

# Vision

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## Philosophy and the **Golf Professional**

by Dennis Clark

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*As our study is entitled Practical Philosophy I thought it would be interesting to begin a series on the part it plays and the effect it has in our working lives. As this can be one of the most challenging areas in our lives, the sharing of these experiences may be somewhat enlightening and helpful to others facing similar circumstances.*

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I guess I really have math to thank for the biggest change in direction my career, and life, took.

No, it wasn't some theoretical calculation that set the world on fire. In fact math was my pet hate subject in high school. I'd managed addition, subtraction, multiplication, and even long division without any real difficulty, but when they added Algebra and Geometry, this made mockery of all I held sacred. A monster had been created. I mean, how can you have numbers and letters together in the same equation? Numbers were for math; letters

were for my favoured subject of English and never the twain shall meet, so let's keep them separate. I didn't enrol for "Mathlish".

My entire high school experience was spoiled by this combination. No matter how hard I tried it just didn't make any sense, which became patently obvious to my teacher (as if he wasn't already aware) and parents (from whom I had kept it hidden), when my School Certificate mark appeared.

For years I avoided anything remotely math based, no matter how limiting it made things.

Much later, when sitting in on an extramural math session with my son, something went click. The tutor explained some basic natural laws around which math was based and the fog began to lift.

You've no idea of the relief I felt. While I still prefer letters to numbers, and am still not excited to see them entwined, there is no longer a limiting dread hanging over me when faced with a math task.

The everlasting lesson of the day was that by learning to look at things differently I saw the answer instead of the problem and this impacted other areas of my life.

It became the staple in my armoury as a golf coach.

Often a student would say, "It's easy for you, you're a professional", and while different people have strengths in different areas, the truthful and simple answer was that being a golf professional was what I did to provide for my family, it didn't give me any special powers. We were both standing there with one head, two arms, and two legs; the only difference was how we viewed golf and the direction we took from that viewpoint.

It became very apparent that the theory of the game, which was always changing, and was continually being pumped at us, and trying to fit into that theory, which we perceived as reality and truth, was causing the problem. It set up a battle within the students that was not winnable and only led to frustration. People, in attempting to realise their potential, were trying to be what they weren't. Why? Because that's how it was always done.

How could it be the truth if it was always changing and everybody had a different perception of it?

The question then became, "how can anyone

realise their potential in golf, or in any other area for that matter, if they didn't first know who they were, what they had, how it worked, and only then, how they could apply it to golf?

Golf, like all other things in life, is practical and experiential, and only when one realises their capacity can they experience it fully, be content with the experience, and thus experience the true bliss of the game.

In such an experience you are not competing against the game but are being one with it, being one with the course and all that goes with the round, including acceptance of things as they are.

Since I started playing the game, and especially in the teaching of it, I always knew there was more than what was being revealed and I worked at finding it, and did so to a large degree, without really knowing what it was. The study of the words of the wise and the practical application of it has answered many questions. It has highlighted, through golf, the vast difference, between man's search for an unachievable and limiting ideal state and a limitless acceptance of perfection.

A watershed lesson occurred when as a young trainee working on my own game, my boss gave me the necessary instruction needed and told me to practice and come back when I had it. Being an impatient youth I was back in an hour boldly stating that "I had it". He knew differently, had one look at it and quietly said, "Come back when you've got it". It was quite some time before I reappeared, this time with a humble, "I think I'm getting somewhere, would you please have a look?"

Much later in conversation the question arose, "How do you know when you've got it?"

The answer..... "The question won't need to be asked".

This was the essence of the pursuit. Ultimately there was no question to be asked, there was only Self discovery to be made. After all hadn't we been promised by our Creator that we will always have everything we need in abundance, that we were created perfectly and in His image? Now I bet if our Creator is a golfer He's a pretty good one, and seeing as we are made in His image, there's a favourable starting point, and perfect golf is achievable. I bet He's a dab hand at math too.

I found in my own game, and that of my students who would dare to put aside all they had been taught and surrender to their natural abilities, that the results, measured in mental and spiritual, as well as physical manifestations, were far more bountiful than expected, even to the point of being frightening; frightening because there were suddenly no limits, but also no crutch to

hold onto like previously. And although we had always realised there was something more and had sought after it, when it arrived in such abundance it was almost too much.

