

# Vision

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## 41ST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The Taoist poet Lu Yu once wrote :

*“The clouds above us join and part.*

*The breeze in the courtyard  
leaves and returns.*

*Life is like that. So why not relax.*

*Who can stop us celebrating.”*

Who indeed! Especially on the occasion of what had been billed as the 40th Anniversary of the Auckland School of Philosophy, which was celebrated at a delightful function on December 5th in the Music Auditorium of the Auckland College of Education.

In actual fact, it turned out to be our 41st Anniversary, as further assiduous research undertaken by a student after the publication of the “history” of the Auckland School in the last issue of “Vision” revealed that classes had commenced in September 1960, not January 1961 as previously thought.

Several hundred current and ex students of the School gathered at the function to enjoy each other’s company and, of course, a liberal supply of good food and wine.

The evening began with a few well chosen words of welcome from the Principal, Digby Crompton, who reminded us that though this School is 41 years old, and it’s UK parent is around 70, the concept of ‘School’ and the

philosophic tradition it draws on is much, much older. This tradition stretches back to the beginning of recorded history and beyond, and is in effect eternal.

Forty-one suddenly seemed young, and the rest of the evening was bright and exuberant as conversation flowed and we mixed and mingled freely.

It was heartening that so many former students were able to attend and enjoy the evening. One past member who is warmly remembered by many, Jo Chaning-Pearce, later expressed his appreciation. He wrote:

“My wife and I are the vintage of 1961-1971, so we go way back. We were very kindly invited to your 41 year celebration... Being part of the assembly of past and present School members was very rewarding. To renew old friendships that in fact didn’t need renewal, just refreshment, was a joy.”

Also, as a result of attending the evening, several former members have rejoined the School this term.

Presumably we can now look forward to a similar gathering on our 50th!

As the poet said “Who can stop us celebrating?”.

*by Graham Soughtton*

(Many thanks to all those who gave of their time to ensure the success of this event.)

# Waterperry Youth Week

by Elizabeth Connor

At a time when the September 11th terrorist attacks on New York had cast a shadow over international travel, the idea of attending a Youth Residential Week in England from 29 December to 6 January seemed both a risk and a necessity.

Once gathered at Waterperry House (near Oxford) it soon became clear that we had made the right decision. Concrete and steel had been shown to crumble like paper on our television screens. Security and values that had previously seemed unbreakable were shaken, and in this unstable climate it seemed essential that we should meet and be reminded of our common inner strength that hadn't been affected.

Reminded we were! The week brought out a determination in the group and a certainty that we could make a difference. We were really encouraged to take philosophy out of the mental realm and to put it to real practical use, to address the problems in society and to look for practical ways to put true values and quality, first, in our lives.

There were about 170 students aged 16 to late twenties from affiliated Schools all over the world: Spain, Argentina, Malta, Germany, South Africa, Australia, America, Canada, Ireland, Scotland, England and several from New Zealand. We were, indeed, part of something so much bigger than the individual.

Mr Anthony Renshaw, the leader of the Sydney School, challenged us to view the birth of Christ as a metaphor for the birth of light within each one of us. We were encouraged to embrace our own tradition, to peel back our stale notions about it and uncover its true wisdom. This struck a chord in me. I found a steadiness and strength in both the English and Christian traditions that were

recognized as being at the base of our nation. Enthusiasm was sparked for finding ways to deepen that connection within all of us and will hopefully take direction at a proposed Youth Leadership conference to be held in the near future.

Many of us found that we were interested in uncovering the unity underpinning all subjects covered in our academic studies. It is hoped that some people, who are top in their fields, will be able to run courses geared towards uncovering this unity, putting emphasis on discovery and delight in the academic realms.

The week was graced by some amazing speakers, people who have given their lives to the search for truth. Dr James Armstrong simply glowed as he talked about the delight of discovery and how to live life always aware of divine beauty. Mr Renshaw shared his infectious enthusiasm for philosophy, challenging us to push through our boundaries.

Mr Jaiswal, a quietly spoken man in his seventies with a humble countenance and huge presence, gave us a prejudice-dissolving talk that simply reminded us of the perfection of the universe. This melted away any anxiety about the state of the world. Even though we work to help heal the world we live in, there is always peace in the memory that all is perfect.

