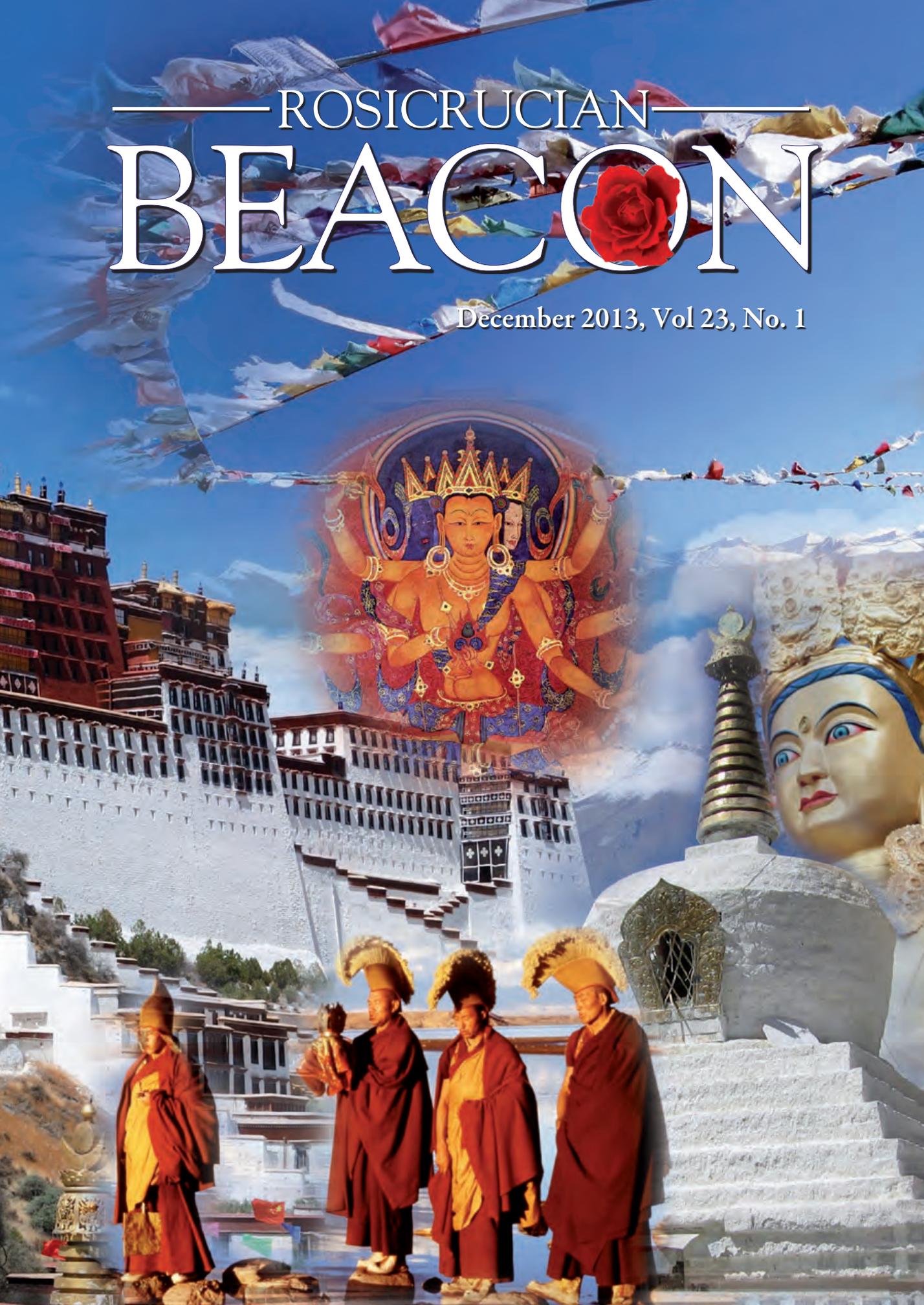


# — ROSICRUCIAN — BEACON

December 2013, Vol 23, No. 1



# The wonder of Life

**T**hink for a moment that you were not here, no longer a living person on Earth. No breeze on your face, no warm sunshine to enjoy, no twitter of birds in the forest, no smell of salt spray by the seaside, no loving hand to hold, no beautiful music to hear, no exquisite words to read. All that we value, every single thing we care about is down there..., on our home planet, our beloved Earth. What intense longing we would feel if we were not there.

How little it takes to understand the privileged state of our existence on earth, and how precious our planet is to all its myriad forms of life. But how few take the time to treasure it.

If you seek a closer connection with all that surrounds

you..., if you seek a deeper appreciation of all things on earth..., if happiness, peace and justice for all is what you seek..., then learn to commune with your inner self, learn to find the deeper you, and through it find the Consciousness of the universe itself.

By reading this magazine you have an open mind, and this message was meant for you! To find out more about the Rosicrucian Order, visit our website [www.amorc.org.uk](http://www.amorc.org.uk) or contact us for a free copy of our introductory booklet "*The Mastery of Life.*"

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# ROSICRUCIAN BEACON

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**Cover spread**

TIBET: Searching for Wisdom



# Peace Profound

*by Christian Bernard  
Imperator of AMORC*



**W**HETHER SPOKEN to be heard or written to be read, the expression 'Peace Profound' is much more than a simple polite letter-ending or fraternal greeting. It is a mystical invocation, the benefits of which are intended for the person whom we are addressing. The more we inwardly feel the essence and power of these two words, the more this invocation will have positive results for the person who inevitably benefits from it.

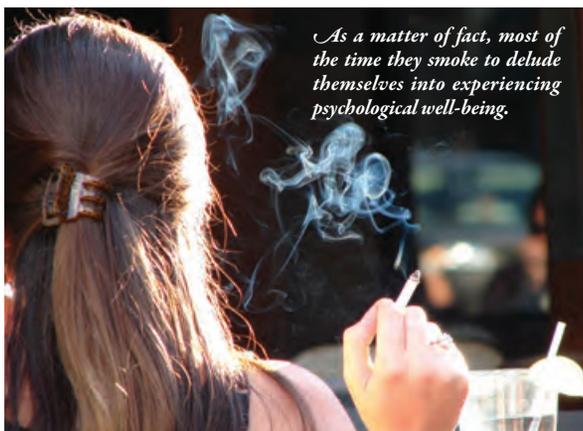
It is important to meditate upon the meaning of Peace Profound for the more we realise its full significance, the more we are able to live it, not only for ourselves but for others as well. Peace Profound is not only a state of the soul, it is also a state of both heart and body. In fact, people can experience the fullness of Peace Profound and advisedly invoke its blessings for their fellow human beings only if they blend peace of body, heart and soul. 'Peace of body' as the expression implies, depends upon our ability to live in



harmony with the natural laws governing our being. The modern pace of life makes this physical harmonisation quite difficult at times and many people are subjected to stress despite their best efforts to counter it, and this negatively affects their physical well-being.

The hectic pace some people face in their increasingly mechanised work, the infernal noise to which so many are exposed to on a daily basis, and the pollution of the surrounding atmosphere and air that millions of people breathe, are all external factors contributing to the creation of disharmony and strife within the bodies of individuals. However, without denying these facts, we are also compelled to recognise that people often violate basic rules of health themselves, which nothing truly prevents them from respecting. To illustrate this, we could select many examples and see to what extent the human being knowingly violates natural laws, sometimes more through negligence or carelessness than ignorance. As an illustration I shall simply mention the classic problem of tobacco, as we are all perfectly aware it as a problem, and it directly involves the mystical process of breathing.

There is not one smoker who is not acquainted with the harmful effects of tobacco. Campaigns to increase awareness of this scourge are not lacking and are prominently featured in the current news media. Yet thousands of people poison themselves, knowing full well that they shorten the length of their life span and create for themselves tremendous risks of illness and suffering in the future. Why do they do it? As I mentioned earlier, it is not through ignorance of the negative consequences that unfortunately such a poisoning can cause within their body. As a matter of fact, most of the time they smoke to delude themselves into experiencing psychological well-being. Therefore, they are the conciliatory and guilty victims of a wrong application of their free will. Indeed, they have willingly created this illusion of well-being for themselves which, when we consider the whole range of physical disorders a long-term smoker suffers from, can



*As a matter of fact, most of the time they smoke to delude themselves into experiencing psychological well-being.*

only be psychological. This same illusion of well-being has become a law to their subconscious and from this subconscious law, a bad habit which the body has gradually interpreted as a physical need has been born.

A mystic must be fully aware that the smoking of tobacco runs counter to the Peace Profound of the body, for this poison is definitely detrimental to the breathing process, since it prevents the organism from properly assimilating the Life Force contained in the air we breathe. The result is an imbalance in the polarisation of the body cells, and this imbalance not only affects the peace of the physical self, but also that of the psychic self.

**In the name of true Tradition, let us not declare war needlessly on our body or that of others, for without peace of body there can be no peace of heart.**

These few remarks apply to many other forms of poisoning or physical aggression, for when it comes to the violation of natural laws, the failure of people to realise their carelessness, works hand in hand with negligence and ignorance to mutilate or destroy that which nature builds and maintains so painstakingly. Indeed, what can we say about the sometimes disastrous consequences of a poorly balanced diet; about the harmful effects that an abuse of stimulants such as coffee produces within the body; about the often inconsiderate waste of the best hours of sleep; also about the unnecessary surgical removal of certain organs which, after all, have their reason for being; finally and especially, about the sexual mutilations practiced upon children in some countries, in the name of barbaric traditions which go against nature?

In the name of true Tradition, let us not declare war needlessly on our body or that of others, for without peace of body there can be no peace of heart. It is therefore our duty, as soon and as often as we can, to direct thoughts of strength, health and vitality towards all those who suffer from bodily ailments, and towards all children, women and men whose physical beings are suffering from the ravages of war, hunger, sickness, barbarism and all the ills which prevent them from experiencing peace of body and generally speaking, happiness.

As for Peace of Heart, it is linked to our emotional and sentimental life. It is obvious that this peace cannot be acquired by anyone who regularly entertains thoughts of hatred, wickedness, jealousy, envy, vengeance, intolerance and any feelings which enslave them. Such feelings create very destructive emotional problems. In fact, they give rise to a kind of mental poisoning which affects the balance of the psychic body and, as a result, the harmony of the physical body. This emotional poison is therefore a formidable foe as





*Peace of Heart, cannot be acquired by anyone who regularly entertains thoughts of hatred, vengeance or intolerance .*

much for peace of heart as for peace of body. Consequently, it gradually leads to a self-destruction of the being.

Very few are the human beings who never experience, or have never experienced, the inner conflict that negative thoughts and emotions provoke, both being closely connected. Rosicrucians have mystical means at their disposal to neutralise the destructive effect of their own negative thoughts and, also, that which is equally important, the possibility to protect themselves from those that others might harbour against them. When it comes to nullifying the harmful consequences of our own discordant thoughts, we need only to recognise them for just what they are at the moment they spring into our mind and to transmute them into positive and constructive thoughts. We cannot combat a negative thought by repressing it. Rather, it is much better to bring it to light for ourselves, to analyse it, acknowledge it and replace it with a thought of opposite nature.

Wanting to conquer headlong our own negative thoughts would, on the contrary, amount to giving them greater importance yet, more life and to intensifying even more their pernicious effects. Therefore it is wiser, I repeat, to replace them with constructive thought and thereby proceed to a mental and emotional transmutation. In this sense, prayer is the key to the heart which enables us to carry out this mental and emotional alchemy. So, when we happen to have a thought of hatred, even if only for a second, we must put a thought of love within our heart and hold it there for a long time. If the shadow of jealousy or envy hovers over us, let us replace it with the light of shared happiness. If the spectre of vengeance looms behind our emotions, let us transform it into a living image of forgiveness. By doing this mental and emotional substitution systematically, we will neutralise the destructive effects of our own negative thoughts and experience peace of heart.

When we feel assailed by the negative thoughts that other people may hold about us, it is up to us to ignore them or, at least, not to give them such importance that

they finally end in giving rise to thoughts just as negative within us. If we were to do this, we would then become the willing victims of others' wickedness by creating, on our own and within ourselves, the foundation of our own mental poisoning. Let us rather wrap ourselves up in the mystical cloak which protects us from the attacks of ignorance and let us do good without worrying about what a few inimical hearts may think of us.

These few remarks concern our own responsibilities when we allow mental and emotional strife to disrupt our peace of heart. However, this peace of heart may also be shattered by trials which we ourselves did not necessarily bring about. The life of each of us is punctuated, from birth to death, with lesser or greater pains or sorrows which considerably perturb our inner equilibrium. The lack of affection, sentimental disappointments, the pain of separations and the deep grief which the loss of a loved one engenders are some of the emotional problems which affect peace of heart. Therefore, we must draw from spirituality the comfort we need so badly. On the other hand, since as we give, so shall we receive, we have the duty to radiate thoughts of love, compassion and comfort towards all those who suffer within their heart, so as to help them in carrying out the emotional alchemy which will give them peace of heart and, one day, will enable them to find again the *joie de vivre*, the zest for life.

I come now to Peace of Soul. This state simply corresponds to the spiritual plenitude to which mystics who have chosen to dedicate their life to the service of God and their human brethren have access. It is also the inner peace which the one who succeeds in permanently living in Cosmic Harmony experiences. Therefore, it is as much the peace of the rose as it is that of the cross. The traditional and initiatory path, which the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis is, and which it teaches, is of invaluable help in attaining and living this peace to the full. Indeed, its mystical teachings include all the elements necessary for humans to satisfy the aspirations of their spiritual Self and to reach happiness. However, I will add that we cannot know peace of soul as long as we have not attained peace of heart and peace of body.

