

Vision

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“COMMUNICATION”

Underneath the banner heading of this newsletter appear the words *“Published by the School of Philosophy Auck. Inc. for enjoyment and communication”*. What is communication? It is the art of sharing between people, imparting, revealing, bestowing; having something in common with another; being *unreserved*. In Old French, *comuner* means “share”, (formed on) *commun* – “common”. The Latin *communicare* is “to make common to many”.

The word *commune* has among its definitions “to hold spiritual intercourse with; partake of Holy Communion”.

So communication is not just a method of exchanging information, which it is often taken to mean today. The medium used can be either the spoken or written word. A good communicator is one who succeeds in conveying his or her meaning to others, thereby uniting the participants.

Practised wisely, communication is a vital commodity, banishing loneliness, selfishness and misunderstanding. It saves us from living in an all too prevalent vacuum which others have to penetrate as best they may to reach the person within. Its tool is Speech, which

the Upanishads say is the essence of Man.

“It is reason and speech that unite men to one another”, adds Cicero. “There is nothing else in which we differ so entirely from the brute creation”. (78 B.C.)

This is not to say that there is no place for silence, or silent communication, this being better

***“Speech is the mirror of the soul;
as a man speaks, so he is.”***

*Publiltus Syrus (50
B.C.)*

by far than a flood of unnecessary words. We have all heard the sayings “silence is golden” or “still waters run deep”.

Some believe that “silence is more eloquent than words” (Thomas Carlyle), or “blessed is the man who having nothing to say, abstains from giving us wordy evidence of the fact.” (George Eliot)

Often something more than silence is required, however! The wise remind us that speech conveys consciousness, and when consciousness is allowed to flow unimpeded, everything flows.

“Speech is reason’s brother, and a kingly prerogative of man,

That likeneth him to his Maker, who spake, and it was done.”

Proverbial Philosophy (1837)

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AUSTRALASIA 2001

Youth Week, Sydney, January

by Richard Lacey

I was surprised, to say the least, when asked to write the following because not only am I a 'Pom' but a poor writer. But in the spirit of the Week, attended in Australia in January (lovely place but unfortunately full of Aussies) by many youth, like myself, I will just allow the pen to move in its unique way and see what it produces.

Having boarded the school mini-bus, after what can only be described as a strenuous flight – battling the cramped conditions, the food, the entertainment ... flying is difficult, even when you do receive a free upgrade to business class ... I



Katrina Beissel, Andrew-John Spicer, Sarah Wulff, Elizabeth Connor

was driven with the rest of the group over the Sydney Harbour Bridge and up the drive of Mahratta House. The house looked stunning, the grounds looked stunning, the New Zealanders were stunned. This was definitely a place I could stay for a week or two.

With great English timing I arrived just in time for dinner. The beautifully laid tables stretched all down the corridor, giving a rough idea of how many youth would be attending the event. There were about seventy. This seventy was shared evenly between the men and ladies so even someone like me had a dinner date.

The evening moved swiftly into the night and so it came to bedtime.

The morning arrived all too quickly, but without too much trouble (it all being a new adventure) I arose and went about my morning duties. "A run !!!" I said. Although it

was 4.30 am it was very hot and going to get a lot hotter, so despite my body's 'better judgement' it was the logical time to go.

For me the day usually starts with breakfast but whenever I am on Weeks breakfast, for some unknown reason, always comes in the middle of the day; or it seems like it by the time you get to it. After a short creativity session everyone had been served an otherwise lethal concoction of fruit and weet-bix. After an even shorter, the creative masterpieces disappeared.

The day continued with various work sessions in 45° heat, interspersed with two more creativity sessions.

I should probably tell you a bit more about the people who were attending. We had five groups overall: three male and two female. The men's tutors were Mr Graham Farrelly, a sure young man from Auckland; Mr Ross

Farrelly, a 'soon-to-be-married' man from Sydney, and last but not least Mr Varadi-Boethy, an encapsulated powerhouse of Hungarian chivalry and etiquette. The female sector had Mrs Renshaw, wife to the boss, and Miss Renshaw, an awe-inspiring character. Finally we come to the aforementioned, Mr Renshaw, a very down-to-earth type who knows exactly what to do in all situations.

