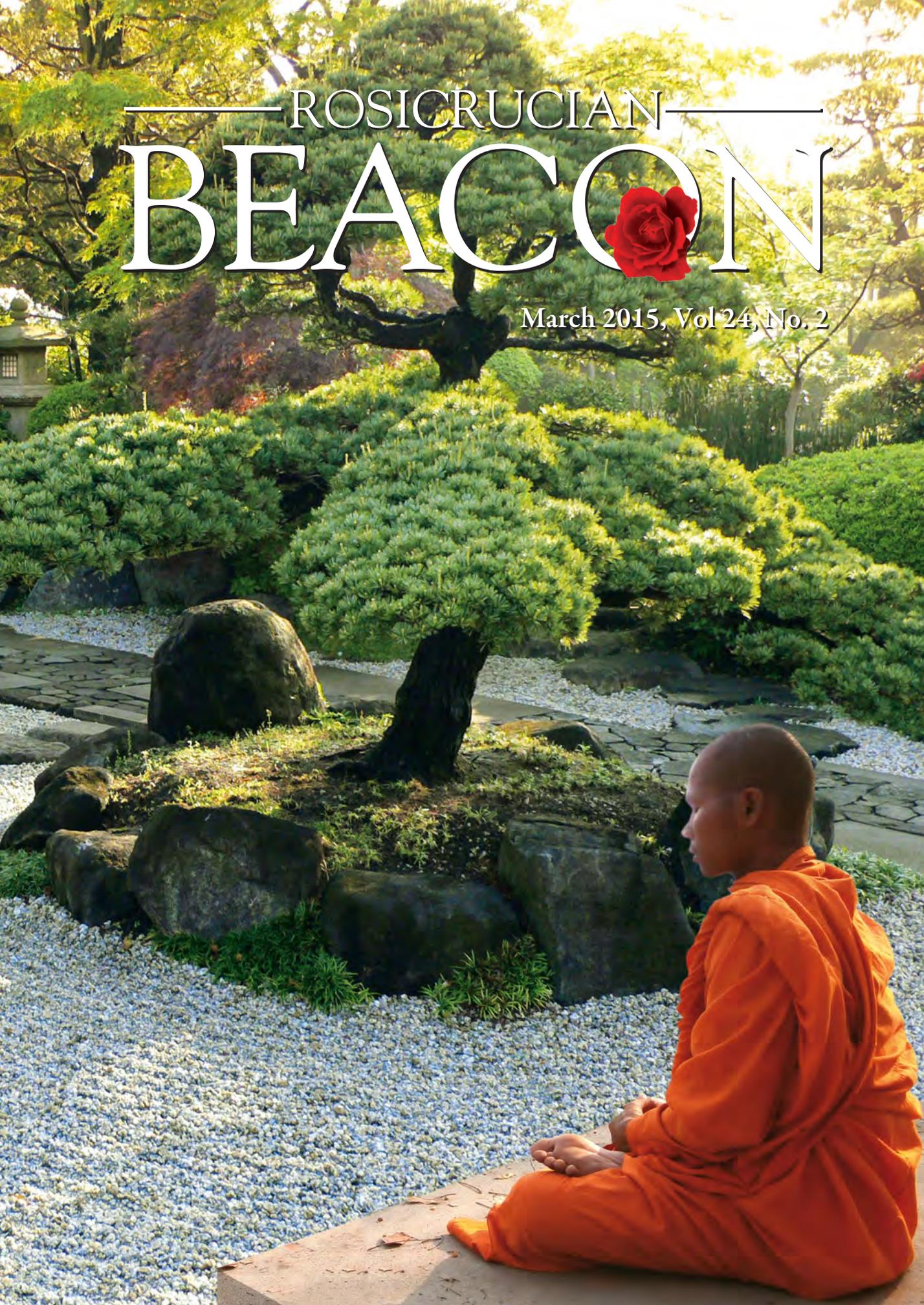


— ROSICRUCIAN —
BEACON



March 2015, Vol 24, No. 2



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Cover spread

Serenity Lies Within





Solitude

by Christian Bernard
Imperator of AMORC

VERY OFTEN, people have confided in me, saying: “*I feel alone*”, “*I feel left out*”, “*I don’t fit in*”, “*I’ve been abandoned*”, and the like.

Irrespective of whether we’re extroverted or introverted, we do not experience solitude in the same manner. Some say it does not exist, others that you get



used to it. For my own part, I experienced a form of solitude as an only child, and am rather introverted.

But things have been different for a long time, and I am delighted to have a large family nowadays, or rather two large families, for I am a child of the Rose-Croix and consequently have thousands of brothers and sisters, friends and fellow travellers. I am never alone. You can have this same feeling by being aware that you belong to the great family of humanity. The Latin origin of the word solitude is "*solitudo*" which is defined as: "...situation of a person who is alone, momentarily or lastingly. Solitude is a state of abandonment, of separation, that a person feels in contrast to human consciousness or society."

In daily life, solitude can be very distressing, indeed more distressing than anything, resulting as it sometimes does from a tragedy, a handicap, a final or temporary separation from someone dear, or from being abandoned. The famous 19th Century French poet Alphonse de Lamartine wrote: "*You are missing one single person and the whole world is empty!*"

There are people who are genuinely isolated, and others who, despite meeting lots of people on a daily basis and having lots of contact at all times, feel terribly alone. This emotional isolation is therefore all in the mind, and it is vital not to get some sort of pleasure out of it, and not to build invisible walls that have no door or window, between us and others. People of course imagine that these walls protect, but this is not so, it is quite the contrary. With no exit to the outside, they suffocate us inwardly, prevent us from releasing our emotions, and confine us in an unhealthy atmosphere, noxious and harmful to our emotional and physical health.

Our language has wisely sensed the two sides of being alone. It has created the word 'loneliness' to express the pain of being alone. And it has created the word 'solitude' to express the glory of being alone. -- Paul Tillich

We can see that those who wallow in deep solitude are seldom cheerful, communicative and responsive to others. You will tell me that they may of course simply be thoughtful and deeply meditative people. In their own way they may also be very happy, have great inner wealth, be content with their own company and so on. I have no doubt that this is possible, and I know people like this. However, this solitude may in some cases be masking a discontent, even a tendency to what we term depression, a permanent obscure night. If this solitude includes silence as well, it may



We can see that those who seek deep solitude are seldom cheerful, communicative or responsive to others.

be confirming what I said previously. This is by no means always the case though, and it is also true that an excess of chattering and expressiveness can be symptomatic of a huge feeling of solitude or of an inner emptiness.

When I said 'solitude is holy,' I did not mean by solitude a separating from or a complete forgetting of people and society, but a withdrawing where the soul may commune within itself. -- Alfred De Vigny

People of course imagine that these walls protect, but this is not so, it is quite the contrary.

It is well known that we have to be good company to ourselves, but this does not exclude being good company for others as well. Your response may be that generally people are far from pleasant and one cannot have too much to do with them, and that their all too obvious faults cause you more annoyance and distress than they do interest or pleasure.

What is the source of this feeling of solitude that we feel, that often leads us to say we are always alone? Is it because as we incarnate, we are leaving a family, the great Universal Soul, with regret? Is it because our biological mother, in ejecting us from her body, forces us to become an independent being within a few moments, alone from that point on, launched out to discover another universe? Or is it the weight of responsibilities and duties required of us as a single individual manifesting?

In solitude are we the least alone -- Lord Byron

When we have overcome an obstacle and triumphed over an ordeal, we are proud to have done it on our own,



with no-one else's help. A personal feat is often a better experience and feeling than a group success. From birth to death, there constantly recurs this basic principle: individuality, to which is added responsibility and often, guilt. The latter may of course be collective, and connected to a nation or a group, but most often it is our own.

Coming back to this feeling of solitude that we all experience to varying degrees, we can say that it arises most often at difficult times when we are sad or in pain. It is accompanied by a feeling that others do not understand us, by the notion of not being appreciated for the actions and work we have carried out, of struggling all alone, of being neither supported nor helped..., in short, of being alone, utterly alone, in carrying a heavy weight and bearing the woes of the world on our shoulders.

Feeling we are not understood by another person or by other people, or..., as the popular expressions go, 'preaching in the wilderness,' 'not getting heard even by shouting,' and so on..., leaves a profound feeling of solitude in the human heart. It will most probably be this way for a

long time to come yet, for this is part of our human nature, it is linked to our ego. Readers of these reflections..., remember that you are not alone!

I will take time to be alone today. I will take time to be quiet. In this silence I will listen..., and I will hear my answers. -- Ruth Fishel



Not being heard even by shouting..., leaves a profound feeling of solitude in the human heart.

Secret Spider

by Benigna

*One inch long and not much wider,
Think upon the common spider.*

*What great fears can be released
By such a tiny, harmless beast?*

*A simple bath can hold him captive,
No escape, however active.*

*Yet great grown men would rather die
Than look the spider in the eye.*

*What ancient fears are manifest
By one small blob and eight thin legs?*

*Who can tell what primal nerve
Is touched by Spider's body swerve!*

*What guilty tale is left untold,
Avoided lest it should unfold?*

*Perhaps in Eden, out of sight,
The spider spied the apple bite!*





Take Peace!

*Giovanni Giocondo's
Letter to a Friend*

by Susan Ayles

In the December 2014 issue of the Rosicrucian Beacon I gave the true background to that lovely bit of inspired writing "Desiderata." The present article shows less successful detective work, but Giocondo's letter, I'm sure you'll agree, is worth an inspired mention too.

A TALENTED wordsmith can surpass the mundane combination of syllables and sentences and produce text that is truly sublime...., words that touch the heart, reach the soul and lifts one's spirit. A letter ascribed to the Franciscan friar *Giovanni Giocondo* (c. 1433 - 1515) is one such text that has apparently survived down the ages and made its way into numerous august publications of the

modern age including now, into the Rosicrucian Beacon.

Take Peace! as I call it here, was reputedly written on Christmas Eve 1513 by the elderly friar to one *Contessina Allagia dela Aldobrandeschi*, an Italian countess whom he counted as a friend and addressed as 'most illustrious.' Her family's once extensive lands were divided between two counties in 1265 and ruled by different branches of the family, with one side dying off without heirs and the



heir to the other branch marrying into the Sforza family.¹ A prolonged though not entirely exhaustive internet search suggests that being the recipient of Fra Giocondo's letter was the Contessina's chief and perhaps only claim to fame.

Yet the old friar's words are so wise and comforting that they are enough for us to keep the Contessina's memory alive 502 years later. Before continuing with my investigations though, please read now the friar's letter.

There is nothing I can give you which you have not got. But there is much, very much, that, while I cannot give it, you can take [it].

No Heaven can come to us unless our hearts find rest in it to-day. Take Heaven!

No peace lies in the future which is not hidden in this present little instant. Take Peace!

The gloom of the world is but a shadow. Behind it, yet within our reach, is joy.

There is radiance and glory in the darkness, if we could but see. And to see, we have only to look. Contessina I beseech you, Look!

Life is so generous a giver, but we, judging its gifts by their covering, cast them away as ugly or heavy or hard.

Remove the covering and you will find beneath it a living splendour, woven of love, by wisdom, with power.

Welcome it, grasp it, and you touch the Angel's hand that brings it to you. Everything we call a trial, a sorrow, or a duty: believe me, that angel's hand is there; the gift is there, and the wonder of an overshadowing Presence.

Our joys, too: be not content with them as joys; [for] they too conceal diviner gifts.

Life is so full of meaning and of purpose, so full of beauty beneath its covering, that you will find that earth but cloaks your heaven. Courage, then to claim it: that is all!

But courage you have; and the knowledge that we are pilgrims together, wending through unknown country, home.

And so, at this Christmas time, I greet you; not quite as the world sends greetings, but with profound esteem, and with the prayer that for you, now and forever, the day breaks and the shadows flee away.¹

Fra Giocondo was certainly an important person in his time, one of those rare enigmas able to transfer his skills across a many fields of endeavour, gathering under his brow the understanding of diverse and complex disciplines and, through hard work and ingenuity alone, advancing the global knowledge of humankind.

Born in the city of Verona (at that time ruled by Venice) in 1435, Giovanni became at the age of 18 a friar of the Dominican order, which, after the close of the 15th Century, became known as the *Ordo Praedicatorum* the "Order of Preachers." Later he switched to the Franciscans and became a teacher of Latin and Greek.² He was noted at the time for his great learning in philosophy, theology and classical literature. But it was his accomplishments as an architect, archaeologist and engineer that sealed admiration of him forever in the minds of his peers.

Wikipedia records: "He designed a drainage system for the lagoons of Venice, built the fortifications of Treviso, and is universally credited with the design of the Palazzo del Consiglio (1476) at Verona, an elegant, arcaded monument of the early Renaissance. He accompanied Charles VIII to France in 1495 as court architect."³

Another online encyclopedia records: "The young priest, a learned archaeologist and a superb draughtsman, visited Rome, sketched its ancient buildings, wrote the story of its great monuments, and completed and explained many defaced inscriptions. He stimulated the revival of classical learning by making collections of ancient manuscripts, one of which, completed in 1492, he presented to Lorenzo de' Medici. Giocondo soon returned to his native town where he built bridges and planned fortifications for Treviso, acting as architect, engineer and even head builder during the construction."⁴

Evidently there was no discernible limit to Giovanni's talents, from scholarly theology to maths, nor his contribution to Italian culture and through that to all of us who have been privileged as tourists to explore the Venetian lagoons and the lovely city with waterways instead of roads. He's even credited with bolstering the foundations of the great Basilica of St Peter in Rome, at the request of the Vatican.⁵

On top of all that, it seems he brought some of the influential works of the past into his modern era by means of the printed word. He published Pliny's *Epistles* in 1498 and again in 1508, wrote four dissertations on the waterways of Venice and produced a corrected edition of *De Architectura* by the Roman writer Vitruvius, a significant influence on the architecture of the Renaissance, among various other volumes.

With all that to his credit it doesn't seem at all far fetched to assume he could probably write a bit, too. The letter to the countess has been widely attributed to him. Yet, the British Museum pronounced in 1970 that



it had “proved impossible” to identify Fra Giovanni as the author of this letter.² It is not known either, how it made its way from the countess to us, the general public, or indeed if the countess existed under that title; for while one branch of the Aldobrandeschi family died out without heirs in Sovana, the heiress of the family’s other line, in Santa Fiora, Cecilia Aldobrandeschi, married into the Sforzas family in 1439.

Certainly the museum is aware of many texts by Giovanni, but not the famous letter. Whoever it was written for, and whenever it was written, it is usually believed that it made its first appearance in print for public consumption in the 1930s, published by one Greville MacDonald, son of one of the most famous fantasy novelists of the day, Scot George MacDonald and his wife Mary.

Greville was himself a man of talent and influence. Born in Manchester in 1856, he was a Harley Street specialist in ear, nose and throat medicine, but also an enthusiastic and influential member of the Peasant Arts movement which emerged in Haslemere, Surrey in the early 1900s, promoting the enjoyment of home-made crafts of all kinds.⁷ The Peasant-Arts Blogspot records that Greville bought The Museum of Peasant Arts for a knock-down price from a clergyman in 1908 and handed control to the Founders of the Peasant Art Guild, for its protection and public benefit, so it would not be swamped in the great halls of the big city museums.

Greville was himself a writer of note, producing many and various titles including a biography of his parents, a learned work called “*The Sanity of William Blake*”, various works of fiction and his own biography, “*Reminiscences of A Specialist*.” The Peasant-Arts Blogspot also finds from Greville’s own writings that it was he who launched *The Vineyard Magazine* as the organ of the Peasant Arts Movement in 1910. By reputation Greville published the famous letter, attributing it to Giovanni, in the 1930s, with ‘Christmas greetings’ from himself.

I have been unable to pin the piece down further but a preacher from Lincoln, Massachusetts, the Rev Claire Phillips-Thoryn, used it in a sermon she gave in the approach to Christmas 2007. Calling it *Take Heaven!* she said: “*It was published in the 1930s by Greville MacDonald. MacDonald probably wrote the piece himself as a Christmas greeting, but perhaps to give his Christmas wishes more historical gravitas, he attributed it to the ancient Franciscan monk Fra Giovanni. Whether it was written 500 years ago or 80 years ago it is still a beautiful and true reflection on the season of Advent.*”⁸

One internet source reports that it was reproduced



Greville MacDonald

earlier than Greville’s publication, in the Theosophical Quarterly, Volume 8 of 1910, again ascribed to Fra Giovanni. This source, says: “*You may be asked if it is a genuine antique, or a modern composition cast in antique form; and I, for one, cannot tell you. Nor do I see that it matters. The only important question is whether its message is true or not; and I think it is profoundly true.*”⁹ I do so agree.

Sometimes the true authorship of work is hidden for the sake of the art, sometimes for the protection of the author and often for reasons not made known

to anyone save the writers and publishers themselves. Giovanni had a great deal of work published by his own intention but a letter would not normally be written to be publicised at all, however fine the prose. Its purpose would be merely to be shared with the person it was written to..., in this case, apparently, to give comfort in the lady’s dark hour. Who knows the circumstances by which it came to light in 20th Century Britain, if indeed it had its origins in the deep past, passed on by a descendant to a relative to a friend to a stranger.

It is rare but by no means impossible that it could survive 502 years, especially as aristocratic families tend to protect their belongings as part of their heritage. Equally it could be the work of a professional writer, one of those who produce work for all manner of purposes as Greville MacDonald evidently did. It may be a relatively modern interpretation of a document which, if Giovanni had written it, would presumably have been written in archaic Italian and would undoubtedly have been couched in less secular language.

I have found myself unequal to the task of bettering the British Museum’s attempts to identify the author, but no matter: Now at least you have the letter with its gentle wisdom, surely as true now as 500 years ago, and every bit as valuable as a resource whether the work of a Franciscan friar or a journalist.

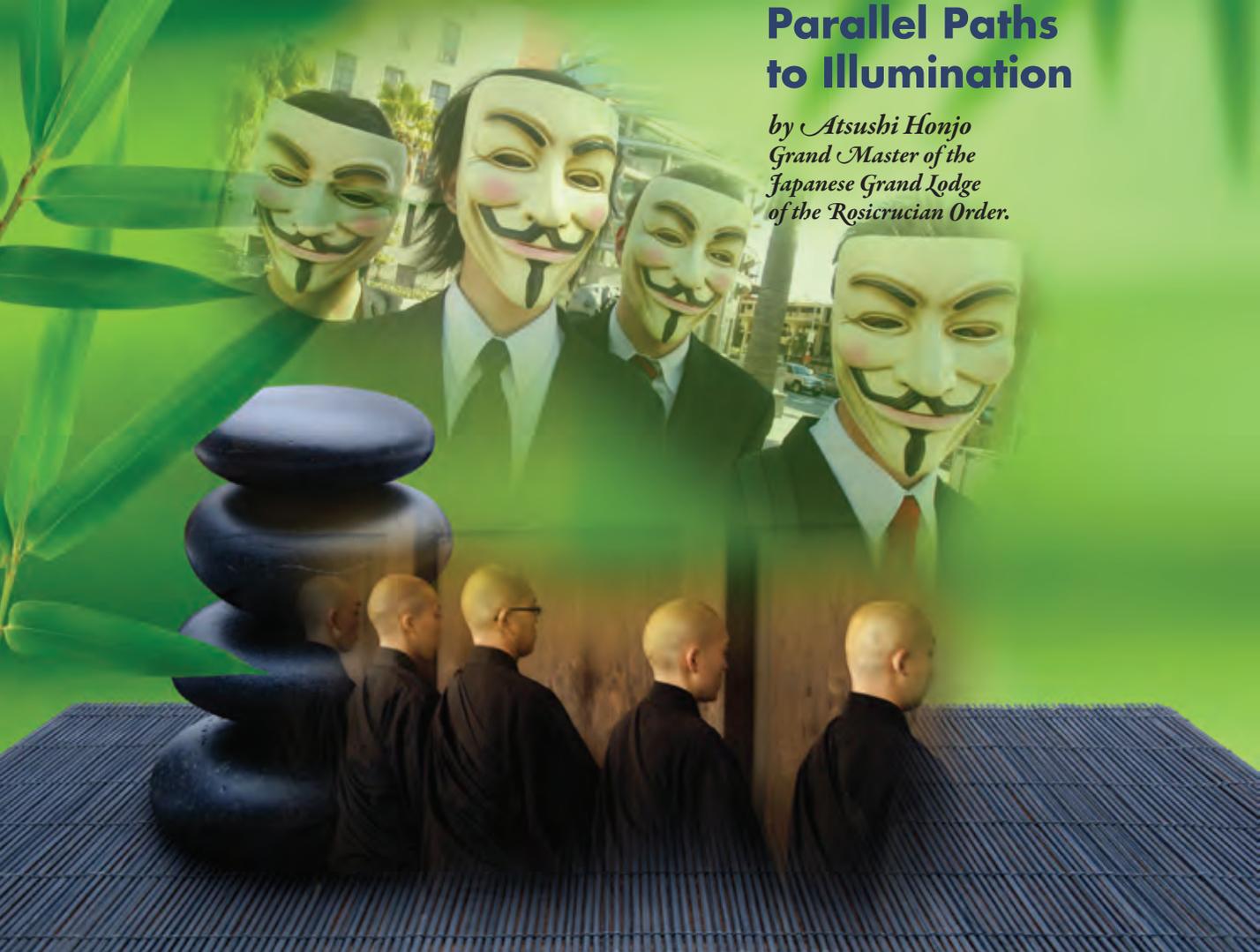
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Rosicrucianism & Zen

Parallel Paths to Illumination

by *Atsushi Honjo*
Grand Master of the
Japanese Grand Lodge
of the Rosicrucian Order.



