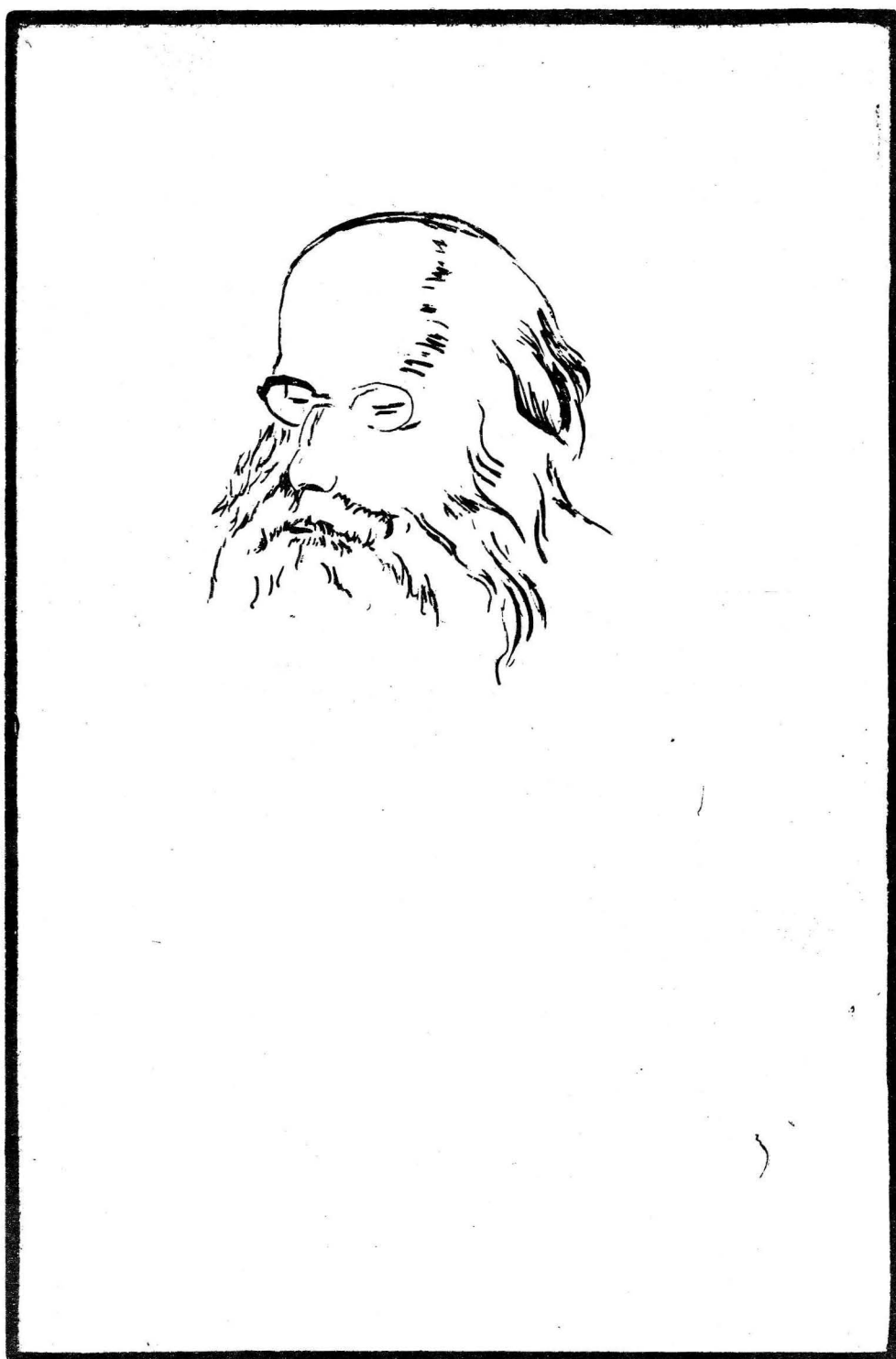
I studied philosophy in college, beginning with the early Greek philosophers, Thales, Anaxagoras, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, Zeno, and Hermanogus, then Plato and Aristotle. Then came the schoolmen from

Anselm to Thomas Aquinas, followed by the classical philosophers, Descartes, Francis Bacon, Spinoza, Leibnitz, and the more modern Berkley, Hume, and Johnstone, Kant, Bergson, Fichte, and Hegel. Then the phenomenologists, Husserl, Heidegger, Jaspers. Then the existentialist, Jean Paul Sarte. Everyone had a little influence on me.

I looked into western music and western painting, western art in general. I got some idea of the space - time relationship in music by over and over listening to Bach and Mozart, and an idea of symphony by listening several times to Beethoven. I was very inspired by his music. On the lighter side, I liked Vivaldi. The fantasies of Wagner helped me to have an insight into the relationship of music with visual art. That is my world, so when I got a little insight into western music, I thought I should also know the music of my own country. So I put some effort into understanding the compositions of Thyagaraja and other South Indian musicians, and the North Indian music, Drupad.

This is the total story behind my philosophy. I am still not speaking of my philosophy, but what is behind it. In the last years of his life, Nataraja Guru was teaching Saundarya Lahari and some of the classical works of Kalidasa. That gave me the idea that the true philosophy of life need not necessarily come from a philosophy book. It can come from drama, poetry, novels. So I studied the novels of Victor Hugo, as a very special case, particularly Les Miserables, The Hunchback of Notre Dame and The Toilers of the Sea. I found great understanding of human psychology when I looked through the eyes of narrators of human biography. I found deep philosophical input in the works of writers like Tolstoy, Gorge and Romain Rolland - very profound. I also tried some other writers like Pushkin, Chekhov, Shakespeare and the authors of the Greek Tragedies. Then I turned to modern poetry. The first to attract me was W.B. Yeats, then Frost, Cummings and others. That led me to Japanese poetry, particularly Basho and to Haiku in general. That also gave an occasion to understand the Japanese mind, their drama, their painting, and their music. I found that these are all derived from Chinese sources, so I gave some attention to study Chinese literature and Chinese philosophy. I am not attracted to Chinese music, but very attracted to Chinese painting. Then I turned to the aboriginal peoples and looked into the insights of the Incas, the Mayans, the Australian aborigines. Lately I have turned to Black poetry and protest poetry. All of these are part of the picture of the background out of which I have developed my philosophy.

(To Be Continued)



Reflections on Class at the Gurukula

Nancy Leedy

Over the past year we have had two types of classes at the Gurukula on Bainbridge Island. There are our Sunday classes where we have continued to work and contemplate our way through Guru Nitya's Neither This Nor That But Aum: 100 Verses of Self-Instruction. And there are our Wednesday night classes where we have studied a variety of subjects from poetry, art and legal contracts to gardening and publishing a magazine.