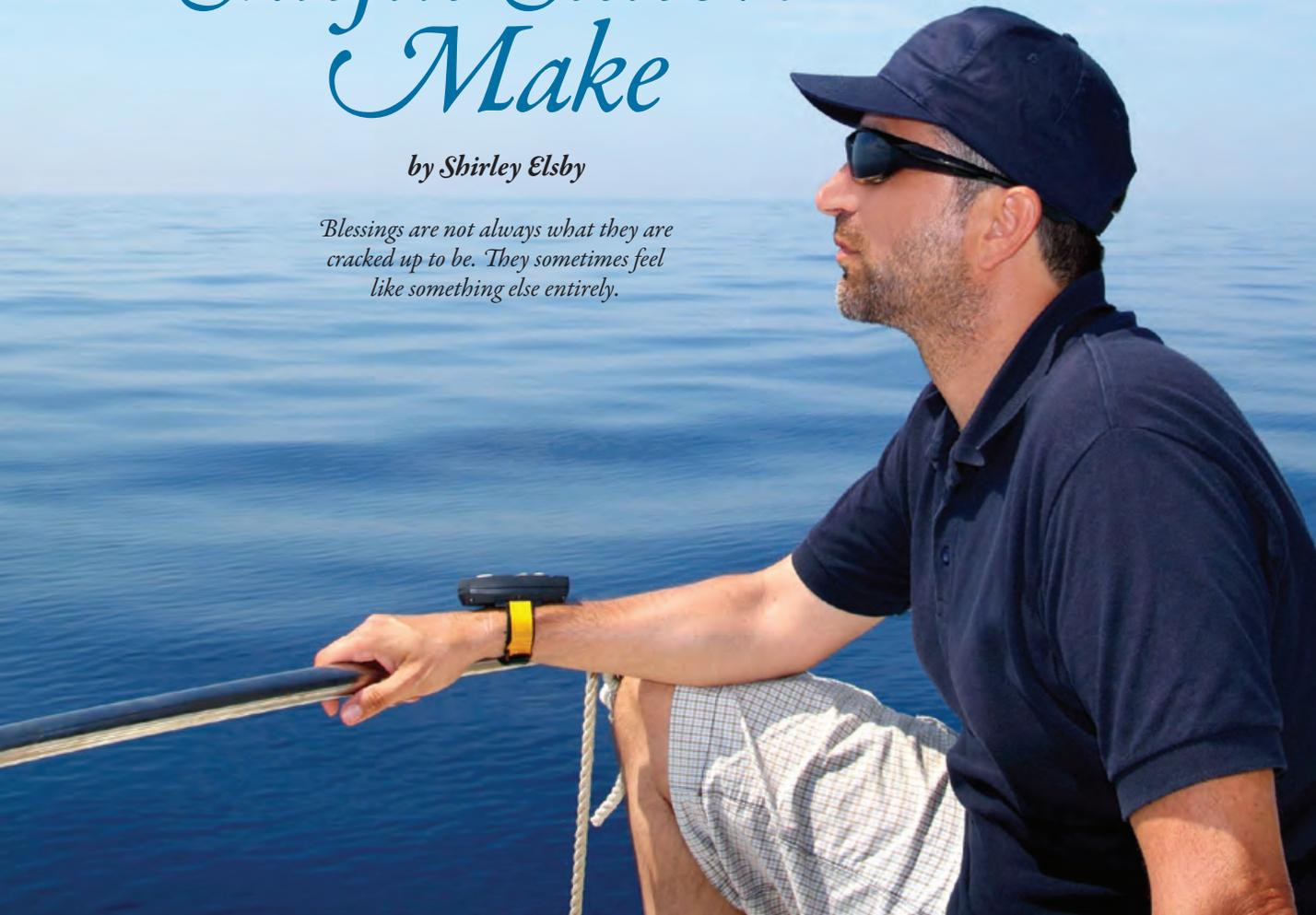
In conclusion, I would like to say that when God becomes the centre of our conscious activity, when we acknowledge God's presence within the heart and body of every living thing upon Earth, when our soul is pure enough to reflect God's glory, then verily we shall receive the blessings of Peace Profound. Henceforth, we ourselves shall become an agent of the Divinity and have at our command the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual influx needed to help all those who are still fighting a battle against themselves or who are being subjected to strife which other people inflict upon them.



# Smooth Seas Do Not Skilful Sailors Make

by Shirley Elsby

*Blessings are not always what they are  
cracked up to be. They sometimes feel  
like something else entirely.*



**C**OUNTING blessings is something I have been doing for a while; 10 a day, every day for 500-and-something days. I did not expect that the process would sometimes take dogged persistence. It is easy to count the kind that come around in terms of healthy, mobile bodies, windfalls, great meals and convivial conversation and an absolute cinch to include those around the themes of happy families, friendly relationships, thank-yous, and

the little triumphs that come around once in a while.

It is not so easy when your 56-year-old body aches like your mother's, the hole in the wall swallows your bank card and the cat acts like she's about to breathe her last any moment. Still less is it second nature to perceive the blessing when friends unexpectedly bow out of this particular lifetime's production, the taxman throws a curved ball, the exhaust drops off the car and there appears little prospect of ever getting well-paid work again.





*Skills only become second nature with lots and lots of practice.*

Nonetheless, 5,000 blessings have been counted with just a little application to the task, even on what have felt the bleakest days of a lifetime's tendency to depression. The trick, I've discovered, is to just keep thinking until you tease the blessing out from its nasty little disguise. With a bit of a twist and change of perspective you can always count to 10, even on what seem the bleakest of days.

When all else fails it is worth remembering the old adage: *"Calm seas do not make skilful sailors."* To reinforce the lesson there is another old proverb: *"Ships are safe in harbour, but that's not what ships are for."* The choppy waters, overpowering waves and out and out tempests all serve to build resilience, resourcefulness and confidence – although not necessarily immediately and rarely all at the same time.

**After counting to 5,000 and discerning my 10 blessings in every single day I do not need any more convincing.**

Skills are learned through practice. They only become second nature with lots and lots of practice. Some of the hardest are only acquired by the added incentive that there is no other way out but to learn them. It is worth remembering that in days of old sailors feared being becalmed as much as being swished overboard by fearsome waves. It was not good to be all at sea with no means of restocking the galley. They wanted to do what they needed to reach their destination and get back home again with pay in their pockets and fresh tales to tell.

So, on I go; one, two, three, four. Life being the great and literal balancing act it is – for no single day either is

or feels entirely bad or entirely good – identifying the last couple of blessings for what they really are can seem a bit of a stretch but the bit about seemingly adverse events building the skillset always brings a workable solution.

The aching body, I reason, will return to being one which is at least passably comfortable and mobile. The bank will return the lost card and in the meantime friends will bale me out and make light of the matter – also giving the opportunity for a good chat. A very good vet dispenses cat tablets and my companion is returned to good spirits and comfortingly loud but not so good voice.

The subscription to the RAC pays off with excellent service and a mechanic delivers not only a full repair but fixes a dodgy headlamp too, for extremely reasonable recompense. The taxman cannot take off me what I haven't first earned and I realise that I can't mourn my deceased friends without having had them and valued them first. Not being in my original, well paid gives me acres of time for other pursuits and a chance to fashion a new and better future.

Even people who have experienced true tragedies and terrible, sudden crises are able – if they stay with the programme – to learn from them, taking on some of the more difficult skills such as transforming adversity to benefit, learning to forgive, spotting the silver lining under the patina caked on by the big, black cloud.

Blessings, eh. They are everywhere and in everything. But you do have to look and you do have to practise for as long as it takes for them to become visible. To accomplish that, you have to have unwavering faith that they are there. After counting to 5,000 and discerning my 10 blessings in every single day I do not need any more convincing, just a little more practice and a lot more skill.





# I Am Music

by Allan C Inman

*The following edited passage was used as a welcome message at the 1976 AGM of the National Foundation for the Advancement of Music held in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Its author is the obscure Allan C Inman, and dates from the 1920s.*

I AM MUSIC, most ancient of the arts. I am more than ancient, I am eternal. Even before life commenced upon this earth, I was here in the winds and the waves. When the first trees and flowers and grasses appeared, I was among them. And when Man came, I at once became the most delicate, most subtle, and most powerful medium for the expression of emotions.

When people were little better than beasts, I influenced them for their good. In all ages I have inspired them with hope, kindled their love, given a voice to their joys, cheered them on to valorous deeds, and soothed them in times of despair.

I have played a great part in the drama of Life, whose end and purpose is the complete perfection of human nature. Through my influence, human nature has been uplifted, sweetened and refined. With the aid of humans, I have become a Fine Art.

From Tubalcain to Thomas Edison, a long line of the brightest minds have devoted themselves to the perfection of instruments through which you may utilise my powers and enjoy my charms. I have myriads of voices and instruments. I am in the hearts of all people and on their tongues, in all lands and among all nations. The ignorant and unlettered know me not less than the rich and learned.

For I speak to all people, in a language that all will understand. Even the deaf hear me, if they but listen to the voices of their own souls. I am the food of love. I have taught gentleness and peace to all, and have led them onward to heroic deeds.

I comfort the lonely, I harmonise the discord of crowds, I am the necessary luxury of all people. I am Music.



# A Living Gift of Love

*by Wim Barnard*



**M**Y WIFE has a certain 'weakness' for..., no, let me start again..., my wife has a great 'strength': she loves cats. In fact she adores all living creatures great and small, though especially cats. And they love her back with an intensity and devotion I can hardly begin to comprehend. In fact



life is fulfilled for her when her love and compassion is poured forth on disadvantaged animals of all kinds, and fortunately for me, she regards me as an 'honorary animal'.

One day she brought home a blind cat. It's the only one so far, but I'm sure there'll be more in due course. Her kindness towards animals has no limits, except occasionally when I point to the emaciated look on my wallet; for pets are by no means cheap to care for, and they are of course for life. Like our children, they grow up with us, mature with us, and share everything we possess. The children quickly came up with a name for him, Bumpy, no doubt because he bumped so often into the furniture.

I'm discovering that a blind cat offers an irresistible temptation for mischievous children. "Let's see if he'll bump into the chair if we call him," cried my allegedly animal loving five year old son Dylan as he created an obstacle course. Screams of delight as Bumpy walked into several obstacles, shook himself, but good naturedly tried again and again to reach my calling son. Very cruel I thought and was about to issue a harsh admonition when Angela, my seven year old daughter lunged at Bumpy with pity, picked him up and sat down to have him all to herself. There he purred relentlessly as she stroked him into a curled up ball in her lap, and soon the two were sound asleep.

One particularly naughty friend just had to see whether the rule about cats always landing on their feet applied to Bumpy. So, holding him upside down over a bed, he let go. Why cats always seem to land on their feet I don't know, but before I could stop this next cruel experiment, we all learnt with a thump that blind cats do not land on their feet. They land on their backs or their sides, but never on their feet. Bumpy was not hurt for the bed was soft, but through repeated tries he never stopped purring for an instant! I suppose Bumpy might have the same sweet disposition if he could see, but our pets with

perfect vision have never been as good-natured as this wonderful little creature.

It's tempting to think that Bumpy may somehow be compensating for his disability by being extra good natured to ensure our favour, but that's absurd isn't it? I've seen in this small creature a soul as sophisticated in its catness as my soul could ever be in its humanness. For any trouble Bumpy might be for us, his blindness simply caused him to try harder than the rest, and with the graciousness and good humour of a really 'old soul'.