A

FORMER GRAND Master of the Rosicrucian Order, Chris Warnken, once wrote: *“After many years of daily struggle to evolve..., I have a strong conviction that the root cause of the majority of our difficulties is unquestionably the ego. The ego is very skilful at masking its identity and only occasionally is it obvious... that the ego is to blame. More frequently however, the ego is concealed*

behind an ingenious mask of self-sacrifice, patriotism, health or indeed a host of other clever disguises.”

Zen Buddhism concurs that the ego is *the* great stumbling block in life. In fact, dealing with the ego lies at the very heart of Buddhism. The Rosicrucian teachings pursue the issue of the ego in much detail and present practical advice for reducing its dominance or even eliminating it entirely. In this article I will be exploring





Southeast Asian
Budda statue.

the many similarities that exist between the Rosicrucian teachings and Zen on the subject of the ego.

A Brief History of Zen

Elsewhere in this magazine you will find an article by Bill Anderson about the origins of Zen, so I will not go into too much detail here. I will however, give a brief history of Buddhism and Zen. The founder of Buddhism is known as the *Buddha Sakyamuni* (from *Sakya* where the Buddha was born) or *Gotama Siddhartha* in Pali, an ancient language of India. Gotama (also spelled as Gautama) comes from the Sanskrit *gō*, meaning “*bright light*”, and *tama* meaning “*darkness*”, presumably then meaning a/the “*bright light [dispelling] darkness*”, very apt, considering the huge influence of peace and illumination that Buddhism has brought to humanity.

According to certain Buddhist literature, the Buddha experienced the *Great Enlightenment* (*Bobdi* in Sanskrit) in the early morning of 8th December (in the Gregorian calendar) while watching the pre-dawn rise of Venus in the heavens. When it happened he is said to have remarked: “*How strange! Mountains, rivers, grasses and woods..., they are all enlightened.*” From the Rosicrucian perspective, what the Buddha experienced was what can be called “*Ultimate Reality*”, namely, consciousness of the indivisible unity of the Universe where Venus, he and Nature all



Zen Master Dogen.

around him were manifested in the form of supreme harmony. Of course, as mystics we know that such an experience transcends any objective description or logic we can engage in, and I will return to this later.

After his enlightenment, the Buddha strove for another 45 years to help others to reach this same experience. Many disciples gathered around him and through their monastic practices they sought to experience ultimate reality. Over the millennia, the experiences of each succeeding generation of disciples was checked face to face, Master to disciple, resulting in new Masters emerging from the disciples, Masters who continued the lineage of instruction and indeed continue doing so today. More than 2,000 years have passed from

the first generation of disciples and Masters to the one in existence today.

The Master of the 28th generation was a famous Indian by the name of Bodhidharma, and it was he, according to legend, who founded Zen Buddhism. He is commonly portrayed with a beard and earrings; and in Japan, a doll representing this illumined man is a very popular children’s toy. It is in fact a symbol of patience, for the dolls are so constructed that no matter how they are knocked about, they always right themselves..., most frustrating!

While Bodhidharma is said to have transferred Zen Buddhism from India to China, it was the 51st successor in the lineage, the great Japanese Master Dogen, who for all practical purposes, brought Zen across to Japan from China. Zen has widely and strongly influenced Japanese culture. Gardening, architecture, the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, archery and judo are but a few of the activities upon which Zen has left a lasting and beneficial mark.

Master Dogen

But let me return to my subject: the Rosicrucian teachings and Zen. The 13th Century Zen master Dogen, who founded the Japanese *Soto Zen* school, is a good guide for exploring the many similarities that exist between the Rosicrucian teachings and Zen concerning the ego. In his main literary work entitled “*Shobo-Genzo*”, which means “*The Right-Dharma-Eye Treasury*”, Dogen expresses a profound understanding of the relationship between the human being and the Universe. This insight was acquired only



after many years of arduous Zen training which included the practice of *Zazen*, the seated form of Zen meditation. Master Dogen wrote:

“To learn Buddha’s truth is to learn one’s self. To learn one’s self is to forget one’s self. To forget one’s self is to be confirmed by all dharmas. To be confirmed by all dharmas is to let one’s body and mind, and the body and mind of the external world fall away. All trace of enlightenment disappears, and this traceless enlightenment continues without end.”

To Learn One’s Self

Taking the first sentence of this paragraph, “*To learn Buddha’s truth is to learn one’s self*,” one is reminded of the legendary injunction over the entrance of the temple at Delphi: “*Know thyself*.” And that most certainly is what Rosicrucians seek too, for the main task of every true Rosicrucian is to build up a clear channel of communication between the dull mundane outer self and the radiant, sacred, inner Self. Many subjects in the Rosicrucian teachings deal specifically with this quest for self-realisation. Master Dogen taught the same, namely, that learning about one’s Self is the surest way there is of discovering the true nature of our existence and the Universe.

To Forget One’s Self

The other sentences in the quote seem enigmatic at a first glance, especially the second one: “*To learn one’s self is to forget one’s self*.” But from personal reflection and the practice of Zen, I have learnt that this concerns the ego; for forgetting one’s self implies surely the abandonment of the ego if one wants to know the true nature of one’s being?

Several questions arise. First, what exactly is the ego? There are so many varied definitions in



ictionaries that they frankly confuse rather than assist us. Strangely though, it is not that difficult to conceive of a state of being devoid of an ego. Let’s use the example of a professional skier. It’s a foggy day, the ski slope is steep and bumpy, and here and there the snow is compressed into dangerous ice plates. The positioning of slalom gates is a specialist occupation requiring the skill of an expert in order to minimise the risk of injury. A world-class skier is waiting at the start gate for the signal to go. Nervous energy courses through his tense though fully prepared body and he

He is no longer aware of his body or mind, and in his field of awareness, in his reality, he is intimately merged with the universe.

knows he will require all his skill and concentration to safely reach the finish line.

The signal sounds and in an instant he’s off. With the wind searing his face, he hears the sound of his skis carving the hard snow. He feels the elasticity of the skis but he can hardly see the slope ahead of him because of the thick fog. His balance is constantly disturbed, adjusted and readjusted with split-second precision as he encounters unexpected obstacles and changes in the course. But he recovers quickly because of his well-honed skills. His actions are automatic, as if something deep within the subconscious has taken full control. If even for a second he had to think about his technique, his actions would be too slow to cope and the consequences could be fatal.

Before he left the start gate, his consciousness had reached a degree of separation from his environment. There was just him and the slope, his ability and the difficult conditions ahead of him. But all thoughts were instantly blown away when he pushed away from the gate, when conditions immediately demanded his full attention. It was at that moment that the separation between himself and his environment ceased to exist and something deep within took over.

Now, speeding down the slope, he is no longer aware of his body or mind, and in his field of awareness, in his reality, he is intimately merged with the universe. We all eventually learn through experience that the only universe we can ever know is the universe of our personal reality. And the ultimate such reality is a universe completely devoid of the ego. There is oneness and harmony, and in this state, one can achieve the best one is capable of. One knows at such moments the enormity of one’s true capabilities and has reached at least a partial understanding of the meaning of Zen Master Dogen’s words: “*To learn one’s self is to forget one’s self*.”





Bodhidharma

To be Confirmed by all Dharmas

And now to the third sentence of the quotation given earlier: *“To forget one’s self is to be confirmed by all Dharmas.”* The Sanskrit word *Dharma* means “reality”, or things and phenomena that are real to us in the deepest sense possible. The realisation of the skier’s excellent performance depends not only on his skills but also on his full integration into the environment in which he is skiing. The world is inseparable from the skier and the skier is inseparable from the world.

If the skier were to start thinking of other competitors or to begin noticing the crowds cheering him on, or if he suddenly became aware of the dangers of the situation, or even if he started being distracted by an itch, his concentration would break in an instant, control for the

“Since both consciousness and reality change, nothing is as permanent as it may seem.”

movement of his body would pass from his subconscious mind to the cumbersome outer intellect, and the race would be lost.

A centipede could not walk if he had to think about how his legs needed to move. Similarly, the harmony of the skier disappears and his performance deteriorates the instant his intellect is allowed to take charge. And herein lies the ego in the broadest sense of the word, and we may conclude that it is the ego, that outermost framework of the mind, that prevents us, more than anything else, from effective action in life.

Just as fish do not notice the water they swim in, or we humans do not notice the air we breathe, so do we rarely notice the presence of the ego. The ego, without a shadow of doubt, prevents us from fulfilling our full potential, and hampers us severely in gaining an understanding of our true relationship with the Cosmic. Indeed it prevents us from understanding that at the very deepest level of our being, we and the Cosmic are inseparably one.

Mumyo

What causes the ego to exist? Buddhism says that *“Mumyo”* is the fundamental cause of the ego and of all suffering in our lives. *Mumyo* means the ignorance we carry about with us through myriad incarnations, and specifically, it means ignorance of the “two basic truths.”

Syogyo-Muzyo

The first of these truths is *“Syogyo-Muzyo.”* *Syogyo* means “all that is perceived”, while *Muzyo* means “change or the changeable.” Together, these words mean: *“everything perceived is changeable”*, or to put it differently, *“nothing we perceive remains unchanged forever.”* How very Rosicrucian!

The ancient Greek philosopher, Heraclitus wrote: *“All matter is becoming,”* and we know that the law of matter is above all else a law of change. Consciousness changes constantly; it is in a permanent state of flux. As one of the monograph lessons from the Rosicrucian curriculum says: *“Since both consciousness and reality change, nothing is as permanent as it may seem.”*

We have many strong attachments to things in life, and our concepts seem unchangeable..., at least for some periods of time. These temporarily unchangeable things can be our homes, our status, our physical beauty or strength, our neighbours, lovers, opinions, beliefs, reasoning abilities, etc. Our strong attachment to these things firmly supports the existence of the ego. If, like brief though intense flashes of lightning, we were to realise the true nature of the ever-changing Universe..., and if we were to realise that it is impossible to truly possess anything..., we would free ourselves from these strong attachments and





The technique of candle gazing.

the ego would as a result be vastly diminished. One part of the written teachings of the Rosicrucian Order says just this, though in a slightly different way:

“Although through man-made laws we can compensate each other and thereby obtain certain rights to have the legal privilege of acquiring something for our exclusive use, we are nevertheless always indebted to the Cosmic for such benefits.

“We are obligated to the Cosmic because it is through the manifestations of universal laws that all such things are made possible. Even the inspired human intelligence of the inventor or designer of something is the result of Cosmic enlightenment.”

Our Guusi Attachments

Returning to our skier, he is in the oneness, the bare-bones no-ego Universe. But needless to say, not every skier reaches that great enlightenment immediately, and this is because human attachments are so persistent and last many incarnations. Buddhism compares these attachments to “*Guusi*”, namely the fibres of the lotus root which are very hard to cut.

On the other hand, our skier for example achieves the no-ego state almost exclusively through his preparatory period of concentration, followed by

a release of intellectual control of that concentration at the precise moment he leaves the start gate. Zen shows that a state devoid of the ego is a natural quality of the deeper self. If repeated no-ego experiences are allowed to accumulate within us, a point is eventually reached when the erroneous paradigm of the ego is blown away forever. Practice is all we need: practice, practice, practice.

From the foregoing example, it seems therefore that some purely mundane activities can lead us to the no-ego state relatively easily. Here are a few examples:

- Listening to sounds, say music or mantra sounds, with the detached deep concentration of the inner self.
- Doing various outdoor sports which require the sort of delicate balance achievable only through abandonment of the outer intellect to the higher inner faculties.
- Acting or portraying another personality, animal or even an inanimate thing like a cascading mountain stream, and getting deep into the role.
- And then there is the Rosicrucian technique of gazing at a candle flame or frankly anything else which attracts our consciousness, and allowing the mind to enter a state of neutrality as it watches.

Many similar activities have been arranged in various forms in the written teachings of AMORC. The mystical, as opposed to intellectual form of concentration that is used during these activities, has the power to break the illusions the ego has created for us.

Syoho-Muga

The second truth of Buddhism is “*Syoho-Muga*.” *Syoho* means “*all things*” and *Mu* denotes “*negation*.” The word *ga* is ambiguous however. One of its meanings is the “*everlasting independent personality of the soul*.” If we use this as the meaning of *ga*, we gain some sense of the meaning of the entire phrase, and here it is: “*...in the universe there is no such thing as an eternal, separated soul personality, for it is always changing and dependent*.” In other words, no soul, and hence no expression of that soul (what Rosicrucians call the “*soul personality*”) remains as it is forever, and is ever dependent on its ultimate source. This agrees with the Rosicrucian viewpoint, for concerning the soul and its attendant expression on earth (the soul personality), another part of the Rosicrucian teachings explains it as follows:



“To the Rosicrucian, the soul is always connected to and is a part of the great Universal or Cosmic Soul, and is therefore never actually individualised. It does not belong to us, but to the Cosmic; it is not separated, but united. It is not independent, but dependent.”

If we thoroughly realise the temporal nature of the individuality, the “I” or ego can no longer manifest. One of the Rosicrucian pamphlets we publish speaks of eliminating the ego as “...forgetting misleading, inflated theories about individual personality; in other words, eliminating personal individuality.”

The remaining part of Master Dogen’s quote says: “To be confirmed by all dharmas is to let one’s body and mind, and the body and mind of the external world fall away. All trace of enlightenment disappears, and this traceless enlightenment continues without end.” To understand this, we must delve deeper into the deep meaning behind the expression *Syoho-Muga*. As previously explained, the word *ga* has several meanings, one of which denotes the “fixed characteristics of things.” Applying this meaning of *ga* to *Syoho-Muga*, we get the following sentence: “Nothing in the universe has any inherently fixed characteristics.” But what exactly is meant by this? And why is it so important?

For those without ego, the true nature of worldly passions, angers and foolishness is in itself Nirvana.

The Honourable Monk Sariputra

We have a clue in the *Yuima-Sutra* which was written by an unknown author in India in the 2nd or 1st Century BCE. This very old sutra relates a beautiful and inspiring story about the inherent characteristics of things.

A heavenly maiden lived in a house where Buddhist monks held their assembly. She listened to their discourses and was so delighted and moved that she revealed her body to them and sprinkled heavenly flowers on them. The flowers that fell on the clothes of some of them did not cling and fell on the ground, whereas the flowers that fell on others clung to their clothing. They tried to remove the flowers from their clothes by their supernatural powers but they could not. Eventually she said to one of them:

“Honourable monk Sariputra, Why are you trying to shake off these flowers?” He replied: “We retired into Buddhism and are contented with honest poverty, so it is not appropriate for us to decorate our clothes with flowers.” She asserted: “Honourable monk Sariputra, you should not

say this, for flowers are in accord with the law of Reality; flowers neither think nor judge. But you think and judge that they are not appropriate. For those who have retired into Buddhism and are living with ultimate truth..., evaluation and judgment are not appropriate with the law of Reality.

“Honourable monk Sariputra, You are evaluating and judging ultimate reality. Evaluation and judgment is not suitable for this. You should observe the monks to whom the flowers did not cling; they neither evaluated nor judged. For example an evil spirit watches for a chance to possess one who harbours fears. Similarly, he who fears birth, death and reincarnation, allows his ego to be strongly attached to the passions, to the things that his five senses perceive. But if he renounces his fears and abandons his passions for the worldly created things, his passions for the things of perception cannot affect him.

“The flowers clung only to those who are not yet free from the patterns of thinking and action that was formed by strong attachments to worldly things. But they did not cling to the clothes of the others who are free from all these patterns.”

Sariputra asked: “Honorable heavenly maiden, is not the abandonment of passions, anger and foolishness needed for the attainment of Nirvana?” She replied: “Only for those with inflated egos is there a need to follow the teachings that say that we must abandon worldly passions, angers and foolishness in order to attain Nirvana. For those without ego, the true nature of worldly passions, angers and foolishness is in itself Nirvana.”

Nirvana

But can passion, anger and foolishness really amount to Nirvana? This brave assertion relates the fact that



Sariputra has many frameworks falling in two categories. One is sacred and the other is worldly. For him, flowers are worldly and do not belong to the sacred world. The passions, anger and foolishness referred to are not part of the sacred either and therefore belong to the secular world. They are different from Nirvana which can only exist in the sacred realm.

But according to the heavenly maiden who made fun of him, flowers have no inherent fixed qualities like *vulgar* or *sacred*. Passion in itself does not have the quality of vulgarity, just as Nirvana does not in itself have any inherent qualities of sanctity. These natures or classifications exist only in the mind of Sariputra, so the things, desires and emotions exist independently of whatever judgment is made of him. They have no inherent qualities apart from those we ourselves create.

So, for some people, flowers are ostentatious when worn on their clothes, even though those same flowers can be offered to the Buddha as symbols of the beauty of the sacred world. Some poisons when used in minute quantities, as for example in homeopathy, can be used as highly effective healing agents. Similarly the passions, which so often confuse us, can be converted instead into great compassion because they have no inherently fixed natures. This highlights the other meaning of *Syoho-Muga*, namely that “*nothing in the universe has any inherently fixed characteristics.*”

If we insist on avoiding vulgarity and seek sanctity at all costs, we have a form of attachment to the ego. And if we leave the worldly life and seek Nirvana, this too is a form of attachment which we have to cast off in order to realise the true nature of ultimate reality. To put it another way, we tend to construct paradigms consisting of two opposite categories or qualities. Examples are the sacred and the profane, heaven and earth, good and bad, the passions and Nirvana, objects and ourselves, body and mind, actuality and reality, outside and inside, space and time. These are convenient for some phases of reasoning, but they are after all merely concepts that we ourselves have created. As frameworks, they do not belong to ultimate reality.

If we wish to reach that ultimate reality of God or Nirvana, we must cast off all frameworks and paradigms and stop being misled by the ego. In fact, we even have to cast off Nirvana itself. We have to cast off our concepts of God or ultimate reality if they are mere categories or concepts, for they hold us back from the actual experience of this ultimate reality.

For analogy, suppose you tasted sea urchin eggs for the first time. If you had read or heard about them before, and knew what creature they came from, you would probably not have enjoyed their taste as much as your ignorance of these facts would have guaranteed. That is why Zen Buddhism pays special attention to

the limitations of language. If we use words to describe something, we inevitably separate ourselves from the reality of what we are attempting to describe. We regard things as objects, as if they existed outside of us.

Pointing at the Moon

Zen Masters often use the metaphor of an index finger pointing at the moon. With their characteristic simple though deep wisdom, they warn us of the subtle danger of confusing *enlightenment*, symbolised by the moon, with the *description* of enlightenment, symbolised by the finger pointing at the moon. Experiencing enlightenment is not the same as describing it. This is why most schools of mysticism affirm that ultimate reality transcends all intellectual concepts and defies objective description. And so it is with the Rosicrucian tradition as well. Relatively little is conveyed directly in words, but a great wealth of experience is bestowed upon us through simple rituals, a fragment of which I will shortly be quoting from.

We would do well to take heed of the two truths of Buddhism that have been covered so far, namely *Syogyo-Muzyo: nothing in existence is unchangeable* and *Syoho-Muga: nothing in the universe has any inherently fixed characteristics*. The Rosicrucian teachings and Zen agree on these two points and we should adjust our passions and attachments accordingly. By understanding *Syogyo-Muzyo*, and cultivating the experiences of *Syoho-Muga* through deliberate actions, and by pursuing our daily activities like the skier in our example, we are led to the wonderful realisation of the no-ego perfect Universe.