It never was a journey about math or golf. They were just the pointers to Self Realisation. Although my golf teaching is now somewhat limited, the basis of it is Self discovery. It's quite amazing how naturally and flowingly the mechanics of the game come into play once the Self and its capacity are realised.

In life there are many scenarios but the natural laws that govern them remain the same, and it's interesting just how golf, life, and math are inextricably connected and how a different way of looking at them made a difference in fulfilment.

The journey continues. I'm pleased the Absolute knew to put golf in my path to learn valuable lessons, and I acknowledge His great wisdom and keen sense of humour for giving me math.

## Auckland School Cultural Groups

*Come – and enrich your life!*

<b>Economics</b>	@ 27	Sat. 7.15 – 9.45 am	Russell Allen	276 8770
<b>Forms of Government</b>	@ 27	Sat. 10.00 – 11.45 am	Russell Allen	276 8770
<b>Plato</b>	@ 268	Wed. 9.45 – 12.00 pm	Lillian Beanland	521 5054

New members are welcome.

For enquiries, please phone the group tutors listed.

At 27 Esplanade Rd, Mt Eden & 268 West Tamaki Road, West Tamaki.

# Beautiful People

## Australasian Sanskrit Week, Auckland, January 2014

by Dawn Roscoe

**T**his is a mélange of impressions, which I hope, will give the reader some sense of the jewel the week turned out to be.

Perhaps it was just our group as a one-off and rare occurrence, or the effect of the week, but the group I was in, was simply a collection of beautiful people. By all appearances we were a mixed assortment; diverse in age, gender, experience and background, and by no means efficient in the kitchen. However, in the group-room something along the lines of humility and honesty made each person shine, and the love and acceptance within the group was special.

The keystone for the week was a passage from the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad which in English states:

*It should be realised in one form only, (for) It is unknowable and eternal. The Self is taintless, beyond the (subtle) ether, birthless, infinite and constant.*

This was a gracious passage to hold in mind and as one woman from Sydney said: “What was the most delightful surprise was to find all the activities equally enjoyable from prayers to dictionary study, kitchen service and following stories. This was no doubt the effect of studying a verse from the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad.”

I found the effect of having Sanskrit as the focus of study, surprising. It was like a normal residential, only more so – an enhanced residential. From this I understood how the Sanskrit language is at the core of Advaita philosophy.

Dr. Grohmann, leader of the Canberra School, led the residential with a sense of ease and excellent blend of traditional School of Philosophy practice and procedure with something modern. Evening discussion meetings were held and at one he suggested that it was useful to ask ourselves what we really wanted. I did so, and the answer was: “to realise ‘It’ in one form only”. This had a profound effect for the rest of the week; when remembered, it cleared away other desires that were hindering my connection and progress



**Dr Grohmann**

in many situations. Dr. Grohmann went on to say that if one is to pursue that particular desire, everything else, in terms of what one does with one's life, would be looked after.



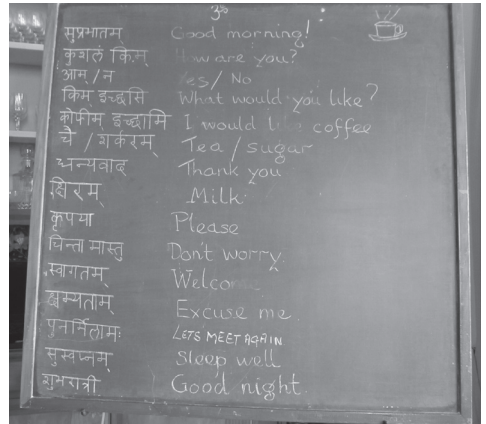
It was a pleasure being in the company of about 40 Australians among whom were Mr. and Mrs. Kruger from Perth. Mrs. Kruger must be a tour de force at any Sanskrit residential and this was no exception. Her



dedication to proper pronunciation and animated sounding sessions set us on a true course each morning. Mr. Kruger, the Perth School Leader, tutored and also brought much to the mix with his warmth, humour and dedication to philosophy.