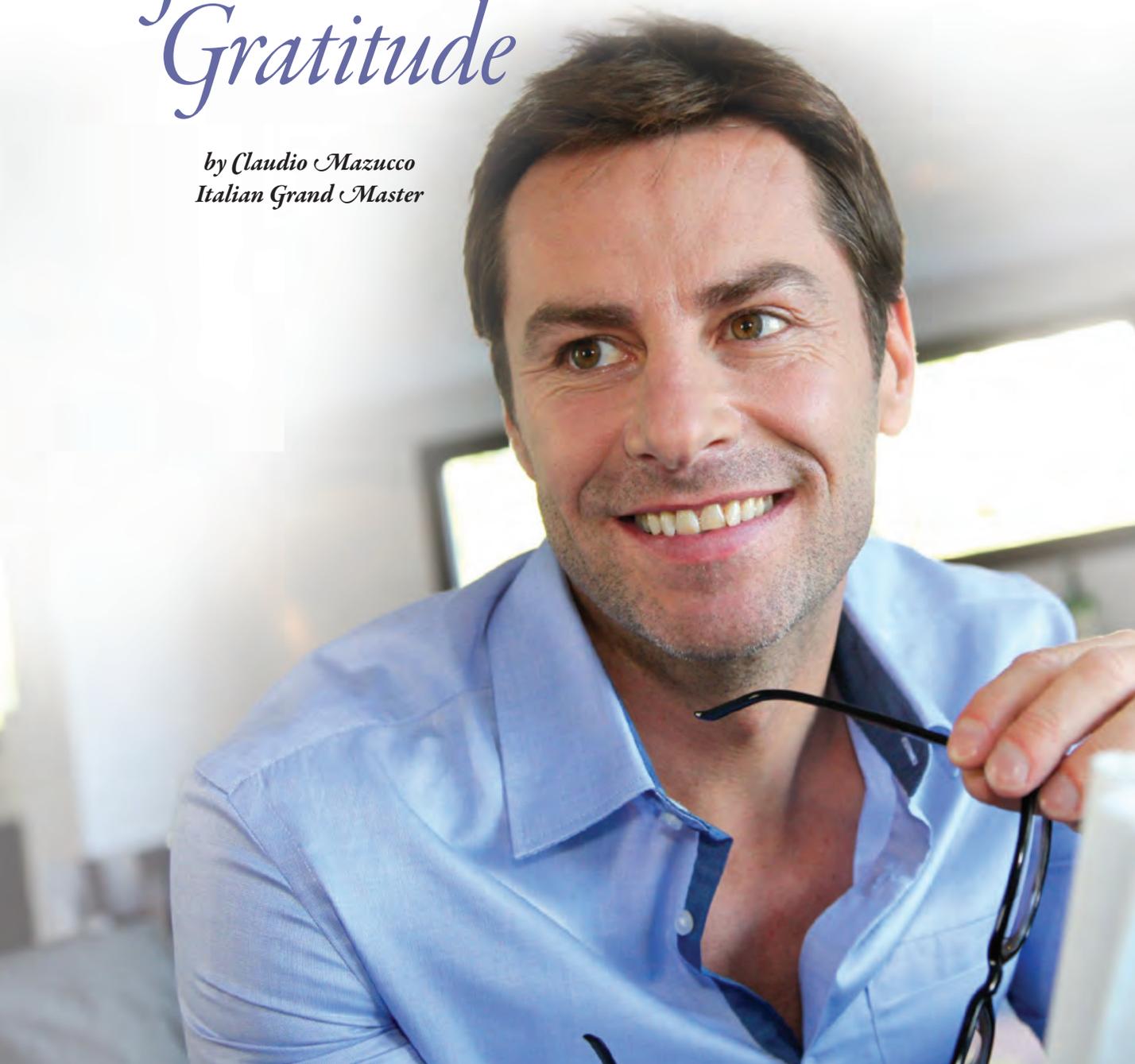
**Bumpy is a thing of beauty and love that has taught us all deep lessons in how to treat all animals, but for me at least, especially how to treat other humans too.**

It has never ceased to amaze me how beautifully he gets around despite his disability. His sense of hearing is acute and he pinpoints a flying moth with great accuracy before leaping into the air to catch it. I've never seen him succeed, but his playfulness as he springs happily and gracefully in the tall grass of the backyard makes me feel so small in comparison. Why can't I be so happy and grateful for life? After all, I can see. His patience and affection as he lovingly licks every speck of dirt from the paws of our messy Beagle is a thing of beauty and love that has taught us all deep lessons in how to treat all animals, but for me at least, especially how to treat other humans too. If Bumpy can be so good natured and forgiving, then we must rise to his level of evolution and do it too. Bumpy finds with ease the bedroom of whichever child he chooses to sleep with, and he can enter and exit through the kitchen catflap as though it weren't even there. Even when teased by naughty children, he remains composed, serene and patient, and never stops purring his love for them. He is a living gift of love, and to the fates that made this possible for me: thank you, thank you, thank you!



# Reflections on Gratitude

*by Claudio Mazucco  
Italian Grand Master*



**A** MAN, somewhere in the world, wakes up one morning; and as it has been for many years, he starts his day's activities. He checks his diary and thinks over all the events he will devote himself to in the next twelve to fourteen hours. A busy schedule, with many commitments, programmes and meetings. He must remember to talk to the lawyer, have

lunch with a client and meet with the Board of Directors for important company decisions.

Barely awake, he remembers even the small mishaps of the previous day, the moments of anger or frustration for a project not completed, the crisis in the relationship with his wife or children, and so on. A normal life we could say. Ah, he scrawled on his diary that he also had to see the



doctor to collect the test results from a few weeks earlier following a minor ailment. Nothing to worry about, just routine checks.

But then the unexpected happens. He realises something's wrong from the doctor's expression as he starts to explain how medical science has developed, that there are many treatment options, and that statistics show survival is 'quite' high in these cases. And in an instant all the priorities and commitments of the day, all

**When the end of life becomes a real prospect due to ill health, one realises for the first time that life is the only thing that really counts.**

those thoughts and worries, all the family tensions that bothered him every day, suddenly take on a different dimension. Life itself takes on a different dimension. The scale changes abruptly and security is gone.

He is filled with a sense of loneliness because for the first time he realises that the life that animates him is the only thing that really counts, and that this experience is by its very nature, solitary. In an instant his understanding of life takes on a clarity it never had before, and he feels remorse that he had not noticed this before.

This story is at the same time both imaginary and real. It is repeated thousands of times a day around the world, and most of us will have known someone who has had a similar experience. Therefore, it is real. In a hypothetical exercise I put myself in the position of a man who lived this experience and the first thing that came to mind was a feeling of gratitude towards things we don't normally think of as important, the simplest of things. For me it is gratitude to the Rosicrucian Order which gave me the chance to see my life through a different lense, the same reality through renewed eyes, revealing a multitude of values otherwise obscured from my vision.

Thinking that the days are always the same, that they do not bear within themselves the seeds of a new future, that every moment is not full of untapped potential that await our consciousness to become real, really impoverishes our lives. But being aware of the fragility of our material existence, fleeting and transient as it is, of our vulnerability and the fact that we will all leave one day unexpectedly..., such thoughts make us grateful for life, grateful for the people who are close to us, grateful for day and night, our friends, the spiritual values passed on to us, the things we have that bring us comfort, and the things we will never have..., grateful for the moments of happiness that make us like children again, and the moments of pain that lead us to draw on our hidden

reserves of strength...; for all these things we feel such immense gratitude.

Thinking about death is not a neurotic act; not wanting to think about it rather constitutes a true neurosis for our society, and perhaps even the most important factor in the impoverishment and aridity of our time. Being thankful therefore is the necessary response, and rationally the most appropriate for each day that is given us to live in this world. Whoever I am with, I feel truly privileged, but to go home and see my family, my grandson, this is a true gift. Seeing friends and laughing and joking with them, is a real blessing. And extinguishing the candles after meditation in my private sanctum is a reminder of my true nature, so that I never forget that all this is given to me as a gift, and that the only feeling that I can possibly feel is precisely that of Gratitude.



The work we do in the Rosicrucian Order is noble, for it helps people become aware of the life that flows through them, thereby allowing them to achieve wider, clearer visions of the nature of their existence. The letters we receive from members of the Order and the meetings we are privileged to have with them, regularly attest to this. Please close your eyes now, and hold in your mind

**I never forget that all this is given to me as a gift, and that the only feeling that I can possibly feel is precisely that of Gratitude.**

for a few minutes an intense feeling of gratitude..., and then ask the God of your understanding to help you to inspire others through your kindness, compassion and understanding to express the same gratitude you have been blessed to experience today.



# ZOROASTER

## ANCIENT DISCOVERER OF LIGHT AND DARK

by *Nahid Aryanpour*



*Oh Bounteous Lord when I  
approach You with good thoughts,  
silent meditation teaches me  
the best things to say.  
-- Yazna 43 of the Gathas --*

**Z**OROASTER<sup>1</sup>, also known as Zarathustra, was one of the great avatars of the pre-Christian era. He is referred to as a *Saoshyant*, the one who brings about the final renovation of the world. In the Avestan language<sup>2</sup> *Saoshyant* means ‘the one who brings benefit’, but also ‘the bringer [revealer] of light.’

Zoroaster’s birthplace is uncertain though it is widely believed that he was born in the eastern part of the Iranian Plateau, perhaps in Bactria in modern-day Afghanistan, but also perhaps in the Zagros mountains of modern-day Iran. Some sources claim he lived during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE, roughly contemporaneous with the second intermediate period of Egypt or a few centuries



before it<sup>3</sup>. Others believe he lived during the 7<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> Century BCE<sup>4</sup>, at roughly the time Solon, the great Athenian statesman and poet. And yet others believe that if he lived at all, it would have been far back in pre-history, possibly as far as 8,000 years ago<sup>5</sup>.

There is no agreement as to when Zoroaster lived, nor even where he lived, but it is likely that what he taught was not so much an entirely new religion, but more a reformation of an existing belief system with a few radically new concepts added to it. Just as Jesus is portrayed in the New Testament as a reformer of an old religion, Judaism, Zoroaster may have been a reformer of a much older, possibly Vedic religion with roots stretching far back into pre-history.

There has been speculation that he lived and wrote around the same time as Akhenaton or Moses, but this is almost certainly incorrect, for it is based only on the single thread of commonality between the three religions emanating from them, namely monotheism. But if Zoroaster lived centuries before Akhenaton, it is not inconceivable that his teachings eventually found their way into the Egyptian court of Akhenaton's father Amenhotep III or centuries earlier, just as the highest expression of the Supreme Deity of the early Vedic tradition, spoken of as "Om", found its way into the



*Behistun: 'Darius triumphing over his enemies beneath the Zoroastrian symbol.'*

**Zoroaster may have been a reformer of a much older, possibly Vedic religion with roots stretching far back into pre-history.**

Egyptian pantheon as "Am", with Amn ("the [masculine] Am" or Amun) being the specific two or three foot high graven expression of that supreme deity located in Thebes. Cross-fertilisation of religious beliefs over thousands of miles no doubt happened to an extent then, just as it does to a much greater extent today.

### Zoroastrianism and the Three Abrahamic Religions

Zoroaster's life may be shrouded in mystery, but there is nothing mysterious about the noble principles he left to us. They show the way to a truthful and constructive life, and are clearly an ancient prototype of Akhenaton's belief system, of Judaism, of Christianity and of Islam. Central to Zoroastrianism are the concepts of *light* and *dark*. It is of course not the only concept of a binary pair of opposites to have emerged in the human mind, but probably the oldest by far.

Day and night must have been deeply ingrained in the daily lives of our early hominid ancestors long before fully formed human beings emerged. It is certainly the most clearly manifested pair of opposites in nature, and most creatures know what a vast difference there is between them. The light of day and the dark of night were transformed into the *light of goodness*, the Ahuru Mazda or Ormazd ('illuminating wisdom'), and the *darkness of evil*, the Angra Mainyu or Ahriman (destructive or dark spirit).

Zoroaster (Zardusht in Middle and Modern Persian) was in every way an ordinary man, upset by the suffering and injustice he saw around him. Much to the alarm of his wife and relatives, he went off into the wilderness one day in search of answers (sounds familiar doesn't it: Moses, Jesus, Mohammed all did the same). One day while sitting before a cave entrance, he pondered over whether his ascetic life was worth the struggle, and maybe he should give it all up and return home. Soon the sun sank behind the distant hills and darkness crept into the valley below. As he watched this happening, he realised for the first time that just as external life was divided into the light of day and the darkness of night, so too the world of thought was divided into the light of good and the darkness of evil. And evil thoughts, the darkness of evil or *Ahriman*, were the cause of all human suffering.

This may seem trivial and obvious to a 21<sup>st</sup> Century mind, but we must remember that many basic principles we take entirely for granted today were once thought of for the first time by a single individual, and prior to which no one had ever thought of it. There has been a first time for everything we can think of, and undoubtedly there



was also a first time for the emergence of the concept of good and evil and its association with light and darkness.

## Good Thoughts, Words and Deeds

Following this revelation, Zoroaster returned to his home to begin teaching all who would listen, about goodness and the need to pursue it at all costs. He was probably the greatest and most radical of religious leaders of his time, and for centuries after his death. And to an extent, his legacy survives in the doctrines of the three Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Zoroaster's teachings form a sacred triangle with the three main points occurring again and again in mantric form as *Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds*, or in Avestan: *Humata, Hukhta, Hvareshta*.

Let's look at the first point: *Good Thoughts*. In the Zoroastrian sacred literature, it is written: "*Your character is built by your thoughts. As you think so will you become.*" Zoroaster stressed that everyone had free

**Good words are the only ones worth keeping, for only good words lead to growth and upliftment in all areas of life.**

will and could choose between thinking good thoughts or harbouring bad thoughts; the right thinking and wrong thinking of the much later Buddhist philosophy. "*If you think nobly, you will be born with a noble character. If you think evil, you will be born with evil traits.*" Noble ideals as thoughts, are the beginning of all things and hence the first point of the Zoroastrian sacred triangle. And as the quotation implies, Zoroastrianism, though



*Manuscript portion of the Zend Avesta, the Zoroastrian scripture. (Bodleian MS J2)*



*Zoroaster on left, standing over the First Judicial Department of The New York Supreme Court.*

not clearly saying so, certainly acknowledges the existence of reincarnation or transmigration as found in the Vedic religious stream.

Next, look at the second point: *Good Words*. In this regard the sacred writings counsel us to "*...render to each man his due.*" Speak words from a kind heart, for each day offers endless opportunities for good words, spoken generously and touching another's heart; thereby potentially positively changing his or her life. Words can inspire people

to do both good or bad. Good words are the only ones worth keeping, for only good words lead to growth and upliftment in all areas of life.

And finally the third point of the triangle: *Good Deeds*. Through acts of kindness, a person transforms previously thought about and spoken of ideals into physical action. Only by performing 'deeds' do things finally crystallise into physical reality. Through every good deed, those doing the deed, as well as those benefiting from it, advance a bit on their path to ever greater spiritual realisation. In the Rosicrucian philosophy, the key to true spiritual growth lies in selfless acts of service to others.

## Only One Lasting Good

Zoroastrianism, also called Mazdayazna or *din-e zardusht* (the religion of Zoroaster) by its followers, claims that for all people there is but one lasting good, "*...the health, power and purity of the soul.*" We have a striking example of





*Zoroastrian Parsi Navjote Ceremony.*

this in the clothing of the Parsis (meaning: Persians) in India, who still adhere to this ancient religion of light.