Being Confirmed by all Dharmas

Let us now analyse the final part of the paragraph of Zen



The poisonous plant 'Belladonna' is used in homeopathic medicine.





Zen Masters often use the metaphor of an index finger pointing at the moon.

Master Dogen: *“To be confirmed by all Dharmas is to let one’s body and mind, and the body and mind of the external world, fall away. All trace of enlightenment disappears, and this traceless enlightenment continues without end.”*

These words are so profound that I simply cannot reduce or analyse their meaning any further. They say it all so precisely, and it cannot be clarified or expanded upon. Suffice it to say that every time I read these sentences I am overwhelmed by the most sublime emotion of deep attunement with the Cosmic. What I would like to do instead is to quote a brief passage concerning the Cosmic from a Rosicrucian ritual:

“All things are within You..., and from You they continually spring forth. Cosmic Being, You are self-sufficient, for You are both creator and consumer.”

“Within You, things have no estimate, for nothing is without place, nothing diminishes, nothing is older or younger, lesser or greater than another.”

“Though You are ever changing, Your complexities are nameless. Neither air, fire, water, earth nor life exist by the distinctions by which mortals know them. Yet they are eternally contained in Your essence.”

For the sake of humanity, for the future of our world, it is so important that we and all others on our beloved planet experience as soon as possible that no-ego, perfect and inseparable Universe that resides within us. Yes, this must be the foundation of that peace based on the Great Compassion that Buddhists call *“Zhi”* and that Rosicrucians know as *Peace Profound*.

If the realisation is achieved, there will be no *I*; indeed, the Universe will become the *I*. Every person will help others in distress, with no special concern for reward or even recognition, just as the left hand cares for the wound on the right hand, for it is part of the same wounded body. We are all part of the same body, the great body of the Universe, the great Cosmic reality.

Close Friends

I have now reached the end, and as Rosicrucians will no doubt agree, the Rosicrucian teachings and Zen are close friends. They see the same Cosmic reality and agree in principle on the two fundamental truths of Buddhism: *Syogyo-Muzyo* (nothing in existence is unchangeable) and *Syoho-Muga* (nothing in the universe has any inherently fixed characteristics.) Through these two great truths, practitioners of the art of Zen seek to attain realisation of the one perfect, no-ego Universe. And that is so very Rosicrucian!

“All things are within You..., and from You they continually spring forth. Cosmic Being, You are self-sufficient, for You are both creator and consumer.”

Many Rosicrucian aspirants and Zen practitioners the world over will one day achieve the experience of the no-ego inseparable reality and learn to live by it. From the Great Compassion to all living creatures, may the Rosicrucian Order and Zen fulfil their respective, though common, missions of bringing about a bright new era of elevated human consciousness.



THE GREEK MYSTERIES

by George Sutherland

MYSTICISM, IN the form of a direct perception of the Divine, is an important dimension of ancient Greek religious belief and is directly related to the idea of light and darkness. In this article I will be looking at the ancient Greek mysteries, and at the mystical movement known as Orphism in particular which enjoyed a prominent part in the esoteric life of ancient Greece.

A vital position in the Greek pantheon of gods was accorded to Dionysus the god of epiphany and transitions. As one writer put it, there were only two figures of true spiritual elevation in the Greek pantheon of gods: in religious terms it was *Dionysus*, the supreme god of Orphism; in terms of mystical experience it was *Eros*, the ancient god of mystical love. In the earliest sources available to us, namely the cosmogonies, the writings of



the very earliest philosophers, and certain texts referring to the mystery religions, Eros is referred to as one of the first or primordial gods who caused the cosmos itself to come into being.

Orphism

An understanding of the central role Orphism played throughout the Classical period of Greek history is crucial to any understanding of ancient Greek mystical belief. Orphism was without doubt a deeply mystical belief system and is believed to have been founded by *Orpheus*, whom the lyric poet Pindar refers to in his *Pythian Ode 4* as “...the father of songs, much-praised Orpheus.”

He was the inspiration and prophet of what came to be known throughout the ancient Mediterranean as the *Orphic mysteries*, and was credited with the composition of the *Hymns of Orpheus*, a collection of 87 short religious poems which were written down in either the late Hellenistic era (3rd - 1st Centuries BCE) or the early Roman era (1st - 2nd Centuries CE). Amazingly, some of these hymns have survived to the present day and although difficult to translate into English poetic form from the Ancient Greek, they represent without doubt thoughts and spiritual aspirations of the highest sort.

The main elements of Orphism differed from popular ancient Greek religious belief in the following ways:

1. Orphism characterised human souls as divine and immortal, but doomed to live (for a period at least) in a ‘grievous circle’ of successive bodily lives through the process of metempsychosis, the transmigration of the soul.



Roman mosaic depicting Orpheus, wearing a Phrygian cap and surrounded by the beasts charmed by the music of his lyre.

ORPHIC HYMN NO 3

“TO HEAVEN”

To be invoked with the fragrance of frankincense

Great Heaven, whose mighty frame no respite knows..., Father of all, from whom the world arose;

Hear, oh bounteous parent, source and end of all, forever whirling round this earthly ball;

Abode of gods, whose guardian power surrounds the Eternal World with ever during bounds.

Whose ample bosom and encircling folds the dire necessity of nature holds;

Aethereal, earthly, whose all-various frame azure and full of forms, no power can tame;

All-seeing Heaven, progenitor of Time, forever blessed, deity sublime;

Propitious on a novel mystic shine, and crown his wishes with a life divine.

2. It prescribed an ascetic way of life which together with secret initiatic rites was supposed to guarantee not only eventual release from the ‘grievous circle’, but also assured eventual communion with the gods.
3. It warned of post mortem punishment for certain transgressions committed during life and has clear echoes in later Christian beliefs.
4. It was founded upon sacred writings about the origins of the gods and of humans.



As an esoteric movement, Orphism emerged some time during the 6th Century BCE and remained an important influence until the end of the Hellenistic period. Where the teachings originated from is not known, but it is quite likely that some fertilisation of ideas and concepts had by then filtered through from the Vedic tradition of the Asian heartland, especially the concept of transmigration and the possibility of releasing oneself from all further need to incarnate into corporeal reality. In 1911, Otto Kern suggested that the city of Pergamon in western Turkey was the birthplace of these hymns, partly because several of the divinities in the hymns were little known in mainland Greece, but appear in Anatolian (modern-day Turkey) inscriptions. Pergamon was a great cultural centre where mystic Dionysian ceremonies are known to have taken place.

Reincarnation and non-harmfulness to all creatures was an important part of its mystical philosophy.

Orpheus is said to have lived (if he was an actual person) somewhere between 1100 and 800 BCE, though some elements can be traced even further back into Mycenaean¹ times and of course to the early Vedic teachings. The works attributed to him are theological writings and mystical hymns which instructed and inspired groups of initiates known as *Orphics* who had the privileged status of being permitted to participate in all the main spiritual activities of ancient Greece. One of the most important of these was the *Eleusinian Mysteries*.²

Reincarnation and non-harmfulness to all creatures was an important part of its mystical philosophy. It had a great deal of influence on nascent Greek philosophy and the resultant emerging scientific enquiry which began in the Ionian region³ of modern-day Turkey which at the time was an important part of the Greek world. We can see this influence in the works of Anaximenes of Miletus⁴ (6th Century BCE), one of the first of the Greek philosophers to express his thoughts in terms that any modern scientist can relate to. In his emphasis of the importance of the *apeiron* and the *aether* as fundamental bases of the world, he was influenced by the beliefs and cosmology of the Orphics. In an indirect way therefore, the foundations of western science were begun by Orphism itself.

Although there has long been a belief among scholars that Orpheus was an historical person, several authors in antiquity wrote under his name, and this has understandably complicated matters quite a bit. No less a person than the great philosopher Pythagoras of Samos (580-504 BCE) may have written in the name of Orpheus.

It is not known for certain that he did, but it would not be far wrong to say that the life and teachings of Orpheus were an inspired ploy by Pythagoras to promote the revered 'historical' person of Orpheus and his philosophy in such a way as to assist his own philosophy.

Through the now lost sacred scriptures of Orphism, the figures of Dionysus and Eros were brought into prominence in Greek society. These two figures were really important: Dionysus as the premier guide to spiritual evolution with his associated rituals, and Eros or Love, in the sense of a life energy or life force, as the god who led seekers to the highest forms of consciousness available to humans.

Impersonal, spiritual love is therefore given great emphasis in Orphism. The philosopher Plato (428–348 BCE) was, like so many other Classical philosophers, influenced by the Orphics. And as he says in his dialogue *Symposium*, a person imbued with love is connected not with a *reflection* of truth, but with the *actual* truth itself. In Orphism, Love is seen as a feature brought into the world by the highest consciousness, an attractive force which

binds together all 'particles' of the universe. It is also a force between humans which blends them into a single conglomerate or commonality known to Rosicrucians as "*the human égrégore*."

As the writer Hesiod⁵ (fl. around 750-650 BCE) said: love "...can provide a *Will to immortals and mortals alike*." So, a philosophy which most in the west associate with Christianity, has a far older pedigree. Being central to the philosophy of Orphism, love was personified by the god Eros whose many manifestations were used by the Orphics as a path of spiritual discovery.

A Greek Tree of Life

In broad outline, while ancient Greek esoteric systems (including Pythagoreanism) were strongly influenced by Orphism, they were also influenced by several other streams of wisdom from the Near East, and quite possibly by religious beliefs from much further East such as Persian Mazdaism⁶, Vedic teachings and very early Buddhism as well.

The intricacies of Greek mystical ideas can however be illustrated through the Kabbalistic⁷ *Tree of Life*, which though Jewish in origin, has been successfully used in many different circumstances to explain belief systems and behaviour that are not easily understood in any other way. This is not of course saying that the Greeks used or even knew of the Kabala; but the Kabala can be used as a tool to explain something which is otherwise quite impenetrable.



In the Greek mystical tradition an important differentiation can, and needs, to be made between the inner world of thoughts and *pneuma* or spirit on the one hand, and the outer, visible world on the other. The *Tree of Life* as applied to this ancient Greek belief system has helped me to see features like this and I will now use it to explain certain aspects of ancient Greek mysticism.

The tree is an inner structure, with the Unknowable, the highest source of reality, placed at the top. The Unknowable can never be fully experienced, for it is by definition the Divine Intelligence itself, known in Greek esotericism as the *Apeiron*, the "Boundless." It means the unlimited, infinite or indefinite from 'a' meaning 'without' and *peirar* meaning 'end' or 'limit.' In Rosicrucian terms this equates to the Cosmic.

The *Apeiron* is the *essence* of all that can exist and contains within itself all that was, is and ever will be. In more modern terms, the *Apeiron* is a state of consciousness that all mystics eventually aspire to experience in whatever way they can. The *Apeiron* was associated with something called the *Aether*, which was the personification of the 'upper air.' *Aether* was the pure upper air that only the gods could or were permitted to breathe. Mortals had to breathe the lower, less pure air. *Aether* also incorporated the idea of the purest and most rarefied form of fire, and is the source of the flame that is used in Western esotericism in so many modern rituals of purification.

Looking at the Tree of Life we see something important concerning the *Apeiron*. Hesiod's *Apeiron* has often been interpreted as a moving, formless mass, the primordial state that existed before Creation and from which the universe itself and all the gods emerged. It was from this formless state that the biblical *Logos*, the primordial first Word that started Creation was uttered. And that first Word was the pattern that emanated from the highest possible source of reality and made possible the creation of all things. As the same concept appears in ancient Egyptian mythology, and we know that there was a great deal of contact between Greece and Egypt, we can speculate on the origin of this concept. The *Logos* is the *pattern, word* or *information* that willed the universe into existence within the *Apeiron*. *Logos* is meant to represent

a perceptible, auditory expression of the Divine, but is of course merely an allegory of a far deeper hidden reality.

The highest form of consciousness possible for any sentient being co-exists with the *Logos*; and it manifests as a pattern or ripple in the universe, creating a moving boundary of a "*transcendent beginning*." Being unformed, the leading edge of this beginning has been referred to as "*the darkness*." And now a point for serious contemplation:- which came first from the *Apeiron*, the *Aether* or the *darkness*? In inner terms this is the same as the area which was described by the 15th Century English mystics as the "*darkness of unknowing*." Here aspirants tried to free themselves from everyday patterns of thought, arriving eventually at a state of "...*complete passion for God*." This, it was believed, is further than thought or any form of understanding can ever reach.

The *Aether* and the darkness are like a "*dark fire*" in the world..., the essence of the fire that can be seen. It is dark in the same sense that Dark Matter and Dark Energy⁸ are, namely that their effects are felt but they can't be seen. The word 'dark' is not an expression of morality and carries no human qualities. *Aether* acts upon and emerges from within the *Apeiron*, and all worlds and everything within them emerge from it as well. This forms a duality, the world of polarity: positive and negative, active and passive, male and female, etc.

There is an important differentiation to be made between the *Apeiron* or Boundless and the 'things' that are bound and limited by it. There is a border between the *Apeiron* and the still to be completely bound area which the Greeks termed the *Erebus*, and which was often thought of as a primordial deity representing the personification of darkness.

Within the *Apeiron*, on the earth plane, emerges the area of *Ouranos*, the sky or the heavens, as portrayed in the Orphic Hymn above, where limits are finally created and the world as we know it comes into being, becoming perceptible for the first time. And so we can see a progression of three 'worlds' out of the infinite *Apeiron* or as we would say The Cosmic: *Darkness, Ouranos* (the heavens), and finally the *world of gods and men*. The realm of *Ouranos*, namely the heavens and beyond, is composed



Tree of life



of all visible light. It is the change of light, rather than constant light, which is perceived through human thought processes. The mystics in ancient Greece were trying to get themselves to the inner light, a spiritual light, rather than that which is constructed by thought. One of the Orphic Hymns is addressed to *Aether*:

*Yours are Zeus' lofty dwelling,
Endless power, too;
Of the stars, of the sun
And of the moon you claim a share.*

*Oh tamer of all, oh fire-breather,
oh life's spark for every creature,
sublime aether, best cosmic element,
radiant, luminous, starlit offspring,
I call upon you and I beseech you
to be temperate and clear.*

Dionysus: The God Who Comes

Also known as *Bacchus*, Dionysus has ancient antecedents in Mycenaean times (c. 1400 BCE), and was said to have been brought to Greece by the followers of Orpheus. Dionysus is the god of epiphany, the god of “*sudden revelation*”, literally the god of “*striking or radiant appearance*.” Whether based on an historical figure or not is not clear, but many mythical figures are believed to have been based at least in part by actual historical events and people. Dionysus was a spiritual guide who led people from the outer, public world to private, inner worlds. He was therefore an important individual, for he accomplished for anyone sincere enough and determined enough to experience it, a way into the holy precincts of the soul itself.

In his form as *Bacchus*, Dionysus was originally portrayed as a rather coarse looking individual, usually intoxicated. One explanation for this lies in his origins as a rural wine god before the Orphics introduced him to a wider Greece. A predominant feature of his appearance is the animal pelt he wears. He is rustic, unkempt with long hair and carries a rough staff. Sometimes he is bearded, sometimes not. Looking at him further however, he is really nothing like this. The untidy features he has are those that can be seen of an individual unconcerned with outer matters. His untidiness is of an outward nature; his cleanliness is entirely internal.



Dionysus

Euripides⁹ in his play about Dionysus, *The Bacchae*¹⁰, describes him as having soft skin and tresses. Far from being bucolic, he is androgynous. Euripides even gives him a lisp. He can be seen, as was sometimes the case, as an aesthete. The staff or wand he carries, the *thyrsus*, is an important symbol, deliberately chosen. It is a staff of giant fennel covered with ivy vines and leaves, sometimes wound with ribbons and always topped with a pine cone. The ivy signifies the highest consciousness going forward, descending into the world. The rest of the staff is a fennel reed, marked into sections indicating descent, and on further reflection it amounts to none other than the caduceus or staff of Hermes¹¹, the inner guide.

The emphasis upon Nature features in his appearance and he was introduced at a time when Greece was becoming rapidly urbanised. Dionysus therefore assisted the individual in getting in contact with his or her emotions. This characteristic was emphasised in the account of his life, and in reality by his activities, giving a prominent, even predominant place to the spiritual contribution of women. This coincided with the actual introduction into Greek society of a place for the spiritual involvement of women. In Dionysian rituals these, the Maenads or “worshipping women” often came from aristocratic and cultured families. In the figure of Dionysus we find a combination of emphasis on emotional features and an appreciation of sensitivity and inner harmony. The Maenads, the followers of Dionysus were said to be “*entheos*” that is, inspired by the god.

In his life story, Dionysus has a special, even strange birth. His mother Semele was the daughter of the king of Thebes in Greece, and his father was Zeus, “*the father of gods and men*.”¹² The special birth is often a feature of prominent figures in the ‘mystery religions’ of the ancient world, whether a parthenogenic (virgin) birth or a birth by some other miraculous or unlikely circumstance. Such figures have existed in many cultures and most stories were embellished with a ‘mystery’ narrative. There are two main versions of Dionysus’ birth, death and rebirth. The rebirth in both versions of the story is the primary reason he was worshipped in mystery religions, as his death and rebirth were events of mystical reverence, as happened as well in early Christianity.

In one version Dionysus was cut into pieces by the Titans¹³ before being miraculously reconstituted and reborn. He was murdered in the autumn or



winter and reborn again in spring. Spring therefore had an important spiritual significance in the Dionysian mystery tradition. Although he esoterically did not really die, exoterically he did and the process therefore emphasised the importance of re-birth and renewal. This story recalls the same type of story from other parts of the Near East: Osiris in Egypt was the most famous of these but there was also Adonis in Syria and Serapis (the Hellenised form of Osiris-Apis) in Alexandria. The animal pelt that Dionysus wears is a mystical symbol whose meaning is shared by all narratives about him. As a symbol of bereavement, the pelt represents the 'death' of the highest form of human consciousness, a symbolical exoteric 'Fall' in which this outer, objective consciousness was cut into pieces and dispersed.



Modern view of Eleusis, with the ruins in the foreground and looking over the Saronic Gulf.

There has been much speculation as to whether or not the Dionysian mysteries came from the ancient Egyptian god Osiris who was also cut up and scattered before his body parts were re-assembled for one final act of procreation with his wife Isis to bring spring and new life into being. We will probably never know, but both may have descended from a much older common source. The myth of the dismemberment of Dionysus by the Titans (with Osiris it was by his brother Set) is alluded to by Plato in his book *Phaedo* in which Socrates claims that the initiations of the Dionysian Mysteries are similar to those of the philosophic path.

We can see the combination of the emphasis on Nature and inner light in the work of the Athenian comic Aristophanes¹⁴ (446–386 BCE) concerning Dionysus in *The Frogs*. Although probably meant as a comedy, inwardly there exists a deeply mystical allegory. He depicts a chorus of initiates at a festival of Dionysus:

*Spirit, Spirit we have hied us to your
dancing in the meadow!*

*Come Dionysus, let your brow toss its
fruited myrtle bough.*

*We are yours, O happy dancer,
oh our comrade come and guide us!*

*Spirit, Spirit, lift the shaken splendour
of your tossing torches!*

*All the meadow flashes, scorches;
Up Dionysus, awaken!*

Eleusinian Mysteries

Dionysus was also a central figure in the Eleusinian Mysteries. Of the many Mysteries celebrated in ancient times, these were for centuries the most important. It is believed their basis was an old agrarian cult possibly of Mycenaean times (1600–1100 BCE). The goddess Demeter who presided over the annual harvest and grains and fertility of the earth in general, was in existence by 1500 BCE. The Mysteries were intended to elevate man above the human sphere into the divine and to assure his redemption by making him a god and so conferring immortality upon him.

Comparative studies show parallels between these Greek rituals and similar systems in the Near East, some of them older. For example the mysteries of Isis and Osiris in Egypt, the Adonis cult of Syria, the Persian mysteries and the Phrygian Cabirian¹⁵ mysteries. Some scholars believe the Eleusinian cult was a continuation of an older Minoan cult, possibly influenced from the Near East as well.