In reflecting on these classes, what I noticed first was that coming to class has helped me build a regular routine of making space in my life for the spiritual: for wonder, questioning, doubt, and, as a fellow student is fond of saying, "for gaining the perspective of a million years."

And then I kept finding myself thinking about a little boy I had tutored each morning this past year. He didn't freely choose this tutoring the way I have chosen our gurukula classes. But early on we talked about how handy reading was, how essential, and what worlds it could open up for you; so he was willing to go along with the routine of our tutoring.

He'd been in school two years, and he could see that this reading stuff that he couldn't figure out wasn't going to go away. He could see that his inability to read made his time in school uncomfortable. So came the daily grind of going at it. Day after day he struggled to tell a 'b' from a 'd,' tried to remember what a 'w' looked like, tried 'was' for 'saw' and 'saw' for 'was' -- all the time struggling and struggling to make his eyes, his hand, his brain see these things that other kids seemed to learn without even thinking.

As I thought over our sessions, what struck me was his courage... squarely facing those squiggles that confused him so badly; making mistakes right out loud over and over; pulling hard on other understandings of the world that he had like how a story should go or what word would logically come next; using everything he had to put those squiggles into some meaningful context. Oh, he got discouraged from time to time. He'd make me find him, pull him into our room, force him to look at that print again. He'd sigh pitifully and say, "Oh, all right," and plod along with his heart somewhere else. There were lots of, "I can't." And there were also days that I gave up on him. Here I was, putting myself out for him day after day, doing my best to make these letters fun, entertaining and relevant to him. We were both of us very good at self-pity.

And then there were those days of triumph: he'd got through a whole stack of cards getting all the words right; he read two pages in a row with all print on them and no pictures; he wrote a story that I could read without his help; he figured out a strange word all by himself. Belief that he could whip this reading thing after all would shine out from him. He was full of delight in his own understanding and his own progress.

This student came to mind this morning because he reminded me of myself as a student here at the gurukula. There are times I am cranky. I drag myself unwillingly away from my comfortable family routines of lengthy breakfasts and coffee and newspapers. I have known full well the wallows of self-pity, the struggle to face what I cannot immediately understand, the dis-

couragement. And there are the glorious times of glimpses of understanding, moments of self-illumination, of feeling the wisdom of Guru flooding my mind with light.

One day I said, "Wow. You can really read now!" to one of my other kids who had waged her own mighty battle with the reading demon all year. And she said, "Yeah. You know, it used to feel like I was swimming underwater. Now I've got my head out of the water and I can look around."

The little boy I tutor and I both have a long way to go, but maybe if we just keep at it, day after day, we too will get our heads out of the water.



A Look Back from the Year 2010

Garry Davis

In the mid-1980s, the Soviet Union and the United States were moving swiftly toward a violent confrontation due to the development of interspace missiles carrying nuclear warheads. The arms race, dating from the end of World War II, had, up to that point, been more or less verifiable - if not controllable - by both superpowers. A number of insights were gained by the world public during this tense time via television linked with the communication satellites which literally covered the planet. One was that the dimension of power of nuclear weapons eliminated the classical definition of war because, for all practical purposes, that dimension was global or total; in other words, "war" finally was unwinnable. "Nuclear" meant "holocaust" when used as weapons by states. This gave rise, in turn, to a general psychosis of fear on both sides as also in the so-called middle world or in Europe which had been the battlefield of so many wars in the past.

This fear was translated into a worldwide movement in the early 1980's which became known as the Freeze Movement. The word freeze meant only the simultaneous stopping of all future production of nuclear weapons, leaving stocks at their present level. There was no attempt in this movement, however, to cope with the problem of war itself.

Another insight supporting the thesis of humanity's possible demise was advanced by scientists Carl Sagan and Paul Ehrlich, along with their counterparts in the Soviet Union, who together predicted that in the event of a nuclear war between the USSR and the USA there would be virtual annihilation of the ozone layer and a blacking out of the sun through the raising of

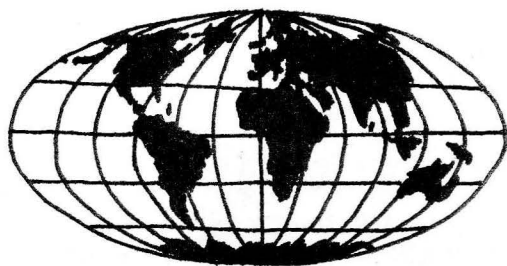
tremendous dust clouds. This would lead to a period of such intense cold that all life would cease in the entire Northern Hemisphere, the cold gradually spreading to the Southern Hemisphere as well.

Also, the fact that a great deal of the natural resources of the world, plus technological and administrative skills and scientific research, were going into the maintenance of an antiquated and artificial national security system finally forced business leaders to the conclusion that if this continued, a test of physical might would be inevitable, which, in the least offensive terms, would be 'bad for business.' The nation state system, in other words, was not so slowly 'bankrupting' the entire world community. Toward the end of the 1980s, therefore, the heads of the largest multinational corporations, led by the Japanese, came together in an informal meeting to discuss the responsibility of business toward the nationalistic political world moving fast toward an armed confrontation which, everyone agreed, would lead to the annihilation of the human race from the planet.

In the meantime, the impotence of the United Nations had become clear to a sceptical and now fearful world public. In the United Nations itself a group of small and mini-states, in the face of the nuclear threats of the USA and the USSR, finally decided they had nothing to lose by advocating a total revision of the Charter. A few more radical members proposed the jettisoning of the Charter entirely in favor of the formulation of a world constitution. The then present Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, supported this new position while severely condemning the superpowers for holding humanity in hostage to their combined nuclear threats.

These small states were opposed immediately, and ironically, by both the United States and the Soviet Union, neither of which was willing to relinquish any sovereignty to a world authority. But the concept of a world public order gained widespread support not only in European countries but in the so-called Third World, which had everything to gain and nothing to lose by a world government. Largely dependent upon the industrialized nations, they faced severe financial difficulties through lack of capital, technological know-how and administrative skills. Added to this was acute famine in Africa due to long drought conditions and deforestation. To Third World leaders World Government seemed a drastic but imperative solution to their myriad problems.

Support for a world order slowly coalesced in the United States after the presidential elections of 1984 through a conglomerate of minority groups and the millions opposing the election of Ronald Reagan. Then, surprisingly, support came from a growing population in East Europe which had been under the domination of the Soviet Union and had suffered through the inadequacies and oppressions of the Communist and Socialist economic programs. Most of these nations in fact were heavily in debt to Western banks and would have gone bankrupt without the aid of such international institutions as the International Monetary Fund, known as the "World Bank." The populations were more concerned with achieving a comfortable and happy life than in continuing an outdated and oppressive ideological crusade under Moscow's domination.