The Australian Youth were the main stars of the show. It was their attitudes and experiences that made me take a new look at my life. The environment was inspiring to say the least. When I came to New Zealand I thought I had seen a near to perfect Youth Group. They welcomed me without any limitations; I could have been a god or a tramp, it would not have mattered. Their understanding of the teaching was far better than mine. I knew that I would be able to learn many things while here, the first and most important being 'What is the Truth?'

Having met the Australians, I was even more inspired. The New Zealanders were too. It's just like a car. When you buy the car it is perfect and beautiful and you keep it clean and shiny looking. The Australian Week was, to all those who attended, a very necessary clean up of all the inside of the vehicle. The company was heartening, the teaching was uplifting and the ambience enriching. All these things, together with – dare I say it? – a measured lifestyle, made for a great week.

I have, along with everyone else, taken a lot away from it, and all of it good.

A TUTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

by Graham Farrelly

The youth week in Sydney was an enriching event for all involved, in the sense of being filled with life and energy that comes from Spirit. Other youth events have been similarly inspiring, but this week had a solidity to it that has not been so evident previously. I was left with an impression of firmness and contentment rather than elation which disappears soon after it is felt.

The contingent from New Zealand numbered 19 – 16 from Auckland, 3 from the Wellington School.

There were three study sessions each day and topics included:

- The Bible, *St Matthew*
- Sanatana Dharma (Eternal Discipline),
Laws of Manu
- Sri Shankaracharya "Conversations" on Reason
- Plato, Parmenides

During sessions students also undertook private study using a wide anthology of extracts from the Bible and works of Shakespeare, Marcus Aurelius, Marsilio Ficino, and St Teresa of Avila, as well as passages from the Bhagavad-Gita, Hermes Trismegistus, Kahlil Gibran and the Chandogya Upanishad. The anthology, which had been prepared by a student before the week, was used as base material and was divided into ten headings under Sanatana Dharma: patience, forgiveness, self-control, non-stealing, cleanliness, regulated use of the senses, wisdom, true knowledge, truthfulness, and abstention from anger.

As aids to the work of the week two main practices were pursued – single-pointed attention, and discrimination – from which all profited.

From a tutor's point of view the week was most enjoyable. It was a rare and privileged opportunity to be able to conduct the study and discovery of the Self in such lively company. In addition, it was a chance to present new material and exchange ideas with the Australian tutors, all of which will be of benefit here in Auckland.



OPEN

The Auckland School has an Open Day annually but this was the first for 17 months. It was decided to open in the autumn rather than spring, partly because of the better weather stability. The 4th of March dawned bright and glorious and stayed that way all day.

Already a great effort had been put in by many on Saturday to set up the property at 268 West Tamaki Road. Volunteers were called for the morning and afternoon but by 1pm the job was almost complete.

The day has rather the flavour of a happy gala day with activities for all ages. The children had coconut shies (some very old children sighted there), novelty races, face painting, story telling, a bouncy castle and plaster modeling. For adults there were many food stalls, with Robert Sutherland in full Sushi regalia and, no, that was not a tea towel round his forehead! A visiting sushi team prepared

fresh food from 6.15am and joined with the teams who presented Devonshire teas, salads, pancakes, and other fine fare. A wind trio played in the garden and seemed to enjoy themselves as much as anyone.

Two wine bars were popular, especially later on as the workers found some time to enjoy each other's company after a long day in the sun.

Two entertainment programmes drew good audiences morning and afternoon. One venue displayed music, vedic dance, and the Ficino School concert. The drawing room was standing room only for the latter event. Chamber music was provided by a quartet led by David Kayroux, a music teacher at Ficino School. The Mozart quartet was particularly well received.

We were fortunate to obtain the singing of Edward Scorgie, a young and rising star and his fiancée Joanna Heslop. Edward is a baritone trained in Auckland and Milan who recently performed for 200,000 people in the Starlight Symphony concert in the Auckland Domain. Joanna is a soprano. They sang (gloriously) duets and solos from "The Marriage of Figaro", "Don Giovanni", and songs by Gershwin. They commented



Choir performance at the Open Day

DAY

afterwards on the support and quality of the audience, who showed their enjoyment and gave their full attention. They made it clear that they would very much like to return.

Meanwhile upstairs a series of talks was underway. Tony Clarke, Ficino School and Philosophy Art Group tutor, spoke on "Art in Creation". In this talk he used a tape-recorder to demonstrate similarities between music and art. Tony has recently been juried into a Wildlife Art seminar in Montana with world leader Robert Bateman and has been awarded a part-time art residency.