*(Elizabeth Connor is a member of the Wellington School, and the Auckland Youth Group.)*



*'Lamp of Wisdom' - Waterperry Gardens.*

*“Since she is a gift from heaven,  
philosophy drives earthly vices  
far away;  
firmly subdues fortune;  
marvellously softens fate;  
uses mortal gifts most rightly;  
and bestows immortal gifts  
according to desire.”*

(Marsilio Ficino, Vol 3. Letters (No. 13))

# Leadership Changes

In December last a singular event took place in the School in Sydney in which the function of Leader was transferred from the retiring incumbent to his appointed successor in a ceremony using words from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad on the “Rite of Entrusting”.

This was the first time such a ceremony had been used in the world-wide body of Schools and marked the smooth transition of the Leadership from Mr Malcolm Tolhurst to Mr Anthony Renshaw, in the presence of members of the senior part of the School in Sydney and most of the Australasian Leaders

Mr David Boddy, arguably the best known ‘philosophical’ New Zealander who was in Australia at the time, presided. He conveyed greetings and blessings from Mr Donald Lambie, Head of the Schools world-wide, and introduced a series of talks and events, as well as music.

Mr John Russell spoke on “Leadership and the Tradition”, and Mr John Jepsen (from Melbourne) on “Leadership and Australia”. Mr Klaus van Diet from Wagga Wagga spoke in praise of Mr Tolhurst’s 16 years of Leadership as well as his many years in the School as a student, firstly in London and then in Australia.

The actual transfer of the office was the unique part of the proceedings. The symbol of office was represented by a book of the Conversations between the School’s Founder, Leon MacLaren, and His Holiness the former Shankaracharya of the North, Shri Shantananda Saraswati. The retiring Leader, in the spirit of the Upanishad, surrendered the office back to the Tradition as its true source, from which it was to be issued again to the new Leader upon the sounding of solemn undertakings based upon the Veda.

Using words from the Rite of Entrusting, as from teacher to pupil, or father to son, from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, the retiring Leader called upon his successor to undertake the duties and responsibilities of School Leadership appropriately. Mr Tolhurst then surrendered the

symbol of office to the senior Leader, who represented the Holy Tradition throughout the proceedings.

In his turn, the representative of the Tradition asked the successor, Mr Renshaw, a long-time member of the Sydney School, to respond to the call made upon him. With fine dignity Mr Renshaw responded, again using the words from the Upanishad, and was duly presented with the symbol of office.

By this time the atmosphere was somewhat charged and the relief, when everyone stood and applauded the acceptance, was heartfelt. The successor’s speech concluding the event was eloquent and received with complete attention, and the subsequent refreshments and buffet supper in the garden, to the accompaniment of a string quartet, was an elegant and gentle finale to a singular event.

Mr Tolhurst, who becomes Leader Emeritus, and Mrs Tolhurst, will remain as senior members of the School, participating in annual events and tutoring here and there, but, no doubt, glad to leave the rigours of office to younger people.

Two additional items of Australasian interest are the opening of a branch of the Sydney School in Canberra. Its Leader, Dr Gary Grohmann, a senior member of the School in Sydney, is a Consulting Scientist by profession and also an accomplished pianist. The new School formally opened its doors in January this year.

The second item is the withdrawal from the Leadership of the Hamilton School of Mr Graham Robinson, for personal and business reasons, though after 29 years of membership he has every intention of returning to the fold as soon as he can. Mr John McLeay, a lawyer and senior member of the Hamilton School, will assume responsibility for the branch until a formal appointment is made by Mr Lambie in July.

# Australasian Summer Cultural

In January of this year, the Sydney School of Philosophy once again hosted a series of Summer Cultural residential weeks at Mahratta, encompassing Art, Dance, Economics, Law, Sanskrit, Science, and Education.

Several Auckland students attended the first week from 5–12 January, joining members from the Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane, Wagga Wagga, Newcastle, Canberra, and Wellington Schools. Guest tutors from England were Nathan David (Art), Ian Mason (Law and Economics) and Ann David (Dance). Nathan David was assisted by the young Perth artist Jonah Cacioppe and Peter Tibbits from Auckland.