In the Soviet Union itself, which had suffered a tremendous loss of civilian population in the Second World War, there was a crisis of leadership in the late 1980s between the old Kremlin leaders and the 'Young Turks' who sought a modus operandi with the West. The expansionist policies of the USSR in Africa and Afghanistan had virtually run out of steam, being doggedly opposed by local guerrilla forces. Countries such as Angola, Ethiopia and Mozambique, which had professed Marxist ideologies and profited for a time from an alliance with the USSR, eventually rejected all Soviet officials and began leaning to the West for support. Simply holding together the vast Soviet empire, collapsing internally, led to a tacit acquiescence to the notion of world order. China added to this trend by renouncing Marxist-Leninist dogma in the early 1980s, expressing its willingness, under Premier Deng Xiaoping, to open its doors wide to free enterprise in order to elevate its living standards. Japan's example had been a dominant influence in this historic reversal.

Added to all these factors was the more subtle movement of the religious leaders of the world. In view of the total crisis facing the human race at this period, they were forced to recognize, for the first time in human religious history, the reality of humanity itself as not only a defensible entity but an existent entity in itself. For the first time, therefore, the concept of personal salvation became intimately allied with that of humanity itself, thus bringing together the micro and the macro or the one and the many duality into a unified whole. The Catholic Pope, the Buddhist Dalai Lama, Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, Mother Theresa of India, and others began to call upon political leaders of all nations to cease their internal squabbles to recognize the commonality of humanity itself under one God. The result of this was, not surprisingly, the rise of an amorphous one world religion or ideology in the early 1990s, one which met both scientific and pragmatic criteria as well.

Another important factor focusing the various elements which make up our one world today was the opening of the space age, the last frontier. Space

held such promise and inspiration to the entire human race that the machinations and irrationalities of the national leaders became so obvious that they were finally recognized as being literally insane in their programs to capture space for their particular nation.

Another significant movement which helped to solidify the concept and actuality of a one world ideology began in 1949 when Cahors, a small town in the middle of France, declared itself "mondialized" according to a Charter of Mondialization. In effect it declared itself in solidarity with all towns and cities throughout the world and in common danger of a world war. This initiative spread throughout the world slowly and in the 1950s reached Japan where the towns of Nagasaki and Hiroshima declared themselves mondialized. Other towns in Japan and even prefectures quickly followed suit with Tokyo itself finally declaring its "world townism." The movement finally arrived in America in the late 1960s with the first town declaring itself a world town being Richfield, Ohio. Three states of the United States - Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin - made declarations of world citizenship in the 1970s, while many other towns in the 80s and 90s adopted the Charter of Mondalization, recast to their own style but maintaining the general theme of one worldism.

Allied to these events and, as it proved, essential to the legal evolution of our present World Government, was a growing population known as 'refugees.' They were, in reality, the victims of nationalistic conflicts and rivalries erupting in wars which forced large masses of people out of their homes and homelands. These people, half of whom were women and children, were herded into huge camps and were then left virtually to their own devices in terms of political representation. A number of so-called relief and refugee organizations hovered around to provide the bare necessities of life through appeals to the humanitarian impulses in other people. The refugee population, however, became a ferment in which an ancient concept finally took pragmatic and then legal root. This was world citizenship which heretofore had been only a moral and intellectual

concept. The idea was that in the given world the refugees themselves faced, literally and figuratively outside the old framework of the nation state system, they were citizens in a natural sense of the larger community which had become global in the twentieth century. They were de facto world citizens.

A human catalyst was involved in this process through the person of an obscure young American, a former bomber pilot of World War II, who impulsively renounced his nationality in the early part of the century and declared himself "a citizen of the world." The combination of being willfully stateless and a self-claimed "world citizen" forced this young man to represent himself as a world citizen in face of opposition by the various national officials with whom he came into contact. In being forced onto United Nations 'territory' in Paris in September, 1948, he was propelled into world prominence as the "first world citizen." This led to a movement of world citizens where millions of others joined in declaring themselves world citizens. This movement gradually developed its own legal forms and documents based on human rights, resulting in a declaration of a government of world citizens on September 4, 1953.



Coincident with the beginning of the world citizen movement was the proclamation on December 10, 1948, of a Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the General Assembly of the United Nations. This document quickly gained widespread support among jurists and international lawyers and was even incorporated into national constitutions of states that had thrown off the colonialist yoke. Legal cases involving both states and citizens of different states referred to the UDHR as "common binding international law."

The declaration of the embryonic World Government in 1953 conformed to Article 28 of this human rights declaration which claimed that everyone was entitled "to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration can be fully realized." The World Government took forty years to come to a certain fruition. Its global documents, then carried by over a quarter of a million individuals, had been recognized by over eighty nations. It was only in 1984 that the founder, then sixty-two, added a political factor to the world citizen government by declaring himself a candidate for its presidency. In the late 1980s this led to the declaration of other more professional parliamentarians as candidates for a future world parliament, which now had a widespread advocacy in the United Nations itself.

In the meantime, the ex-American World Citizen had made a link with a South Indian guru who was recognized as a modern expression of the ancient holistic philosophy that was the seminal code of all former teachers of humanity. His declaration of candidacy for world president in turn helped unite the spiritual leaders of the world with the political ones and challenged them to recognize both sides of the same coin of human reality and salvation.

The ground was thus prepared for the actual global political-religio party which we know as the World Citizen Party through which world candidates could campaign for office and thus raise the franchise to the very level on which the principal human problems existed. It drew to itself a tremendous number of supporters, turned off from the national political process, in all fields from the spiritual to the economical.

It was on the economic level that the world president candidate had his most fervent support, once it was realized that national wars could not be fought with the world money he had promulgated from the beginning of his campaign. It became increasingly clear from the economic point of view that only a world government could release an immense amount of capital for the consumer through the ending of the entire arms race as well as all the nationalistic paraphernalia such as embassies,

consulates, spy systems, border guards and etcetera.

Through the new party ticket, the public came to understand the immense benefits to consumers a world government would promote through the raising of living standards for everyone. A leading prophet of this philosophy was Buckminster Fuller who died in 1983 and who advocated a one world citizenship from both a moral and a technological viewpoint.

In addition to the parliamentary government incorporated into the World Government is the World Corporate Congress, a direct result of the insistence of multinational corporations to be considered in the political process. Its economic counterpart is the World Citizens Corporation which, as we know, was designed to distribute ownership of corporate equity directly to individuals throughout the world as a matter of right so that the profits of the multinational corporations could finally be democratized. This was a logical evolution of the private money market funds so popular in the second half of the twentieth century. This economic revolution, which had been advocated by the economist Louis Kelso, is gradually eliminating the so-called have-not world and fulfilling one of the age-old prophecies, that of universal well being.