There were two initiation ceremonies held every year at Eleusis, some 14 miles west of Athens. The name of the town, Eleusis seems to be Pre-Greek and may be connected with Elysium¹⁶. The first of the mysteries, known as *the Lesser* was held at the spring equinox over three days. The second, *the Greater* was held at the autumn equinox over nine days. There were also several other, less prominent festivals of Dionysus throughout the year. The Mysteries of Eleusis were the most important body of mysteries in the ancient world, where people gathered for experiences of ecstasy or deep inner attunement with the god. Dionysus was important in all of these as a guide figure.

The mysteries of Eleusis were founded upon the myth of the goddess Demeter and her daughter Persephone,





"Hiera Hodos"
The Sacred Way

his followers as "triple-crested korymbante."¹⁸ This identifies Dionysus with the *Kyretes*, initiates in Crete who wore such headgear and were known to be followers of a "higher Zeus." Pythagoras visited them on his travels and participated in their initiations.

We have seen examples of Dionysus and Hermes as teachers leading people back to the inner light. The figure we know as Hermes can be seen as the ideal of a being with full mastery of consciousness.

The Sacred Way

From the city of Athens, through the Kerameikos cemetery and over the Pass of Korydallos runs the white road to Eleusis, the *Hiera Hodos* or Sacred Way. As the hills closed behind us shutting Athens

played out for thousands of years in one form or another.

The "Dio" in Dionysus refers to Zeus, his father and head of the Greek pantheon (Deus in Latin). Dionysus appears as a figure of divine light (Zeus means literally "shining") and in his role as a teacher, as a bringer of that "shining" light. There is something else that points to him being a guide or teacher. Earlier it was pointed out that Dionysus was sometimes portrayed as a coarse, rustic figure. In two of the Orphic Hymns, mention is made of an oxherd or herdsman called a "*boukolos*." This was in fact an officiant in the Dionysian cult, a shepherd (or oxherd) figure who is often seen as representing the figure of a spiritual guide, who leads his flock to higher, safer, more nutritious ground. He was the mediator who assisted the initiates during their transformative experiences. In Athens there was an ancient ceremony of a spiritual marriage in which the wife of the *Archon Basileus*, the ancient and perhaps mythical king of Athens was married to Dionysus in a *Hierogamy* or Holy Marriage. In this spiritual marriage, those involved were the bride and 11 or 14 other pure Athenian women. The service was venerated as one of the most ancient in Athens and took place on the outskirts of the city. The ceremony, conducted once each year, was held at the *boukolikon*, the place where you can find the guide.

In the most ancient descriptions of Hermes he is depicted as a wayfarer and herdsman. Later images of him however, show him dressed in other garb. The traditional depiction of a herdsman is with the *petasos*, a characteristic wide-brimmed hat. Euripides also describes Hermes-Eros in this way as "*he of the changing plumes*", referring to the shifting of teaching roles he has and the associated headgear. In this theme of symbolic features, Euripides in his work concerning Dionysus, the *Bacchae*, refers to

from our view, it was as though some spell had fallen, as though the closing of the hills had shut a gate upon the outer world and brought us into an enchanted garden. Was it Pan who lingered here, or Apollo or Aphrodite, whose shrine and rock-cut inscription wait at the next turn of the road? Or was it the ghost-thoughts left by processions of singing Mystae who passed so many times along this road?

To mystics of all ages, the journey is just as important as the destination, the end result. For centuries, throngs of Greek-speaking pilgrims made their way along the white road to Eleusis seeking something profoundly deeper in life, to be initiated into the mysteries of the universe. In this article I have tried to show that the mysteries of Greece were not confined purely to the most famous initiation of the ancient world at Eleusis.

From the earliest times of Bronze Age Greece, through the Mycenaean and Heroic Ages, down through

Or was it the ghost-thoughts left by processions of singing Mystae who passed so many times along this road?

Classical Greece and into the Roman Period, the interaction of Greek, Egyptian, Minoan and Near-Eastern ideas produced a syncretism that has endured to the present day. As with all religious belief, there are esoteric and exoteric or inner and outer aspects. We can read the stories of the gods and their deeds at face value as great works of literary fiction. But like the initiates of old, we should look a bit closer at the real meanings behind the stories and not delude ourselves into believing that the deepest aspects of their beliefs weren't motivated by the same spiritual impulse that moves us today to seek spiritual union with our highest understanding of the Sacred.



Ancient Greek religious belief revolved around two fundamental divisions of the cosmos: the sphere of activity of the ouranic (sky) gods on the one hand, and the sphere of activity of the chthonic (earth) gods on the other.

I have tried to explain the meanings behind the ancient Greek myths in terms that we can understand. I began by examining Orphism and the figure of Orpheus, who introduced the earliest-known of the ancient Greek mysteries. The gods Dionysus, Eros and Hermes were regarded as spiritual guides to the inner world in an attempt to come to know the *Apeiron*, the boundless Unknowable that lies behind and encompasses the world of the senses in which we live.

Having touched upon the Eleusinian Mysteries, the most celebrated of all the ancient Greek mystery cults, there is so much more that can be written about them and their symbolism. I have tried to show that we are the heirs of ancient Greek thought; where the Rosicrucian Order has become the spiritual guide seeking to initiate ordinary men and women into the mysteries of the Universe Intelligence, known to many simply as “*the Cosmic*.”

Footnotes

1. Mycenaean Greece refers to the last phase of the Bronze Age in Ancient Greece (ca. 1600–1100 BCE). It takes its name from the archaeological site of Mycenae in Argolis, Peloponnese, southern Greece. Other major sites included Tiryns in Argolis, Pylos in Messenia, Athens in Attica, Thebes and Orchomenus in Boeotia, and Iolkos in Thessaly, while Crete and the site of Knossos also became a part of the Mycenaean world.
2. The Eleusinian Mysteries were initiation ceremonies held every year for the cult of Demeter and Persephone based at Eleusis in ancient Greece. They are the “most famous of the secret religious rites of ancient Greece”. It is thought that their basis was an old agrarian cult which probably goes back to the Mycenaean period.
3. Ionia is an ancient region of central coastal Anatolia in present-day Turkey, the region nearest İzmir. It consisted of the northernmost territories of the Ionian League of Greek settlements. Never a unified state, it was named after the Ionian tribe who, in the Archaic Period (600–480 BCE), settled mainly the shores and islands of the Aegean Sea. Ionian states were identified by tradition and by their use of Eastern Greek.
4. Miletus was an ancient Greek city on the western coast of Anatolia (Turkey), near the mouth of the river Maeander in ancient Caria.
5. Hesiod was a Greek poet generally thought by scholars to have been active between 750 and 650 BCE, around the same time as Homer.
6. Zoroastrianism, also called Mazdaism, is an ancient Persian religion and a religious philosophy.
7. Kabbala, literally “*receiving/tradition*”, is an esoteric method, discipline, and school of thought that originated in Judaism.
8. Dark matter is a type of matter in astronomy and cosmology hypothesised to account for effects that appear to be the result of invisible mass. Dark matter cannot be seen directly with telescopes. In physical cosmology and astronomy, dark energy is a hypothetical form of energy which permeates all of space and tends to accelerate the expansion of the universe.
9. Euripides (c. 480 – 406 BCE) was one of the three great tragedians of classical Athens, the other two being Aeschylus and Sophocles.
10. Bacchae, also Bacchantes: female followers of Dionysus.
11. Hermes is the Greek of transitions and boundaries. He is quick and cunning, and moved freely between the worlds of the mortal and divine, as emissary and messenger of the gods, intercessor between mortals and the divine, and conductor of souls into the afterlife. He is protector and patron of travellers.
12. Hesiod, from his *Theogony*.
13. The Titans were a primeval race of powerful deities, descendants of Gaia (Earth) and Ouranus (Sky) that ruled during the legendary Golden Age. They were immortal giants of incredible strength and were also the first pantheon of Greek gods and goddesses.
14. Aristophanes (c. 446 BCE – c. 386 BCE), was a comic playwright of ancient Athens. Eleven of his thirty plays survive virtually complete.
15. Important group of deities, probably of Phrygian origin, worshipped in Asia Minor and in Macedonia and northern and central Greece.
16. Elysium or the Elysian Fields is a conception of the afterlife that developed over time and was maintained by certain Greek religious and philosophical sects and cults. Initially separate from the realm of Hades, admission was reserved for mortals related to the gods and other heroes. Later, it expanded to include those chosen by the gods, the righteous and the heroic, where they would remain after death, to live a blessed and happy life, and indulging in whatever employment they had enjoyed in life.
17. Charon is the ferryman of Hades who carries souls of the newly deceased across the rivers Styx and Acheron that divided the world of the living from the world of the dead.
18. The Korymbantes were the armed and crested dancers who worshipped the Phrygian goddess Cybele with drumming and dancing.

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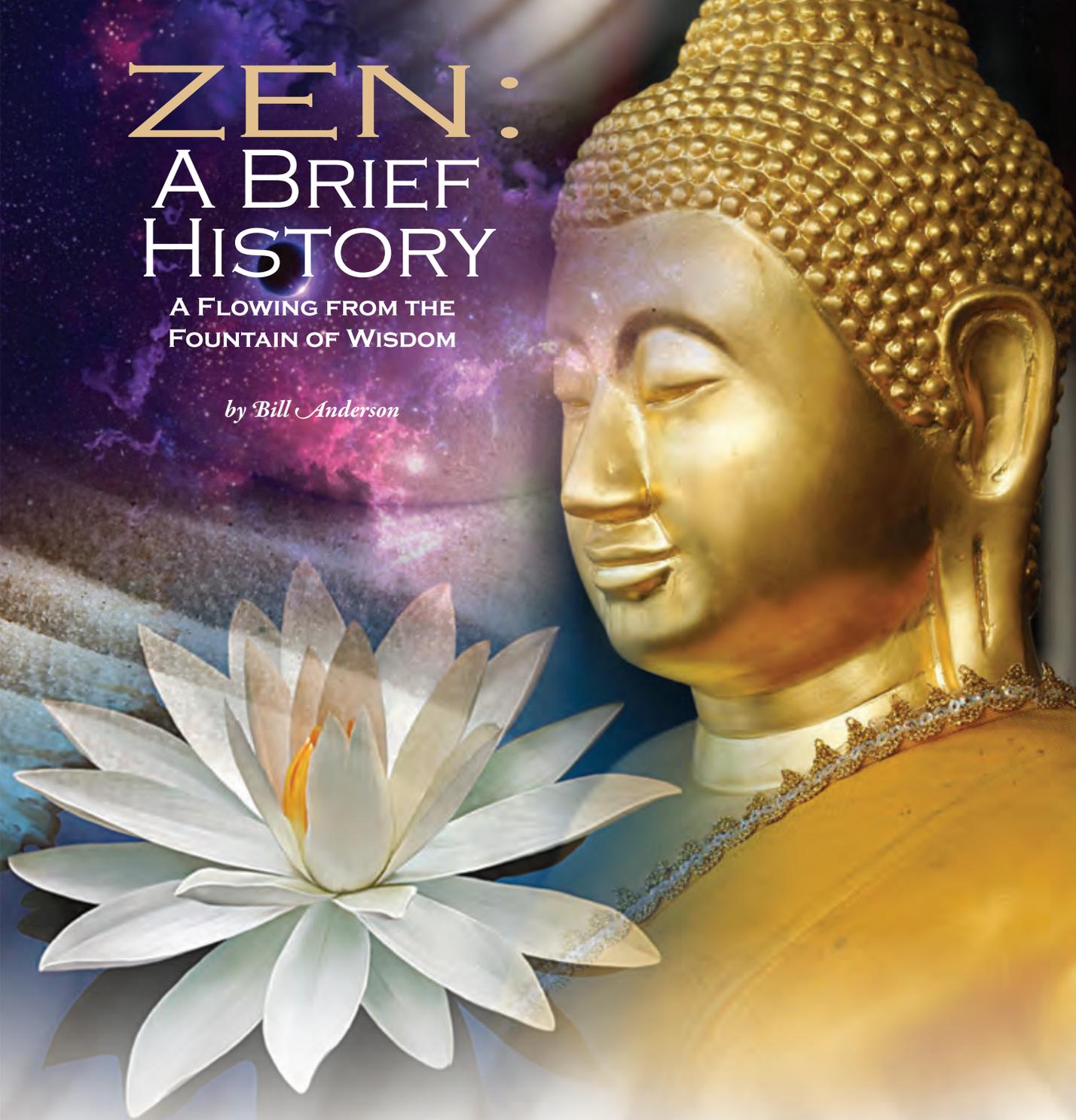
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ZEN: A BRIEF HISTORY

A FLOWING FROM THE
FOUNTAIN OF WISDOM

by *Bill Anderson*



ZEN BUDDHISM is not a religion in quite the same manner as the word 'religion' is interpreted in the West. It is a way of life, a journey which guides the practitioner from unawareness to awareness. The word 'religion' in the West is almost exclusively associated with the concept of an all-knowing, all-powerful, all-seeing supreme deity called 'God.' It is not a mere cerebral concept though, for God in the orthodox liturgy of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic lineage personally intervenes in the daily affairs

of His creation and specifically intervenes in the lives of humans. This is where Buddhism in general, and Zen in particular, part company with the predominantly Western religious tradition.

Buddhism is often referred to as a "*dharma*", a word with no direct, single Western equivalent, though with many associated meanings which describe aspects of this single word. In the Vedic-related religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism, *dharma* means living in accordance with "*Rta*" (Sanskrit *ṛtam*, meaning *fixed order*,





Map of the Tarim Basin in the 3rd Century CE showing the various states surrounding the high Tibetan plateau and desert through which the Silk Road passed.

[supreme] reality, rule, [divine] law, truth, properly joined), which in the West has its closest analogy with the ancient Egyptian concept of living in accordance with “*Maat*”, a word meaning something approximating “right order”, “truth” and “right way” (of living). *Rta* in turn emerges from the Proto-Indo-European morpheme “*rt*” which has descended for example into the ancient Greek Sophists’ understanding of “*arete*”, meaning ‘quality’, and into English words like aristocrat, art, rhetoric, worth, rite, ritual, wright, right (handed), and right (correct).

The Buddhist “*right way of living*” encompasses a variety of traditions, beliefs and most importantly of practices, that are largely based on the life philosophy and teachings of a person known as *Siddhartha Gautama*, or more commonly in the West as the Buddha, “*the awakened one*.” In Buddhist tradition, this ‘awakened person’ lived and taught in the northern and eastern parts of the Indian subcontinent sometime between the 6th and 4th Centuries BCE. He is recognised by Buddhists as an ‘awakened’ or enlightened teacher who shared his insights to help sentient beings to end their suffering through the elimination of ignorance and craving. The ultimate goal of Buddhism is the attainment of the sublime state of *Nirvana*, by practising the *Noble Eightfold Path*, also known as the *Middle Way*.

When I hear the word Zen, I automatically think of the cultured refinement of Japanese traditions. But I know as well that Zen Buddhism has a pedigree that can be traced back through many lands: Korea, China, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India to name a few. Buddhism may have begun in India but it was disseminated along the Silk Road, which is the name given to a series of interlinked trade and cultural transmission routes. These routes were central to cultural interaction through different regions of the Eurasian continent connecting the West and East by linking traders, merchants, pilgrims, monks, soldiers, nomads and urban dwellers from China and India to the Mediterranean Sea and Rome during various periods of time.

The Silk Road

Extending some 4,000 miles (6,437 kilometres), the Silk Road was so-named because of the lucrative trade in Chinese silk carried out along its length, beginning during the Han dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE). The Central Asian sections of the trade routes were expanded around 114 BCE, largely through the missions and explorations of Chinese imperial envoys. Trade on the Silk Road was a significant factor in the development of the civilisations of China, the Indian Subcontinent, Persia, Europe and Arabia, opening long-distance, political and economic interactions between the civilisations.

Although silk was certainly the major trade item from China, many other goods were traded as well. And religions, syncretic philosophies and various technologies, as well as diseases, also travelled this route. In addition to economic trade, the Silk Road served as a means of carrying out cultural trade among the several major civilisations that existed along its network. So, as silk travelled west, religions such as Manichaeism, Buddhism and Christianity travelled east, and what we today consider purely Eastern or purely Western has since antiquity always had elements of both hemispheres, at least to some extent.

Buddhism entered China via the Silk Road, beginning in the 1st or 2nd Century CE. The first documented translation efforts by Buddhist monks in China (all non-Chinese) were in the 2nd Century CE, possibly as a consequence of the expansion of Kushānshahr, the Greco-Buddhist Kushān Empire, into the Chinese territory of the Tarim Basin, dominated by the Taklamakan Desert in what is now the Xinjiāng Uyghur Autonomous Region of China. The Tarim Basin was a strategic melting pot of Silk Road traffic, a hub of interchange of both goods and ideas, philosophies and religious beliefs. And of course the several Tocharian languages, the easternmost group of Indo-European languages, were once spoken there. Besides Tocharian, various Eastern Iranian Khotanese Scythian dialects were also used.

Kushānshahr and Gandhara

Direct contact between Central Asian and Chinese Buddhism continued throughout the 3rd to 7th Century, well into the Tāng Dynasty. From the 4th Century onward, with Fāxiān’s pilgrimage to India (395–414), and later Xuánzàng (629–644), Chinese pilgrims started to travel by themselves to northern India, their closest source of





One of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan (Kushān Empire) before their destruction.

Buddhism, in order to gain access to original scriptures. Much of the land route connecting northern India with China at that time was ruled by the Buddhist Kushān Empire, with its heart in the kingdom of Gandhara in its western section. During these centuries, the combination of Indian Buddhism with Western influences (Greco-Buddhism) gave rise to the various distinct schools of Buddhism in Central Asia and China.

Greco-Buddhist art is the finest artistic manifestation of Greco-Buddhism, a cultural syncretism between Classical Greek culture and Buddhism, which developed over a period of close to 1,000 years in Central Asia, between the conquests of Alexander the Great in the 4th Century BCE, and the Islamic conquests of the 7th Century CE. This syncretic art is characterised by the strong idealistic realism and sensuous description of Hellenistic art and the first representations of the Buddha in human form.

Greco-Buddhist art depicts the life of the Buddha in a visual manner, probably by incorporating the real life

models and concepts which were available to the artists of the period. The Bodhisattvas are depicted as bare-chested, jewelled Indian princes, and the Buddhas as Greek kings wearing the toga-like himation. The buildings in which they are depicted incorporate Greek style with the ubiquitous Indo-Corinthian capitals and Greek decorative scrolls.

The Kushān Empire was originally formed in the early 1st Century CE in the territories of the former Greco-Bactrian Kingdom around the Oxus River (nowadays called the Amu Darya), and later based near Kabul, now the capital of Afghanistan. The Kushāns, an Indo-European people of possible Iranian or Tocharian stock, spread out from the Kabul River Valley to encompass much of the Indo-Greek Kingdom, one of the successor states of Alexander the Great, from which they took their first official language, the Bactrian alphabet, Greco-Buddhist religion, coinage system, and art. They absorbed the Central Asian tribes that had previously conquered parts of the northern central Iranian Plateau once ruled by the Parthians, and reached their peak under the Buddhist emperor Kanishka (127–151 CE), whose realm stretched from Turfan in the Tarim Basin in the West, to Pataliputra, near Patna in Bihar state on the Ganges Plain in the East. They therefore controlled the central part of the Silk Road.

The Kushāns had diplomatic contacts with the Roman Empire, Sassanid Persia, the Aksumite Empire of Ethiopia and the Han Dynasty China. While much philosophy, art and science was created within its borders, the only textual record we have of the empire's history today comes from inscriptions and accounts in other languages, particularly Chinese.

And it is in the Kushān Empire that we find the genesis of the main branch of Buddhism: *Mahāyāna*. The Mahāyāna tradition is the largest branch of Buddhism existing today, having 53% of all Buddhists, compared to 36% for the Theravāda and 6% for the Vajrayāna. Although Mahāyāna means "Great Vehicle", it also refers to the path of the Bodhisattva as s/he seeks complete enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Mahāyāna Buddhism

In the course of its history, Mahāyāna Buddhism spread from India to various other Asian countries such as Bangladesh, China, Japan, Vietnam, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tibet, Bhutan, Malaysia and Mongolia. Major traditions of Mahāyāna Buddhism today include the following:-

1. **Zen:** most popularly known from Japan. The word originates from the Chinese word *Chán*.