The spacious art deco home of the Sydney School allowed each of the respective studies to take place in beautiful surroundings lit by very good company. The occasional soft sound produced by the bells which the dancers wore around their ankles contributed to the atmosphere of lightness and happiness. To the artists, who sometimes felt despondent when what appeared on the drawing paper did not match the beauty or essence of the subject, that sound was a great aid in lifting the spirits.

The Art Group was given a creative project to be developed as a design during the week. The design was intended to decorate the lunette situated over the doorway of the front corridor leading to the Music Room at Mahratta. ‘Beauty and Health’ was the theme, set within the concept of ‘Sanctuary’. We were given a passage from Plato’s Republic III,401:

“Let our artists rather be those who are gifted to discern the true nature of the beautiful and graceful; then will our youth dwell in a land of health, amid fair sights and sounds, and receive good in everything; and beauty, the effluence of fair works shall flow into the eye and ear, like a health-giving breeze from a purer region, and insensibly draw the soul from earliest years into likeness and sympathy with the beauty of reason.”

We were also given references to the Ancients: Hippocrates, first God of Medicine; Apollo, God of



*Nicolette Farrelly preparing a plate for the Offer Dance*

Healing and Music, and Hygeia, Greek Goddess of Health. All these demonstrate a relationship between knowledge, consciousness and release from disease.

Also from our brief:

*“Architecture, sculpture and painting act as support and medium for the transmission of this knowledge. Also music, dance and poetry”*

(Marsilio Ficino)

For the artists as a group, the first session of most days included the mind-quietening exercise of drawing straight lines and circles. The remaining four sessions included portraiture, life drawing, oil painting and design for the lunette. Also, the Dance Group extended an invitation to the artists to be present with pencil and paper during their sessions.

One afternoon the artists visited the New South Wales Art Gallery to view an enlightening exhibition, “Buddha: Radiant Awakening”, showing images of the Buddha in all his manifestations.

The week presented plenty of challenges. One was to practise restraint when presented with the most delicious and sumptuous array of tropical fruits such as mangos, lychees, paw paw, cherimoyer (like a custard apple) etc. at meal times. Whenever

forgetfulness of the practice loomed, a comment made during an evening meeting that “taking more than one needs is the cause of poverty” rang in one’s ears!

The evening entertainment, following a combined meeting of all groups and supper, included a solo performance in the Bharata Natyam Indian classical style of dance by Erika Watson from the Auckland School. Dr Gary Grohmann, Leader of the new Canberra School of Philosophy, gave a piano recital of Mozart Sonatas to the delight of us all, and Nathan David showed slides of his work.

Another evening we enjoyed an outdoor performance by a Sydney-based group of dancers using a style of Indian dance called Kucha padi, with music, depicting incidents in the life of Krishna and the last dance told of the union of the Lord Shiva and Parvati.

On our last evening, each guest tutor described the content, aim and fruitfulness of their respective subjects embraced during the residential week. Under Mrs David’s guidance, the dancers expressed how indeed the dancer arouses love in the spectator. Each of the Philosophy Schools represented presented a wide-ranging programme that included both humorous and the more serious dances created during the week.

In his address, Nathan David underlined the present state of the Arts with a report of the recent Turner art prize at the Tate Gallery in London being awarded to a work which used a light switch



*Picnic lunch in the grounds of Mahratta*

to express how life comes “on” and then goes “off”!

Ian Mason in his presentation included a description of the “man” for whom the Common Law was originally made. He was considered intelligent, moral, reasonable and normal, whereas the “statutory man” for whom the laws are currently made is often quite the opposite.

As the week progressed and the lawyers, economists, dancers and artists found measure and peace and enjoyment in their chosen subjects, so the lightness grew and the evening meetings offered a wealth of knowledge and experience. The sharing of this drew such seemingly diverse subjects into a unity of purpose, which was spoken of as bliss for all beings.

*(Ngairie is a member of the Auckland School’s Art Group)*

## Auckland School Cultural Groups

<b>Wednesday</b>	Vedic Chants	9.00 – 10.00am	Lilian Beanland	521-5054
	Plato Group	10.00 – 11.30am	“	“
<b>Friday</b>	Art Group	6.30 – 10.00pm	Peter Tibbits	411-8398
<b>Saturday</b>	Vedic Dance	8.00 – 9.15am	Rosemary Auld	412-8782
	Art Group 2	1.00 – 3.00pm	Peter Tibbits	411-8398
	Renaissance Studies	1.00 – 2.30pm	Mary Tibbits	411-8398
<b>Sunday</b>	Choir	7.00 – 9.30pm	Beverley Wilson	817-6200

New members to these groups are welcome!  
For enquiries, please phone the group tutors listed

# Open Day 2002

The Open Day at 268 West Tamaki Road held in March of this year was a success in all ways.