Ray Rogers is a native New Zealander who will be familiar to many in the Sydney School and to "Art in Action" participants in the U.K. As a potter he has specialized in pit firing and lustre glazes. Ray gave a popular talk on these subjects and also had work on exhibition and for sale. His work varies from powerful forms to delicate highly glazed items, with others richly decorated.

Mark Broadwith, Headmaster at Ficino School, spoke about "Education for the 21st

Enjoyment is the seasoning of things: it is the food of love, the kindling of genius, the nourishment of will and the strength of memory.

(Marsilio Ficino)

Century."

Peter Tibbits has studied and used "Harmonics in Architecture" for many years. He has a deep understanding of the subject and gave a very interesting talk. He used geometry to demonstrate how forms are generated from the centre and how this can be applied to practical use.

Hamish Hudson has been an appreciator



Tony Clarke giving a lecture on art

of Shakespeare for many years and involved in drama production for both Ficino School and the School of Philosophy. Hamish spoke on "Shakespeare and Love"

The final lecture on the programme was delivered by Simon Laurent, a practising lawyer, who spoke on "The Law - Evolving, Revolving, or Devolving." The talk centred on the notion contained in Blackstone that law exists and should be followed, to enable people to achieve happiness. Happiness is, after all, our natural birthright, but is covered over by desires for the things of the world. Law regulates the fulfilment of those desires to reduce suffering and clear the way for enjoyment of our time on earth.

Other displays included art in three rooms. Favourable comments were received and a number of sales made. As usual plant sales were popular and the Silent Auction made much out of what was presented.

All of these things contributed to the success of the day, which made a small but adequate profit and was enjoyed by 800 people who seemed happy to be there. School members worked hard, took the opportunity to show the true and generous spirit of real work in action, and enjoyed each other's company.

Cultural Activities

RESIDENTIAL ART WEEK – 2001

The annual residential art week in Auckland was held at 268 West Tamaki Road between 5 and 12 January.

As in previous years it was well attended, mostly by members of the Friday night Art Group but also by two younger students from the Wellington School, which added to the diversity both in ages and natures.

One of the great delights of such a week is that the responsibilities and cares of everyday life can be put aside and the discovery of art related to Truth pursued without distraction.

As with all weeks, the day is centred around meditation, which during the long days of summer starts and finishes the formal part of the day.

Although there were a great many diverse activities, three main studies continued throughout the week. The morning, following a meeting and general household activities, was devoted to the contemplation of the qualities of the Absolute.

Each student at the beginning of the week chose a quality that particularly attracted them and for the remainder of the week they were to contemplate this quality and develop a work in oils that would convey this to the viewer.

The first work period after lunch was spent discovering the delights of geometry, a subject that the students had been threatened with for some time, but which is fundamental to the study of form and necessary for all serious visual artists.

The remainder of the afternoon was spent painting one of the five primary elements. Each student chose one element and proceeded to paint a landscape drawing out that particular element in the painting.

Many of the art works produced during the week were exhibited at the Open Day on 4 March.


There was no let up from attempting to develop the aesthetic skills of the students; all meals were presented artistically, complete with flowers, candles and unusually folded paper serviettes.

Early in the week students had been tipped off that there was to be a concert on the final night. They rose to the challenge but it wasn't until the last minute that it was realised that the M Groups were to meet on the same evening, so ended up providing the Art Group with a somewhat larger audience!

Just as with all good wines, the week was soon over, but the fine after-taste lingers on and is savoured in the weekly Art Group sessions.

CULTURAL GROUPS - WHEN AND WHERE

Wednesday	Vedic Chants	9.00 - 10.00am	27 Esplanade Rd
	Plato Group	10.00 - 11.30am	"
Friday	Art Group	6.30-10.00pm	"
	Renaissance Studies	7.00 - 9.00pm	"
Saturday	Vedic Dance	Morning	"
	Art Group 2	Afternoon	"
Sunday	Choir	7.00 - 9.30pm	"



"SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY CELEBRATION EVENING"

To end the year 2000 on a positive, joyful note, all members of the School were invited to a celebratory evening of speech, music, poetry, drama, wine and food held at the Auckland College of Education Music Auditorium on 6 December last.