The Heart Sūtra

The *Heart Sūtra*, has been called Buddhism in a nutshell, as it covers more of the Buddha's teachings in a shorter span than any other sūtra. It is quite short and is reproduced here. The noble Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, while practising the deep practice of Prajñāpāramitā, looked upon the Five Skandhas [functions or aspects]. Seeing they were empty of self-existence, he said:

*Here, Shariputra, form is emptiness, emptiness is form;
form is not separate from emptiness; whatever is
form is emptiness, whatever is emptiness is form.
The same holds for sensation and perception,
memory and consciousness.*

*Here, Shariputra, all dharmas are defined by emptiness,
not birth or destruction, purity or defilement,
completeness or deficiency.*

Therefore Shariputra, in emptiness there is

*no form, no sensation, no perception,
no memory and no consciousness;*

*no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body
and no mind;*

*no shape, no sound, no smell, no taste,
no feeling and no thought;*

*no element of perception, from eye to
conceptual consciousness;*

*no causal link, from ignorance to
old age and death;*

*no end of causal link, from ignorance
to old age and death;*

no suffering, no source, no relief, no path;

*no knowledge, no attainment and
no non-attainment.*

*Therefore, Shariputra, without attainment,
bodhisattvas take refuge in Prajñāpāramitā
and live without walls of the mind. Without
walls of the mind and thus without fears, they
see through delusions and finally nirvana.*

*All buddhas past, present and future also take
refuge in Prajñāpāramitā and realise
unexcelled, perfect enlightenment.*

*You should therefore know the great mantra of
Prajñāpāramitā, the mantra of great magic,
the unexcelled mantra, the mantra equal to
the unequalled, which heals all suffering and
is true, not false, the mantra in Prajñāpāramitā
spoken thus:*

“Gate gate, paragate, parasangate, bodhi svaha.”

2. **Pure Land:** called *Jōdo bukkō* in Japanese, *Jingtūzōng* in Chinese, and *Jeongtojong* in Korean.
3. **Lotus Sutra:** *Tendai* in Japanese, *Tiāntái* in China, and *Cheontae* in Korea.
4. **Nichiren:** *Hokke-kei Bukkyo* in Japanese.

The *Heartstud Sūtra* (Sanskrit: *Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya*) is a famous sūtra in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Its Sanskrit title, *Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya*, literally means “*The Heart of the Perfection of Transcendent Wisdom.*” This sutra is often cited as the best-known and most popular Buddhist scripture of all. The Chinese version is frequently chanted (in the local pronunciation) by the *Chán* (*Zen/Seon*) school during ceremonies in China, Japan, Korea, and even Vietnam. It is also significant to the Shingon Buddhist school in Japan, whose founder Kūkai wrote a commentary on it, and in various Tibetan Buddhist monasteries it is studied extensively.

Zen began to emerge as a distinctive school of Mahāyāna Buddhism when the Indian sage Bodhidharma (ca. 470-543 CE) taught at the Shàolín Monastery in China. Because of his ground breaking work, Bodhidharma is called the *First Patriarch of Zen*. The word Zen is originally derived from the Sanskrit word *dhyāna*, meaning “meditation.” As practised in China (*Chán*), Korea (*Seon*) and Japan (*Zen*), Zen is today a quite specific form of Buddhism focusing overwhelmingly on a single outcome: true meditation. Zen places far less emphasis on scriptures than other forms of Buddhism and deals instead with a practical method of gaining spiritual breakthroughs and elevated awareness through the proper use of meditation.

Zen in China

Buddhism first reached China from India roughly 2,000 years ago, during the Han Dynasty. Han Dynasty China was deeply Confucian, and Confucianism is focused on maintaining harmony and social order in the here-and-now, with little or no thought for a ‘hereafter’ world. Buddhism, on the other hand, emphasised entering the monastic life to seek a reality beyond ordinary reality. The two world views were bound to collide, and this they soon did. Confucianism was not welcoming of Buddhism as it saw it as a dangerous and impractical upturning of the existing order of things.



Buddhism however found an ally in China's other great indigenous religion, Taoism. Taoist and Buddhist meditation practices and philosophies were similar in many respects, and some Chinese took an interest in Buddhism from a Taoist perspective. Early translations of Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Chinese borrowed Taoist terminology. Still, during the Han Dynasty very few Chinese practised Buddhism.

In south China, a kind of "gentry Buddhism" stressing learning and philosophy, became popular among educated and well-to-do Chinese. The elite of Chinese society freely associated with the growing number of Buddhist monks and scholars. The dialogue between Buddhism and Taoism continued, and the Taoist influence caused the Chinese to favour Mahāyāna Buddhism.

In north China, Buddhist monks who were masters of divination became advisers to rulers of the "barbarian" tribes. Some of these rulers became Buddhists and supported monasteries and the ongoing work of translating the Sanskrit texts into Chinese. This separation of north and south China caused Buddhism to develop



The tranquility of a Japanese Zen-themed garden in an English woodland setting.

into northern and southern schools in China.

There are six acknowledged Patriarchs of Zen in China. Under the 6th Patriarch, Huìnéng (638-713), Zen removed most of its remaining Indian trappings, becoming more Chinese and more what we now consider as being Zen. Some (although much in the minority) consider Huìnéng, not Bodhidharma, to be the true father of Zen. Huìnéng's tenure was at the beginning of what is still called the Golden Age of Zen which can roughly be equated to China's Táng Dynasty, 618-907. The masters of the Golden Age still speak to us through *kōans* and stories. Of the several distinctive schools of Mahayana Buddhism that had originated in China, only Pure Land and Zen survived with an appreciable number of followers despite the suppression that occurred during the later Táng Dynasty.

Seon – Korean Zen

In Korea, Buddhist temples are abundant. Many of the oldest and most famous temples are located high up in the mountains where Buddhist monks and nuns live, meditate and study. Many temples have beautiful architecture, statues, paintings and pagodas, some dating back more than 1,000 years.

Buddhism first arrived in Korea in 372 in the *Goguryeo* kingdom (37 BCE – 668 CE). In 374 the influential Chinese monk *Ado* arrived in the kingdom and so deeply impressed the king *Sosurim* the following year that the first two temples *Seongmunsa* and *Ilbullansa* were built by him in 375. Buddhism soon became the national religion of the *Goguryeo* kingdom.

A series of teachers transmitted Zen to Korea during the Golden Age. A new epoch in Korean Buddhism began in another of the three kingdoms of Korea, the *Silla* kingdom (57 BCE – 935 CE) with the



One of the first representations of the Buddha wearing the Greek himation. Gandhara, 1st-2nd Century CE.





The three kingdoms of Korea: Goguryeo, Baekje and Silla. The Goguryeo confederacy (c. 42-532 CE) existed within the borders of the Silla kingdom, but was eventually subdued and fully incorporated into it. Silla conquered parts of Goguryeo in the latter part of its history, considerably expanding its reach.

establishment of several Zen (*Seon*) schools. In China, the movement towards a form of Buddhism based primarily on meditational practices began during the 6th and 7th Centuries. It was not long before the influence of this new approach reached Korea, where it was known as *Seon*, meaning “meditation.” Tension developed between the new meditational schools and those which were until then academically-oriented, and which were described by the term *gyo*, meaning “learning” or “study.”

Beomnang (fl. 632–646), said to be a student of the Chinese Fourth Patriarch Daoxin (580–651), is generally credited with the initial transmission of *Seon* into Korea. *Seon* was popularised by Sinhaeng (704–779) in the latter part of the 8th Century and by Doui who died in 825. From then on, many Koreans studied Zen in China, and upon their return established their own schools at various mountain monasteries with their leading disciples. Initially, the number of these schools was fixed at nine, and Korean *Seon* was as a consequences called the “nine mountains” (*gusan*) school. Eight of the schools were of the lineage of Mǎzǔ Dào'yī (709–788), as they were established through connection with either him or one of his eminent disciples. The one exception was the Sumi-san school founded by Jeom (869–936), which had developed from the Cáodòng lineage.

Here is a recent description of a visit to a Korean *Seon* temple which gives an insight into Korean temple life:

“Everything was so clean: from the mountain air to the spring water that flows from stone fountains and tastes better than any fine wine from Bordeaux. And this,

combined with some vigorous hiking and quiet meditation and reflection, contributed to the best nights’ sleep I have had since I was a child.

“Each temple offers an early-morning chanting ceremony at 04:00, Zen meditation during the day, a tea ceremony and conversation with a monk, community work, hiking and participating in evening prayers.

“I was determined to hear the early morning service, which began at 03:30, and asked my translator to make sure I awoke in time. I sat in the small, quiet temple and observed two monks bowing and chanting and three lay workers performing the 108 deep-bow ceremony which took place after the service. I made an attempt myself but was only able to perform a few deep bows.”

Modern Zen and Japan

Japan is a very mountainous country, and over 70% of the country is forested, mountainous and unsuitable for agricultural, industrial or residential use. As a result the habitable zones, mainly located in coastal areas, have



Indian cave wall painting of Avalokitesvara. Ajantā Caves, 6th Century CE.





Shàolín Monastery or Temple is a Buddhist temple in Dengfeng county, Zhengzhou, Henan province, China. This shows one of the buildings in the large complex.

extremely high population densities. Indeed, Japan is one of the most densely populated countries in the world; so, with a population of some 126 million people, space and privacy are at a premium. With this lack of privacy, the only sure way of having privacy is to reach within one's innermost being, for only there can one truly be alone.

The paramount figure in Japanese Buddhism is Prince Shōtoku (572 – 622), a semi-legendary regent and politician of the Japanese Asuka period who served under Empress Suiko. He was a son of Emperor Yōmei and his younger half-sister was Princess Anahobe no Hashihito. Over successive generations, a devotional cult arose around the figure of Prince Shōtoku for the protection of Japan, the Imperial family, and for Buddhism. He was appointed regent (*Sesshō*) in 593 by the Empress. Inspired by Buddha's teachings, he succeeded in establishing a centralised government during his rule. The Prince was an ardent Buddhist and is traditionally attributed as the author of the *Sangyō Gisho*, or "*Annotated Commentaries on the Three Sutras*" (the *Lotus Sutra*, *Vimalakirti Sutra* and the *Sutra of Queen Srimala*). The first of these commentaries, *Hokke Gisho*, is traditionally dated 615 CE, and therefore traditionally regarded as the first Japanese text, in turn making Shōtoku the first Japanese writer. However, it is also said that despite being credited as the founder of Japanese Buddhism, the Prince respected Shintoism and visited Buddhist temples only when done in conjunction

with visits to Shinto shrines as well.

As already stated, the central feature of Zen for at least the past millennia and a half is meditation. The tradition holds all notions of doctrine and teachings necessitate the creation of various intellectual creations, and these in turn obscure the transcendent wisdom of each being's innate Buddha nature. The process of rediscovery of one's inner Buddha goes under various terms such as "introspection", "a backward step", "turning-about" or "turning the eye inward."

During seated meditation, practitioners usually assume a lotus position. To regulate the mind, awareness is directed towards counting or becoming aware of one's breathing, and moving the focus of one's attention to an energy centre located below the navel. Often, a square or round cushion is placed on a padded mat and is used to sit on. In other cases, a chair is used and the practice is then called seated *dhyāna*, *zuòchán* in Chinese, and *zazen* in Japanese.

Intensive group meditations are practised at times in some temples, and such gatherings are called *Sesshin*. While the daily routine may require monks to meditate for several hours each day, during the most intensive part of the practice they devote themselves almost exclusively to the practice of seated meditation. The many 30–50 minute long meditation periods are interwoven with rest breaks, meals, and short periods of work that are performed with the same mindfulness. Nightly sleep is





The inside of a Korean Buddhist temple in the capital Seoul.

been a totally benign and compassionate reason for its approach, which is to coax one into loosening the grip of one's ego and bringing about a penetration of mind into the realm of the True or Formless Self, which in turn is equated with the Buddha. According to Zen master Kosho Uchiyama, when thoughts and fixation on the little "I" are transcended, an awakening to a universal, non-dual Self occurs:-

"When we let go of thoughts and wake up to the reality of life that is working beyond them, we discover the Self that is a living universal non-dual life [before the separation into two] that pervades all living creatures and all existence."

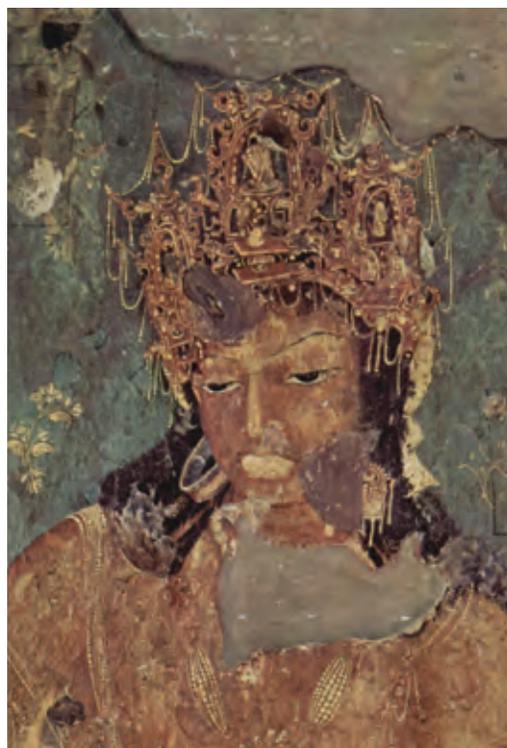
kept to seven hours or less. In modern Buddhist practice in Japan, Taiwan and the West, lay students often attend these intensive practice sessions, which are typically 1, 3, 5 or 7 days in length.

At the beginning of the Chinese Song Dynasty (960-1279), use of the *kōan* method became popular. A *kōan*, literally a "public case", is a story or dialogue describing an interaction between a Zen master and a student. These anecdotes give a demonstration of the master's insight. *Kōans* emphasise the non-conceptual insight that the Buddhist teachings are pointing to. *Kōans* can be used to provoke the "great doubt" and test a student's inner progress.

Kōan inquiry may be practised during seated meditation (*zazen*), walking meditation (*kinhin*), and throughout all the activities of daily life. *Kōan* practice is particularly emphasised by the Japanese Rinzai school, but it also occurs in other schools or branches of Zen. The Zen student's mastery of a given *kōan* is presented to the teacher in a private interview. While there is no unique answer to a *kōan*, practitioners are expected to demonstrate their understanding of the *kōan* and of Zen in general through their responses. The teacher may approve or disapprove of the answer and guide the student in the right direction. The interaction with a Zen-teacher is central to Zen, but makes Zen-practice, at least in the west, vulnerable to both misunderstanding and abuse.

Zen Paradox

Paradoxes abound in Zen Buddhist teachings, almost to the point that the whole edifice upon which it is built was intentionally created to confuse rather than enlighten. But that is far from the truth and there has always



According to Mahāyāna doctrine, Avalokiteśvara is the bodhisattva who has made a great vow to assist sentient beings in times of difficulty, and to postpone his own Buddhahood until he has assisted every sentient being in achieving Nirvāna. Ajantā Caves, 6th Century CE.



Life-Changing Books

by Stella Dartington

In the March 2014 edition of the Rosicrucian Beacon I gave a list of films I've seen over the years that moved me deeply and I believe brought about some very positive changes in my life. But, another of my great enthusiasms is reading and I thought I would share with you here a few of my all-time favourite books.



TECHNOPHOBES may have worried about the future of the book as part of our mainstream media, but a glance at the shelves in the average large bookshop should give reassurance that it has not yet yielded to online information sources or e-readers. The array of new titles remains quite astonishing. Latest figures documented by Wikipedia show 2.2 million around the world at last count from various years dating back to 1996, nearly 150,000 of them in the UK in 2011,

not counting those in the electronic publishing boom which is enabling writers to bring their work to market in a highly affordable form.

But reading a book is time-consuming, even for those who have mastered skimming, chunking and other arts of speed reading. Perhaps we should think twice before deciding how many of our 86,400 precious seconds a day to spend on it. Certain books may be a complete waste of time, at least as far as you, the reader, is concerned. If a glance or two tells you the inner material



is offensive, banal or too ridiculous to contemplate, walk away and don't feel guilty. Those seconds cannot be replaced.

There are many books well worth the effort however, whether because of the information accrued, the emotional journey, the vibrancy of the writing, the great plot or the new perspective. The particular volume may offer amusement, a fresh perspective, one or more interesting ideas or perhaps good pictures. If a book is still in print when the copyright expires, 70 years from the end of the year the author died, it will probably be worth at least a perusal.

Every book we do take time to read changes us subtly at some level, but then there are books which have a profound effect on our lives, providing material which we not only enjoy in any of a range of ways, but which we choose to absorb and work with. These are books written by people who have discovered more than we know at that particular time, and they have first chosen and then made considerable effort to share it with us.

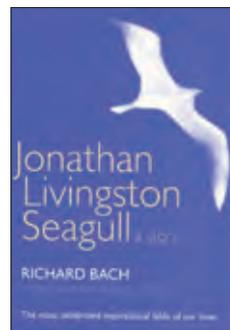
In some cases these books actually invite us to work with them, to carry out exercises, fill in quizzes, make meditation journeys, explore our inner hang-ups or in other ways burrow to the depths of our own interior workings to find out what is going on and shed new light upon it. I am fortunate to have been blessed with many such reading experiences and to have garnered what I take to be illumination through them, in the sense of greater understanding of my own inner processes. So, I thought it would be fun, and possibly helpful, to share some of them with you by compiling a list of my top 10 best-ever favourites.

Overtly religious or philosophical texts such as the Bible, the Koran, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Tao Te Ching, have been purposely avoided, even though they are world best sellers. No-one will have trouble finding those and finding out anything they wish about them. I have also avoided books from my Rosicrucian library since most readers of this magazine know that they, by definition, come recommended by the Order. Other extremely rich seams have also been ruled out, just to make the choice a little more manageable, including novels, biographies, histories, compilations and subject textbooks. After all, Google estimates nearly 130 million different books have been published and even 86,400 seconds a day doesn't afford enough time to read them all.

These 10 I have selected because of the impact they had on me personally and they mostly seem to merge under the Mind, Body and Spirit tab. One of the yardsticks I use for a good read is that I want to go back to them again and again, and that with every visit there is something new, different and pleasing to be found.

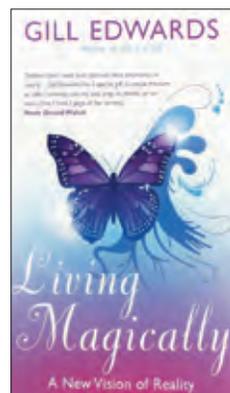
Please note that the preferences may change depending on many factors including mood on a particular day, perhaps even by the time of going to print, and further reading under progress and yet to come. The choices are highly subjective and personal to me of course, but perhaps you might like to draw up your own personal shortlist of great reads and think about why you love and value them so much. For me it feels like an absolute pleasure to spend some of those wonderfully abundant seconds in this way and I am convinced that nothing which makes the heart feel so good could possibly be a waste of time.

So, here is my treasured selection.



Jonathan Livingston Seagull
by *Richard Bach*

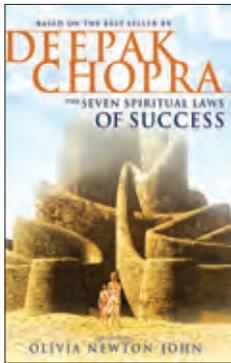
This is the wonderful tale of a seagull who dared to be different, flying not just to find food but to build speed, to reach greater heights and break the barriers which conditioned others of his kind to stay within the dull confines of their routine lives. His own, personal flight path brings its own hazards and its literal downfalls (one of which nearly kills him) but following his dream sends him soaring on every level. It is a metaphorical lesson that we, too, should follow our dreams and our hearts, breaking free of the constraints of the mundane.



Living Magically
by *Gill Edwards*

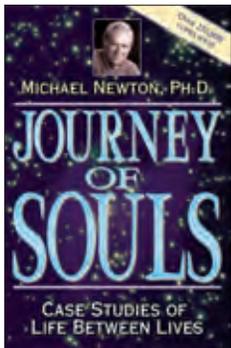
This book, which the author called 'a new vision of reality', was my first encounter with 'New Age' thinking, including the key concept that we each create our own reality by means of the thoughts that we think, and that we can therefore change it by changing our thoughts. What an empowering and beautifully delivered message! Psychologist Gill provides wonderful meditation journeys and exercises, such as discovering and releasing the hidden beliefs which hold us back, meeting our inner, shadow saboteurs and awakening to our dreams. But for repetition I would include her second book, "*Stepping Into the Magic*", which is equally well thumbed.