The Parsis wear whatever dress is best suited to their occupation, but beneath their outer garments, the sudreh and kusti (a white shirt and a belt made from white wool) must always be worn. The sudreh is symbolic of the simplicity and purity of life. The kusti, made of lamb's wool, reminds the wearer of innocence and gentleness. In the act of putting on the kusti, each person makes a commitment to fight evil. This simple act tries to speak to the true inner man or woman as the belt itself is given three winding turns: *good thoughts, good words and good deeds*, always and everywhere!

The followers of Zoroaster did not *worship* fire, as is sometimes thought. To them, fire was a symbol, and a symbol only, of spiritual purity. His philosophy is based on the supreme value of spiritual health and wellbeing, and provides its adherents with a sense of divine order where a pattern of life in the form of regular prayers and rituals to revitalise the world, social periods and acts of philanthropy, and private moments of devotion to the

great God of Light *Ahura Mazda*, gives them a sense of cohesion and continuity.

*Hambandagi* is a term with an inner meaning that the pursuit of goodness is not just a means, but is an end in itself; for it, and it alone, leads to social cooperation, harmony and personal spiritual liberation. It is a pattern for living a holy life where the Cosmic provides us with many opportunities for growth, progress and happiness. If we could ask Zoroaster what happiness is, he would probably give a single answer: "*Happiness is manifesting your soul for all to see.*"

1. Zoroaster is the English variant of the Greek form of his name: Zōroastrēs (Ζωροάστρης).
2. The Avestan language was an early form of Persian and an Indo-European language closely related to Sanskrit. It is partly because the oldest parts of the Zoroastrian teachings were written in old Avestan that experts in the field believe the religion's origins lie close in time to the emergence of the Vedic religious stream during the mid to late 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE.
3. The *Gathas* and *Yasna Haptanghaiti*, both works assumed to have been written by Zoroaster, were written in Old Avestan, a language dated to the early part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Millenium BCE latest, and more likely several hundred years earlier and contemporaneous with Sanskrit as a living language. All known surviving Zoroastrian literature was however written (or transcribed from earlier documents) no earlier than the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> Centuries CE. Zoroaster's writings were however referred to by the ancient Greeks, and Plutarch and Diogenes for example suggested an era prior to 6,000 BCE.
4. Following the conquest of Babylon and lands to the east and north of it by Alexander the Great, the Seleucid Kings introduced a new calendar based on the year of his death (323 BCE). The Zoroastrian priests countered this by formalising their own calendar based on the birth of their prophet Zoroaster, and the so-called 'traditional date', widely accepted up to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, was placed "258 years before Alexander", or 581 BCE.
5. See *Plato Prehistorian* by Mary Settegast, 1990 Lindisfarne Press



*Zoroastrian Temple of Yazd, Iran. Photo: GFDL.*





# BE Inquisitive

by Alan Sasha

**T**HROUGHOUT history, great men and women have found deep and useful meanings even in the most ordinary of things. The Greek mathematician Archimedes, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BCE, discovered the law of hydrostatics by noticing how the level of his bath water rose in proportion to the immersion of his body; a usual occurrence, but not one that ‘ordinary’ people would give a second thought to. He was so excited with the implied meaning that, as legend has it, he ran out naked in the street shouting “*Eureka!*” (“I have found it!”).

The English mystic and mathematician Isaac Newton (1642-1727) saw meaning in the usual occurrence of falling things: they fall down, never up, even though the earth turning on its axis and travelling around the sun at great speed should cause all things to fly off into space. He had been wondering, it is said, why an apple fell from a tree to the earth and not up into the sky, and the result was his discovery of the universal law of gravitation.

The French scientist Louis Pasteur (1822-1895) started the science of bacteriology with an inquiry into



the reasons why wine, left in unsealed bottles deteriorates more rapidly than when the bottles are sealed.

The American inventor Thomas Edison (1847-1931) was intrigued by the commonplace occurrence of two metals producing sound when rubbed together. What kind of a sound would be produced by a needle point moving against a resonant plate? And what if the pressure on the needle point were to vary in response to the air current produced by the human voice? The phonograph resulted.

The Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) considered trivial contradictions and slight memory lapses as indicators of conflicting patterns of behaviour in the subconscious. The result: the creation of psychoanalysis as a system of bringing those hidden conflicting patterns into open understanding for the possible establishment of inner harmony and peace of mind.

The Scottish biologist and pharmacologist Alexander Fleming (1881-1955) discovered penicillin by questioning why moulds are more disease-resistant than healthy plants. Investigation proved that moulds are forms of bacteria convertible into antibiotics to fight disease in humans.

The invention of the aeroplane, credited to the Wright Brothers, had its inception in a very usual phenomenon: winds lift objects from the earth. Would an artificially created and deliberately directed air current carry objects through the air? From this point on, it was only a matter of choosing the right materials for fuselage, engine and propellers, and of shaping fuselage and wings to receive the air current produced by the forward motion of the aircraft.

These outstanding examples of genius discerning meanings and principles in the simplest of things, leads to the question: *Is there a special kind of mental faculty that accounts for such discernment?* Can everyone develop this faculty? It manifests as a mental attitude of inquiry into commonplace things that sometimes leads to the discovery of new values that can be found in them. The following experiments may be used to help the development of this mental attitude in you without your becoming unduly inquisitive.

## Helpful Experiments

Begin the process by considering everything you see or hear, even the most commonplace, as a hint or suggesting of something more beyond it. Hold onto definite and

well-verified details, and always ask yourself how relevant the details are in relation to what you are trying to understand. Guard against allowing your imagination too much freedom of expression in producing entirely imaginary interpretations, and you will begin to notice new possibilities. Avoid wishful flights of fancy unrelated to reality, and new possibilities can lead you to practical results and to greater mental resourcefulness.

**No thing is never isolated, all by itself; everything is connected in some manner with other things.**

Or try this: Think repeatedly several times about some usual thing or occurrence until its 'usualness' fades. Become increasingly interested in all its possible relationships, in its origin, its various effects, in how environment affects it and how it attempts to counteract its environment. A blade of grass, a pebble, a snowflake, a smile, a frown or your familiar home, through your continued thought of it, will reveal new depths of meaning which you may well have overlooked before. By adopting this mental attitude of constant enquiry, nothing will ever again appear totally frozen or irrevocably finished for you. Everything will whisper to you "I have a secret; come and find it!" No thing is ever isolated, all by itself; everything is connected in some manner with other things. So what are those 'other things'?

There is always something more to be understood, so prod, push, pull and don't be satisfied with 'surface answers' only.

For example, when you next take a walk, find a peaceful spot to stoop down and look at the grass around you while all the time applying your concentrated thought on how grass grows, just the grass itself. This exercise will eventually yield the experience of growing vitality, freshness, the earth's nourishment, fertility, strength, chemical reactions and even healing power. Thinking in this way should ultimately bring your thought processes to a much more powerful and deliberate state instead of the usual fleeting thoughts you employ. Your interest will also become more profound and concentrated than before.

Nothing will appear haphazard or fortuitous any longer, and where inherent principles of existing order are not yet known, you will nevertheless sense that they do exist, and are just there to be discovered. This is exactly what takes place in the mind of a genius. You may not of course ever become a genius, but you can increase your mental resourcefulness by following their example. Start by being inquisitive today.



Alexander Fleming



# CAMEROON CONVENTION

by *Sven Johansson*

First ever  
English speaking  
Rosicrucian  
Convention in  
Cameroon



**A**RRIVING in Douala on the Atlantic coast of Cameroon was quite an experience, accustomed as I am to cool weather, mist and grey skies for a lot of the year. The plane's windows steamed up immediately, and when I left the air-conditioned comfort of the plane, the equatorial heat and humidity came as a wonderful embrace.

I felt truly privileged to visit this wonderful country

in August 2013, not alone, but accompanied by the Grand Administrator for English speaking West Africa Kenneth Idiodi and his wife Bridget, known affectionately to thousands of Rosicrucians in West Africa as 'Mummy'. Not only is Cameroon endowed with an abundance of resources, great natural beauty and a lovely climate, its greatest asset by far is the warmth and generosity of its people. Admittedly, although I met mainly Rosicrucians





wherever I went and could therefore expect to find good people in abundance for that reason alone...., despite the humble circumstances of most people I saw going about their daily tasks as I was driven past simple homes and road-side stalls, there was a great deal of spontaneous smiling and laughter everywhere.

On the first evening, we stayed in a comfortable downtown hotel, but I was awoken in the early morning hours by a sound I had never heard before, the sound of millions of huge raindrops falling on aluminium roofs throughout the city. It was the mother of all cloudbursts and I know now why the roadside gutters in Cameroon are so deep, wide and sturdily built: all the better to get those heavenly waters back to their mother, the ocean.

The following day we left Douala and made a steep ascent to the town of Buea, high up on the slopes of the not so long ago active volcano, Mount Cameroon. I was told the German colonial rulers of the late eighteen hundreds and early nineteen hundreds based a lot of their administration here due to the cooler, more equitable climate. So there still stand well maintained sturdy old colonial buildings harking back to a very different era.

Soon we arrived at the beautifully decorated Rosicrucian Temple of Hermes Chapter. A large gathering of Rosicrucians was present, and after a guided tour, we assembled in their large, well appointed Temple for a collective mental and spiritual focalisation exercise known to Rosicrucians throughout the world as the midday Council of Solace attunement, during which health and solace is directed at people in need, and towards our beloved mother earth and all her creatures.

After a welcome lunch with members, it was time to travel back to Douala for dinner in the home of a treasured past Grand Councillor and to meet members of

Plotinus Lodge, a beautifully appointed Temple at which the first English speaking Temple Degree Initiation team in Cameroon was installed, and Grand Councillor Julius Nso Nso delivered an inspiring Convocation message.

The following day I travelled from Douala to Yaoundé by car, driven by the ever smiling Grand Councillor Mathieu Ngako. It was a real eye-opener, with ancient forests stretching in all directions with huge trees, no doubt hundreds of years old. But even here the signs of modernity were never far away. Enormous tree trunk segments loaded onto trucks were stacked up in their hundreds on the outskirts of Douala, waiting for clearance to enter town and make their way to the docks where the precious wood would be shipped to

**As I was driven past simple homes and road-side stalls, there was a great deal of spontaneous smiling and laughter everywhere.**

destinations throughout the world. Being a lover of nature, I couldn't help but feel pangs of sadness at seeing so many magnificent trees destined to be converted into chairs, bookshelves and dining room tables primarily for elegant homes in first world nations.

Yaoundé, the political capital of Cameroon stands at an average 2,500 feet above sea level, and is a lot dryer and less humid than at the coast. In fact the evenings were distinctly cool while the days were pleasantly warm. The town is well built and surrounded by several abrupt mountain peaks, no doubt the ancient remains of old volcanic lava cores. Shortly after arriving, we were taken to the truly beautifully appointed Loge Aristote, in an upmarket part of town. Operated by members of the French Grand Lodge of AMORC, a choir sprang into





action as we arrived. Kenneth, Bridget and I stood in awe at the warmth of the reception we were given, and for my part I was close to tears listening to their heartfelt singing when I realised the extent to which everyone had gone to make such a special welcome.

The following two days were devoted to inspiring seminars and Convocations, and periods during which we could meet and socialise with members. From all social strata, from all political, philosophical and religious adherence, Rosicrucians can be found in almost every corner of the world. And there is a certain 'something' quite special about them; for they

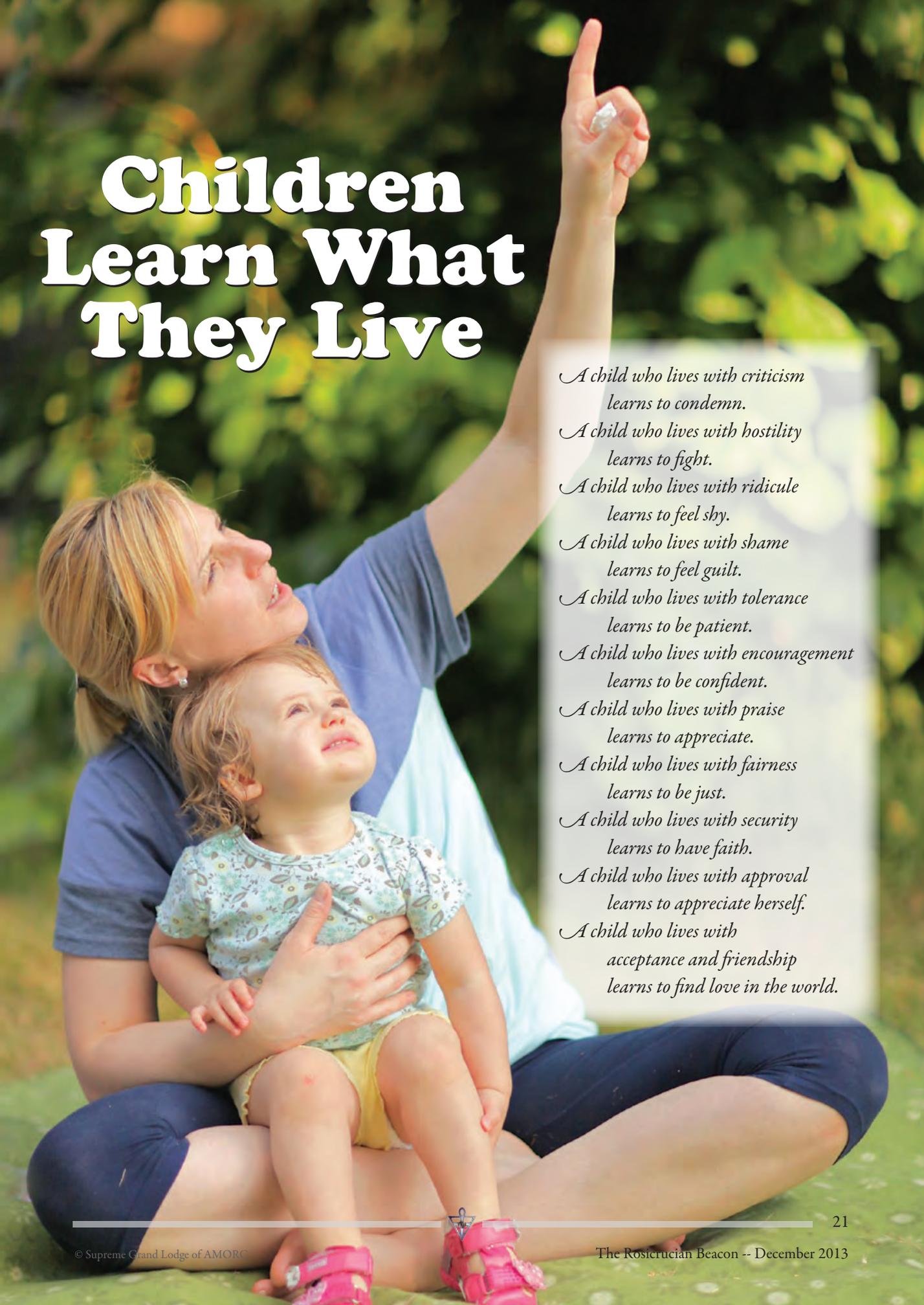


believe in peace and goodwill towards all people; they believe, even in the face of callous and brutal acts of violence in so many parts of the world, in the inherent goodness of humankind, and the inevitable unity of humanity which will one day become a reality in our presently much troubled world.