There was more learning of Sanskrit and about Sanskrit during afternoon sessions and evening lectures on topics of interest by experts in-residence. One highlight was a fascinating talk by Mrs. Gai Kroczeck (Perth)

on Max Muller, the great German Sanskritist and Indologist, and contemporary of Monier Williams, which gave us a picture of the Sanskrit scene in England during the late 19th century. Max Muller was a lover of Indian thought and admirer of Sri Rama Krishna. He invited Sri Rama's disciple, Swami Vivekananda, to lunch with him in Oxford on May 28, 1896. The swami said of his visit, "The visit was really a revelation to me. That little white house, its setting in a beautiful garden, the silver-haired sage, with a face calm and benign, and forehead smooth as a child's in spite of seventy winters, and every line in that face speaking of a deep-seated mine of spirituality somewhere behind; that noble wife, the helpmate of his life through



his long and arduous task of exciting interest, overriding opposition and contempt, and at last creating a respect for the thoughts of the sages of ancient India."

Afternoon sessions included Mr. Vincent Wallace's sessions on Sanskrit Sopranum (Songs in Sanskrit) which is a lively Sanskrit teaching programme running successfully at the Irish day school, John Scottus; and Mrs. Kruger's Sanskrit storytelling. She has made Sanskrit picture books of well-known stories such as the *Lion Cub* and the *Sugar Ant and the*



*Salt Ant.* Both Mr. Wallace and Mrs. Kruger have generously shared their resources for which I am very grateful.

For the grammarians, there were several groups studying Panini's grammar. Another Sydneysider (who has recently sat the Option A IGCSE exam in Auckland) said of this: *"Paninian Grammar is like a giant jigsaw puzzle. Once you get a few pieces to fit together, you begin to see patterns and codes that lead to understanding the way we interact with the world through speech."*

An even more select group studied the Amarakosa, an ancient Sanskrita thesaurus, which enables scholars to explore the full etymology of Sanskrit words of spiritual significance. One student said: *"It was exciting to find which of the three possible dhatus mentioned in the Monier Williams dictionary for "Atma" had authority. The Amarakosa confirmed the dhatu, "AT", meaning "to go constantly".*

For those for whom the Amarakosa is not on their top 10 reading list, I'll leave you with a more prosaic quote attributed to Peter Wyder, who attended the residential from Perth: *"It'll be alright in the end; and if it's not alright, it's not the end."*

Many thanks to Elaine, Tessa, and other helpers for all their hard work.



# Jonah the Reluctant Prophet

by Graham Soughton



Life as a prophet of the Lord isn't easy. God speaks directly to you, and you have to do what He says, regardless of how you might feel about what's being asked of you. Sometimes you might feel like objecting.

This was certainly the case with Jonah bin Ammitai.

Who?

Jonah, the Old Testament prophet who spent three days in the belly of a whale.

We all know the story, don't we?

To recap:

It's about 800BC, and Jonah a minor prophet in old Israel hears the word of the Lord telling him to go and preach against a certain city in an area we now know as Iraq, but which was then under the rule of a recently

expanded Israel.

The wickedness of the people in this city had recently become known to God and he needed someone to go to them and tell them to mend their ways, or they would cop His wrath!

This city, called Nineveh still exists but in those days it was thriving commercial centre about the size and population of say... Hamilton.

Now put yourself in Jonah's position. Suppose the word of the Lord comes to you telling you to go and preach against the wickedness of the people of Hamilton. You'd be reluctant, and for all the right reasons... like, who wants to be 'that guy'.

Jonah didn't much like the idea either so he hightails it in the opposite direction.

The trouble with that was the opposite

direction happens to be the Mediterranean Sea.

Jonah boards a small sailing ship heading for a place called Tarshish (which no-one has ever been able to accurately locate.)

You can't get away from the All Knowing though, and not far into the sea journey a massive storm blows up. The ship's sailors know that this is the kind of storm which breaks small wooden vessels into toothpicks; and are petrified by that terrible thought, and also by another terrible thought, that God is angry with someone on board. (Sailors in the BC era were a superstitious lot).

When Jonah is found asleep below deck, the sailors think they have found the culprit. But to be safe they draw straws and lo and behold Jonah draws the shortest straw (sounds rigged to me).

To their credit the sailors don't throw Jonah overboard straight away, they try to out sail the storm, which responds by intensifying. In fear of their lives they drop Jonah into the seething sea, which immediately subsides.

Jonah doesn't drown, but only because he's swallowed by a giant fish. Now this is a special fish, custom - made it seems by the Lord, just for Jonah.

It swallows him whole, and he lives for three days in it's belly.

It wasn't a pleasant experience. You can imagine the smell, the goo, the churning around, and all in pitch darkness. Jonah begs forgiveness from the Lord, and after it is granted the fish vomits him up, unharmed, onto dry land. A very strange fish you'd have to agree!