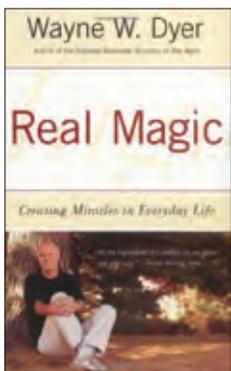
The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success by Deepak Chopra

Subtitled “*A practical guide to the fulfilment of your dreams*”, this small volume is a highly readable masterpiece of mysticism, introducing the laws of the universe and how to use them to achieve success. By success, this prolific author and doctor of Ayurvedic medicine means “*the continued expansion of happiness and the progressive realisation of worthy goals.*” It gives one of the simplest possible insights into quantum physics, the means by which the invisible can be brought here into visible manifestation in the material world.



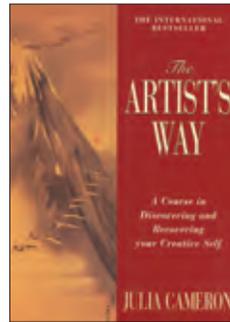
Journey of Souls by Michael Newton

This book is a compilation of pioneering deep hypnotherapy sessions in which the author supposedly regressed his willing subjects back to their lives between lives, enabling them to meet the beings who guide their evolution, shed light on what happens to the immortal part of ourselves after earthly death and reveal how our relationships and circumstances enable us to develop and evolve. I found it unputdownable.



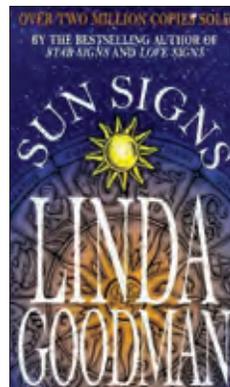
Real Magic by Wayne Dyer

The author, now in his 80s, has made his own life a testament to the workability of this guide to making amazing things happen in everyday life. And he has done this not only by becoming one of the best known authors in the modern New Thought genre but also by continually learning, growing and experiencing ‘miracles’ in his own life. His own mastery of how to transform what you would like and deserve to have into what you finally receive and hold is engagingly evident in this wonderful manual.



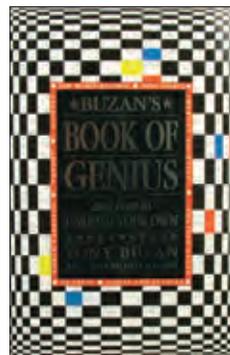
The Artist's Way by Julia Cameron

This is a course for “*discovering and recovering*” your creative self and is a readable guide with lots of suggestions for exercises to unlock latent talents and unblock stifled expression. She suggests the latent artist equip themselves with two basic tools; (a) producing, first thing every morning, three pages of longhand, stream-of-consciousness writing, getting the chatter of the subconscious mind down on paper just as it comes in an unbroken chain; and (b) a weekly *Artist Date* in which you give yourself a solo experience of some kind, to feed the inner artist with new material. This first of several books on the artist theme offers many exercises to help unblock and revitalise the creative thrust.



Sun Signs by Linda Goodman

This is quite the most fun book I've ever found on astrology, even though I was probably still at school when I first read it. It has been reprinted since then but I love Linda's amazing insights into the effects of the constellations, and was hooked after finding her section on the Aries Woman like reading an interview with myself and that significant others' inner workings were likewise detailed with compass point accuracy and wit. It is still my 'go to' book when encountering anyone new, with tremendous humour and accuracy and several chuckles to the page.



Buzan's Book of Genius by Tony Buzan and Raymond Keene

Subtitled “*...and how to unleash your own*”, this is a fabulous book for assessing where you are in your life, and deciding steps to get you where you would like to go. It includes an innovative test section to evaluate your “multiple intelligence quotient”, not just the standard IQ assessment but judging your aptitude in fields such as creativity, courage, truth, intuition, positive attitude, planning and commitment. Buzan was the



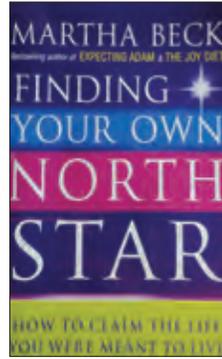
inventor of “mind mapping” and Keene the co-founder of the World Memory Championship. Together they have produced a book with fascinating mini-biographies and rankings of geniuses through history, and given tips and techniques enabling ordinary mortals like us to develop our various skills. One book, a lifetime’s reading.



The Magic
by Rhonda Byrne

While “*The Secret*” is the book which made Rhonda’s name, “*The Magic*” is the one that captured my attention and compelled me to start counting blessings at the rate of 10 a day, 920 days ago at time of writing this. It is the ultimate feel good book, immensely enjoyable,

a manual of means to create positive conditions in your relationships, career and bank account by using various means and imagery to generate feelings of gratitude. If you get the exercises right as Rhonda evidently did, you can literally have anything and everything you want. Even if you don’t succeed, and I haven’t quite yet, they are such delicious fun to do and to visualise that this enchanting book can’t fail to earn its space and justify its reading time.



Finding Your Own North Star
by Martha Beck:

This is another book filled with insight expressed in quite magical writing. Martha’s marvellous use of language and amazing stock of real life coincidences and wisdom tells you “*how to claim the life you were meant to live*” and does it

beautifully. It guides you to follow the inner compass towards discovery and fulfilment of your divine purpose. It is a satnav for life’s journey, an enchanting trip over the obstacles and past the pitfalls to wherever it may lead.



The Power of a Smile

by Dini Jacobs
(1931 - 2015)

WHEN we see the news lately, it’s all so depressing: wars, hunger, disease, suicide bombers, corruption, there seems no end to the misery. It’s no wonder psychiatric waiting rooms are so full of people suffering from depression.

Well, they should be empty. We’ve been given free will to either accept our lot in life and make the best of it, or let it detrimentally influence us to such a degree that we spiral into despair. There is a third option though, and that is to consciously try and improve things. In the *Rosicrucian Code of Life* we’re urged to give thanks every morning for the new day, for the return of consciousness and the opportunity to continue the mission of our lives.

So let’s begin with gratitude by recognising the beauty around us. Beauty in nature may be the easiest to observe, but

with a bit of thought you will realise there is beauty in everything. Take a good look at a straw hat for instance. First there was the grass seed coming to full maturity as grass or reeds. Then the stems were cut, dried, and finally woven into an intricate pattern to make the hat. One can see beauty in every step of this process.

And when we see all this beauty, isn’t it just right to pass some of it on to others? But how? By smiling of course! We should have a warm smile for everyone we meet during the day, for surely a smile is the most beautiful expression of one’s being? Wherever you are, smile at everyone, in a kind and friendly way and see how often this kindness is returned. By doing this regularly, you won’t even have to think about it anymore; you will smile automatically and it will come from the goodness of your heart.

If you haven’t smiled today, give it a try; it could be the start of something good.



God of My Heart

by Ralph M Lewis
Imperator of AMORC
(1939 – 1987)



ARE THERE any people who do not have within them a concept similar to the Rosicrucian expression “God of My Heart?” Can any people conscientiously deny that there exists a Transcendancy or state of reality that is

infinitely greater than themselves? Must they not admit that Being, the whole of reality, is infinite in relation to the human consciousness? Solipsists affirm that there is no reality beyond the human consciousness, that nothing exists other than the self. Yet, by the very fact of



their personal existence, they refute their own belief in this regard, for their very dependence upon externality for their existence is proof of their distinction from the self. No one thing is the whole; all things are part of it. However, is there just one “God of my Heart?” In other words, is there a *unity of understanding* of this Transcendancy, this Absolute, of which all things are said to consist?

Among people there is no universal concept or definition of the God of one’s Heart, that is, a common belief in a dynamic Supreme Power. We recognise instinctively, intuitively and rationally our subordination to the collectivity of all Being. However, we have always struggled to define it. What do we conceive its elements to be? Creativity, power, omniscience? A cosmic order, infinite and eternal? A Supreme Judge of all? Or perhaps all of these and more? Where do we derive these concepts that we attribute to this Transcendancy, the infinite reality in which we find ourselves? Is it not from within our own being? Have we not, through the ages, found in ourselves the qualities we attribute to this God of our Heart? Can we find other words or ideas to attribute to this Infinite All, other than the “human frames” or bodies that come with our mortal experience? Consequently, the God of our Heart and the concepts of that God held by all others, must be a construct of our minds; not the essential “essence” of it of course, but the mental image we make of that essence as we experience it.

All people therefore have a God of their Heart, though by definition it is not universally accepted by them. Different minds have come to agree on a definition

of this Infinite Transcendancy which they experience; it is intimate to them and their personal definitions therefore create a corresponding mental image. This concept then, appears so effective to them, emotionally and psychically, that they consider it an absolute truth. Consequently, they believe no other image can better portray the mystical experience which they have had and which is therefore to them God.

Different Conceptions of God

Yet there is a multitude of other individuals who have experienced this Supreme Essence as well, but mentally conceive it differently. To them, God is accepted with equal reverence and devotion, despite the fact that their

Yet there is a multitude of other individuals who have experienced this Supreme Essence as well, but mentally conceive it differently.

individual concepts of this God may not have the same mental image as that held by others. Some feel that to attribute human qualities to the God of their Heart is to demean God’s exalted nature. And there are others whom we recognise as being spiritually motivated, yet who believe that this Transcendancy lies beyond human comprehension, especially in its definition. In other words no mortal, finite mind can embrace fully the nature of the Infinite so as to declare it to exist in a specific form.

People who have a similar affinity of feeling and understanding have reduced their beliefs to sacred books which to them constitute the Divine Truth, born out of their personal enlightenment. But what of others who have the same elevation of spirituality, but whose construct and understanding of God differs? Are they wrong? Throughout history there have been, and still exist, many names for one’s personal God or Transcendancy that many have experienced: Zeus, Brahma, Logos, Apollo, Allah, Jehovah, Mithra and more. Is one person’s conception of God any less true or less in quality than another’s?

Admittedly, by certain relative standards, the teachings of one particular religion, which are attributed to divine revelation from



Throughout history there have been, and still exist, many names for one’s personal God or Transcendancy.



one god, may appear more morally exalted than those of another. But again, these varied moral standards are the products of human mind, inspired by mystical experience and a feeling of oneness with his or her God. There would seem to be a vast gap between, for example, the anthropomorphic concept of a God to whom humanlike qualities are attributed, and who may be accepted as a paternal being exhibiting such emotions as love and anger, a God who punishes and reproveth man, on the one hand...; and on the other hand, an equally spiritual concept of the Infinite had by those who consider God to be a Universal Consciousness far removed from the petty qualities and emotions had by humans.

This consciousness is presumed to permeate the whole of being, constituting a motivating power throughout the whole matrix of cosmic laws. If such people have reached this belief, this concept, through mystical experience, it is then to them the God of their Heart. Are we to condemn them as being wrong? Who can come forth and give evidence that one person's God is false? An individual's personal understanding and realisation of God may have the same effect upon that person, morally, as another individual's conception of God.

Ever Evolving God

Our culture has defined and redefined our image of the God of our Heart throughout the centuries. However, to deny any devout concept of a Transcendancy that was held throughout history because of its apparent primitive form is to fail to recognise the ever-evolving "God of the human Heart." To most people, the word God embraces the exalted qualities of the Absolute, for that is more easily understood. It should most certainly be used by all who find it to be the most intimate term for their comprehension of divine qualities.

Intolerance enters the picture when one set of believers think their definition of God is the sole truth and, in their fanatical zeal, persecute those whose spiritual image and experience of supreme Reality differs. The Rosicrucian Order is not a religion, but rather a cultural, mystical and philosophical Order. In its discourses and curriculum it has always used the term "God of our Heart" when the subjects of mysticism, ontology, Being, or the Absolute are discussed. And the term has always meant for each individual to accept as God the concept which is intimate to the spiritual feelings of the individual. Such is God to that individual, but by no means should this person's concept be the definition of God that all others must accept.

Sanctuary of Self

by *Ralph M Lewis*

Mystically, entering the silence often does not mean communing with the Cosmic or escaping in consciousness to another plane. It can and often does mean freeing oneself from all other realities except the paramount one with which one is concerned. It can mean intensive objective concentration on one important factor. In other words, it can consist of creating a mental world, perhaps for a few minutes, in which nothing exists but self and the problem at hand.

One can enter the silence so one is oblivious of one's surroundings and yet be using one's objective powers of reason, applying them to the matter at hand. True mystics feel unworthy of making appeals to the universal mind, of entering the silence of the Cosmic for the purpose of soliciting help, if they have first failed to exercise their Divine gifts of reason and the other mental faculties they were given at birth.

The occult principle of silence is to permit the soul to *hear without ears*. It is also to permit our soul to speak or commune with us by other means than that of the mouth. It consists of a complete submission of the will to the Cosmic mind, to hear that which the human ear cannot hear, and to speak through the soul rather than through the mortal self.



The Indo-Europeans

PART 2: The Kurgan, Danubian and Anatolian Hypotheses

by Sven Johansson

Parts 1 and 2 of this multi-part article do not directly deal with the hypothesised spiritual beliefs of the cultures descended from the original Indo-Europeans; but they lay the groundwork for an eventual investigation into those beliefs and how they have influenced the genesis and survival of many religious faiths. There are some key spiritual concepts we take for granted as self-evident truths, but all of them began somewhere at some time by some one or more persons. Many of these belief systems trace their lineages back through ancient civilisations descended from the original Proto-Indo-European language speakers.

This series of articles is intended to encourage you to further investigate the origins of human cultures of any sort, but in particular the one that brought about one of the languages you speak, one that almost certainly descended from an Ur-language called Proto-Indo-European, also known as PIE.

CONTROVERSY is never a pleasant thing but it is often what we find in theories that have good logic and balance in their arguments, have both strong supporters and fierce opponents, but also have little physical evidence to support their conclusions. This is much the case when it comes to theories concerning the origins of the original Proto-Indo-Europeans, the original PIE-speakers. The arguments are persuasive, some less so than others, but all have at least a few very good points.



Indo-European studies are “...about as exciting as watching lichen grow. Not only does it takes years to see any appreciable change, it takes even longer to warm to the hidden knowledge lichen biology can yield.” Many people may be interested in passing, even enthusiastic for a while, but very few have the stomach for a lifetime of painstaking research. So, with this important caveat behind us, let us now briefly look at the conclusions reached by a few who spent large parts of their lives researching the origins of Proto-Indo-European.

There are at least three major hypotheses concerning the origins of the original PIE-speakers, and in this part I will briefly present them. The first and oldest is the Kurgan or Pontic Steppe hypothesis of Marija Gimbutas from 1955. The next plausible theory was, when it was first formulated in the mid-1970s called the Danubian hypothesis, though not gaining much traction at the time. And the last is the Anatolian theory from 1987 by Colin Renfrew. Since then, each of these theories have undergone modifications and refinements and today appear in the literature regularly by other names.

These three are the main foundation stones upon which most current discussion revolves, except..., the recent Continuity hypothesis which is intriguing but has yet to gain much acceptance, and the even more recent genetic studies which are confirming some of the conclusions reached by the main theories. DNA analysis is revolutionising the field and may one day establish a comprehensive and scientifically robust theory of the origins and subsequent spread of the original PIE speakers. It is awful to see the deep tribal, religious and national divisions that exist today between people and communities that once upon a time in deep antiquity may have originated from a common source and spoke a common language..., Proto-Indo-European.

Part 1 concluded that the original Proto-Indo-European language must have emerged somewhere between 6000 and 3500 BCE. It also concluded that these original PIE speakers were agriculturalists and had domesticated cattle, sheep and pigs, and had possibly domesticated horses to the level of draught animals, though not necessarily for riding. They built houses with doors, they were from deep within continental Eurasia, and they knew little or nothing of large expanses of water such as oceans. And finally, they were habituated to a temperate, continental climate similar to what is found in central Europe as far east as the Urals.

KURGAN HYPOTHESIS

The 70 year old Kurgan or Pontic-Steppe hypothesis

exists in a number of different versions. One of the better known, and the one most compatible with our time frame of 6000 to 3500 BCE identifies the ancestral PIE speakers with the *Kurgan* culture of southern Russia and Ukraine, so named from the “kurgans” or burial mounds that are prominent in the area. The theory has at first glance an intuitive appeal, but there are problems with it. Although its emphasis is on the *Kurgan* culture itself, its originator Marija Gimbutas referred to several much earlier cultures as well, including the *Sredny Stog* from roughly the same geographic region. According to the theory, it is from one of these pre-Kurgan cultures, stretching back as far as 5500 BCE, that the earliest instances of PIE speaking people emerged and transmitted their language to the later Kurgan culture.

The Kurgan people first become identifiable around 4000 BCE in the area between the Don and Volga rivers. The region, now a flat grassland with patches of woodland mainly along watercourses, was wetter and more forested at that time, considerably so. Supporters of the theory describe the Kurgans as pastoralists herding cattle, sheep and horses, and keeping pigs. Horses seem to have been by far the most important as a food source, with their bones accounting for 70-80% of animal bones found in early Kurgan settlements. This should not seem strange as we know from much earlier Neolithic settlements that horse meat was high on the list of preferred meals.

Hunter gathering was the predominant source of food. However, early forms of agriculture may also have been practised.

Although hunter-gathering was predominant, early forms of agriculture may well have been practised by the Kurgans. There is evidence of a few sickles and grinding stones, but this alone does not point to extensive agriculture, or even necessarily to agriculture at all, for such implements could have been used for harvesting and grinding wild grass seeds, as was done in other pre-agricultural cultures. The Kurgans made pottery on a limited scale and may have used annealed copper, but there is no evidence that they had learned how to smelt it.

Between 4000 and 3500 BCE, according to the theory, the Kurgans expanded west, east and south, from their homeland searching for better pasturelands. They settled preferably in flat grasslands, a landscape favourable to horse and cattle grazing. As they expanded westward they absorbed other already settled agricultural societies such as the *Tripolye* and *Cucuteni* of southern Ukraine. The decisive elements in this successful expansion, it is claimed, were the use of horses for riding, presumably for rapidly



transporting
m o u n t e d
archers, but also
the first use of fighting carts,
wagons with solid wooden wheels drawn
by oxen or horses.

Beginning around 4000 BCE, the growing Kurgan population of pastoralists expanded into the Danube basin, and over the next 1000 years took over most of the farming cultures of the Balkans and Central Europe and started moving north, northwest and northeast from that area. A little later, beginning around 2500 BCE, the easternmost wing of the Kurgans moved from the steppes across the Caucasus, infiltrating southwest into Asia Minor where they became the ancestors of the Anatolian Indo-Europeans, and south into Iran as the ancestors of the Indo-Iranians.

The theory however lacks both cohesion and any relation to archaeological evidence. Although once popular, it is today considered outdated and based more on an appealing though unsupported opinion than on factual evidence. For example, it says that the Kurgans must have been seafarers on the Black Sea at one time, but that need not have been the case, for the only actual fact cited in support of this is that the Indo-Europeans possessed a word for “boat” **nau-* (English: “nau~tical”) and one for “rowing.” To expand a rowboat into a seafaring ship requires a lot more evidence than this, and anyone who has tried rowing a boat on the open ocean will know it is wholly different from accomplishing the same in a river or lake. Furthermore, the PIE speakers had no word for “sea.”

Indo-European pig keeping does not fit in with the picture of a semi-nomadic grassland folk either. Pigs are forest animals, and moreover are virtually impossible to

drive over any distance. Finally, if the Kurgans were indeed searching for better pasturelands in flat, grassy country, they would not have found it in the densely forested and often hilly terrain of central and western Europe.

There is general if not universal agreement among archaeologists that at some point in prehistory some steppe-related people, possibly speaking a language of PIE origin, did migrate into much of Europe. But according to most archaeologists this movement began a good deal later, from 3500 to 3000 BCE. These dates would perhaps allow the Kurgans to have had horse or ox-drawn carts, which though little use for fighting, would have given them mobility both in following their herds and in migration. The same time period would likely have given them copper weapons which would have provided a much more decisive military advantage than horse-mounted archers or fighting from cumbersome carts.

Various other experts have cited these possibilities in identifying the Kurgan expansion, whether from the grasslands or from the more wooded parts of southern Ukraine, as the original expansion of PIE speakers. The trouble with these theories is that if one puts the Kurgans late enough in time to have either wheels or copper/bronze weapons, they are also too late to fit the time frame we have already described. The Kurgans were almost certainly Indo-Europeans, but the date of their expansion is probably much too late to cater for the wide differences





between PIE-descended languages that are found by 1400 BCE.