As we know, "money" became an artifact with our present universal credit and debit system - totally computerized - replacing the archaic system of carrying paper "mediums of exchange" of various denominations issued by nations to individuals and businesses. This trend saw its beginning in the 1960s when checkout counters at grocery stores in the West began to install direct computer connections with the bank accounts of some of their customers, simply reducing the sums from the accounts themselves. The French Government was the first in the early 1970s to install computers as a matter of policy in all French homes whereby the individuals could deduct expenses from their account from orders given by computers to local stores. This development, allied with communication satellites and mainline computers among others, led to the worldwide referendums which we now enjoy where world citizens can vote on

issues which are global and affect everyone at the same time.

Since the advent of nuclear power in 1945 had made it increasingly obvious that national politics was no longer adequate to the literal survival of the human race, a new concept of politics was vital and necessary if the human race was to continue on its home planet. This concept had to be non-competitive and relational in that the entire human race and each individual was intimately and dynamically involved. Thus it was that another factor contributed significantly to the peace and prosperity which today we enjoy through the world government: the emancipation of woman into the political world. Theretofore, the woman's role had been secondary, subsidiary and even nil in so far as national politics was concerned. This politics was highly competitive whereas woman's natural political philosophy and ideology was what might be called relational or wholistic.

The role of woman became increasingly important in determining the modalities of this new politics. A candidate for public office could not be elected unless he or she advocated not only the social and political laws which had previously been sufficient to deal with human progress but also the bio- or ecological laws which dealt with the entire environment in which humans were placed. A forerunner of this new politics was Rosika Schwimmer, a Hungarian pacifist and feminist of the early twentieth century who helped organize an international federation of women to try to stop World War I. She, along with Mary Lloyd and others, in 1924, proposed for the first time a world constitutional convention which would elect delegates on the basis of one per million population to formulate a world constitution for the governing of the world community. Many other women gradually took up this battle cry which represented emancipation from unjust laws.

The candidate for world president had recognized this vital trend in new political thinking and immediately enlisted the support of leading women to declare themselves along with him for the office of world president. This is why today this office is a dual office

where a man and a woman preside equally. Allied with this infusion of women into national politics was the evolution of the family vote. Before the democratic process had been a direct one-to-one relationship between candidate and voters. But in world elections, a candidate who gains the support of both the man and the woman in a family unit gains an extra vote, the family vote, thereby recognizing the value and the rights of the woman as equal to the man's and bringing forth the relational nature of the political world today.



A United Nations' tribunal called the International Court of Justice had been cast in the ironic role of refusing to consider individuals as well as states subjects of international law despite the precedent of the Nuremberg Decisions. Elaborated by the International Law Commission, an international penal code had been established whereby the Nazi officials and certain leaders of German industry during World War II were indicted, prosecuted and convicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity by the Court's predecessor, the Nuremberg Tribunal.

One of the most interesting and revolutionary articles in any national constitution at this warlike period was Article 9 in the 1945 Showa Constitution of Japan which renounced as a method of resolving conflicts, to wit, "the belligerency of the state will not be recognized." This article was subsequently "universalized" by the International Tribunal of the Far East which, as the Nuremberg Tribunal did to the Nazis, condemned the Japanese generals as war criminals and put them to death. While these two judgements in legal fact condemned the entire arms race as illegal,

lacking international enforcement, the nations continued their suicidal armament.



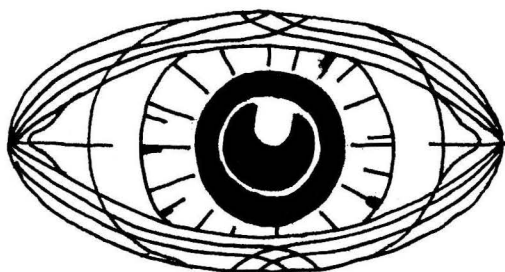
A number of legal initiatives attempting to use the Nuremberg Decisions to condemn national leaders as war criminals all came to nought until the stateless world citizen candidate for world president sued both US President Ronald Reagan and USSR Chairman Mikhail Gorbachev in early 1985 as war criminals before the International Court of Justice at the Hague, utilizing mainly the Nuremberg Principles. He claimed in his brief that he, as well as the two national presidents, were under the aegis of international law and that the latter were committing an international felony by pointing a nuclear gun at him. The issue as to whether the International Court at the Hague could accept jurisdiction for the petition was relevant to his case. The Nazi criminals had already been condemned under international law, thereby establishing the precedent of individuals being its subject; yet the Statute of the Court itself only permitted states as litigants to the Court proceedings.

The brief pointed out, however, that if international law did not pertain to the individual, then not only were the Nuremberg Decisions and the trial and the convictions a travesty of justice, but the Court was juridically admitting an anarchic condition of national law that could only lead to a test of physical strength, i.e. war, between the equally sovereign nations. In brief, the petition placed the Court in a major legal dilemma. The case thus proved to be a legal breakthrough revealing the fundamental flaw of the International Court of Justice. It exposed the inconsistency of the Nuremberg Principles which re-

ferred to the individual as a potential war criminal while states alone were capable of waging the very war which the Principles condemned. Moreover, only states could condemn such criminals. The petition claimed that if an individual could not sue another under international law, the accepted principle of reciprocity was being violated in that if individuals could be considered subjects of international law according to the Nuremberg Principles, then individuals also had the legal right to sue such potential war criminals.

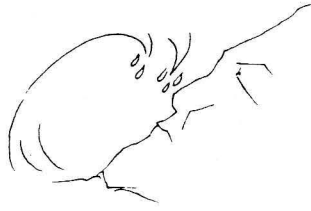
The World Government of World Citizens declared in 1953 had in fact established its own court called the World Court of Human Rights in 1972. The Court published a statute based upon former declarations of human rights plus the UDHR. This Court eventually became the forerunner of the World Supreme Court, replacing the International Court of Justice as the World Government replaced the United Nations.

Once the World Constitution had been ratified by special world people's assemblies set up precisely for this purpose, the nations, and particularly the highly industrialized nations of the West, were obliged to follow the specific disarmament prescriptions of the present World Constitution, which in turn continually lessened tensions between the superpowers. An immediate result of the World Constitution's ratification in the year 2000 was the immediate release of immense capital for the vital work of reconstruction, reforestation, well digging, the arresting of pollution of the atmosphere, of the oceans and of the soil. The problem of nuclear wastes is, however, still with us, a by-product of the now obsolete trend to nuclear power. Currently solar generators supply almost fifty percent of the available power used on the planet.



Since its ratification and the actual functioning of the World Government by the citizens of the world and all the nations, the human race has enjoyed unparalleled peace and prosperity. The myriad problems which once plagued our community are today attacked frontally and we know they can be solved. World population is decreasing as standards of living rise. Space has been declared the common property of all humankind.