Much chastened Jonah is now ready to do the Lord's bidding so he travels to Ninevah and speaking in what must have been their equivalent of a town square he tells them that the Lord will destroy them in 40 days time. There are two things to note about this.

Firstly Jonah was not carrying out the Lord's

will to the letter. He had been asked to warn them to mend their ways. Instead he simply proclaimed a terminal sentencing. It seems even after his own humiliation, he had his own willful approach.

Secondly, it seems that in those days a doomsday prophet could wander into town and be listened to (how times have changed).

Certainly the Ninevites took his word to heart and considered themselves recipients of a full and final warning, and repented their ways in such a surprisingly contrite manner that the Supreme Judge reduced their punishment to a mere citywide heat wave.

Jonah who had ensconced himself on a nearby hillside to witness the destruction he thought was coming also suffers in the heat wave, but he is enraged that there will be no wholesale destruction as he had foretold. No self-respecting doomsday prophet likes to be thwarted!

This Old Testament story ends with Jonah debating with God.

Jonah takes the negative arguing for divine retribution; and God takes the affirmative arguing for divine mercy and grace.

God wins.

The Jonah story clearly needs some interpretation to be understood fully. And there is a good reason for wanting to understand it.

It's a cornerstone of the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Forgiveness is the foremost virtue promoted by Jesus, the Saviour of sinful mankind.

Forgiveness is supposed to be the dominant principle and practice of the Church established in his name.

When a Pharisee tries to trap Jesus by asking him for "a sign" Jesus answers by pointing out that an evil and adulterous generation shall get no more of a sign than the people of Ninevah



who repented because of the preaching of Jonah, but “behold, a greater than Jonah is here”... (ref. Matthew 12; 38-41)

In other words if you do not recognise me, or my ministry, you will have no right to expect the divine forgiveness of the Lord.

The Jonah story is primarily a lesson in obedience, humility, and forgiveness.

Jonah, the lead character embodies the self-righteous, judgemental, negative, and pessimistic qualities we have come to associate with ‘a Jonah’.

We can all have a ‘Jonah’ within, ever ready to step out and denounce that which “does not seem right to me...”. If you want to know what the voice of Jonah sounds like, listen to talkback radio!

But, is the Book of Jonah a factual historical account?

The Old Testament contains great spiritual truths and insights, but it is written in a variety of genres including: historical narrative; allegory (representations of abstract ideas); parables (non-historical stories to teach a principle); and prophecy (the revealed word of the Almighty, which yet may be set within a known and accepted history).

This makes the Old Testament a challenge to understand.

The Jonah story is almost certainly a mix of all of the above.

Jonah was a real person, and known to be a minor prophet.

Ninevah is a real place and still exists.

But the central elements of the story are almost certainly mainly allegorical.

I’ve done enough research to be able to summarise key meanings as follows:

Jonah is the first historical figure in the Judeo tradition to be asked by Yahweh, the one true God, to preach non-Jews, in other words pagans.

Jonah’s rejection of this request reveals his assumed superiority.

He would prefer that the non-believers of Ninevah suffer the consequences of their ignorance; so he heads for Tarshish.

Tarshish is not necessarily a physical place. In Hebrew tarshish means hardness, or crystallised; and this symbolically signifies that hard –hearted, unyielding, quality which the intellect can assume when not tempered with the softening influence of love and higher spiritual understanding.

Jonah’s judgmental persona is naturally drawn to this.

He needs a lesson, and he gets it during the defining ‘big moment’ of this story... the encounter with the giant fish, after being thrown overboard to pacify the storm.

The metaphysical symbolism associated with fish in the Judeo-Christian tradition is the realm of ideas. Fish represent the fertility, productivity, and creativity of ideas. A giant fish represents a big idea. What is the big idea in the Jonah story?

It could be this: the Absolute intends no deprivation, but Man invents a persona to deprive himself. Jonah suffers because his attitude and stance against those whose sin he been asked to relieve, is shown to him in all its small meanness when faced with the effortless power of the Lord.

Jonah begs for relief from his suffering, and when this is granted he yet goes grudgingly to do the Lord’s bidding in Ninevah. In great contrast to his own level of obedience the ‘pagan’ people of Ninevah immediately and thoroughly repent and throw themselves on the mercy of the One truly worthy of worship, and thereby earn their reprieve.