The Rosicrucians of Cameroon were the same as everywhere else, but for me they were decidedly among the friendliest and most humble I've ever met.



# Children Learn What They Live



*A child who lives with criticism  
learns to condemn.*

*A child who lives with hostility  
learns to fight.*

*A child who lives with ridicule  
learns to feel shy.*

*A child who lives with shame  
learns to feel guilt.*

*A child who lives with tolerance  
learns to be patient.*

*A child who lives with encouragement  
learns to be confident.*

*A child who lives with praise  
learns to appreciate.*

*A child who lives with fairness  
learns to be just.*

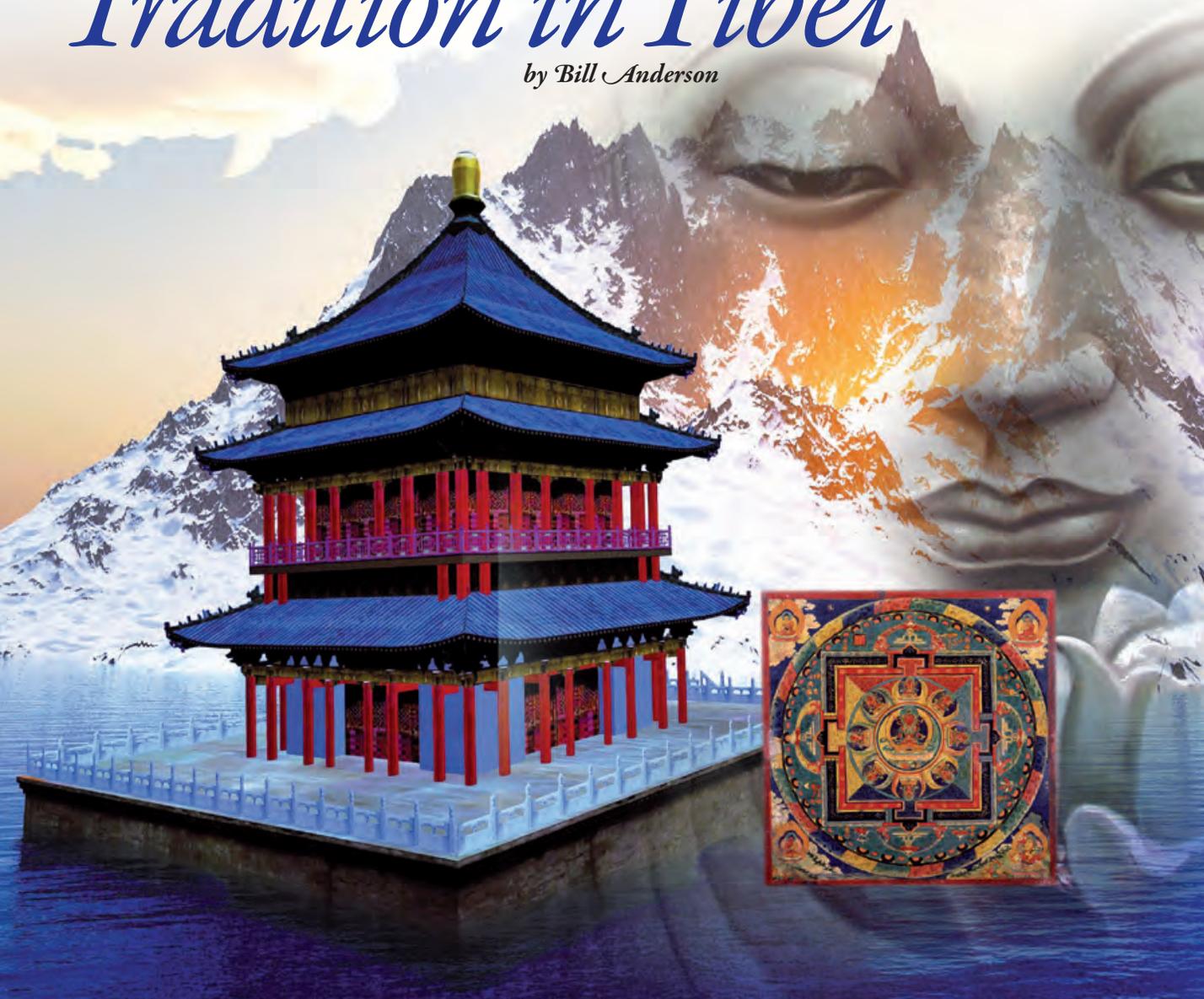
*A child who lives with security  
learns to have faith.*

*A child who lives with approval  
learns to appreciate herself.*

*A child who lives with  
acceptance and friendship  
learns to find love in the world.*

# Mystical Tradition in Tibet

by Bill Anderson



**T**IBET, THE VERY name conjures up visions of robe clad monks going about their daily business, while in a chamber far in the distance can be heard the deep sonorous sounds of chanting. We see rows of monks of all ages seated in a dark, smoke-filled temple murmuring prayers as they progress through their prayer beads one by one, hoping to move inch by inch closer to their ultimate liberation.

But we also see a bustling little city like Lhasa with

well stocked Chinese shops and Tibetan peasants in rags roaming the streets like so many third world scenes we have seen before. Does the Western image of a nation filled with robe-clad men of wisdom portray reality or wishful thinking? We can't be sure can we, for Tibet has been an occupied nation for much of its recent history, and very little verifiable information ever leaves this mountain land. It is almost certain though that most of what we in the West would consider the spiritual part of Tibet to be, is now sadly in the past.





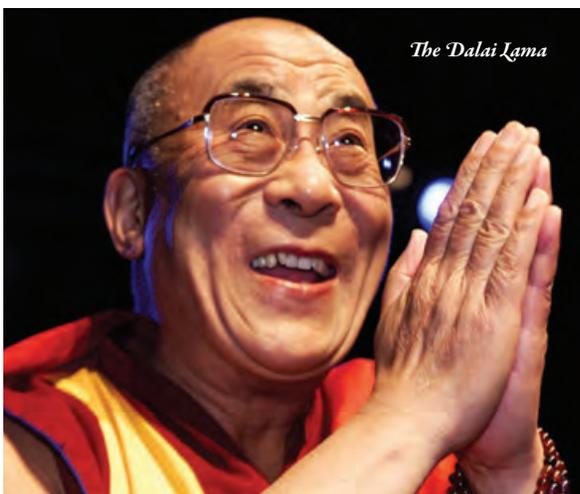
*The Kunlun mountains.*

Long isolated by the world's highest mountain ranges, a dominant feature of Tibet are the Kunlun, a wide range of mountain peaks stretching from West to East across the entire Tibetan plateau. This old theocracy has long been thought of as a land of mystery, and it remains so even today. Despite over half a century of brutal suppression and ethnic cleansing of its original inhabitants, the Tibetan religion and traditions still cling on in isolated communities, and the Tibetan sense of national identity runs as deep as ever in the hearts of Tibetans, whether in Tibet itself or in its worldwide diaspora. Having suffered

the vicissitudes of several foreign invasions in the past, the most recent one beginning in the late 1940s, Tibet still remains in Western eyes a beacon of spiritual practise and attainment, harking back to a time of almost superhuman spiritual achievement.

Much of the moral rectitude and spiritual depth that people perceive Tibet to possess comes from early 20<sup>th</sup> Century authors who portrayed the country as one possessing the most refined spiritual theocracy in the world. The present Dalai Lama though, has undoubtedly done more than most people alive today, in bringing the plight of the Tibetan people to the eyes and moral conscience of the world. Through years of strict observance of non-violence and a deep love of the country of his birth, he shas hown how people can live lives of kindness and compassion despite generations of foreign occupation and state-sponsored vilification. How accurate the picture of the Tibet we have today has ever been is open to question of course; but what is certain is that this sparsely populated land has inspired in the minds of seekers the world over, spiritual quests that have brought untold happiness and serenity in this life, and hopes for a positive and beautiful future for all humankind.

The former country of Tibet now forms the Chinese autonomous region of Xīzàng Zìzhìqū, though Tibetans in small communities are also found in the neighbouring Chinese provinces of Qīnghâi, Gānsù, Sìchuān and



*The Dalai Lama*



Yúnnán, and in several fragile communities in northern India, Sikkim, Nepal and Bhutan. And that is not counting the western diaspora of exiled native Tibetans, and the large following of Tibetan Buddhism in the West which has emerged in recent decades.

## Tibetan Language

Modern humans have lived in Tibet as far back as the Neolithic period, and almost certainly, the first hominins out of Africa, some 1.7 million years ago, the long extinct Homo Erectus, would have called it home. We can't tell who the first modern humans were, but their deep ancient ancestors were almost certainly Neanderthals or the even more ancient Denisovians. But if we restrict ourselves to the era of modern human migrations out of Africa into Asia between 50 to 70 thousand years ago, there is little reason to doubt that modern day Tibetans are anything but the direct descendants of these early pioneers. If so, and considering the huge population changes that have taken place all over the world in recent millennia, then the Tibetans are among the most ancient of all human populations outside of Africa.

The Tibetans call themselves the *Bod-pa*, meaning 'people living in the Bod [region]', and their language is of the Tibeto-Burman family. Burmese is believed to be the closest language to Tibetan, possibly, though

**Modern humans have lived in Tibet as far back as the Neolithic period, and almost certainly, the first hominins out of Africa.**

not proven by any means, due to migrations of Tibetans into Southeast Asia around or before the time of the Buddha (6<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Centuries BCE). Grouping these two languages together with other related languages spoken in the Himalayas, as well as in the highlands of Southeast Asia and the Sino-Tibetan frontier regions, linguists have concluded that all these languages originated from an ancient Tibeto-Burman language, possibly older even than the language group which arrived on the Indian sub-continent with the arrival of the Vedic tradition some four to five thousand years ago. Tibetan is also spoken in parts of Nepal, India and Bhutan and is also used by some Mongolians in order to study Buddhism.

There are several different Tibetan dialects, and due to differences in pronunciation and vocabulary it can be difficult for people from different regions to understand each other. However, greater social interaction among



*A Tibetan Bon gathering taken in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.*

Tibetans from previous regions in recent times has led to the development of a modern standard Tibetan language, in contrast to various other traditional dialects which are much closer to classical Tibetan. Written Tibetan was devised in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE by Thonmi Sambhota (or Thon-mi bsam-bho-ta), the senior minister of the famous Tibetan ruler King Songtsän Gampo or Srong-btsan sgam-po (c. 569-649).

It was believed that the king was a manifestation of the Buddhist Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, of whom the Dalai Lamas are similarly believed to have been manifestations. Thonmi Sambhota was one of 15 scholars sent to India by the king to compile Tibetan scripts so that Buddhist literature could be translated into Tibetan. He developed the Tibetan language based on the Sanskrit characters of the Devanagari script, which is used for many Indian languages. He also compiled grammar texts which are still the primary source for studies in Tibetan grammar.

Since its introduction, the writing system has barely changed, although the spoken language has evolved considerably. As a result, written and spoken Tibetan are quite different. Spoken Tibetan is tonal to an extent and also nasal, like French or Portuguese. More controversial, and considerably less popular, is the theory that the Tibeto-Burman family is itself part of a larger language family, called Sino-Tibetan, and that through it, the Tibetan and Burmese languages are distant cousins of Chinese.

## Bon

As early as the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE, some Tibetans were calling themselves *Bod*, which is believed to be derived from the word *Bon* or *Bön*, which refers to a shamanistic or animist religion followed by many Tibetans at that time.



Prior to the Tibetan diaspora, *Bon* existed within a web of ancient indigenous animism, Hinduism, sympathetic magic, Buddhism, folk religion, shamanism, Vajrayana, asceticism and mysticism complexes prevalent throughout the Himalaya, freely intermingling throughout the inner Asian region.