In conclusion, we wish to point out that the first human born on planet Mars three days ago at the earth colony foretells the advent of a new type of citizenship, which might be called "system citizenship" and which no doubt will lead eventually - when interstellar space drives are perfected - to galactic citizenship where the human race will join other sentient beings for the peace and happiness of all.



YOU CREATE THE IMAGE OF MY MIND

Thou art the Highest truth,
my beloved God.
How many lies you fantasize
every moment to create this world.
A little of you is all of us.
We see the dreaming man in
a weather-beaten rock.
And from worry-worn mind
we even create the God Supreme!

45

This poem is excerpted from a new publication of Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati's book The Haunting Echoes of Spring, brought to realization by Steve Weckel and Darlene Dehlin.

East-West University Seminar

Peter Oppenheimer

THE DIMENSIONS OF PEACE: An Exploration and Cultivation of Peace at the Personal, Interpersonal, International and Transpersonal Levels

First Dimension - Personal Peace

Every moment we are presented with an enormous variety of sensory inputs, memory associations, future-oriented motivations, aspirations for self, concerns for others and so on. From a potential cacaphony of factors we select, highlight and order a number of items around some nuclear value which consciously or unconsciously is promoted as most relevant in that situation. Those values, at any given time, can range widely among such items as physical nourishment, sensory stimulation, emotional reinforcement, Intellectual and moral satisfaction, or even a sense of spiritual communion with all being. Our perceptions and actions are in large measure determined by these nuclear values from moment to moment.

Peace, in its fullest sense as discussed in the previous issue of *Gurukulam*, is certainly worthy of being one such nuclear value around which impressions and expressions can be oriented. And, in fact, it was with the hope of clarifying and cultivating just such an orientation toward peace that the participants in the present workshop gathered together for reflection and practice.

The four dimensions of peace under reference (see seminar title) are not distinct from one another in the sense of being separate. They are more like four reflections from within a single spectrum, four different depths of an ocean whose bottom has never yet been fathomed, or four ways of visualizing and experiencing the being of peace or the peace of being which itself is a single all-encompassing whole. Thus to speak of personal peace as separate from interpersonal peace or to speak of international peace as separate

from transpersonal or spiritual peace is a falsification that can even delude our discrimination. And yet just as one must enter the vast ocean from the shore one step at a time, similarly it can be helpful to approach the subject of peace initially as an individual concern. Indeed, we cannot realistically expect that any person could promote peace with others if he or she had not first cultivated peace within himself or herself. For as Jesus said, "A man can only spend that which is in his own purse."

Thus the primary questions we discussed as a group at our initial workshop session were "What does it mean to be at Peace with oneself?" "What factors contribute to that inner peace?" "And what seems to inhibit or disturb that peace?" In responding to these questions each participant was encouraged to draw on their own past experiences, their sense of being as they were experiencing it in the present moment during the discussion, and also their visualizations of future attainment.

The discussion that followed was at once lively and somehow hypnotic. As each person spoke, another facet of inner peace emerged in the room as a palpable presence, and by evening's end we all acknowledged feeling ourselves submerged in and transformed by the pervasiveness of the very peace we were invoking. The following paragraphs can briefly touch, in passing, upon several of the ideas and perspectives that were shared that particular evening. But reading the words is no substitute for the empowering experience of going through the process for oneself and with others. This process of creating meaning actually transforms to some extent our experience of reality.

To that end one might answer the above questions for oneself and discuss them with a friend or in a group.

One thing we established for ourselves early on is that inner peace does not imply an absence of conflict or tension but rather a centered willingness to deal with conflicts as they arise. Conflicts can be crippling or they can be dealt with as opportunities for creative new syntheses. In order for a kite to remain airborne there must be a given amount of tension in the line between it and the ground from which it is rising. If that tension slacks or snaps, the kite does not soar off but rather falls to the ground. Similarly being alive implies some creative tension, and inner peace requires primarily that we do not exaggerate the tension through projections of anxiety about the future or remorse about the past.

Just as in interpersonal relations "divisiveness leads to conflict whereas being at one brings peace," similarly within the individual there is a need for a wholistic inclusion and acceptance of all aspects of one's being. One participant went so far as to define inner peace as "being with your entire being." This is the literal meaning of "integrity" which is defined as "the quality or state of being complete or undivided." We can never be at peace with ourselves so long as there are aspects of ourselves which we deny or reject.

One time-honored way of approaching a sense of integrity or "being with our entire being" is through the attempt to discover and commune with our own core, the source from which all of our being radiates. Ironically, it is when we are most connected to our core that we are most connected not only to the diverse aspects of our own individual make-up but also to other people as well. The way I have heard this described before is that "Rays of the sun are closest to one another when closest to their source."

A related factor contributing to inner peace is perhaps best summed up in the two guiding principles according to Socrates, "Know thyself, and to thine own self be true." A similar emphasis is given in the Bhagavad Gita by the centrality assigned to the notion of

swadharma in spiritual life. Swadharma refers to discovering one's intrinsic characteristics that make one uniquely oneself, and then matching those inner factors with one's chosen activities and means of expression. One of our group members highlighted this fact in her own life when she spoke of her realization that for so many years she had defined herself solely in terms of roles such as Sandra the daughter, Sandra the mother and Sandra the wife and what a peace-bestowing revelation it was to begin to discover and cultivate "Sandra the Sandra." It is in this area of making peace with oneself that the importance of intrinsic motivation versus extrinsic motivation becomes crucial. Unfortunately the type of externally directed education we receive and our resultant dependence on the approbation of others tend to vitiate this important aspect of inner peace.

One factor which plays a very powerful role in inner peace or its disturbance is desire. Desires are a normal part of life, but how we tend to cultivate or minimize them and how we choose to act upon them will to a large measure determine our degree of inner peace. In the West desire and its gratification has been elevated almost to the status of a religion. Even the "Quality of life" is most often measured by how wide-ranging and varied are the items of desire available. Spiraling desires and a clutter of potential gratifications are the hallmark of modern society. This is the result of the "supply-side" approach to dealing with the disturbance and dissatisfaction which accompany desire. On the other side, Eastern traditions have sought peace through the attempt to moderate the demand rather than proliferate the supply. The Chinese classic, The I Ching, warns against the peace-destroying spiral in which "one reels from desire to gratification and in gratification craves desire." The Bhagavad Gita goes to the extent of declaring desire as "the enemy of the wise." Desire is depicted as stemming from ignorance of our true peaceful nature and leading to bondage within a chain of action and reaction. One of the verses of the Buddha deals exclusively with this relationship:

If you sleep
Desire grows in you
Like a vine in the forest

Like a monkey in the forest
You jump from tree to tree,
Never finding the fruit -
From life to life
Never finding peace.