Jonah shows he hasn’t learned to have full faith in the Father, by berating Him for his mercy. Jonah does not lack courage! But he does lack heart.

In the true heart there is no real difference!

# Bookshop News



by Geoff Long

## What sort of instruction and writings could we expect from a Jesuit priest?

Well if an idea has already formed in mind then this is exactly what blocks our access to love, happiness, peace and life. At least that was the first take on a wonderful book called **Awareness** by, yes a Jesuit priest, called *Anthony de Mellow*. He puts it very simply and directly saying:

“Mark Twain put it very nicely when he said, “*It was so cold that if the thermometer had been an inch longer, we would have frozen to death*”. We do freeze to death on words. It’s not the cold outside that matters but the thermometer. It’s not reality that matters but what you’re saying to yourself about it.”

So whenever an idea forms in mind the freezing starts and reality is missed – his instruction is to wake up and start the defrosting, see reality!

This is just one of the very many stories and instructions given in hope that we will **WAKE UP!**

Another of his books that appeals is a very small but profound explanation of statements from the bible. This seems to present the Christian teaching in terms of Advaita or unity that we are familiar with and opens the mind to a far greater appreciation. Whether this appeals will have to be discovered as everyone has a different nature.

Other books new to the Bookshop are the “**Mindful Learning**” by *Dr. Craig Hassed and Dr. Richard Chambers*. This was included in the recent Philosophy Part 1-9 weekend and is providing some excellent material in the way of practical exercises to relieve stress, giving the body a chance to return to its natural equilibrium, operate more efficiently, experience greater well being, and possibly extending our lives.

New CD’s are also appearing  
not only from the Irish school –  
David Horan’s presentation from the  
Plato week being one.

Have fun experiencing the Bookshop!

# Easy -

by Lawrence Ames

# Phone Home

## Are you smarter than your smartphone?

**A**s philosophy students seeking to return to our spiritual home we could take inspiration from the extra-terrestrial in the film ET who famously declared “ET phone home”, fashioned a very powerful phone to call for help and was rescued back to his home. Today there is already a very powerful phone available in most every person’s pocket able to provide a vast range of services and this article suggests using the smartphone as a motivational tool for anyone seeking to be rescued back to their spiritual home.

Consider how far the phone has evolved in just a few decades and ask yourself; are you smarter than your smartphone? With some fertile imagination we can engage in a light-hearted enquiry tracing the parallels between the evolution of the phone and our spiritual evolution. Are we keeping pace with the phone?

**Phone 1** - *the party-line phone complete with winding handle to ring a loud bell and providing the ability to butt into someone else’s conversation.*

Do you sometimes exclaim loudly or interrupt the conversations of other people, become impatient, not listen and talk over

them? Do you still deliberately wind them up? Do you still get wound up?

**Phone 2** - *the solid black Bakelite phone, tethered to the wall, an iconic symbol of once modern communication technology.*



Are you fixed in rigidity of thought, constrained by ancient dogma or sanskaric habit, colourless and living life within a small wiashti-like radius of experience, not moving out of your comfort zone? Are you tethered to an outdated belief of your capacity and potential, more a relic of past achievements than an icon of enduring spiritual vitality and endeavour?

**Phone 3** - *the coloured plastic phone with a new digital keypad bringing a variety of colour and the advancement from mechanical analogue to more subtle faster digital technology.*

Have we kept pace with the phone and developed to adopt more subtle and efficient means of communication? Has our language refined, our perception become more acute, the mind more intuitive and less reliant on blunt mechanical logic and evidence? Are we watchful of the purity of the sounds we

make, are we better listeners and do we hear a more refined sound in our own voice? Are we more digital than analogue, meaning, are we more unified than mechanical in our thoughts, words and deeds?

**Phone 4** - *the cordless phone representing a major step towards freedom and away from physical constraint, placing a greater reliance on subtle connection. No wires.*

Are we still hard-wired or attached to the body? Are we yet free, at least occasionally, of this first sheath that conceals our true identity? Are we able to open the heart yet keep the subtle highly mobile realm of mind present and sufficiently ordered to rightly formulate our words and guide our actions? Do we have a real sense of freedom in our life? Has the scope of our mental and emotional maturity enlarged from personal towards universal? Are we practising mindfulness, freed from distractions and a limited span of attention?