It was a beautiful day, enjoyed by over 900 people, and included colourful sights such as dancers performing in the open air against a backdrop of the islands and sea of the Hauraki Gulf. A string trio played for the diners who lingered under sun umbrellas enjoying “Lunch on the Green”, wine was served in several locations, and there was a good variety of stalls and cultural activities.

But how does all this come about? Each year there is a “debrief” by the Open Day group to look at ways to improve this event and refine processes so that it runs smoothly and is as good an experience as possible for everyone. Last year a number of changes were made in the group itself and new members found themselves on a learning curve for a while.

Robert Bree joined as the marketing representative and soon established his own team of experts, including Andrew Iten, who produced the flyer artwork and design which was highly acclaimed as being the best yet. Bruce Gatward-Cooke provided media expertise for advertising. This team developed a strategy which was essentially “Let’s increase the number of leaflets and refine the quality of the advertising and leaflets. If there is no significant difference in attendance then we will concentrate more on advertising in the future.”

The catering team was led by Glenda Rogers, later helped by Denise Bree. Decisions were made to reduce wastage by not over-ordering, to only serve food in the Annexe area (renamed “Café by the Green” for the day), and to change the menu to



*Fun with face painting*

keep it interesting. This they certainly did! Food on offer ranged from sandwiches, Calzone and Devonshire teas to Indian food (an instant sellout and many thanks to Usha Patel for her full hearted support in this area), quiches, salads, and chocolate brownies, the latter item supplied by Youth Group girls. Then there was the Sausage Sizzle and Corn on the Cob at the “BBQ Spot”...

The roster for catering was built on the basis that if many ladies could give two hours or more then there would be enough help. This seemed to work well, and all credit to Glenda, who did an outstanding job.

The main wine bar was located closer to the café this time and appeared to be well patronized as it provided wine, juices, and other drinks for the guests under their sun umbrellas.

It was decided to construct an outside stage this year and a great effort was put in by Rewa Warburton and Gordon Russell to get this finished in time and painted. The stage is portable and the top

doubles as top for the Ficino School stage, so it has been economical to build and use. Apart from the top, it comes apart into two pieces that can be manoeuvred around the grounds.



*Abhinaya Group dancers perform in the open air*

As the day approached, the programme settled into its final form. At a late stage violinist Urszula Podolska came to our attention. As it happened, a speaker was going to be delayed starting so Urszula was slipped into the programme and played beautifully. A change in emphasis this year had demonstrations taking place of painting, raku pottery firing, and wax carving by Hamilton School member and goldsmith Geoff Taylor. The Ficino School concert was a delight although the continuous hot sun on those little heads caused concern.



*Pony rides are popular as always*

A fine selection of paintings and drawings by the Art Group and ceramics by Ray Rogers could be appreciated (and purchased) in display areas which were ideally set up for quiet contemplation. A great deal of thought went into this so that the art works could be shown to advantage.

The Philosophy Choir sang some lovely music, the cake and preserves stall appeared to have almost sold out by mid-afternoon, beautiful flowers were generously donated for sale, new and used books appeared to be making good sales, and the linen stall had a very nice display. The Ikebana demonstrations were apparently very good but needed to be better advertised in the programme.

Graham Farrelly's Youth Group, as usual, did a really good job in looking after the children's activities, which included clay sculpture, face painting, horse rides, novelty races, etc. The group was also particularly useful when it came to setting up and dismantling. Matthew Roscoe did a brilliant job of supervising the setting up: it gets easier every year. At the other end of the day, Ildiko Watson was noted as last out of the kitchen – making sure that everything was as it should be.

Spare a thought for the banking team, who spend the day hidden away and have considerable responsibilities. Garry Walker took charge of this at fairly short notice and carried it out well.

The Silent Auction almost became noisy towards the close of play as the bidding became serious. The main cause of this was the very generous donation by potter Ray Rogers of 6 or 7 large fruit bowls. These were highly sought after.