The scholarly history of *Bon* is difficult to clearly ascertain because the earliest surviving documents referring to the religion date to the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Centuries CE, well after Buddhists began the suppression of indigenous beliefs and practices. Moreover, the word *Bon* is used to describe three distinct traditions:

1. The pre-Buddhist religious practices of Tibetans and the Tibetan peoples of Nepal that are *“imperfectly reconstructed yet essentially different from Buddhism”* and were focused on the person of a divine king.
2. A syncretic religion that arose in Tibet and Nepal during the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Centuries, with strong shamanistic and animistic traditions. This shamanic indigenous religion is not Buddhism but is sometimes regarded by scholars as a substrate form of Buddhism.
3. A set of popular beliefs in which local shamans try to heal people using ideas sometimes ascribed to *Bon*. Shamans may divine deities’ wishes, have supernatural struggles with deities, or become possessed by deities. These shamanic practices are common in the Tibeto-Burman speaking ethnic groups.

*Bon* teachings feature ‘Nine Vehicles’ which are pathway-teaching categories with the distinct characteristics of view, practice and result. Medicine, astrology and divination are in the lower vehicles, then follow sutra and tantra at a higher level, and finally *Dzogchen* or ‘great perfection’ being the highest level. Traditionally, the Nine Vehicles are taught in three versions known as the Central, Northern and Southern ‘treasures’.

After the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet during the 7<sup>th</sup> century, there was often fierce competition between the two traditions. Over time, *Bon* lost influence and was marginalised by the Tibetan political elite. Among the important aims of *Bon* are cultivating the heart and mind with compassionate activity to benefit others. According to the Bonpas themselves, the *Bon* religion has gone through three distinct phases: Animistic *Bon*, Eternal *Bon* and New *Bon*.

The first phase was grounded in animistic and shamanistic practices and corresponds to the general



*Tibetan Shaman.*

characterisation of *Bon* as described by western scholars. Initiation rituals and rites closely correlate to the indigenous shamanic traditions of Siberia. Many Bonpo shamans were members of a clan-guild, and were both male and female. A shamanic aspirant was often visited and possessed by an ancestral shaman and/or one or more of any number of entities such as gods, elementals, demons, and spirits. The possession typically resulted in a divine madness and a temporary retreat into the wilderness, where the shaman lived like an animal and experienced visions of his own death at the hands of spirits. After recently possessed shamans returned from exile they were taught by senior practitioners and members of the clan-guild how to exert power over the spirits that visited them, as well as how properly to intone certain mantras which were believed to possess great power.

In *Bon*, the five elemental processes of *earth*, *water*, *fire*, *air* and *space* are the essential elements of all phenomena, the most subtle manifestations of which are known as the ‘five pure lights’. Physical properties are assigned to the elements: earth is solidity, water is cohesion, fire is temperature, air is motion, and space is the spatial dimension that accommodates the other four active elements. In addition, the elements are correlated





*5 Elements Goddess.*

to different emotions, temperaments, directions, colours, tastes, body types, illnesses, thinking styles and character.

From the five elements emerge the five faculties of sensory perception, the five fields of sensual experience, the five negative emotions, the five wisdoms, and the five extensions of the body. They are the five primary *pranas* or vital energies, and are the constituents of every physical, sensual, mental and spiritual phenomenon.

## Buddhism

Especially interesting to seekers of spiritual insight is the knowledge that Tibet has guarded an ancient mystical tradition for hundreds of years, and that her four Tulkus or Great Lamas, each the leader of a particular sect or school, continue to guard it to this day. The mystical tradition per se does not belong exclusively to any one of these schools, but to those students or mystics of any of the schools who have themselves advanced on the spiritual Path.

Religion is extremely important to the Tibetans and has a strong influence over all aspects of their lives. *Bon*, the ancient religion of Tibet, has been almost entirely eclipsed by Tibetan Buddhism, a distinctive form of *Mahayana* and *Vajrayana*, which was introduced into Tibet from the Sanskrit Buddhist tradition of northern India. Tibetan Buddhism is practised not only

in Tibet but also in Mongolia, parts of northern India, in the Russian Federation republics of Buryat, Tuva and Kalmykia, and in a few parts of China. During China's Cultural Revolution, nearly all of Tibet's monasteries were ransacked and destroyed by the Red Guards, and their lamas executed or marched off into 're-education camps' where many died. Under strict control by the Chinese government, a few of these old monasteries have been allowed to be rebuilt since the mid 1990s, and greater religious freedom has been granted, although severely limited in expression by Western standards. Although monks are returning to monasteries across Tibet, and monastic education has resumed, control over the number that are allowed to enter monastic life, as well as what may be taught, is an ever present restriction.

Tibetan Buddhism has four main traditions (the suffix *pa* is comparable to "er" in English):

1. ***Gelug(pa)*, *Way of Virtue***: also known casually as Yellow Hat, whose spiritual head is the Ganden Tripa and whose temporal head is the Dalai Lama. Successive Dalai Lamas ruled Tibet from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> to mid-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. This order was founded in the 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries by Je Tsongkhapa, based on the foundations of the Kadampa tradition. Tsongkhapa was renowned for both his scholasticism and his virtue. The Dalai Lama belongs to the Gelugpa school, and is regarded as the embodiment of the Bodhisattva of Compassion.
2. ***Kagyupa)*, *Oral Lineage***: this contains one major subsect and one minor subsect. The first, the Dagpo Kagyu, encompasses those Kagyu schools that trace back to Gampopa. In turn, the Dagpo Kagyu consists of four major sub-sects: the Karma Kagyu, headed by a Karmapa, the Tsarpa Kagyu, the Barom Kagyu, and Pagtru Kagyu. The once-obscure Shangpa Kagyu, which was famously represented by the 20<sup>th</sup> century teacher Kalu Rinpoche, traces its history back to the Indian master Niguma, sister of Kagyu lineage holder Naropa. This is an oral tradition which is very much concerned with the experiential dimension of meditation. Its most famous exponent was Milarepa, an 11<sup>th</sup> Century mystic.
3. ***Nyingma(pa)*, *The Ancient Ones***: this is the oldest, the original order founded by Padmasambhava.
4. ***Sakya(pa)*, *Grey Earth***: headed by the Sakya Trizin, founded by Khon Konchog Gyalpo, a disciple



of the great translator Drokmi Lotsawa. Sakya Pandita 1182–1251 CE was the great grandson of Khon Konchog Gyalpo. This school emphasises scholarship.

The Buddhist mystical tradition entered the Land of Tibet as early as 787 CE when the Indian master Padmasambhava introduced Buddhism into the country and, on invitation of the Tibetan king, performed the consecration ceremony for the first Buddhist monastery there. The ‘Old Sect’, or Nyingmapas, descends directly from the Nepalese monk Śāntarakṣita, who was the first abbot of that early monastery. He had been abbot of the famous Nalanda University in India. He founded the philosophical school known as *Yogacara-Svatantrika-Madhyamaka*, which united the *Madhyamaka* tradition of Nagarjuna,

Padmasambhava (lit. “Lotus-Born”), also known as the Second Buddha, was a sage guru from Oddiyana, in the modern-day Swat Valley of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan. Padmasambhava is said to have transmitted *Vajrayana* Buddhism to Tibet, Bhutan and neighbouring countries. In those lands, he is better known as Guru Rinpoche (lit. “Precious Guru”). From his *Yoga of Knowing the Mind* comes the following:-

*In its true state, mind is naked, immaculate; not made of anything, being of the Voidness; clear, vacuous, without duality, transparent; timeless, uncompounded, unimpeded, colourless; not realisable as a separate thing, but as the unity of all things, yet not composed of them; homogeneous, and transcendent over differentiation.*

But it was in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century, contemporary with the Norman conquest of England, that the Tibetan master Marpa (1012-1097) made a pilgrimage over the Himalayas and brought back with him the ‘Secret Doctrine’ of the masters of India, which henceforth was to be preserved in Tibet.

## Kagyupa

The ancient mystical fraternity which descends through Marpa is known as the ‘School of the Oral Transmission’ because the secret or esoteric teachings of this school have always been passed down exclusively by word of mouth from master to initiate. The Master Marpa’s chief successor was the renowned Tibetan mystic Jetsun Milarepa.

Milarepa (c.1052-1135) began his career by becoming engaged in the practice of sorcery, for Tibet in the old days was a haunt of so-called ‘black magicians’



*The Indian master Padmasambhava.*

or Bonpo shamen. Having committed innumerable acts of harm, one day Milarepa was overcome with a deep sense of remorse. Repenting of his evil deeds, he then set out in search of a spiritual master capable of guiding him on the path of redemption. So, at 38 years of age, he found Marpa and was accepted on probation. For six long years Marpa caused Milarepa to undergo rigorous acts of penance, and only after the successful completion of this probationary period, was Milarepa initiated by Marpa into the mystical path of Marpa’s school. Milarepa became an adept in the control and application of psychic energy, which made it possible for him to live, clad only in a single white cotton robe, at high altitudes in the Himalayas, even during the freezing cold nights of the Tibetan winter.

Following Milarepa’s spiritual enlightenment, people from all over the East, including Burma, Thailand, India and Tibet itself, made pilgrimages to listen to the mystic songs through which he expounded his teachings. He shied away however from public attention and refused to allow a personality cult to develop around him. Instead, the more Milarepa’s fame spread throughout





*Shigatse*

the East, the more he retreated into the isolation of the mountains, concentrating his efforts on teaching his 21 chief disciples. He explained the doctrine of reincarnation in this way:-

*From beginningless time in the past until now, we have all taken a myriad of bodily forms in our past incarnations, comparable only to the total sum of grains of sand in the great Universe. And so all the sentient beings in the Six Realms are either my mother or my father.*

The next head of the Kagyupa fraternity was Master Gampopa Sonam Rinchen (1079-1153), otherwise known as Dagpo Lhaje or Om-Rah-Mah<sup>1</sup>, who was believed to be a reincarnation of an earlier Indian mystic. Gampopa devoted his energies to building the monastic and academic establishments of the fraternity and his four main disciples in turn founded the four chief branches of the Kagyupa which survive to this day.

### The Mystic Tradition

During the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries the Kagyupa (Marpa's 'school of oral transmission') became the official Tibetan exponent of the Tibetan mystical tradition, and was known

as the 'White School' or 'White Tradition' in Tibet. The Master Kunzi Choskyi Nangwa enlarged upon the significance of the word 'oral' in the name of the Kagyupa school by relating it to a similar sounding Tibetan word meaning 'white', and the Kagyupa has since then been known as the 'White School of Tibet', or dKar-lugs.

But dKar-lugs (the White Tradition) is not related exclusively to the Kagyupa school. In 1400 CE the great Lama Je Tsongkhapa (1357-1419) of Koko Nor, the reformer of esoteric as well as exoteric Buddhism, founded a new religious order, the Gelugpa or 'Virtuous Ones', which with time began to displace in part all the earlier sects and schools of Tibet, including the Kagyupa and dKar-lugs. He once told a story:

*A certain merchant had an only son. One day while playing, the boy fell into a cesspit. The boy's mother and kinsfolk were deeply distressed and cried out with grief, but none of them entered the cesspit to help rescue the boy. Upon learning of his son's predicament, the boy's father climbed into the cesspit and brought him out.*

The boy is a metaphor for all sentient beings. The boy's mother and kinsfolk are those who, upon seeing sentient beings falling into the cyclical flow, are distressed



and cry out with grief, but are incapable of bringing the beings out. And the merchant father is a metaphor for the Bodhisattva<sup>2</sup>. Je Tsongkhapa's nephew, Gyalwa Gendün Drup (1391–1474) was installed in 1439 as the first Dalai Lama of the new order, and in 1445 he founded the great monastery of Tashilhunpo at Shigatse, which later became the seat of the Panchen Lamas. Under the fourth of these Dalai Lamas, the Gelugpa vigorously struggled for political and religious supremacy in Tibet. Patronised by a powerful Mongolian minister, several of the older establishments throughout the land were forcibly incorporated into the reform movement.

### The Dalai Lamas

There was at this time an exceptionally enlightened sage in the Gelugpa Order whose name was Lozang Chöskyi Gyaltsan (1570-1662). In recognition of his great learning and saintly manner of life, Lozang Chöskyi Gyaltsan was elected in his 31<sup>st</sup> year to the Grand Abbotship of Tashilhunpo Monastery. In 1622 he initiated the young Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso as the fifth Dalai Lama who in 1640 steered the Gelugpa Order into a position of supreme temporal power throughout Tibet. All Dalai Lamas since then have been the spiritual heads of the Tibetan government.

The saintly Gyaltsan did not, like his protégé, concern himself with temporal affairs. Instead he devoted his life to uniting and reforming the ancient Tibetan

**A vigorous and ancient people, the Tibetans are more determined than ever to see that this tradition and their religion continue to survive.**

mystical tradition in line with the principles of the great Je Tsongkhapa, founder of the Gelugpa Order, the 'Virtuous Ones'. When the ninth Karmapa Lama, Wangchuk Dorje, died in 1603, many great masters and adepts of the East turned to Gyaltsan for guidance. The following year he was officially given the title of 'Precious Lord Protector' (Gyalgän Rinpoche) for both the Buddhist faith in Tibet, and the much older ancient mystical (Bon) tradition of Tibet. He also received the name 'Precious Gem of Learning' or Panchen Rinpoche, the name by which he is most commonly remembered.