**Phone 5** – *the cell-phone, quickly morphing in form from a brick-like shoe-phone to an elegant lightweight personal accessory.*

What a quantum leap in communication convenience and scope for us to try and emulate; having the ability to ‘roam’ the world on command, rather like manas (mind), and able to connect instantly with an ever growing list of ‘contacts’ and ‘favourites’. Are we able to adapt our responses to the needs of the moment playing our part nicely, confidently and at ease in our own presence? Have we the ability to move with the times, becoming more universal, without losing touch with the particulars of the moment. Are we more Samashti (universal) than wiashti (individual) ? Is manas our servant or master?

**Phone 6** – *the smartphone, more accurately described as a smart-device, providing instant access to a convergence of multiple media technologies.*

With a small pocket sized device it is now possible to talk to or see anyone anywhere who has a similar device, obtain any information, navigate the globe, view video or live-streaming events, give voice commands and receive audible answers. The list of ‘apps’ available is seemingly endless, a very smart device. Such extensive, instant and easy command of the subtle realm is an aspiration for each of us. Are we prepared or able to rely completely on our inherent nature of unlimited knowledge and with self-confidence and self-awareness present ourselves and respond accurately and appropriately in any situation as needed; or are we able to work only with what is held in limited memory? The phone uses a limited memory chip and we mostly use chit, limited consciousness, but we also have access to chid, unlimited consciousness. Has meditation, Satsanga, service and devotion provided greater intuitive knowledge and creativity? Most importantly, has there been experience of Myself, the final ‘convergence’ of all.

**Phone 7** – *unknown, possibly just a keypad hologram able to generate holographic images in response to commands. “Stars Wars” had such devices 25 years ago.*

The hardware device itself will become minute or entirely non-physical, of the subtle realm only, a subtle phone responsive to human thought or desire. Do we realise that our bodies are just holograms, the product of incomplete actions and unfulfilled desires? The entire creation is a sort of hologram, not real, so are we actually living in a sort of pre-existing universally present Phone 7? Rather than having a smartphone in our pocket are we really individual pocket-like holograms in the universal substance of Phone 7, consciousness.

If we are to keep pace with the evolving smartphone then perhaps we should take note of some of its techniques that have enabled such rapid development.



indicated. Likewise, we should always establish 'connection' by remembering the truth of Myself, before engaging in any event.

A tongue in cheek comparison such as given between the advances in telephone technology and sincere spiritual enquiry can only be taken so far before becoming tedious and absurd. For example, a Galaxy smartphone obviously has so much more potential than an iPhone which cannot ever evolve to an iPhone. All analogies and metaphors have their limitations. The phone, like anything in creation has its limits, but the Self, yourself, is without limit.

There is one final important practical point to make. Rather than allowing our smartphone to become a distraction that devalues present company and creates a dependence on 'apps', at the cost of developing personal practical skills and competence, we can employ the smartphone as a constant aid to memory; a spiritual tool. Let each use of the smartphone prompt an associated heartfelt resolve to remain mindful, in memory and awareness of the presence of Myself.

Like ET calling home to be rescued we can be reminded of the presence of Myself at any time in our quest for enlightenment and realisation by letting the smartphone be our Gold phone, offering a direct line to God. Like ET, say to yourself, "easy phone home" and make the connection. Just speed dial 1, unity.

- it needs frequent recharging. Are we faithful in our practice of regular meditation, study and service?
- many 'apps' are regularly updated with improved performance and services by making contact with their creator. We need to acknowledge, connect with and learn from the many teachers that life presents to us each moment, each day, never assuming 'I know' and effectively blocking the available updates from creation and our creator.
- the evolution of the phone has seen progressively less dominance of hardware and a correspondingly greater reliance on ever more subtle and intuitive software. Our challenge is to place greater reliance on universal 'Self-ware', Thy will, natural law, rather than maintaining habitual attachment to personal 'self-ware', my will, the rule of ego.
- if the phone cannot make 'connection' then there is a 'no service' message

## A special thanks...

... to those who gave generously to assist in the preparation of this issue, particularly with photographs.

Also thank you to the 'Vision' team – Dennis Clark (editor), Selwyn Daniels (proof reader), Marilyn Marshall (editing) and Andrew Iten (layout).