This rich and entertaining evening was well attended and provided a great opportunity for members to gather together and enjoy each other's company.

In his opening remarks, Graham Soughtton (Convenor of the Membership Committee and compere) emphasised the value of this spirit of love and good company, particularly with the coming of the festive season. To underline the point, he quoted an 8 year old boy who, when asked what love was, replied "It's what's left in the room when you stop opening your Christmas presents and just listen." The anecdote was instantly recognised and enjoyed by all...

In his following short speech, Digby Crompton (Principal of the School) addressed similar themes, which was a satisfying coincidence as the two speakers had not compared notes beforehand!

Then followed an excellent musical recital by Beverley Wilson (piano) and Jenny Whittington (flute and recorder). Their programme included pieces from Haydn (*Sonata No. 4 in F Major*), Marc-Carles (*Vieille Chanson for flute & piano*), Corelli (*a jig, played on the descant recorder*) and the song, "*Sweet Chance, that led my steps abroad*" by Michael Head (sung by Jenny).

Then it was time for the trio of Tim Burgess, Andrew-John Spicer and Ian Preston to entertain with excerpts from Shakespeare's

poetry to illustrate how effectively he used metaphor and simile to assert the underlying unity behind apparent opposites. We listened to lines from *Anthony & Cleopatra*, building up to the climax of the play when Cleopatra applies the asp to her bosom; the famous Chorus from *Henry V* describing the dawn before the battle of Agincourt; *Sonnet 53*; a soliloquy from *Macbeth*; and finally a short extract about the lover and the beloved from *Love's Labours Lost*, ending thus –

*Nor shines the silver moon
one half so bright
through the transparent bosom of the deep
as doth thy face
through tears of mine give light;
Thou shin'st in every tear
that I do weep:*

This was a striking example of the use of simile – the shining moon compared with the light of the Self – to provoke deeper understanding of unity.

Before refreshments, the choir presented seven items ranging from the rousing *Day by Day*, and Mozart's *Jubilate Deo*, through quieter pieces finishing with the devotional *If Ye Love Me* (Thomas Tallis) and *Oculi Omnium* (Charles Wood). The performance was ably conducted by choir mistress Jenny Whittington – a musically multi-talented lady!

Then everyone enjoyed a feast of another sort – a fine supper, with wine, tea, coffee and convivial conversation to end an evening which we hope was but the first of many.

ALEGRIA

After travelling the byways of Europe, Asia and the Americas, the Cirque du Soleil came to these shores earlier this year "like a bolt of life ... to sing its song of joy" - ALEGRIA was pure joy. To those who saw it, nothing more can be said. This review is for those who missed a wondrous show. It is a poor substitute.

As we entered the huge white tent we thought we were going to a circus ... a human circus. Well yes, but ALEGRIA is more than a circus. It is also a singular work of unforgettable theatre, which scales the heights of artistic genius.

The first thing you notice is that the stage is a masterpiece of design. The audience surrounds the stage on three sides and yet through the clever angles and lighting effects the rear half of the stage seems to stretch well into the distance. Throughout the show the significance of this illusion becomes apparent as entrances of performers seem to come from far off, as if from another time and place.

This sense of timelessness and other-worldliness of ALEGRIA is a feature of the show, and right from the outset we felt we were witnessing a great sweeping drama with many layers of meaning.

The show opens with a little band of toy soldier musicians 'tootling' through the audience. In their midst is a strange little misshapen man dressed in ringmaster red, and dripping with jewellery. His name is Fleur and we take him to be the Master of Ceremonies come to introduce the show. Sure enough, at three points in the audience the band stops and he loudly cries "ALEGRIA !!". The band play; and they march him back on stage. He never

speaks again. This is ALEGRIA... where nothing is as it seems.

Fleur skulks around the outer aspects of the stage. It seems he badly wants to be in the limelight. He never stops trying to catch the interest of the audience but every time real performers arrive he is forced to flee to one side, to preen, sulk and mutter.

He isn't alone. Also on stage for most of the evening is a motley assortment of 'old birds'. These are fantastically attired 'fine feathered friends', with human-like masks.

And what masks! Here in full face are some of the most awful human follies: conceit, pride, smugness, envy, greed, haughtiness. These old birds are ugly; and all night they plod around the stage with a curious, clumsy bird-like gait.