If you are filled with desire
Your sorrows swell
Like the grass after the rain.

But if you subdue desire
Your sorrows fall from you
Like drops of water from a lotus flower.

Like a hunted hare you run,
The pursuer of desire pursued,
Harried from life to life.

O seeker!
Give up desire
Shake off your chains.

You have come out of the hollow
Into the clearing.
The clearing is empty
Why do you rush back into the hollow?

Desire is a hollow
And people say, "Look!
He was free.
But now he gives up his freedom."

Quieten your mind.
Reflect.
Watch.
Nothing binds you.
You are free.

The gift of truth is beyond giving.
The taste beyond sweetness,
The joy beyond joy.

The end of desire is the end of sorrow.

Nor is this "secret" regarding the moderation of desire known only in the Eastern tradition. In the Bible's "Book of Ecclesiastes" it is written, "It is better to be satisfied with what is before your eyes than to give rein to desire (6:9)." According to the Greek Philosopher Diogenes, the only necessary subject in true education was "developmental independence from unre-

strained human desires." Epicurus was another who taught that the few basic human needs could be met with little effort and that controlling the imagination of man which was usually consumed with unfulfilled desires would bring peace of mind. The most common component mentioned by the workshop participants vis a vis their own inner peace was "acceptance of self, others and circumstances as they are" which is certainly the antidote for unbridled desire.



Going hand in hand with the ability to accept with an open-heart that which is presented as opposed to restlessly seeking something which is not present is the gift of being able to take joy in the plain and simple facets of life. Here inner peace and contentment becomes the art of recognizing that the most satisfying and most dependably refreshing experiences of life lie not in great things but in little. Many participants spoke of the role that Nature and solitude play in the cultivation of peace.

In fact a second very common aid in establishing peace of mind in the midst of even very troubling circumstances mentioned by several within the group was quite simply tuning into one's own breath. And along these lines a passage was read out from a book entitled The Art of Contentment:

"Contentment cannot be concerned with what is not at hand. It is not a pursuit, but an awareness. It is a realization that the most precious possessions may be the most readily available. Contentment is discovery without journeying.

... The art of contentment is the art of becoming aware that what is sought is already at hand. It is the art of entering into the spaciousness of the

here and now. It is an art as new as it is old - the art of discovering the world in a grain of sand, and eternity in an hour."

These thoughts on the nature of personal peace are presented here as suggestive rather than exhaustive and are intended to stimulate further reflection and discussion among Gurukulam readers. As elevating and reassuring as was our group's initial workshop discussion on this issue, it is safe to say that the crowning moment of peace and blessedness was the profound and timeless silence into which we all merged at its conclusion.

(To Be Continued)

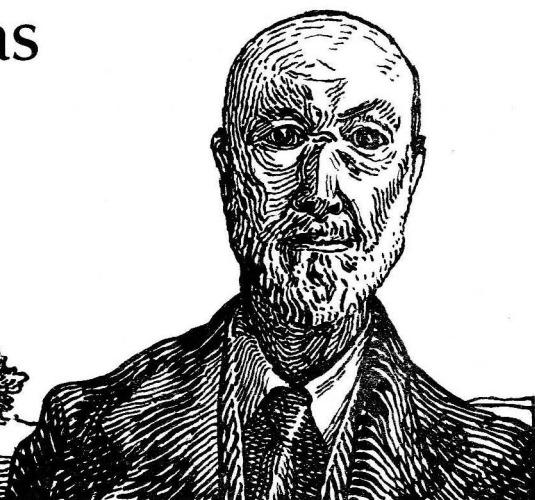


*What lies behind us and before us
are small matters compared to
what lies within us.*

- RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Musical Mandalas

Scott Teitsworth



I have just finished listening to Charles Ives' First Piano Sonata for the 347th time. I know of no other work in any genre that stands up so well to repeated listening, that in fact still grows on one after so much intimacy.

In proportion to the magnificence of this work is a consciousness of the inadequacy of words to describe the music. Musical sounds are among the most general of manifestations, while verbal sounds are quite specific. Words can only give a limited indication about music, just as the horizontal world only has a kind of reflective relationship with the vertical essence of life. Of course great writers, like great composers and successful contemplatives, are at ease moving from the horizontal to the vertical and back again. They know it is only our schematic way of looking at things that makes a distinction so absolute as between horizontal and vertical, specific and general. There are many ways to understand this relationship. Yet how many of us actually gather up our horizontal forces and tendencies to move back from the specific world of smallness and partiality into the depths of a vertical, encompassing generality?

My inability to approach this disparity is ironic here, as the First Piano Sonata is a definitive statement of the very process. Woven into the sweep and scope of this great work of art are tendrils of the horizontal world of New England America, heard throughout as echoes in the mind of the contemplative who is the subject of the

work. The Sonata is a musical panorama of a deep and successful meditation in a room into which drift the sounds and senses of heady, swirling crowds alive with the excitement of turn-of-the-century America. As with any meditation, there are moments when the external world leaps into prominence, only to subside in importance as the mind again settles to the depths. Ives is clearly passing the show into the core of his and our being.

While America in 1985 may not be worth immortalizing, America in 1905 clearly was. In many ways this was the high water mark of American civilization, a time when Transcendentalism and Utopianism were alive and very healthy, and television had not yet appeared to sap her strength and strengthen her saps. Ives' music reveals a man wholly in tune with the pulse of this time, a man who was patriotic about the very best values that used to set America apart: universal equality, staunchly individualistic thinking and behavior, love of nature, mystical esotericism, and communality in the workaday world. To hear this Sonata is to be struck by the difference with modern American patriotism which worships a vindictive god, conventional thinking (or better yet, no thinking at all), every man for himself, and a militaristic us/them approach to the rest of the world.

Ives himself was a classic American contemplative: uncompromising, brilliant, shrewdly humorous, flinty. He maintained his integrity by taking a conventional job as it became clear

that the music world was not ready for the wide-open harmonies he was purveying. Many of his day-to-day associates never suspected he was a musician at all, but it is clear that his outward modesty disguised a burning musical genius of great ability, whose thoughts were written out in paroxysms of notes that seem almost to have jumped out of his cranium and onto the paper. It is well known that his musically talented father educated Ives' ear by having his family sing songs around the kitchen table in one key while he accompanied them in another unrelated key. The new sounds they discovered are found throughout Ives' compositions, adding to the swimming sense of many things happening at once. The effect is not so much ear-splitting as it is mind-stretching. It pulls the listener's mind, like the vacuum of great space, into larger and larger comprehension.