The lectures held in the drawing-room were well attended and included "Education (What a Child Needs)" by Ficino School Headmaster Mark Broadwith, "A Short History of the School and its Aspirations" by Barry Preston, "True Sounds – a presentation on the Sanskrit Language" by Wolfgang Marshall, and "A Wildlife Artist in Africa" by Gordon Howard. Visitors were very interested and in some cases kept the questions flowing long after the talk finished.

Mention should also be made of the valuable contribution made by Rattan Thakurdas, who performed "evening ragas" on his sitar in the drawing room towards the end of the Open Day. This provided a welcome "still point" amidst the dismantling activities going on all around.

As usual, we ended up a bit short of men at the end of the day. For those cleaning up, the finish was in the dark. Thank you Graham, and Mark Broadwith, for providing helpers. It made a big difference. As we now own more equipment (such as tents) this exercise is becoming bigger. It needs a few more hands next year, and a more effective approach to this is planned.

There are too many people to mention so please don't feel left out, but special mention must be made of Anne van der Vossen, who was always on hand to ensure that care was being taken and that small problems did not become big ones.

The day was one of colour and beauty, and nowhere more evident than in all those who served in so many ways. It was a pleasure to be part of it.

# Views and Reviews

## Standing for Justice –

a Biography of Andrew MacLaren, MP  
by John Stewart  
Publisher: Shephard-Walwyn  
Hardback, price \$80.00

*“Simplicity and truth stand together,  
and whenever you get complexity, beware,  
because there is a falsity somewhere.”*

Andrew MacLaren, Hansard, 24 February 1937

From the cover notes:

“Standing for Justice is an account of a man who did just that.

Andrew MacLaren grew up in late Victorian Glasgow in the vicinity of the poverty-stricken Gorbals. His was not a privileged beginning, far from it, but the grinding poverty that he witnessed spurred him on to seek the cause, the reason why men lived in want when, clearly, there was plenty.

He would not compromise: as poverty had a discernible cause, it could be eradicated without diminishing the liberty and sturdy independence on the individual through means testing and taxation. It was to keeping alive this knowledge that he devoted the rest of his life.”

The book details how the School of Economic Science – the School’s parent body in London – came to be founded, contains many extracts from correspondence between Andrew MacLaren and well known literary and political figures of his day, and contains much interesting information on British political life in the early decades of the 20th century.

(Andrew MacLaren is the father of Leon MacLaren, founder of the S.E.S and Leader of the Schools world-wide until his death in 1994).

*Also on sale:*

## Enemy of Injustice –

The Life of Andrew MacLaren  
by Malcolm Hill,  
Publisher: Othila Press  
Paperback, price \$43.00.

## Venus – How to discover the spirit of love in everyday life

by William Wray,  
Publisher: Arcturus  
price \$42.

From the cover notes:

“Much of our frustration in life arises from a disconnection from the principle of love. For the ancients Venus was the spirit of love. Though she may appear to lie beyond us, in truth she is found within. She is ours and we are hers – if we find the way of discovering her presence.

William Wray reveals the habits of heart and mind we need to form if the presence of Venus is to inform our choices, stimulate our creativity and illuminate our experience of life. He shows us how to gain access to and then release the power of the love that lies within us all.”

## The Eternal Wisdom – Central Sayings of Great Sages of All Times

Sri Aurobindo Ashram

A limited number of copies of this very fine book of quotations is available through Book Shop. Hardback: \$19.95, Paperback: \$15.95.

It is a worthy addition to any philosophic library.

## New CD

### “Consider the Lilies” –

### Mozart Piano Sonatas

played by Gerhard Grohmann, \$28.

This beautiful CD is a must for anyone who enjoys Mozart. Dr Grohmann’s exquisite touch and fine feeling for the music makes for very enjoyable listening. Prepared for publication by students of the Melbourne School, proceeds from sales in Australia have been donated to Erasmus School of Primary Education in Melbourne.



# Study of the Geeta

by Selwyn Daniels

*“The Geeta is the universal mother. She turns away nobody. Her door is wide open to anyone who knocks.”*

(Mahatma Gandhi)

Study of the scriptures in all the great traditions of the world is considered an essential element in the pursuit of Truth. In true study the aim is to settle the mind so that what is being studied will open up and reveal its contents. One of the greatest scriptures for such study and reflection is the Bhagavad Geeta, written originally in Sanskrit.