Like circling thoughts in the mind, they spend their time in the vain attempt to catch our attention, but mostly they fail ... and the reason is simple: our attention goes to the performers.

They are sublime. They arrive with an accompanying musical fanfare and look to us like young gods. They have an air of serene detachment and effortless indifference; they majestically transcend the limits of normal possibility.

As each separate act unfolds we witness magic. The balance master

A REVIEW

by *Graham Soughton*

performs a one-armed handstand on top of a single four metre pole. A strong man can't be moved an inch by six others. He has become a rock. He then puts the six on a platform and carries their weight before bending a steel bar around his head ... and yes it was real.



We laugh all right! But wait... isn't that a touch of bitter-sweet, of irony, of pathos? Sure is. These are the best of clowns.

Now we are seeing the whole comi-tragedy of the human personality laid open...and it's

The fire-knife dancer blazes across the stage like a comet. The fire he twists and twirls at impossible speed is his to command. Two contortionists become human rubber in a slow-motion synchronised ballet that is both beautiful and completely baffling.

The flying man soars and swoops in perfect control of powerful bungy cords that would tear someone lesser to pieces. His home IS the air. We are in no doubt. The trapeze troupe perform similar aerial miracles of timing, speed and strength.

These heavenly performances have an effect on the mind and heart which is something close to rapture. We ARE rapt... and would stay that way but for the clowns.

Ah the clowns, the clowns! There ought to be clowns. We need to be brought down to earth with laughter. It really isn't so serious after all, and these clowns are genuinely funny.

funny. It's also sad, but there is no time for weeping, the singer is singing again.

She looks small and she's dressed like a very young girl. Why? She isn't. She is a woman and sings with a big voice. Very big. These are songs with a big passion, delivered with real vocal power. She doesn't sing us to sleep; she sings us awake.

Are we awake? Is she dressed like Alice to remind us that in this wonderland we simply don't know whether we are dreaming or not? Do we know what is real any more? Did we ever know?

We leave the theatre of ALEGRIA sure only that we have just been participants in something very special. A work of art. A world within Mind. Fantastic but strangely familiar, like something almost forgotten...somewhere.

ALEGRIA. Pure joy.

FOOD FOR THE MIND

All things abided eternally as they were in their proper places. Eternity was manifest in the light of the day, and something infinite behind everything appeared.

Thomas Traherne, Centuries of Meditations.

The nearest thing that one knows in God - for instance, if one could understand a flower as it has its being in God - this would be higher than the whole world.

Meister Eckhart

Also in this He showed me a little thing, the quality of an hazel-nut in the palm of my hand; and it was round as a ball. I looked thereupon with the eye of my understanding, and thought: What may this be? And it was answered generally thus: It is all that is made. And I marvelled how it might last, for methought it might suddenly have fallen to naught for littleness. And I was answered in my understanding: It lasteth and ever shall last, for that God loveth it. And so All-Thing hath the Being by the love of God.

In this Little Thing, I saw three properties. The first is that God made it, the second that God loveth it, the third that God keepeth it. But that is to me verily the Maker, the Keeper, and the Lover - I cannot tell.

Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love

...something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

William Wordsworth

We welcome contributions to this newsletter. Please contact the Editor, Mrs Marilyn Marshall on 579-8646.

DAVID BODDY'S VISIT

The latest visit to Auckland by Mr David Boddy from the School in London took place in mid-December. For the fifty or so ladies who attended a three day residential weekend at this time, it was a breath of fresh air in the pre-Christmas period.

Mr Boddy, as counsellor to the ladies in the School, conducted meetings and sessions during which some of the great teachings were studied. We were encouraged to continue this study in our own time, and, using the Bible, works of Shakespeare, St. Augustine, Marcus Aurelius, Dialogues of Plato and letters of Marsilio Ficino, consider questions relating to such matters as family, the roles of father and mother, a woman's role in society today, education, social harmony and human dignity.

Suggestions were given as to how the fruits of such study might be made available for the welfare of humanity.

The days during the residential event were full and varied, with a balance of study, contemplation, work, singing, discussion and, throughout all, very good company.

On this visit, Mr Boddy was accompanied by his wife Marian. She delighted us all with her down-to-earth presence and by participating fully in discussions during meetings, in which she asked perceptive, penetrating questions. All in all, a very satisfying residential weekend.