At the turn of the century the rules of musical composition had been seen to be somewhat artificial, and the stampede was on to colonize the new territory beyond the previous boundaries. On every front bold leaps were being taken. Predictably, the musical establishment scorned most of the new works, while today we remember the innovators like Ives and bother not at all with the dull and redundant pieces that were extolled at the time.

If there is a single unifying theme in Twentieth Century music, it is the exploration of dissonance. By now our ears have been educated and altered to the point that Ives' First Sonata is no longer destructive to our sensibilities. In fact, it is one of his most harmonious and peaceful works, and certainly one of the most beautiful piano pieces of all time. This magnificent work is obscure for only one reason: it is virtually impossible to play even in the studio. It cannot be performed in the face of a public that insists on technical perfection at the expense of passion and intrepidity. But the modern world at least has an alternative. One great performance is recorded that fully brings out the incredible musical content of this sonata, Noel Lee's interpretation for Nonesuch Records (H-71169). Much more frequently heard is William Masselos'

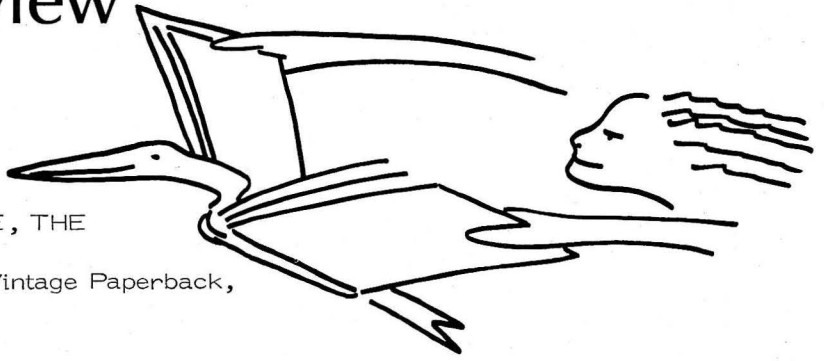
authorized version, which he learned under Ives' tutelage. Masselos deserves credit for the first performance of the work nearly 35 years after its publication, but no greater proof is needed that the composer is often a very poor interpreter of his own music. Perhaps it is their own familiarity that causes everything to be done too fast, or that they are listening to their internal conception rather than the external performance. Whatever the reason, Masselos' version is technically excellent but musically ugly. It is performed with a haste that spoils every bit, and paradoxically guarantees the continued neglect of the work that was originally brought to light by this musician.

Noel Lee epitomizes the musician who has the technical ability coupled with the necessary intellect and expressiveness to do justice to Ives' work and many others besides. With his recording of Ives' First Piano Sonata he has shown himself to be a contemplative musician of the highest caliber. The music is clearly fully understood by Mr. Lee, and he performs it in a way that gets that understanding across. This is no small task considering the depth and technical demands of the piece at hand. On the horizontal level there is an overwhelming barrage of notes and markings to be interpreted, and the performer must assimilate these before he can begin to move into the smooth flow of the vertical, spiritual embrace that is Ives' gift to us.

* * * * *

Beginning in October 1985, the Portland Gurukula will offer a class in music appreciation (EWU 002). There will be one session per month focusing on a single composer each time; mostly performed live with supplements from the record archives. Students are welcome to perform appropriate works, and the instructor can accompany vocalists and instrumentalists if arranged in advance. There is no charge, and you may arrange for Cosmic Credits from the East-West University. To register for any or all sessions please contact Scott Teitsworth at the Portland Gurukula: 11620 N.W. Skyline Portland, Or. 97231 503-286-3271

Book Review



THE CHOSEN PLACE, THE TIMELESS PEOPLE

By Paule Marshall, Vintage Paperback, New York, 1984.

The sun is so hot that instead of rising higher in the sky at the noon hour it seems to fall closer to earth, filling the air with its heat and scorching more deeply the men in the fields. Saul Amron, the American anthropologist, has come into the field with Stinger, a Bourne Island man who is becoming a friend as well as research contact. Their emerging friendship is pushed aside, however, by the intensity of the work in the cane fields. As the day wears on, and as Saul watches, Stinger's pride in his work is soon beaten down by the relentless demand of the fields. The swinging movements of his cane cutter, that once described resolution in their arc, now become mechanical and strained and his vigor is drained to its own shadow. The earlier triumphant grunt that marked the felling of the cane turns silent and lively eyes are drawn down. At the edge of the fields, the estate manager rides watch, unnoticed by the workers. He rides in the old fashion, a shade of an earlier colonial power. But he himself is already only an image of that authority, having been bought out by a remote but powerful multinational corporation.

The dynamics in this scene underscore one of the crucial motifs in Paule Marshall's book The Chosen Place, The Timeless People: the essential integrity of a person's work and the distortion of its fulfillment by external control. Where these issues are examined and played out is a small, neglected island in the Caribbean, in a back-water village which is misunderstood and despised even by its neighbors and supported only by a common past. No great culture supports the Islanders.

This is not India where a people, though colonized and debased, can take refuge in a history of achievement. These people are the children of slaves, torn from their own past and set adrift in the present. Yet even here – or precisely here – Paule Marshall reveals the expanse of human worth and dignity.

Marshall uses her characters to describe the interpenetrating circumferences of politics and personal life. Each person is finely drawn and accurate, and Marshall has a sure grasp of all the subtle social expressions of character. She handles deftly the small details of personality. Yet as real as the characters in The Chosen Place, The Timeless People are, there is a certain mythic element to them. They stand larger than their own lives and one never forgets them as references to a larger community. This is done with intuition and vision rather than dogmatism and without the dry taste of rhetoric.

Many of the major characters in the book are women and we see much of the world through their eyes. It is with two of these women, Harriet and Merle, that Marshall describes the interplay of knowledge and action, a theme which runs throughout the book, complementing Marshall's exploration of labor. Between them Harriet and Merle define the choice to become conscious of the forces that form the foundation of our lives and that shape our world.

Harriet is the woman who can keep her white blouse ironed and clean even in the overpowering heat of Bourne Island. As Saul's new wife, this is her first visit to a world outside the fastness of WASP Philadelphia. To everyone's surprise she adapts well to the

limits on the island, and soon her living room becomes a gathering place for the village women and children. Yet at some point Harriet hits a snag, not on any of the expected places of her environment but on the contradictions of her own self. Harriet is torn – but would never show the emotion – between the need to please and the desire to control, caught fiercely by her inbred restraints and an even deeper urge to connect with her world. Harriet evokes our sympathy and pity and anger as she wrestles with the inconsistencies of her background, yet to the end she remains enigmatic.