### Root Text

The newly enthroned Panchen Rinpoche then issued his famous 'Root Text' bringing into harmony the ancient Kagyupa mystical tradition with the Gelugpa reform. This text, the Precious Gelug/Kagyü Mahamudra Root



*Tashilhunpo Monastery - The Main Chanting Hall.*



Text, is still used as the chief guideline among students of the Tibetan mystical tradition.

From that time forth, successive reincarnations of the Panchen Lama of Tashilhunpo Monastery near Shigatse have been viewed by the Tibetan people as the highest embodiments of saintliness in the Land of Snow. The Panchen Lama is to this day referred to as the chief official (Maha-chöhan) of the brotherhood of mystic adepts. In fact there is a written prophecy, acknowledged by all the schools of Tibet, that a future incarnation of the Panchen Rinpoche will appear as the Kalki Avatara, (the 'White-Horse Saviour') at the end of the present age. In a much earlier incarnation, it is said, he was Manjusrikirti, the mystic king of the ancient land of Shamballa, and consequently he is at the present time the Grand Master of the esoteric initiatory school of the 'Great Wheel of Time', a doctrine said to have originally derived from Shamballa.

The eighth Panchen Rinpoche is reportedly the Grand Lama who oversaw the religious training of the remarkable Russian woman Helena Petrovna Blavatsky

**A vigorous and ancient people, the Tibetans are more determined than ever to see that this tradition and their religion continue to survive.**

(1831-1891). The ninth died while in China, and it is not surprising therefore that the tenth, born in 1938 but forced to take up residence in Beijing following the Chinese invasion of Tibet, held the nominal role of spiritual head of all Buddhists throughout Tibet. There is currently discord over who exactly is the eleventh.

Subsequent to the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1959, necessitating the flight of the Dalai Lama's government to India, the people and religious leaders of Tibet suffered a long period of intense persecution, mass killings and



*Helena Petrovna Blavatsky.*

forced labour in so-called 're-education camps' in China. Not only was the Panchen Rinpoche imprisoned for many years under the most appalling conditions imaginable, but virtually all of the leading masters and officials were brutally executed. In recent years however, the Chinese government's attitude has mellowed from its former harsh and inflexible standards, and several monasteries have been rebuilt, and Tibetan religious expression is again tolerated, though not encouraged.

The Tibetan mystical tradition has survived for 1,200 years. A vigorous and ancient people, the Tibetans are more determined than ever to see that this tradition and their religion continue to survive. What the future holds for Tibet is of course not known, but one can only hope that the deep spiritual tradition of this ancient land will one day blossom forth again in full glory, and bring to its people the practical and theoretical teachings of Tibetan Buddhism back into mainstream use.

## Footnotes

1. *Om-Rab-Mab*, one of the names of the Tibetan Master *Gampopa Sonam Rinchen* (1079-1153), forms part of one of the group of mantras or vowel sounds still used by members of the Rosicrucian Order.
2. A *Bodhisattva* in Tibetan Buddhism is an 'enlightened being', one of the four 'sublime states' a human can achieve.

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*Interior of a Tibetan Monastery.*





# Ginseng and the Snow Goddess

by Linda Quan

**M**ANY YEARS ago an old and particularly wise man travelled throughout China healing people from all levels of society. He asked for no payment, and became renowned for his empathy and extensive knowledge of herbs and medications useful in returning the sick to equilibrium and good health.

One cold and stormy day in the mountains of Manchuria, the doctor came upon a young emaciated woman freezing to death near an old deserted roadside temple dedicated to the Snow Goddess. Being of great compassion, he brought the girl into the temple and bundled her in his only coat. Then out into the storm

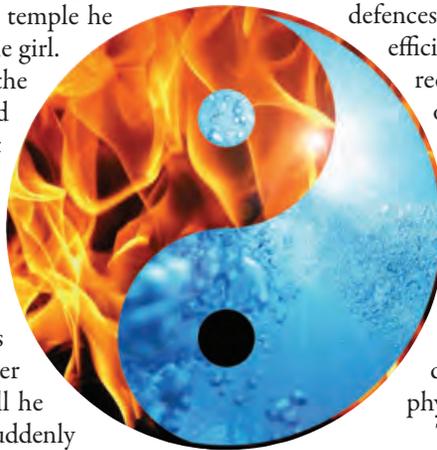




*Mountains of Manchuria.*

he went to find dry wood to build a fire to prepare food and herbal tea. The old man grew cold and tired in his search, but continued until he found enough wood to last the night. On returning to the temple he built a fire and prepared food for the girl. She regained consciousness, took the food and medications he gave her and started regaining her strength. But despite repeated gentle requests by the healer, she would not say how she came to be outside the temple in the state he had found her.

As the girl regained her strength, the healer started losing his strength; inexorably, he grew colder and colder and finally became so ill he could no longer tend to his patient. Suddenly the girl arose in a bright light and prepared a herbal tea using a 'man-like' root that she gave to the healer. He was very surprised, as he had never seen such a root, nor felt such warmth or strength from a medication. Soon he fell into a deep sleep, and when he awoke many hours later, the girl had gone, the storm had passed, and he stood up feeling as strong as he had been at 20. In the



**In the temple lay a bush having the man-like root he had been given and he knew he had found a wonderful new herb.**

temple lay a bush having the man-like root he had been given and he knew he had found a wonderful new herb. The healer, now no longer an old man, travelled far and wide for many more years, helping people and teaching

them of this new medicine which we today know as ginseng, a gift from the Snow Goddess.

## Ginseng

This charming tale was the Chinese explanation of the discovery of the wonderful properties of this plant. Ginseng, the 'man-like' root used in Chinese medicine for millennia, remains today the key element in the pharmacopoeia of traditional Chinese medicine. The word 'traditional' is used to distinguish the medical practices of the modern mainstream Chinese medical establishment from the much old 'folk remedies' which are still widely used even in mainstream medical practice.

According to this traditional and very old Chinese approach to healing, ginseng promotes the *yin* element of the life force, while at the same time removing any the excess *yang* element, thereby bringing about a calming of the body and enabling the body's own defences to start working on a higher level of efficiency. Western medical science does not recognise the existence of yin and yang or of a 'life force', so it is not surprising therefore that Western studies of the effects of ginseng on the human body have not been conducted with much enthusiasm. In recent years however there has been a resurgence of scientific interest in ginseng, and some studies claim to have found demonstrably beneficial effects on the physiology of the body. More of this later.

The English word ginseng derives from the Mandarin Chinese term *rénshēn*. *Rén* means 'man' and *shēn* means 'plant root', referring to the root's characteristic forked shape, which resembles the legs of a man. The English pronunciation derives from the Cantonese *yun sum* and the Hokkien pronunciation "*jín-sim*". The plant comes from 11 related species of slow-growing perennial plants with fleshy roots, belonging to the genus *Panax* of the family *Araliaceae*. It is found only in the Northern Hemisphere, in North America and in eastern Asia (mostly Korea, northeastern China (Manchuria), Bhutan, and eastern Siberia), typically in cooler climates. *Panax vietnamensis*, discovered in Vietnam, is the southernmost ginseng known.

Siberian ginseng (*Eleutherococcus senticosus*) is in the same family, but as a genus is not considered as true ginseng. Like ginseng, it is considered to be an





*Illustration of Panax Quinquefolium (Ginseng).*

adaptogenic herb. The active compounds in Siberian ginseng are eleutherosides, not ginsenosides, and instead of a fleshy root, Siberian ginseng has a woody root.

A testimonial to the belief that people have over the centuries placed in the wonders of ginseng is the fact that Chinese doctors employing traditional healing techniques, believe that ginseng can cure the sick, strengthen the weak, rejuvenate the aged and revitalise the dying. As a result, it is probably the most widely used plant in Oriental medicine. Traditional Chinese medicine attributes various benefits including roles as an aphrodisiac, stimulant, type II diabetes treatment or a cure for sexual dysfunction in men.

This aromatic root resembles a small parsnip that forks as it matures. Above ground, the plant grows to a height of 18 inches, usually bearing three leaves, each with three to five leaflets two to five inches long. Usually the root is usually available in dried form, either whole, sliced or as a powder. Ginseng leaf, although not as highly-prized, is also used on occasion, and as with the root, it is usually available in dried form

Ginseng has undoubtedly been

used in China for thousands of years as a herbal remedy to treat ailments of the digestive and respiratory systems, nervous disorders, diabetes, to keep the elderly warm in winter, and to increase energy and improve memory. To 'outsiders' that seems a rather tall order, but the essential principle behind the healing properties of the root is that it vitalises the body's own defence mechanisms, thereby allowing the body to heal itself or whatever ailments afflict the patient. Not surprisingly, early Chinese manuscripts listing curative foods also claimed that ginseng enlightened the mind and increased wisdom. The earliest written records of the life-prolonging effects of ginseng date to the Liáng Dynasty (220–589 CE).

## Research

Although the pharmacological properties of ginseng have been studied on and off for several decades, it was only by the 1990s that big-pharma started committing large resources to identifying the active ingredients of ginseng, but sadly with no outstanding discoveries yet. Research does suggest however that ginseng, apart from its effects on the immune system, has certain anti-fatigue properties, a transient regulatory action on carbohydrate metabolism and blood pressure, increased survival rates in animals exposed to physical and biological stresses, and increases in adrenal cortical capacity and the body's ability to respond to stress.

Russian research dating to the mid Cold War era, suggested what research in the West discovered several decades later, namely that ginseng (used by humans) boosts physical stamina, promotes optimism psychologically and sharpens the wits of people having to do complicated assembly line work. These were useful traits during the Soviet era when human labour under harsh working conditions was an ever present fact of life.

More recent research has been assessing the usefulness of ginseng as an 'adaptogen', allowing mammals to respond more quickly to stressful situation, and adapt to and recover from challenging circumstances with far less onerous after-event consequences. And more recent studies have shown that humans react in much the same way, possibly even more positively.

Of course there is no such thing as a true 'wonder drug', and ginseng has been found to have some decidedly negative side effects too. Ginseng should never be used



*'Fragment of a Chinese manuscript prescription for a herbal remedy containing Ginseng root. Ginseng in Chinese is called 'human spirit'. The forked root is said to resemble the legs of person.*





as a 'cool-aid'. It is not meant to be consumed in large quantities on the basis that 'more is better', for this is not the case, and too much ginseng, like too much of any substance, will harm one. Some of the conditions produced by ginseng when used to excess can be potentially serious, and whenever in doubt, a qualified doctor should be consulted. On many websites, anecdotal information is available about ginseng, most of it positive, but some of it more objective and highlighting some of the problems associated with high usage of ginseng. The following health problems were treated with ginseng and these comments were made<sup>1</sup>:

- **Heart conditions:** Ginseng appears to have antioxidant effects that may benefit patients with heart disorders. Some studies suggest that ginseng also reduces oxidation of low-density lipoprotein (the LDL or 'bad' cholesterol) and brain tissue.
- **High blood sugar/glucose intolerance:** Several studies suggest ginseng may lower blood sugar levels in patients with type 2 diabetes before and after meals. These results are promising, especially because ginseng does not seem to lower blood sugar to dangerous levels.
- **Immune system enhancement:** Several studies report that ginseng boosts the immune system, improves the effectiveness of antibiotics in people with acute bronchitis, and enhances the body's response to flu vaccines.
- **Type 2 diabetes (adult-onset):** Several human studies report that ginseng lowers blood sugar levels in patients with type 2 diabetes, though not to dangerous levels. Long-term effects are not clear, and it is not known what doses are safe or effective, but it appears that a malfunctioning pancreas is stimulated to begin working better than before, though only temporarily.
- **Bronchodilator:** Limited research suggests that ginseng has positive effects on breathing.
- **Cancer chemotherapy:** Early studies suggest that injections of ginseng concentrate may help patients undergoing chemotherapy for various types of cancer. Ginseng may improve body weight, quality of life, and especially the immune response. Although the evidence is promising, it is not a cure and the effects of ginseng alone are not clear.
- **Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD):** Ginseng is reported to improve lung function and exercise capacity in patients with COPD.
- **Exercise performance:** Athletes commonly use ginseng as a potential way of improving stamina. However, it remains unclear if taken orally, the body's uptake is sufficient to produce the performance results needed. Studies with intravenous administration have been done, but even here, the results are not sufficiently clear.



- **Fatigue:** A few studies using ginseng extract (with or without multivitamins) report improvements in patients with fatigue of various causes.
- **High blood pressure:** Early research suggests that ginseng lowers blood pressure (systolic and diastolic), but what dosages are safe and what could be dangerous, are not yet clear.
- **Liver protection:** Early studies suggest that ginseng may have protective effects on the liver, even to the extent of halting or even reversing certain liver diseases.
- **Lung conditions:** Several studies have looked at the effects of ginseng in a variety of lung conditions. Early results are promising, but most studies have used combination products, therefore making it difficult to isolate the effect of ginseng on its own.
- **Male infertility:** Early evidence suggests that ginseng may improve male fertility by increasing the number and movement of sperm.
- **Mental performance:** Several studies report that ginseng may modestly improve cognition and the uptake and retention of new information. Benefits have been seen in both healthy young people and in older ill patients. Effects have also been reported with a combination of ginseng and Ginkgo Biloba.
- **Mood and cognition in post-menopausal women:** A review of several studies suggest that ginseng may improve mood and lower anxiety in postmenopausal women.
- **Quality of life:** There is early evidence that ginseng may help improve the general 'quality of life' in both

healthy and ill patients. This may be due primarily to the optimism and positive psychological effects of ginseng, but long-term effectiveness is not known.