Within the School, we have been encouraged to read and study the Geeta (“The Song of the Lord”) from the Vedic Tradition. It is an episode taken from the longest epic poem in the world, the Mahabharata. The Geeta is the dialogue between Arjuna of the warrior caste, who is hesitating to fight for what is right according to law, and the Lord Shri Krishna, an Avatara who replies to Arjuna’s searching questions. These questions apply not only to Arjuna’s predicament at that time, but also to the situation in which the human race finds itself at this time.

The conversation takes place on the field of action, when just before the battle is about to commence, Arjuna is asking for guidance from the Lord, who will be his charioteer in the battle. The Lord in reply elucidates the way to transcend these conflicts of the mind and sets forth paths that will lead not only Arjuna, but mankind, to enlightenment and freedom.

In Sanskrit the word for the study of sacred texts is svadyaya, and in the Geeta (Ch. 16 v.1) it is listed as one of the Godly Qualities which lead to liberation.

Of the Geeta there are many translations but the best way is to make one’s own. All that is required is an elementary knowledge of the Sanskrit language and an ability to use Monier-Williams’ Sanskrit-English dictionary. Extensive knowledge of Sanskrit grammar is not required. The study and translation can be undertaken at home, but the better way to study is within a

group such as the one which meets once a week in the School. Assistance and direction is provided if needed and the atmosphere is one of sharing and peace and understanding arising from deeper levels.

As the study of the Geeta proceeds we find that the understanding and care of our own language is enhanced, and in Ch. 17, v. 15 the Geeta says that svadyaya is an essential part in forming truthful and agreeable speech.

It is no wonder that “The Song of the Lord” is so widely read: it excludes any division between the so-called Eastern and Western worlds.

The Geeta Study Group meets every Tuesday from 9.30 – 11.30 am at 27 Esplanade Road. Enquiries, phone Mrs Elizabeth Crompton (524-2016).

## From the Geeta

(The Lord Shri Krishna speaks to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra):

*“O Arjuna! There is nothing higher than Me; all is strung upon Me as rows of pearls upon a thread.*

*“O Arjuna! I am the Fluidity in water, the Light in the sun and in the moon. I am the mystic syllable Om in the Vedic scriptures, the Sound in ether, the Virility in man.*

*“I am the Fragrance of earth, the Brilliance of fire. I am the Life-force in all beings, and I am the Austerity of the ascetics.*

*“Know, O Arjuna! that I am the eternal Seed of being; I am the Intelligence of the intelligent, the Splendour of the resplendent. ...*

*“The inhabitants of this world, misled by those natures which the Qualities have engendered, know not that I am higher than them all, and that I do not change.”*

# Food for Reflection

## Beauty

And it is hard to resist the belief, when one is brought into the presence of perfect beauty, in whatever form it may come, that the deep craving it arouses is meant to receive a satisfaction more deep and real than the act of mere contemplation can give.

I have felt in such moments as if I were on the verge of grasping some momentous secret, as if the thinnest of veils hung between me and some knowledge that would set my whole life and being in a different plane. But the moment passes, and the secret delays.

Yet we are right to regard such emotions as direct messages from God; because they bring with them no desire of possession, which is the sign of mortality, but rather the divine desire to be possessed by them; that the reality, whatever it be, of which beauty is the symbol, may enter in and enthral the soul.

(A.C. Benson, 'From a College Window')

## Meditation

Meditation has changed my life. Nothing drastic or dramatic. No flashing lights, no visions in the night. Nothing but a gentle, though seemingly inexorable, turning away from what was.

There is a lessening of tempo, of temper; a gradual flowing towards people; an understanding of the underlying unity between me and all created things ... An appreciation of what Matisse called "the lived-in silence of empty rooms" – the furniture speaking, the seemingly deserted room vibrant with echoes. Lying in the bath, one sees with sudden joy the harmony of simple forms – soap dish, jar of bath salts, tin of scouring powder – all bound together in a still life that any artist would take hours to arrange consciously. I am caught up in a timeless moment of recognition and joy. Yet I am just a middle-aged woman having a bath.