If you would like to contribute to Vision, contact Dennis Clark  
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# Plato Week

## 2014

by Tess Stephens

**D**r. and Mrs. Horan returned this year to lead the Plato Week in the study of 'The Statesman'. Forty-seven students from Australia and New Zealand attended. Once again, under the guidance of Dr. Horan, this was an inspiring experience leading to many personal insights and revelations. Dr. Horan also gave a memorable public lecture entitled 'Socrates' Swan', subtitled 'The birth of the philosophy of Plato amid the troubled world of ancient Athens and what it means for us today'.

These Plato Weeks have become one of the highlights of the cultural year.

Below are the experiences of one student.

### **Plato's 'The Statesman' (by Matthew Roscoe)**

Confession: I went to this summer's Plato week with some reservations. Having already read the selected text, 'The Statesman', I was curious to see if Dr. Horan could make a silk purse out of what was in my opinion a sow's ear...

'The Statesman' is the middle of three conversations that Plato says took place over several days; the first being 'The Sophist' and the last being the unwritten or missing 'The Philosopher'. 'The Statesman' attempts to define the skill of a statesman and is a dialogue between a foreign visitor/stranger whom Socrates holds in high regard and Young Socrates, a young, talented mathematician. Socrates, while present, is mute. On first reading, it is a long and convoluted dialogue involving an obscure myth and an abstruse logical process involving division. Then on the last page the stranger

sums it all up in a single, simple paragraph which leads to a certain exasperation on the part of the reader i.e. why didn't he just say that in the first place?

One of this year's themes was the utter impossibility of translating from one language to another. It would seem the nuances of language are so contextual that translation inevitably includes some degree of interpretation and on that basis Dr. Horan was reluctant to provide direct answers, preferring to give oblique hints as to where we might care to look.

Three of the hints that stuck in my mind were:

See what is actually in front of you.

Who was this Young Socrates?

Why is there no third book, 'The Philosopher'?

I reflected on these as follows;

There is apparently no historical "Young

Socrates”, therefore his name may have some deliberate significance. It would be hard to believe, given Plato’s respect for Socrates that he would have used the name in an offhand manner.

One possibility is a Greek convention that named grandsons after their grandfathers but Plato seems to be pretty good about denoting familial relationships and he didn’t do so here. Another possibility is that the name is meant to signify that this character is meant to represent the future of philosophy or the next generation of Socrates-like philosophers. Having survived the previous dialogue, we may infer the young man is no mere Sophist and so this may be the most likely option.

If so, then the unusually silent Socrates, by contrast, represents the current/past generation of Philosopher. Now it gets a bit more tricky. Under the “rules” of division mentioned above, there must be a common aspect or quality between the two halves to be separated and this is best defined by defining the ‘measure’ of the division and even better the ‘source of the measure’.

Metaphorically, it might be said that philosophy itself is the measure that separates Socrates and Young Socrates, and the Stranger is the source of the measure for the sake of the dialogue. Socrates appears to assent to this in his endorsing of the Stranger as “divine”.

So, the dialogue is no longer just an investigation into the skill of the statesman, it is educating the next generation of

philosopher about the subject. This is supported by the content of the dialogue; its objective is not about how to be a statesman, there is no discussion of politics, economic or military strategy. Rather it is written to enable a philosopher to recognize an ideal statesman.

So far, so good.

However, the conversation is also instructing Young Socrates on philosophic technique; the dialogue is inherently dialectical, the myth requires intuitive interpretation and the process of division is an early form of critical reasoning. Moreover, by virtue of the way it is written, it is not merely a story about the time the Stranger talked to Young Socrates; it forces the reader to learn the same techniques in order to have a clue what is going on. This process really gained strength when the dialogue was discussed in a group. Small wonder Plotinus refers to dialectic as the precious part of philosophy.

So it could be said that this dialogue has two distinct modes: as a static objective work on the page, it is “The Statesman”; as a living subjective work in dialectic conversation, it rises up phoenix-like and becomes “The Philosopher”, the work that was not unwritten but merely hidden.

If this is correct, then I am absolutely humbled by the brilliance of the man who could conceal one work within another with the key being live dialectic enquiry and do it so well that it still works 2500 years later in a different culture and language.

**“You get there by realising  
you are already there”**

Ekhart Tolle

# Practical Philosophy

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## **North Shore, Massey University Study Centre**

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(Take right hand turn down the drive for Study Centre)

Thursday 16 Oct - 7.15pm

## **Hamilton**

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