These and many other aspects of the Kurgan expansion involve technical and disputed questions about the interpretation and dating of archaeological evidence. What is not disputed by the supporters of the theory however is that the Kurgan migration, whenever it may have occurred, must have happened at a time when most of Europe was *already settled by farming people*, a process which was essentially complete by around 4500 BCE. This implies that the population of Europe was already beginning to become fairly numerous, and the Kurgans, if they indeed were predominantly pastoral, must have been relatively less numerous, since pastureland yields considerably less food than agricultural cropland.

The Kurgan conquest must therefore have been much as Gimbutas describes it, as “...an infiltration by Indo-European warriors who subsequently formed a *superstratum* in conquered lands.” This means that the greater part of the population in the conquered lands of Europe would initially have been non-Indo-European, and this in turn raises the thorny question of what became of those non-PIE-descended languages? How did they disappear so completely and utterly that they left virtually no traces at all?

Conquered Languages

History tells us that when a people speaking one language is conquered by people speaking another, only one of the two languages will survive, though there is no telling which. Conquest brought Greek into Greece, Sanskrit into India and Latin into western Europe. On the other hand, the Vikings who secured Normandy in 911 CE exchanged their Norse language for a dialect of French within a few generations. And when some of their descendants conquered England in 1066 they exchanged French for English in under 200 years. The only general rule seems to be that no matter which language disappears, it does not disappear without trace: it will make its contribution, great or small, to the vocabulary, and sometimes also to the grammar and phonetics, of its successor.

To take a familiar example, the French that the Normans brought into England had all but vanished as a spoken language in England by 1400, but it had greatly enriched the English vocabulary with hundreds of French words. In cases where the conquerors' language is the

survivor, the language of the conquered is most likely to leave traces in two areas. The first concerns things which in terms of the conquerors' previous experience are exotic and for which they therefore have no words of their own.

A familiar example is that of American English, which contains many words of Native American derivation referring to such native creatures as the raccoon, skunk, caribou and muskrat, plants like the hickory, pecan and sassafras, and delicacies such as quahog, squash, hominy, and succotash. Similarly, the invading Greeks acquired words for sea and island, for the olive (*elaia*), vine (*oinos*), laurel, and many other plants, as well as for such refinements of civilisation as bricks and baths. Similarly, when the Indo-Europeans, whatever their origin, reached northern Europe, they acquired native words for “sea” and “ship”, as well as for such unfamiliar animals as the herring, skate, pilchard, pollock and prawn.

History tells us that when a culture is conquered, only one of the two languages will survive and there is no telling which it will be.

As far as land animals are concerned, the evidence against the Kurgan theory is not strong. The animals they encountered in central Europe were probably not all that different from those of the more wooded parts of the steppe, meaning that they would already have had names for those creatures. One would indeed have expected the Kurgans, if they were the first PIE speakers, to have picked up at least a handful of native animal names during their migrations, just as American English quickly incorporated for example the Indian *wapiti* or *elk*. PIE significantly did not however incorporate non-PIE words from other languages until well into its old age. The failure of the Kurgans to adopt local words during their migrations into non-PIE speaking areas does however not weigh too heavily in the balance if they are considered as a warrior people who completely supplanted the populations they subjugated. That they were warriors and that they completely replaced populations into whose lands they entered, was once part of the Kurgan hypothesis, but is no longer supported due to the lack of archaeological evidence of violent confrontation spreading from east to west in Europe.

More significant though is the lack of any common Indo-European vocabulary for marine life. If one visualises the Kurgan expansion as proceeding westward through the steppe belt between the Black Sea and the dense forests to the north, it seems unlikely that they could have made this long journey without acquiring some awareness of the sea and its creatures from the Caspian Sea or the Black



Sea. And if they did, they would almost certainly have had names for them. Yet no such names can reliably be reconstructed.

Even stronger evidence against the Kurgan hypothesis can be found in areas where vanished languages are most likely to have left some traces, particularly when it comes to names for things on land. Take for example a map of the American state of New England. Glancing over it we can see many towns and cities named with ordinary English words, albeit sometimes a bit altered: New~haven, Province~town, Bridge~port, Provide~nce, Hart~ford, Port(s)~mouth, King's~to(w)n, and so on.

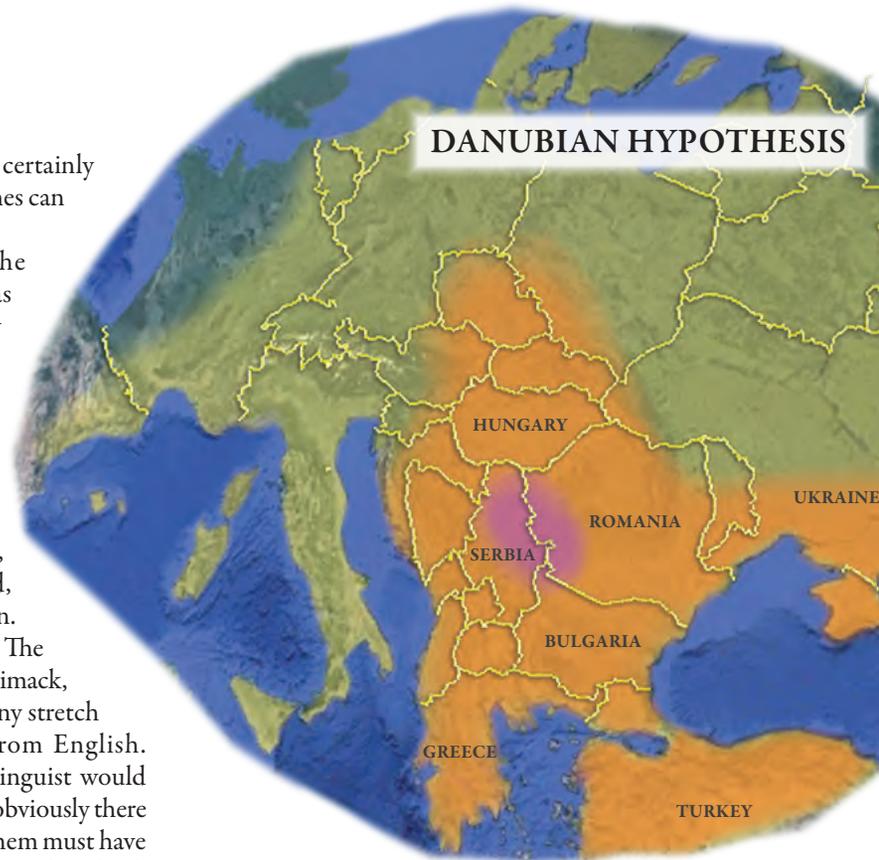
The rivers however are another matter. The Penobscot, Kennebec, Androscoggin, Merrimack, Connecticut and Housatonic cannot by any stretch of the imagination have been taken from English. Even without a knowledge of history, a linguist would inevitably conclude that, as the rivers were obviously there before the towns, the people who named them must have been there before the English language arrived. Indeed, that was of course the case throughout the Americas.

So, if the Kurgans brought the PIE language to central Europe, one would expect to find pre-PIE river names, but there aren't any. From the Rhine (derived from **rei-* "to flow") to the Danube of central Europe, the Don of Russia, the Dons of Scotland and England (all derived from **danu-* for "river" or "flowing")...., from all evidence, these were named by the PIE speakers themselves, not by any pre-existing inhabitants.

If we are still to accept the Kurgans as the original Indo-Europeans, we must believe that not only did they succeed in dominating the population of this vast area completely and utterly, but they somehow also managed to do what no other conqueror has ever done: obliterate even the remotest linguistic traces of those they had conquered. That does not seem plausible.

DANUBIAN HYPOTHESIS

Another theory concerning the origin of the PIE speakers places them already in the Danube Valley. In its simplest version it identifies them with the *Starčevo* (of modern-day Serbia) and related cultures of the middle Danube basin, which began some time before 6000 BCE as the first farming cultures in Europe north of the Mediterranean rim. By around 5000 BCE, the *Danubian Culture*, a term coined by the Australian archaeologist Vere Gordon Childe, had spread over most of central Europe, with apparently related cultures moving northeast into the



Ukraine and north into northern and eventually western Europe. By 4500 BCE descendants of these cultures were firmly established from as far west as present-day Holland to as far east as the Volga in Russia.

The archaeological remains of the Danubian cultures coincide with the linguistic remnants of the PIE speakers' culture. Grain was grown, cattle, sheep and pigs were kept, horses were not kept but may well have been known from wild herds in the more open grasslands. The region, then as now, was a mixture of grassland, woodland and in the higher areas, dense forest. Copper was used in the later stages, though as an imported material, not mined or smelted locally.

To explain the success of the Danubian expansion one need not have recourse to hypothetical armed horsemen, fighting carts or bronze weapons. The Danubians could expand because they were numerous, thanks to the increased food supplies which farming produced, and because in much of Europe there were virtually no other cultures to oppose them at the start of their migrations around 6000 BCE. The forested regions of Europe were at this time almost wholly without human habitation. The densely shaded ground produced little grass or underbrush, and therefore little fodder for game animals and little food for people who lived by hunting and gathering, and doing so preferably in more open areas. One need not in other words, postulate hordes of horsemen or anything of the sort invading from the east, for the Danubians were expanding north, west and east into what was largely a human vacuum.





Although it would have been quite difficult for pastoralists and agriculturalists to move into heavily wooded areas, it may nevertheless have been necessary due to population pressure. Once outside the Danubian mixed woodland/grassland region, the migrant farmers would have been dealing with thick forests and forest soils which, like many such soils were quickly exhausted of their nutrients once agriculture had started. There is a good chance therefore that they worked these soils by the time-honoured slash-and-burn technique of cutting down trees, leaving them to dry out for a year or two, and then setting fire to the remains, thereby clearing the land and at the same time fertilising it with minerals from the ashes. This is much the same as has been done in tropical forests for centuries, though particularly over the past half century with tragic results for the well-being of our planet.

Fields prepared in this way yield abundantly for only a few years, and then need to be turned over to pasture for a few more years before finally being abandoned for the forest to reclaim as the people move on and the whole process is repeated by later generations. In Europe, these first pioneers could within a generation or two (20 to 30 years at most in those hard times) have been followed by new migrants who reworked the same lands though with poorer and poorer results. Farming would have produced expanding populations which would have required constant replenishment by the opening up of new lands. It would also have supplied a technology whereby human communities could thrive and multiply in converted forestlands in ways not possible when hunter-gathering was the main food source.

Population Pressure

The Danubian theory therefore explains the Indo-European expansion as an expansion of agriculture north, west and east from the Danube basin. From the end of the last ice age (around 10,000 BCE) up to the beginning of the copper/bronze age in Europe (around 3500 BCE), there was only one fundamental change in Europe: the widespread adoption of agriculture as the main source of subsistence. The spread of PIE-descended languages was no less fundamental and widespread, and the simplest explanation is that these two radical changes came hand-in-hand as part and parcel of a single, multi-faceted process, the most important part of which was a relatively rapid dispersal of populations attempting to move away from population pressure, much as the Vikings of Scandinavia thousands of years later migrated from their ancestral lands for the same reasons.

The original inhabitants of the Danube basin that evolved the PIE language, or for that matter brought it with them when they first settled there, could have been the first people to have moved into this area as the vast icesheets of the ice age retreated and left wide open tundra on which the first human inhabitants hunted, but which over the millennia was taken over by heavy forestation, thereby forcing people generally south into less wooded, but more populated areas.

The Danubian hypothesis puts the Indo-European expansion as beginning between 6000 and 5000 BCE which satisfies linguists better than the considerably later Kurgan expansion (3500 - 3000 BCE). It explains the absence of non-PIE river names from central and eastern Europe, since the rivers were clearly named by the PIE speakers themselves or their descendants, rather than by any pre-existing residents. One can conclude therefore that either the PIE speakers settled in the Danube basin shortly after the end of the ice age, or they moved into the area at a time when the indigenous population was so sparse that they and their river names disappeared without trace. In addition, the theory explains why non-PIE names for rivers and other geographical features are found where they are in Europe, namely, west of the Rhine, and along parts of the North Sea and Baltic

The Danubian hypothesis postulates that the Indo-European expansion began around 6000 BCE from its source in the Danube Valley.

coast, where the Danubians (if they were the original PIE speakers) had not been settled since the end of the last ice age.

The Danube Valley was not the only route by which agriculture reached western Europe, for as one migration of farmers pushed north from the Danube, another moved west along the northern rim of the Mediterranean. The two eventually met somewhere in France around 4500 BCE, by which time the Danubian migrants now heading south towards the Mediterranean through modern-day France would have been stopped by the existence of an already fairly populous indigenous agrarian population that had evolved their own geographical names, some of which have survived in dialects from this area.

Two Language Lineages Meet

Some of these southwestern areas were not influenced by the PIE speakers at all, even as late as the early Roman period. Much of Spain was populated by Iberians who, during an earlier period, are believed to have dominated



much of France west of the Rhone and may have been survivors of the original humans that lived in southwestern France and Spain through the coldest parts of the last ice age and would have been direct descendants of the original human migrants into Europe from Africa (c. 40,000 BP), which is probably a lot earlier than any PIE speaking presence in Europe.

Parts of the Iberian language, although poorly understood today due to the paucity of inscriptions that have survived, has made it through to modern times as a 'living fossil' language, possibly a lot older than PIE. This language is believed to have been entirely unrelated to PIE or any of its descendant languages. In a small part of this same region today, the Basque language, which may or may not be descended from the Iberians, continues to survive and is the only fully non-PIE related language found in western Europe.

Another place where the advancing Danubians would have found a reasonably large indigenous population is along the northern and north-western coasts of Europe, especially southern Scandinavia. There, the more open country along the shore, and around the lakes and marshes dotting many of these areas would have provided ample forage for game, while sea and lakes together would have furnished fish, waterfowl and marine

The Danubians would have encountered existing, well established populations in the Baltic region, southwestern France and Iberia.

mammals such as seals and porpoises. Not surprisingly, the archaeological evidence indicates that many of these coastal lands were indeed well populated, at least by Stone Age standards, long before farming penetrated the region. It is not surprising then that many tribal names from these areas have survived into modern times, including those of the Belgians, Frisians, Swedes, Goths, Jutes, Britons and Irish, all of which may well have begun as local place names with non-PIE origins.

Even the word "Scandinavia" which originally denoted southern Sweden, is itself partially non-PIE: the **avia-* is Indo-European, but *scandi-* is not. So, in both western and northern Europe we find non-PIE people or their linguistic and sometimes historic traces in just the places we would expect to find them if the Indo-Europeans were indeed migrating farmers from the Danube basin, or at the very least from the east or south.

Like most theories about prehistoric peoples however, the Danubian theory is far from proven, and may be even unprovable. But it does account for the strongest conclusions we have come to about the original PIE

speakers, with a minimum of unnecessary or improbable assumptions. And that is the best one can expect from any theory until more solid evidence has been established.

Migrants from the Mediterranean?

One further matter needs to be considered before leaving the Danubian hypothesis: if the PIE-descended languages were spread over Europe by migrating farmers from the Danube, did these languages perhaps not reach the Danube in the same way, namely by migrating farmers from Asia Minor and Greece? From the purely archaeological standpoint it is an attractive one, and it should be possible to trace that population movement over time.

To begin with, there is no doubt that cultural influences, and probably people as well, did move into the Danube basin from the south some time after 6500 BCE. Agriculture itself, and the domesticated plants and animals it depended on, was the most important of these influences, and archaeologists have pointed out many other similarities between the early farming cultures of Greece and those to the north, though these date from quite a bit later.

A likely link between the two areas is the *Vardar* valley running through Greece and Macedonia, which provides one of two relatively easy routes from the Mediterranean lands northward; the other leads from the Bosphorus, along the Black Sea coast and into Bulgaria. Near the middle course of the Vardar, excavations in the 1970s

at *Anza* in the Republic of Macedonia revealed an agricultural community which appears to have flourished later than the Greek sites to the southwest but earlier than the *Starčevo* sites to the north. What was clear however was the cultural resemblances of both sites.

When *Anza* was first investigated, the theory of relative skull dimensions as an indicator of population origins was in common use. What they concluded was that the skeletons of the Anza people were of what was at the time considered typical of populations bordering the Mediterranean: small-boned, of medium stature, and with dolichocephalic skulls (longer than normal from front to back). The same physical types were found in several Starčevo sites, but mixed in as well with skeletons of more robust build and shorter skulls. The conclusion reached was therefore that farmers from the Aegean migrated into the Danube basin where they interbred with the indigenous population. A few questions follow:-

- (a) Was PIE there before the agriculturalists from Greece arrived? The Danubian hypothesis says "yes."



- (b) Or was PIE invented in the Danube basin once the agriculturalists had settled? The Danubian hypothesis says “no”, for the time between any PIE emergence and its subsequent split into other languages is too short a period for a pristine PIE to have evolved.
- (c) Or did the agriculturalists bring PIE with them? The answer is “not likely”, as the time needed for all non-PIE words to be forgotten is a lot longer than the mere few thousand years left before PIE split off into its many descendant languages.

If the Mediterranean migrants brought PIE with them, a further two questions need to be asked:-

- (a) Where did the Mediterranean migrants come from? The archaeological evidence points to Greece and before that to Anatolia.
- (b) If PIE supplanted existing native languages, why are there no traces of those languages in PIE or its descendant languages?

In considering the possibility of this agricultural migration from the Mediterranean bringing PIE with it at this time (8000 - 6000 BCE), one can only strike a balance of probabilities, a balance which still concludes that PIE did not come with the advent of agriculture, but was already there. To begin with, identifying the early Greek (or Anatolian) farmers with the Indo-Europeans would mean scrapping most of the linguistic evidence concerning the physical environment of the first Indo-Europeans. It is hard to imagine that people on either side of the Aegean would for example have lacked words for “sea” and “island.” And while the word for “sea” might have been lost during migration into an inland region where it was no longer relevant, there are still islands in the Danube, and most other large rivers.

Atlantic Salmon



Danubian Huchen



*The PIE word *laks- is believed to refer to Atlantic Salmon or possibly the related Huchen of the Danube basin.*

Equally, the lack of PIE derived words for Mediterranean plants and trees could be explained on similar grounds, but the loss of words through migration would not explain the presence of so many names for trees found along the Danube but for none that are purely from

the Aegean. Nor would it explain the *laks- whose name can't reasonably be associated with any fish south of the Danube drainage system. And finally, ancient non-PIE place names are found in both Greece and Anatolia, but far less so as one travels north and west.

Ecology as well as linguistics provide persuasive evidence in favour of a Danubian origin for the original PIE language, rather than an origin farther south in the Balkans or Anatolia. For climatic reasons, the Danube basin is not likely to have been more attractive to immigrant Mediterranean farmers than the Aegean lands they were leaving.

Mediterranean vs Danubian Climate

Near the Mediterranean, including most of the Vardar valley, winters are mild and moist, with summers hot and dry, so crops are typically sown in winter or early spring in order to be harvested before the fierce heat of summer sets in. North of the Balkans and adjacent mountain ranges however, the climate changes abruptly from the dry summer heat and winter rains of the Mediterranean

Migrants bringing agriculture from the Mediterranean into the Danube basin would have encountered far greater climatic extremes.

to much more frequent rain throughout the year, and considerably colder winters. There would have been a need for the migrants to develop new agricultural techniques and selectively breed new strains of crop plants. It may well be for this reason that it took nearly a thousand years for agriculture to spread from Greece and Anatolia to the Danube.

It is also worth noting that a much later wave of Greek colonisation, for which there is much archaeological evidence, showed an overwhelming preference for the Mediterranean lands. Beginning around 800 BCE, the Greeks planted settlements as far west as Massilia (Marseilles) and even in Spain. The later settlements around the Black Sea were limited to the coastal lands with their relatively mild climates but migration far inland, with the notable exception of Alexander the

Great's exploits, did not happen. The one easily accessible area that did not attract Greeks from the Classical period was the Danube Valley, and it may be that earlier settlers from Greece would therefore have had similar preferences.

If there are good reasons for thinking that the





An artist's portrayal of daily life in the dwellings of Lepenski Vir.