Merle is a black woman who moves between the worlds of black and white. Of all the blacks in the book she seems most at ease in either world, yet that ease only serves to highlight the points of misunderstanding between the two. Spanning these oppositions and fully conscious of them, Merle is also the most able to bridge the distance between them. Merle, like Harriet, denies her past, not silently but with a barrage of words. Jokes, allusions, anecdotes, all are used to cover the tracks of the past that constantly haunts her. Whereas Harriet hides deeper and deeper within her politeness, Merle works to open herself to the past. In her acknowledgement of it, she gives herself the ground to incorporate it and to live consciously within the present.

Marshall repeatedly emphasizes that our past cannot be ignored for our own convenience. Denying it only leaves one in its power and a victim of habitual choice. There are no guarantees of safety but there is always a door open, a possibility beyond binding structures. At each moment we have the choice to view the world honestly and to act on that truth. We can walk out from our ignorance and beyond habit. Along with her insistence on the

strength of the social forces that shape our lives, Marshall believes in the capacity of the individual to act consciously. We can recognize the structure of our lives and move thoughtfully to change its inequities.

As a person's life is opened to understanding there is greater opportunity to open to other people. In a crucial scene Harriet illustrates the half attempt of generosity thwarted by selfishness. She offers some of her food to hungry urchin children on the beach – but it is the food left over from a week's retreat at a friend's beach house and it is food she no longer needs. Harriet wants to help, but on her own terms. And it is precisely that, her own terms, that she must give up to truly help and to become a person to her neighbors. And it is what she must eventually do to become real to herself.

As Marshall weaves these themes of work and knowledge, power and love, she does so with great skill, never becoming heavy-handed. She takes many contemporary issues and gives them fullness and flesh in each character's life. We are always aware of the nuances of each person's personality and we are made a part of the world in which they live. The overwhelming heat, the scarred fields, the sighing of the ocean around Bourne Island are palpable realities as we read *The Chosen Place*, *The Timeless People*. And though strange at first, they draw us closer into our own lives and their possibilities. Marshall succeeds in evoking the life of the Caribbean as well as making it a mirror for our own hearts.

Deborah Buchanan

Relaxation and repose come only from the cultivation of an attitude of neutrality. The mind has to lie fallow, empty as it were of all emotions and intentions. One must want nothing, live neutrally in the joy of the eternal present where yesterdays and tomorrows have no more meaning.

– Nataraja Guru

East-West University Report and Narayana Gurukula News



In early July Guru Nitya made a tour through Kerala where he visited and spoke at the medical college in Calicut, the Literary Association in Trichur, the Artist's Guild of Cochin and the Children's Center at Edappally.

He has recently finished the translation and commentary of another of Narayana Guru's works, Bahuleya Astakam, Eight Verses in Praise of Bahuleya. This composition is one of a number of devotional hymns written by the Guru in which he revalues traditional symbolism from the perspective of a monistic visionary. Without favoring any religion over another, he left a legacy of mystical hymns to guide meditation on the beauty, goodness, love and truth which shine as the essence of all religions.

Guru Nitya has also been working on a text book of Indian Psychology based on Patanjali's Yoga Sutras.

At the Gurukula center in Australia, Edda Walker has begun teaching a class on Narayana Guru's One Hundred Verses on Self-Instruction, based on the text, Neither This Nor That But... AUM, Guru Nitya's translation and commentary.

Members of Narayana Gurukula, Bainbridge Island and Portland, gathered for the fourth anniversary celebration and Guru Puja at Island Gurukula Aranya, July 7. The fire ceremony was preceded by readings from the Qur'an, the Tao Te Ching and the Bible, and well as chanting of Narayana Guru's Universal Prayer, Daiva Dasakam. Reports on the activities of both centers and the East-West University followed.



Then a group of children sang beautifully in English and French:

We are the world, we are the children.
We are the ones to make a brighter day,
So let's start giving.
There's a choice we're making.
We're saving our own lives.
It's true, we make a better day,
Just you and me.

-Michael Jackson and Lionel Ritchie

A delicious lunch followed, then a demonstration of the press and a collating party to complete the second issue of the Gurukulam. At the same time, construction of stairs to the second story of the press building was completed.

The celebration was enhanced by the surprise delivery of Guru Nitya's Haunting Echoes of Spring. The book is available for \$8.00 from Deborah Buchanan, Narayana Gurukula, 11620 NW Skyline Blvd. Portland, Or., 97231

Classes on Daiva Dasakam begin August at the Portland Gurukula. They will be held the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month at 7:00 p.m. Scott Teitsworth will initiate an East-West University music series this fall. Dates are October 6th, November 17th and December 15th; for details see the notice in "Musical Mandalas." Another East-West University class to begin in Portland will be a series of brunch-seminars on "The Artist and Society," hosted by Andy and Suellen Larkin. Dates are to be announced.

Photo and Illustration Credits

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3: Drawing by Suellen Larkin

4: Etching of Guru Nitya by Andy Larkin

7: Magnolia blossom by Imogen Cunningham

9: Detail of the sculpture The Hand of God by Auguste Rodin

13: Drawing by Andy Larkin

14: Detail of Persian tile

17: Lettering by Suellen Larkin

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19: Krishna

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24: Narayana Guru and Nataraja Guru

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27: Einstein, Socrates, Sartre; Picasso

29: Etching of Nataraja Guru by Guru Nitya

31: Japanese Shinto diety, 12th Cen.

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41: Photograph by Peter Oppenheimer

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43: Portrait of Charles Ives by Andy Larkin

45: Drawing by Bob Lucas

48: Guru Puja, Bainbridge Island, Wa.
Photograph by Sraddha Durand



East-West University and Narayana Gurukula Publications

By Nataraja Guru:

An Integrated Science of the Absolute (Volumes I,II,III)
Towards a One World Economics
Dialectical Methodology
Wisdom's Frame of Reference
World Education Manifesto
Anthology of the Poems of Narayana Guru

By Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati:

Love and Devotion
The Bhagavad Gita (Commentary) (Vikas Publishing)
Neither This Nor That But...AUM (Vikas Publishing)
Iśa Upaniṣad (Commentary)
Śree Narayana Guru
Daiva Daśakam of Narayana Guru (Commentary)
God: Reality or Illusion?
Beyond Cause and Effect
An Intelligent Man's Guide to the Hindu Religion

Other:

Dhyāna Mañjusha (A Bouquet of Meditations)
Nataraja Guru's 90th Birthday Souvenir
The Philosophy of Śrī Narayana Guru - Dr. S. Omana
Functional Democracy - Muni Narayana Prasad
The Blessing of Being Not Educated - Peter Oppenheimer
Gestures in Silence - Deborah Buchanan
What Narayana Guru Is Not - Nancy Yeilding
A World Academy of Wonder - J.L. Ascharyacharya
East West University Yearbook - 1978
East West University Yearbook - 1981
East West University Prospectus
East West University Seminar Report, Kanakamala - 1980

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