ABHINAYA - VEDIC DANCE GROUP

*Where the hand goes, the eye should go;
Where the eye goes, the mind should also go there;
Where the mind goes, the heart should be, and
Where the heart is, there love arises.*

(A central principle of Vedic Dance)

This group is flourishing, with a full programme of instruction, practise and performing for School of Philosophy events, including the Open Day held on Sunday, 4 March, 2001.

In October last year the Vedic Dance group enjoyed a visit from Melbourne dance teacher Bouthaina Mayall. Her beautiful example of Abhinaya inspired and delighted the group, and her busy weekend included coaching the Auckland dance ladies and instructing the children of Ficino School as well as the Sunday School children.

Bouthaina demonstrated the finer aspects of the dance style – which is drawn from classical Indian dance, in particular the North Indian Kathak style, and the South Indian Bharata Natyam style – and its potential for choreography and expression of the scriptures, as well as entirely new and lively dances.

Many ladies took the opportunity to watch and join in.

This visit was followed up in January of this year when Rosemary Auld and Erika Watson joined the Australian dance ladies in Sydney. The week of dance study deepened and enlivened their love of Vedic Dance

and philosophy.

In the most excellent company of the students studying Sanskrit at the same residential week, the dancers looked closely

at the scriptural texts to which dances have been set. They also worked on details of technique and presentation for performance, with the challenging and light-hearted class of a visiting Indian dance tutor completing the week.

During the afternoon of the 4 March Open Day at 268 West Tamaki Road, the group performed to a very

appreciative audience. Their growing skill and confidence in the intricate dance movements were obvious, and conducive to the opening of the heart and stilling of the mind of the onlooker. The programme included two solo dances performed with considerable expertise and vigour by Erika Watson from the School's Youth Group. Erika has been a student of classical Indian dance for a number of years.

Anyone interested in joining the weekly Vedic dance classes is most welcome.

***Enquiries to Rosemary Auld (412-8782) or
Delwyn Wilson (480-8127)***



Erika Watson performing solo

Views and Reviews

BOOK REVIEW

“Mysticism – A Study and an Anthology”

by F.C. Happold, Pub. Penguin Books, \$23.30

First published in 1963, this inspiring anthology has been selling well in the School Bookshop. Dr Happold – the author of a number of books and articles on education, history, social studies, religion and philosophy – has drawn on mystical writings from all over the world for the anthology. Included are Plato, St. Augustine, St Bernard of Clairvaux, Meister Eckhart, Dante, Thomas a Kempis, Julian of Norwich and of course St Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross, two of the best known Christian mystics.

Also forming part of the anthology are extracts from The Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, Buddhist teachings, the Sufi mystics, and the Tao Te Ching, plus the master poets and the writings of lesser known men and women describing their mystical experiences.

A glance at the chapter headings alone creates interest in this book: “The Nature of Mystical Experience”, “The State of Contemplation”, “The Timeless Moment”, “The Sufi Path of Love”, etc.

Dr Happold set out his work in two parts, first a study of mysticism, followed by the Anthology. The study is complete in itself but is also designed to assist the reader’s understanding of the latter. As Dr Happold emphasises, mystical experience is not something confined to those who have risen to the highest contemplation of the infinite, but can be present in a less developed form in quite ordinary men and women. Such

*“May blessings be upon
the head of Cadmus,
or the Phoenicians,
or whoever invented books.”*

Thomas Carlyle, 1820

Pathway

Shall I with love, thank God for thee?
Or thou for bringing God to me
With shadowed eyes yet to see,
Love’s quest unending sets me free.
As thinking long does no man well
Backward glances never tell, and
what of truth?
If such is found from lips that
smile but heart that frowns,
Discern from love what ere you will,
but love your time it’s not to kill.

*by Steven Green –
Student, New Groups*

experiences can change the tenure of a life.

If the subject of mysticism appeals to you, this book is well worth having and would be an ideal gift for like-minded friends and family.

*Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
From outward things, whate’er you may believe.
There is an inmost centre in us all,
Where truth abides in fulness; and around
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
This perfect, clear perception – which is truth.*

(Robert Browning)

DAWN SECRETS

Early awakenings from the depths of sleep,
Hesitation, as eyelids retract to peep.

Breath of active Spirit is around,
Calling me to old, new, even holy ground,
From fragments of our lives profound,
Abundant echoes, and syntheses surround.