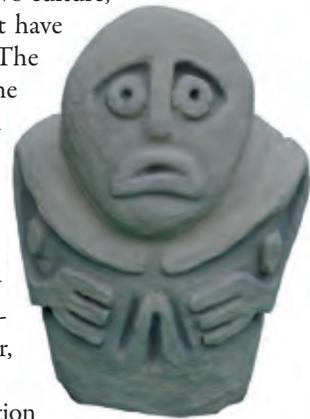
farmers who presumably brought agriculture into the Danube Valley were relatively few in number, there are other reasons for thinking that they encountered a fairly substantial indigenous, though non-agricultural population, as opposed to the “human vacuum” that existed in the deep forests farther north. As already noted, the Danube Valley is a mixture of woodland and grassland with some dense forests. It would have been considerably richer in game than the almost uninterrupted deep forests to the north. The Danube and its tributaries would have provided plenty of **laks-* and other fish. So, at least some parts of the region could have supported agriculture easily, and on the archaeological evidence it did support a fairly dense, even sedentary population.

Lepenski Vir

A striking site of this sort was unearthed in the mid-1960s at *Lepenski Vir* in modern day Serbia at the upper end of the Iron Gate, a massive gorge that the Danube has carved through the Carpathian Alps. Archaeologists uncovered the well preserved remains of a pre-agricultural

hunting and fishing community whose members nevertheless lived in dwellings made at the lower courses with stones, and above that had tent-like poles supporting skin, reed or grass coverings and with plastered floors, all built on curious trapezoidal plans.

The inhabitants, who must have numbered well over a hundred, worked in stone and bone, producing remarkable and distinctive sculptures, often with human or fishlike features carved from sandstone boulders. The site has not been firmly dated, but as its early deposits are overlain by later remains typical of the Starčevo culture, it is reasonable to assume it must have been settled before 6000 BCE. The latest radiocarbon dating places the first inhabitants as having occupied the site somewhere between 9500 and 7200 BCE but there is ample evidence of human occupation in the surrounding caves going back to 20,000 BCE. So it is a very old site, but crucially, it is non-agricultural, purely hunter-gatherer, yet sedentary.



To support a sedentary population at such a high level of culture, the Lepenski Vir area must have been rich in natural resources. One may find a parallel on the northwest coast of the United States and Canada where the rich supply of salmon and other fish supported the only sedentary non-agricultural population of pre-Columbian America. It seems likely that not only Lepenski Vir but other parts of the Danube basin were especially hospitable to human occupancy; and because of their already sedentary way of life, they would have been pre-adapted to agriculture in a way no band of migratory hunters could have been.

So, the immigrant farmers from the south can hardly have engaged in any sort of mass migration into virgin lands, as was the case with the PIE speakers who pushed north from the Danube into the harsher conditions of the great forests. Rather, they would have conducted a slow infiltration into an already settled region, bringing their own technology with them, including both agriculture and pottery, but eventually merging with the already numerous native inhabitants and adopting their language, which on this line of reasoning would have



Archaeological remains of the trapezoidal dwellings of Lepenski Vir.



been Proto-Indo-European.

As for the Lepenski Vir people themselves, there is no way of knowing how typical they were of the pre-agricultural Danubians until many more contemporary sites have been excavated. So far, their trapezoidal houses and sculptured boulders are unique to the area. It is just possible however, that their village may represent one of many such settlements of the original Proto-Indo-Europeans before their acquisition of agriculture launched them on their epic march around the world, eventually to bring their language to half the population of the world.

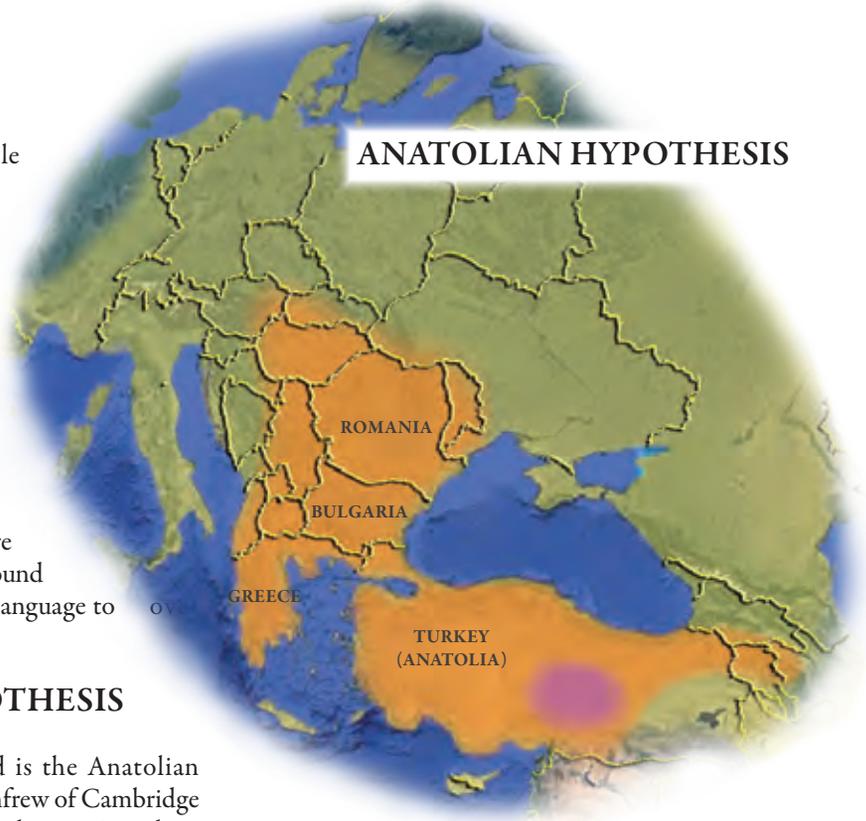
ANATOLIAN HYPOTHESIS

The final theory to be mentioned is the Anatolian hypothesis put forward by Colin Renfrew of Cambridge University in 1987. It partially answers the question where the Danubians came from, though this is not as readily accepted today as it was initially. The theory postulates that Indo-European derived languages were not spread by an initial conquering PIE speaking tribe. Instead, it came into Greece peacefully and from there continued into the Danube basin with the spread of agriculture from Anatolia (modern-day Turkey) some time between 7500 and 6000 BCE.

In one way it supports the Danubian theory in that it indirectly deals with the possible origins of the Danubians themselves, though this is disputed by some scholars as the Danubians were, by the time the Anatolians brought agriculture into Greece and the Danube basin, firmly settled in their home territory already, and could have been so since the end of the last ice age.

The rate at which agriculture entered Europe and what routes were followed is fairly well known from radiocarbon analysis of the earliest Neolithic agricultural sites in Europe, starting in Greece. The archaeological evidence suggests that agriculture entered Europe from Anatolia, arriving in Greece around 7000 BCE. The dispersal was slow however and agriculture is believed to have taken another 3500 years to reach the British Isles for example. Because as far back as can be deduced PIE seems to have emerged in the Danube basin, Renfrew discusses a culture and language that may have preceded PIE itself, and bases it in Anatolia.

This Pre-PIE language appears to have separated from early Hittite around 6700 BCE, perhaps reflecting



the initial migration out of Anatolia by agriculturalists. The split certainly closely matches the age of the first agricultural settlements in southern Greece.

Following the initial split between Anatolian Pre-PIE and Hittite, the language tree shows the formation of separate Tocharian (long extinct), Greek and then Armenian lineages, all before 4000 BCE, with all of the remaining language families fully formed by 2000 BCE. The dates suggested by the Kurgan theory corresponds roughly to these later dates, but do not agree with the time period that many linguists consider the most plausible. According to a recent (2012) computer analysis of 87 Indo-European languages, the period during which the original PIE language spawned the major Indo-European sub-families of Indo-Iranian, Balto-Slavic, Germanic, Italic and Celtic occurred between 5000 and 4000 BCE which is a lot closer to the time scale given by the Kurgan theory.

It seems possible therefore that there were two separate phases of PIE dispersal, one involving a spread of pre-PIE from Anatolia into Greece and from there into the Danubian basin around 7000 BCE; and another dispersal north and eastwards from either Anatolia or from the Danube basin around 5000 BCE. The first phase was the migration of pre-PIE speakers with their agricultural know-how out of Anatolia into Greece and onwards into the Balkans and Danube basin; and the second phase, perhaps coinciding with the Kurgan migrations, led to the spread of PIE related languages based on Hittite in Anatolia, north into the Pontic Steppes and from there northwest into the rest of Europe and



east and southeast into central and southern Asia.

Linguists are however generally not convinced, due to the failure of the Anatolian hypothesis on at least two major counts. In the first place, if the Europeans on the one hand and the Indo-Iranians on the other had once lived together as agriculturists in Anatolia sharing a pre-PIE, pre-Hittite language, they should still have a common vocabulary for agricultural implements, which is not the case. Secondly, the Hittite language of Anatolia, which is the hypothetical linguistic source of the second migratory phase, was a minority language spoken perhaps only by a ruling elite, while the language of 'ordinary' people was entirely non-PIE. These two objections are so strong that despite its archaeological strengths, the original Anatolian theory is today generally not accepted without additional assumptions.

Conclusion

Up until the mid-1990s, only three major theories of the origins of the Proto-Indo-Europeans existed, though each one had numerous variants. Of the three, the Danubian hypothesis, though not discussed any longer under this name, is the strongest from a linguistic point of view, while the Anatolian and Kurgan hypotheses are stronger from an archaeological viewpoint.

All three have both strong and weak points but the Danubian hypothesis rests much more than the other two on the purely linguistic evidence that has accumulated over the past two centuries. It also does not accept as a given fact that archaeological evidence of cultural spread necessarily denotes the spread of a language. For example, Roman culture spread to all parts of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East over a period of half a millennium; yet within a mere few centuries, Latin was no longer spoken in all but ecclesiastical circles. Latin left a strong imprint on all languages of Europe, especially the Romance languages, but it did not entirely erase the native languages which continued with many of their ancient words regardless of the Roman equivalents.

While history has shown that only one language survives the invasion of one culture by another, the same is not true of religious beliefs. Here again, history tells us that beliefs have in the past been as ephemeral in their plasticity and adaptation to new belief systems as for example the adoption of agriculture was in replacing hunter-gathering as a primary source of food.

In a future article I will continue the Indo-European theme by addressing some religious beliefs or concepts which may have accompanied the many cultures that emerged from the original PIE speakers, hopefully to highlight the ancestry to our own beliefs. There is much to discover, so let the investigation continue!

Mansions of the Soul

by Harvey Spencer Lewis

THE SOUL comes forth from its eternal abode with its consciousness and personality unimpaired by the changes in the mortal body from which it was freed at death. It is not composed of dissimilar elements or temporary associates. It is one entity, uncomposed, uncreated and undivided. It is the very antithesis of the physical body in every characteristic. Whatever may distinguish the physical body is a negative expression of the Soul's positive character.

The Soul possesses, as a heritage from the Infinite Consciousness and mind 'in the beginning', a *Mind* and *Memory*, constituting a continuity of experience which is eternal. It is this consciousness of self, this Mind and Memory, which we characterise as our *Personality* which grows and is moulded into greater comprehension and power through the various cycles of evolution. Into the physical body comes the Soul with its Personality, its perfect memory of all past experiences and its acquired penalties and rewards earned through the Law of Compensation.

It is still free to choose, free to decide, free to submit or to rebuke the urges that come from its memory of past experiences or the whisperings of the world without. Nevertheless, it has debits and credits to its record from the past and these it cannot avoid. Whatever it may decide to do, it must contend with the *Law of Compensation* in attempting to carry out its decisions. The debt to be paid will be demanded by the *Law of Karma* at the moment that is most propitious. Ever and anon, the silent adjuster of the Law stands by and with a nod of its head permits the peoples' decisions to come to an issue, or fail.

H. Spencer Lewis
The Temple of Alden,
San Jose, California.
September 15, 1930.

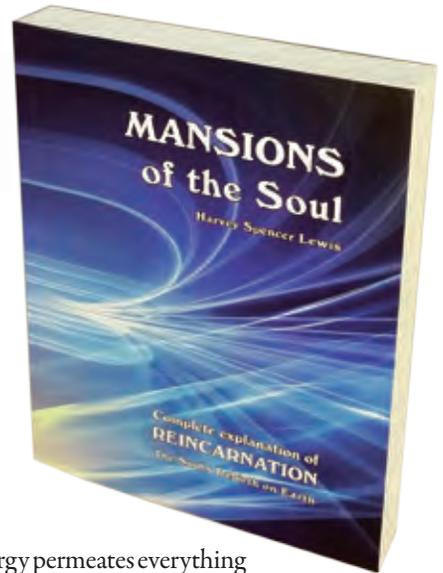


Book Review

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ONE OF THE most perplexing questions we've grappled with at times is that of our survival (or not!) after death. We are so used to our privileged status of having life, consciousness and free will that when we encounter death at a funeral or as a witness to a fatal accident, its mystery and finality impresses itself upon us with great force and urgency. For some people the experience is traumatic, and they are left emotionally scarred for months or even years to come. For others it is a sobering wake-up realisation that we have no guarantee we will see tomorrow. But for others, and probably most of us who read this magazine, it spurs us on to deep reflection on what may happen after death and whether or not we are, as religions say, truly immortal.

The Essentials

As Dr Lewis wrote this book primarily from a Western spiritual perspective, he finds it convenient to divide his attention between the Jewish and Christian religions, and addresses religious viewpoints in chapters 11 and 12. Each religion has its ideas about the qualities of what is generally called the Soul. In Judaism the Soul is believed to be dual in nature: on the one hand it is *active*, for God "...breathed into his nostrils the breath of life..." (*Genesis 2:7*); while on the other hand it is the "*vital spirit*" with which God inspires His human wards. Dr Lewis believes that this has led to the confusion responsible for the emergence of the spiritualist movement of the 19th and 20th Centuries. Christians see the Soul as the "*ultimate internal principle by which we think, feel and will, and by which our bodies are animated.*" These two religions have identified with the universal idea of the Soul as not only a "*vitalising essence*" but also as the human seat of consciousness and mind.

The author compares these ideas with those of the Rosicrucian Order as expressed through mystical revelation. He reminds us that all matter, regardless how inanimate it may appear to be, is quite fully *living*. The only big difference is between *traits of life* as opposed to *traits of consciousness* that all beings possess in some form or other.

Spirit energy permeates everything and maintains the expression of matter; but it is not the same as the Soul. Dr Lewis refers to the Soul as the *Divine Consciousness* or *Infinite Mind* and says it is what connects us with one another on earth and continues linking us together in the spiritual realm. This connectedness of everything through a common source, the *Divine Consciousness*, has immense ramifications that he urges the reader to ponder over deeply..

In chapter five Dr Lewis makes the statement: "*The Soul consciousness added to the physical consciousness in the body of man during incarnation here on earth gives man his character or personality.*" This is a key point and one that is ultimately bound up with the subject of *Karma*, which is commonly referred to by Rosicrucians as the *Law of Compensation*. The author then presents three reasons to support reincarnation. First, the Soul must have earthly experiences; second, the human body must to have spiritual knowledge and illumination; and third, the human personality must eventually be brought to a state of perfection.

Personality

Dr Lewis begins by asking what character is and what constitutes personality. The following is how he distinguishes them: The *character*, composed of one's ethical and moral principles, is ephemeral and changes easily. The *personality* however is subtly different from one's character. As Dr Lewis shows by illustration, we tend to disguise our *true personality* by adopting different behaviour in our character. Someone, he says, whom we know is by profession a banker, may exhibit the characteristics of a banker by his mannerisms, his style of clothing, even his businesslike conversation. When we think of him, we think the word 'banker.' But in the evening we may be surprised to find him engaged in a



pastime we wouldn't have thought him to be associated with, such as carpentry, music, amateur dramatics and so forth. Our personality is in fact drawn to those things in life with which we have a natural affinity, and is the result of, a function of, our evolving soul personality.

It is the "*tendency of the inner self to build up a personality progressively toward a higher degree of perfection rather than toward a lower one*" says Dr Lewis when he speaks of those who appear to have less developed morals than others. This progressive development of the personality is inexorable as it is associated with the Divine Consciousness. Conscience is a factor involved here and amounts to the "*voice of the inner self or personality challenging the conduct of the outer self.*"

Dr Lewis begins his discussion of the survival of the personality after transition (commonly called 'death') by looking at the two opposing claims concerning this subject: that of theology and that of material science. Both seem to put humans at the mercy of fate and relieve them of responsibility for their birth. From a theological point of view we come up against the doctrine of *predestination* where some people are predestined to reach everlasting life while others can sadly only look forward to everlasting death. This has given rise to the introduction of a Satanic character to shift accountability for all human evils onto a being called 'Satan.' Dr Lewis seeks out the flaws in these arguments and shows that they are not tenable.

Karma and Personal Evolution

The Soul has a continuity of experience throughout successive incarnations that moulds and perfects the *mind* and *memory* of the soul personality, thereby giving it greater comprehension and power. It is free to choose how it wishes to handle the "*debts and credits*" it has acquired throughout its cycle of evolution. This brings into play the law of Karma or Compensation. Dr Lewis shows how it is the driving force behind the doctrine of reincarnation. He states: "*We discover in reincarnation and Karma the only rational and acceptable explanation and cause for the seeming injustice of the inequalities of life.*"

Succinctly, the author says that the inequalities in life are Karmic and are accordingly adjustable. Each person is responsible for his or her own fate. Dr Lewis effectively condemns the erroneous assumption that we exist for one incarnation only since the law of Karma cannot operate for just one specific period of earthly existence. We are an aggregation of our past personalities drawing upon the lessons and experiences of the past and "*expressing them as fundamental elements of our present character, while at the same time learning, through lessons and experiences, new principles and new elements out of which we decorate and*

modify, shade, blemish or improve the beauty of our character."

The Over-Soul

The book progressively implies that there is but one Soul existing throughout the universe and pervading all space and that this Soul is the consciousness and Divine essence of God or the Cosmic. It also demonstrates that the individual Souls of humans are not separate and independent Souls, but *undivided segments* of a single Universal Soul. Furthermore, there is a continuous association or contact between individual Souls and the consciousness of God that constitutes the *Vital Life Force*.

Dr Lewis uses the term *Over-Soul* to describe this arrangement. This infers that "*God is within us rather than without.*" He thus identifies with many of the sacred writings of the past and particularly those of a Christian nature.

He continues to enlighten us through a discussion on the role of the *Ego*. This is often referred to as the *psychic body* that resides within the physical body. In order to allow the reader a clearer understanding of the relationship of these elements that constitute our make-up, he provides a schematic diagram. It illustrates the influx of the Over-Soul into the body and the resultant association of the Soul, Body, Aura, Ego, Mind, Memory and Personality. He also uses other supplementary diagrams to enlarge on this subject.

Conclusion

The title of the book refers to the Mansions of the Soul. They are mentioned in the Bible and are of twelve divisions each containing any number of Egos at a time. Dr Lewis likens them to twelve chambers in a great temple. In these Mansions the personalities await reincarnation and "*receive knowledge and Divine benedictions which purge them of their errors for which they have made repentance*" and they thus become more evolved and prepared for their new incarnation. When they return to earth they must work out their Karmic debt by living a life of adjustment.

This book was first published 85 years ago and while it has gone through many editions, scientific knowledge regarding the nature of life has advanced immensely. Genetic research has linked genes with personality, and for good reason. It would appear that in any incarnation we are predisposed toward certain behaviour and personality depending on our genetic structure. This does not in any way detract from the substance of Dr Lewis' work. The Divine Consciousness that permeates all atomic particles in the universe is the same consciousness that resides in the structure of the gene with all the mystical implications this presents.





Calling All Rosicrucians

1915 - 2015

Centennial Celebration AMORC in America

2015 marks the 100th anniversary since the founding of the Rosicrucian Order in New York. To commemorate that event and the achievements of Rosicrucians during the past century, a Rosicrucian World Convention will be held in San Jose, California between Wednesday 29th July and Sunday 2nd August 2015.

To register for the Convention, navigate on your web browser to... http://www.regonline.com/amorc_2015. Within that website you will find a link... <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/rosicrucian100th> where you can book a room at the Fairmont Hotel in downtown San Jose where the main Convention events will be held. There are of course many other hotels to choose from, but if you are planning on attending, please book a room soon.

The Rosicrucian Museum and Planetarium will be open for all to visit before, during and after the Convention, and there will be several other smaller events held at Rosicrucian Park itself, including special Convocations in the Supreme Temple, and classes of the RCUI.

This centennial promises to be both a solemn and happy event for all participants. If you haven't done so yet, please reserve your hotel room/s and purchase your Convention ticket/s as soon as possible. Absolute deadline for all bookings is 15th June 2015. Please book in time.



ROSICRUCIAN WORLD CONVENTION





*Do not follow the ideas of others,
but learn to listen to the voice
within yourself.*

-- Zen Master Dogen