From "Being Oneself – The way of Meditation"  
(Pub. by The School of Meditation, London)

# Concert in the Palau in Barcelona

The pianist is Friedrich Gulda, who has aroused my suspicions in advance by refusing to announce his programme. His appearance on the platform makes the heart sink...he is dressed in baggy black velvet trousers, no jacket, an electronic-blue shirt fastened at the neck with a silver brooch, and a khaki-coloured hat... decorated with beads; his hair hangs down, long and straggly, behind it. What kind of clown have we here?

Within a dozen bars, the answer is plain...for Gulda's motley is the outer man only, and inside there is a devoted and deeply serious servant of Mozart, with a complete technical mastery and a

fully Mozartian dash, crispness and sparkle, always conscious of the depth beneath the brilliance.

The acoustics of the Palau are brutal for a piano, but he makes it sing to eternal harmonies, and I can detect a serenity, an understanding, that goes beyond his communion with the composer; in the C Minor Sonata, K437, it becomes almost explicit, touching levels of feeling and beauty that turn him into a servant not only of Mozart but of whatever it was that Mozart served.

In the interval, he changes his shirt – for one of rainbow hue; but by now I can forgive him anything...

- From "Conducted Tour" by Bernard Levin

# That Ye Study to be Quiet

This simple yet profound statement from the Bible highlights an important aspect of the process of study: stillness of mind.

As has been pointed out in in the article on page 9 of this issue, in true study the aim is to settle the mind so that what is being studied will open up and reveal its contents.

The natural state of the intellect is the silence in which reason operates. Reason has been described as Knowledge of Truth, or “that which lights the way”. Its companion, logic (from the Greek *logos*, meaning “reasoning, discourse”, related to *legein* – “gather, choose, recount”) is a useful tool in the process of sifting material, analysing it and drawing conclusions, but with the final cessation of this mental activity reason can prevail.

The word “study” or “serious application of mind” has the Latin root *studium*, “zeal”. The word also contains the meanings “deliberate, consider”, “room for study”, “seat of learning”, “to look contemplatively at”, “to take into consideration”, to list just a few examples. It is such a simple little word, but has a wealth of import.

A student is “one who studies”; to be studious is to be “devoted to or assiduous in study; heedful; intent”. It is a silent activity, best conducted in an atmosphere free of distraction. We know this instinctively as we walk quietly around a library, so as not to disturb fellow readers.

Francis Bacon wrote in his *Essays* (1625) that “studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability”. William Ramesy, writing in the same century, thought that “the noblest exercise of the mind within doors, and most befitting a person of quality, is study”. A Hebrew proverb would have it that “study is more meritorious than sacrifice”, while a Chinese proverb quite bluntly states that “those who do not study are only cattle dressed up in men’s clothes”!

What is a good method of study? For guidance, note the words of St Bernard of Clairvaux, the 12th century French theologian and reformer whose ascetic and studious life made him one of the most influential men of his time:

“The scholar who wishes to profit from his studies must observe six essential rules: first to dedicate a fixed hour to each kind of reading, [second] to concentrate his attention on what he is reading, and not merely to skim over it. Third, to extract from his daily reading some thought or saying of truth, and to store it in his memory with especial care. Fourth, to write an abstract of everything he reads, since words which are not committed to writing vanish like dust in the wind. Fifth, to discuss his work with his fellow men, whether in formal disputation or in friendly talk. This [is] even more important than reading, for it leaves no loop-hole of uncertainty or misunderstanding. Sixth, to pray, for prayer is the true road to understanding.”

*“Study to be quiet,  
and to do your own business.”*

(St. Paul, in 1 Thessalonians, 4:11)

Leon MacLaren, Founder of the Schools world-wide, pointed out in an address to students in London the importance of

hearing the words in mind during silent reading, as without that the activity is not of much use and the content will not be retained. With this instruction St. Bernard would whole-heartedly agree. In his words:

“There is as much difference between reading and study as there is between an acquaintance and a friend, between bows exchanged in the street and an unchanging affection.”

*“The law of things is a law of  
universal reason,  
but most men live as if  
they had a wisdom of their own.”*

- Heraclitus: Fragment, 500 B.C.

*“Reason is the mistress and queen  
of all things.”*

- Cicero, 45 B.C.

# PHILOSOPHY

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We welcome contributions to this newsletter.

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