These musings, large and small,
Tumble from some harvest stall
As bundles of surprise,

Seen through my barely open eyes.

Best thoughts come from some cosmic deep,
So early dawn about the house I creep,
While fond dog and all are fast asleep,
To welcome secrets I may not keep.

This reflection beyond introspection,
Roots action beyond former traction,
Stokes it seems some latent fire;
Hence no nearby call begs me to retire!

*Reprinted by kind permission of
Professor Richard Whitfield
Freelance international lecturer, writer,
teacher & consultant*

DURING A JOURNEY TO ADEN ...

In the late afternoon, in the golden light, we reached the Syrian border and the cities of the dead were about us, and the strange beauty of Asia who makes her ornament of the secrets of her past. A beauty that relies, like a Paris gown, on subtle line with a single knot or ribbon, a trifle of decoration, a broken column in the barren cup of hills, a lad with black goats browsing, a lonely tree, to give the desired note and awaken the spirit. Style, I suppose it is, both in the French costume and the Syrian landscape – to renounce all but the essential, so the essential may speak.

"East is West" by Freya Stark

From 'Journey into Russia'...

"I myself first saw Samarkand from a rise across a wilderness of crumbling ruins and great graveyards which lie between it and the airport. Suddenly we caught a glimpse of painted minarets trembling in the blue astringent light and the great Madonna blue domes of mosques and tombs shouldering the full weight of the sky among bright green trees and gardens..."

Coming back to the city from the country on my last evening we passed some unusual elms...They were, my guide told me, perhaps a thousand years old, older certainly than Genghis Khan. It was very still...Then from the city came quite clearly the call to prayer from mosque and minaret. I had not expected any calls at all and it made no difference that some of the calls came over loudspeakers. That this could still be uttered alone was important. Then beyond the trees an old man had appeared on a donkey, dismounted, spread a prayer mat on the ground, and kneeling down face towards Mecca he began to pray. No one who has not travelled in a country without gods in the natural sense can know how moving such a scene can be..."

Laurens van der Post

NEW BOOK

"The Royal Law", Source of our freedom today, by L.L. Blake, (Author of Young People's Book of the Constitution, Young People's Book of Law, and Sovereignty: Power beyond Politics) Pub. Shephard-Walwyn.

HOSPITALISED

by Rodney Shadbolt

*Good when He gives, supremely good
Nor less when He denies
Afflictions, from His sovereign hand
Are blessings in disguise.*

(Brother Lawrence)

It was the tooth that threw me. It had started aching just at my busy time of the year but when it was finally pulled I assumed my troubles were over. But when the appendix ruptured, at about the same time, the first thought was that somehow I'd been poisoned by the dentistry!

Then the clever body went to work, piling bio-mass on the rupture and stopping the poison from getting out. There was an appearance of recovery but the pain persisted and the vigilant women in my life, who seemed more awake to the condition of my body than I was myself, dragged me to doctors and A and E clinics. Finally I found myself in hospital one February day when no longer able to continue working. The body had managed to isolate the poison and pain but had also disguised its source, making diagnosis difficult. It might be necessary to operate at any moment.

"Nil by Mouth" – this dreadful sign hung above every bed I was to visit. A sip of water became like a dream. During this time my temperature surged. Alarmed nurses disregarded the surgeons and gave me water and Paracetamol, plus other unmentionable treatments which I tried modestly to refuse, saying "I'll just put up with it".

It was during this battle with temperatures that something interesting occurred.

After five days without food and water and sweating volumes every night, a refinement occurred in the mind-body set up. Suddenly, one was listening at a far different level.

Monday, new nurses arriving, still dreaming about the weekend dancing with their boyfriends, and thinking as they attended my constant needs, "Old so and so!" - being stubborn about getting tabs in unpleasant places (a simple method of getting a temperature down).

It was informed listening. No longer did sounds convey information about activities such as walking, making beds, removing gloves, but the intention behind each action was clear to the ravaged hearing. A bed lowered or merely bumped into conveyed unbelievable intelligence. It was no good. It wouldn't go away! Knowledge poured in.

The nurses hovered. Quietly! The demands increased. Fresh sheets. Pillow slips. Windows opened. Fan produced. Body washers. Soon the nurses were fully contributing, slipping naturally into their roles as care-givers. The temperature receded and other patients were attended to cheerfully and efficiently. What was it? My inner emotional ground? My imagination? It quietened when all were in a contented state, the nurses were themselves, and life flowed naturally.

The doctors did their best. The body weakened. A little food and water was allowed. This was interesting – never had I seen pleasure and pain follow each other so immediately. A glass of water, a bowl of weetbix – pleasure. Evacuation processes had ceased, the food increased pressure – more pain!

No one wanted to make a decision about operating. A top surgeon was called in. By this time I had been prodded, poked, pushed, photographed, scanned. They knew by now

what it was. But what is a top surgeon? I was introduced to a man who was present. He gently put both hands on the aggravated spot. There was an immediate sense of the whole thing, almost like he held it in his hands. Not in a physical sense but like a certain knowledge of what was there. "It's soft enough. We can operate".

One small problem. I had eaten. Once again that dreadful sign "Nil by Mouth" was hoisted above my bed.

Finally The Operation loomed. Awake. Pain! Nurse! Any morphine? Sorry, the pulse was too weak. "You'll just have to put up with it" (which idiot ever thought of that saying?) There were one or two other problems to overcome also. No one wanted to articulate them. Everyone knew. Like the ghost of Banquo in "Macbeth", the catheter hung in the air before us, its use threatened if certain things did not happen within two hours. Male relatives paled in sympathy. Fortunately, in the nick of time, the waters flowed. I had finally obeyed the knowledge to "let go!" as some tenacious attitude within broke down, dissolved, loosened its grip.

Now all actions were guided by knowledge. Attention was fully directed, there were no doubts and the mind was quiet.

So, where did the knowledge come from? Was it the continual phone calls from my tutor, and members of my group who visited in droves, who read me poetry and lifted my spirits? Was it the visits and support of friends inside and outside the School that allowed the heart to sing despite all the misgivings? the helpful neighbours, unselfish relatives, the nurses, surgeons, the cards, telephone calls?

Was it because the very worst night was also my group night that Knowledge flew to my aid? Who can say?

What are we? Are we greater than we know? One thing I can say with certainty – the next time anyone asks me to give a thought, to meditate, to say a prayer for anyone in difficulties

It will be done!

SCHOOL WEBSITE

The web site continues to prove a useful addition to the School's activities, with the highest numbers of visitors yet being recorded in response to the February advertising campaign. We have also had a selection of visitors from around the world, including UK/Eire, Belgium, USA, Australia, South Africa and Argentina, among others.

The "Thought of the Day" email service has also proved popular, with the number of subscribers nearly doubling over the past couple of months. This is free to the community and provides a short philosophically-based quote each week day from a variety of sources.

The website address is:
www.philosophy.school.nz

TERM DATES FOR 2001

	Commences	Finishes
TERM 1	Monday, 29 January	Sunday, 22 April
TERM 2	Monday, 21 May	Sunday, 12 August
TERM 3	Monday 10 September	Sunday 2 December

PHILOSOPHY

FOR TODAY

A practical approach to wisdom.

A twelve week course which presents simple, practical means of finding direction amidst the change and uncertainty of modern day living. No previous study of philosophy is necessary.

You are welcome, regardless of age, occupation, background or beliefs. This is not an academic or historical study of philosophy, but a practical course which presents the great teachings of past and present in a manner relevant to daily life.

Students have the opportunity to tackle those simple but profoundly challenging questions, such as:

- Who am I?
- What is wisdom?
- What is Truth?
- How do I gain peace of mind?

Those attending are encouraged to apply what is presented each week and offer observations from their own experience. The emphasis is discovery through direct experience. This quickly develops awareness and self-confidence, which are of immediate practical value. Continuing courses are available.

This twelve week course runs from 7.45pm to 10.00pm on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 27 Esplanade Road, Mt Eden. You can vary your evening of attendance. Enrolments are welcome from 7.15pm on the first meeting.

Fees are \$95 including GST (\$50 non-earning students)

Course commences: Tuesday 22 May and Thursday 24 May 2001

Enquiries welcome – Phone 09 638-7577

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DAYTIME PHILOSOPHY ONE GROUP

In response to a number of requests, a day-time Part One group is being planned, and it is proposed that it will commence in Term 2 of this year.

Details are being finalised and will be announced as soon as possible.