- **Respiratory infections:** Ginseng appears to be a safe, well tolerated and potentially effective remedy for some forms of respiratory illnesses caused by the flu virus.
- **Well-being:** More generally, studies have examined the effects of ginseng for up to 12 weeks (both with and without vitamin supplements) on overall well-being in both healthy and ill patients. The majority of these studies have been anecdotal only and not to laboratory standards, so the reviews by pharma, though positive, are not conclusive. While ginseng

**There is still a preponderance of evidence to prove that in most cases even a mild or limited course of ginseng has positive effects.**

appears to be positive in the vast majority of cases, it is, as with all other drugs, almost certain that it is not beneficial for everyone.

At the very least, the work that has been done on the moderating effects of ginseng on the stress response, prove that there is a measurable effect. How reliable that effect is though, varies according to each person's specific physiological issues, what other medications they are taking, or their lifestyle preferences, such as smoking, drinking or living with long periods of sleep deprivation through overwork.

Although there is insufficient data to say what concentrations of ginseng cause the beneficial responses to stress levels, there is still a preponderance of evidence to prove that in most cases even a mild or limited course of ginseng has positive effects. And it is unlikely that the potentially harmful effects of ginseng, considering several millennia of use by the Chinese, should be any cause for concern. The only way forward is to conduct controlled, double-blind human experiments, and some long-term studies are now nearing completion.

## Epilogue

Due to the purported nature of the ginseng's action, namely the boosting of *yin* and the suppression of *yang*, the two polar opposites of the so-called 'life force', studies have often been ambiguous in both their methodology and their aims. Results have as a consequence been



*Athletes commonly use ginseng as a potential way of improving stamina.*





*Traditional Chinese practitioner measuring out herbs.*

contradictory and where purely objective criteria have been used, studies have still been contradictory, finding in some cases elevated blood pressure while in other cases a lowering of blood pressure.

In some circumstances ginsenosides appear to act as stimulants, while in others they work as sedatives, and the only conclusions that can be reached with any certainty is that there remains a deep mystery about this 'wonder plant', one that may have more to do with the life force of the plant itself than with any inherent chemical actions.

Objectively viewed, ginseng is generally considered to be a safe tonic and pick-me-up when taken in moderate doses. But taken in large doses, there are some possible side effects which may include increased heart rate, nausea, headaches, sleeping disorder, and restlessness. But on the plus side, apart from its rejuvenating effects, ginseng has the effect of lowering blood sugar levels, something that could be of particular importance to people taking requiring medication for diabetes.

Because ginseng may have a steroid hormone-like effect on some women who have had breast or endometrial cancer, some doctors caution against its use for such women. Not enough study has been done though to show whether it is safe for women who are pregnant or breast-feeding, and doctors generally would advise against its use during such periods. Women who fall into these groups should speak to their doctors before taking ginseng.

So, with this ancient and revered herb, the best advice is to proceed with caution and in moderate doses to begin with; and only increase dosages as the body adjusts and only if beneficial results are clear to see. Don't overdo it and consult your doctor if you have any concerns. In the end, its true power may lie not so much in its pharmaceutical qualities as in its ability to control the two aspects of the life force, *yin* and *yang*, something that modern science can of course not deal with.

In the end, a proper application may require the psychic abilities of a true traditional Chinese healer, a person with the training to perceive the vitality and qualities of the root directly, and the ability and experience to apply those 'psychic' qualities to best effect in the patient. That is after all the manner of all ancient healing systems, even though probably all herbs used by traditional practitioners have to some extent had definite active ingredients known at least partially today to pharmacology.

The molecular chemistry of ancient herbal remedies has undoubtedly had physical effects on patients who have used those herbs. But the greatest effects may yet have been the psychological effects, or more importantly the psychic effects that the healers administering herbal remedies had on their patients. As with everything in life, there must have been fakes and charlatans in the healing profession in ancient times, just as there are today. But there were then, and no doubt exist even today, a few accomplished healers

**In the end, its true power may lie not so much in its pharmaceutical qualities as in its ability to control the two aspects of the life force, *yin* and *yang*.**

who work wonders through their ability to manipulate the *yin* and *yang* of the great Life Force that infuses all living creatures from birth till death. And this ability, more than any beneficial chemical properties in the ginseng, may be the true origins of the great respect that traditional healers still have for it.





# MENTAL POISONING & BLACK MAGIC

by *Eli Gilmore*

**I**N 1937, the first Imperator of the Rosicrucian Order, Dr H Spencer Lewis, wrote a short book called *Mental Poisoning*.<sup>1</sup> I've read it many times over the years to remind myself of the dangers of 'wrong thought' and how devastating our thoughts can be if not well controlled.

Black magic has been part and parcel of belief





*A slick-talking salesperson, can pressure a customer to buy things they don't want.*

systems for thousands of years, and still exists in many parts of the world. Does it work? No it doesn't for most of us, but it does for certain people. Don't take my word for it though, read Dr Lewis' book. Many people scoff at the superstitions associated with black magic, but according to Dr Lewis' book at least, we are actually invoking this power constantly ourselves without even being aware of it.

Okay, so we don't use powders, potions and incantations to deliberately bewitch others, but so many people, through the harmful thoughts they harbour about themselves or others, accomplish many of the harmful things one typically would ascribe to witchcraft. And the worst is they aren't even aware they're doing it! They aren't even aware that anything untoward is happening.

## Mind Power and Suggestion

The mind has a certain 'mind power', it can influence things of a physical nature and at the very least has the potential of telepathically influencing the thoughts and opinions of others. Every time we use the mind consciously or subconsciously to convince anyone of anything against his or her will, and especially when we harbour malicious thoughts about a person, we are in effect doing what practitioners of black magic do. At the bare-bones level, this is precisely the process involved in black magic, except that the black magician does it willingly, maliciously and knowing full well what the intended consequences for the poor victim should be.

Black magic is nothing more or less than the acquisition of results through mental suggestion, whether done directly or indirectly, close-up or at a distance, through verbal or telepathic suggestion. In essence, the only power a wizard or witch has, is a highly developed ability to implant fears in the mind of the victim, whether through actions, words or the focused telepathic ability to

implant thoughts and emotions in the minds of others. With the intention of harming the other person, the black magician attempts to plant fear and panic in the mind the victim, and hold that fear, panic and blind faith in place for as long as it takes for the victim to accept the harmful suggestions being sent. The rest is up to nature, for any firmly held belief is acted upon by the body eventually.

With a slick-talking salesperson, the pressure is on for customers to buy things they don't want. It doesn't take much to see the similarity between such pressuring and 'black magic', for it is an attempted imposition on the minds of customers to change the way they think

for a brief moment so they agree to buy something they neither need nor want. And even if we think we are trying to sell something 'good' to the customer, are we really qualified to say whether or not the customer needs the things we believe are so 'good'?

Mothers convince their children that 'bad things' will befall them if they don't behave a certain way, thereby planting fears in their minds. Ministers tell us we'll go to hell if we don't do as the church tells us to. And when a doctor tells a patient death is only six months away, this almost seems to follow, though the patient does not necessarily need to die if s/he had a strong enough will to live. And now and then an extraordinary patient proves this to be true. It is what one believes that counts. Similarly, indigenous people on primitive islands may believe that a certain witch doctor can curse them to death, the suggestion is taken, and sure enough, they die.

**In essence, the only power a wizard or witch has, is a highly developed ability to implant fears in the mind of the victim.**

We condone negative talk about war, disease, distrust, poverty and so on, which travels around like snowballs gathering in momentum and size with tremendous speed. When we believe in and stoutly proclaim and spread an idea, we help to bring it to pass. We laugh at the fears and naiveté of people in some parts of the world when they believe they have been 'cursed' by a witch doctor. Yet aren't we as gullible in other respects when suggestions are made in a sufficiently convincing manner?

Look at how easily a good orator can sway an audience through words alone to do the most awful things. Call it a mob eggregore, popular convictions, mass delusion, or whatever, but it all starts with someone implanting a



thought, and others then reinforcing it through blind acceptance. All manner of evil has been created in such dramatic ways.

## Thoughts Find Their Mark

Whether aware of it or not, we are constantly trying to influence the minds of others to suit our preferences. It may be the 'natural' thing to do, but that does not make it okay, and it certainly leaves its mark karmically on us all. But our kind of 'hidden' black magic goes even deeper than that. Like the witches and wizards of yore, we don't even have to be in the presence of our 'victims' to get results. Whenever we send a harmful thought to someone, we are guilty of the age-old crime of witchcraft. The only difference is that the wizards and witches know what they are doing while we *maybe* are ignorant of our powers.

Black magic is based solely upon belief, and if recipients know that evil can come their way but that they do not have to accept it, that they alone have control of their minds, no evil can affect them. But few people realise this and the evil thoughts sent in their direction do affect them. Every thought you send out with feeling lands on its mark, and has consequences. And in all cases, it 'infects' you as much as your poor 'victim', in fact usually a lot more than the person you are thinking badly of. You are in a very real sense 'bewitching' yourself too. Dr Lewis called this '*mental poisoning*', and there is hardly a better expression to describe the effects.

Most people are mild, unknowing, and almost kind witches and wizards. They don't know their own power, or the harm they are causing, and for that reason the consequences are not as severe as they are with people who knowingly engage in such practices. The effects we undergo may be feeling a bit down, feeling sad perhaps, becoming a bit less organised, getting into an argument with someone we would otherwise not have, etc. Wishing a person a bit of 'bad luck' may seem an innocent enough thing, but it has consequences for us too, you can be quite sure of that. Without the faintest realisation that our thoughts not only affect the people we are thinking of (even if only minutely), we suffer the consequences as well.

So how do we stop practising black magic and how do we protect ourselves from the bad thoughts sent out by other minds? Control of our thoughts and words is the key. We cannot think bad thoughts and at the same time get positive results. Like begets like, always! Whether *thinking* about planting pumpkins or *actually* planting them, remember that it is your thoughts that the initiate



*How easily a good orator can sway an audience through words alone to do the most unwise things.*

everything, and often affect everyone within your karmic proximity. That may amount to quite a few innocent people, and then you wonder why no one likes you!

## Stop your Black Magic

Stopping the cause of 'black magic' means first and foremost holding only good, positive, uplifting thoughts about oneself, one's neighbours, one's work colleagues, in fact as many people as possible that we know of. We must find peace with others, at least inwardly within us. Do this, and we will stop bewitching ourselves and others, and help to control the practice of black magic everywhere. Using the power of our thoughts to raise the moral and spiritual level of thoughts worldwide is after all the greatest thing we could do for our suffering world.

Stopping your 'mental poisoning', stops the black magic associated with it. Both are two-way streets and once started, the one feeds off the other until there's

**Wishing a person a bit of 'bad luck' may seem an innocent enough thing, but it has consequences for us, you can be absolutely sure of that.**

nothing more the feed on. We are like broadcasting and receiving stations, sending out and receiving thoughts, and of course words. Minds on the same mental and spiritual level constantly contact each other. We all know about mental telepathy and how distance makes no difference. Therefore, to control black magic we must control our own thinking by sending and accepting only good thoughts. Your mind is not a rubbish bin, so keep it clean!

As we think good, and only good, we grow in understanding and move higher up the scale of thought.



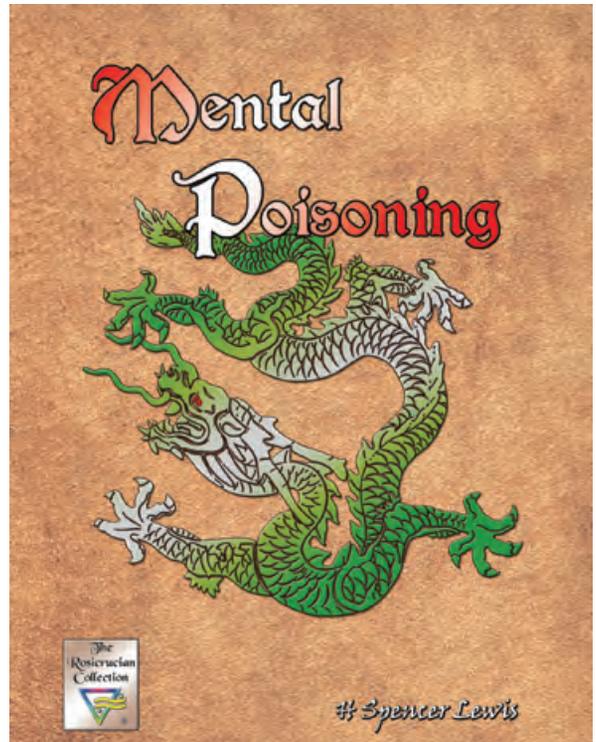


*By sending good thoughts into the world, we help many others.*

And we think only charitably of everyone, we build a safeguard against the harmful thoughts directed at us by others. By sending good thoughts into the world, we help lift our neighbours' thoughts, which in turn come back to us as positive and uplifting experiences for a change.

If we are habitually negative thinkers, it will of course take some doing to break the habit of negative thinking. If we feel bad about someone or something, it's not that easy to stop thinking unkind thoughts and turn on the kind ones. Yet, if we discover that a certain food (even our favourite dish) causes us discomfort, of course we must stop eating it. It is easier to control our physical habits than our mental ones, but we must control them both. Once we realise that our ulcers are the result of the arguments we constantly get into, the hurt feelings we are prone to resort to when stressed, and the sarcastic and malicious thoughts we harbour about certain individuals, we know we have a toxic brew in our minds and need to take strong corrective action to turn things around.

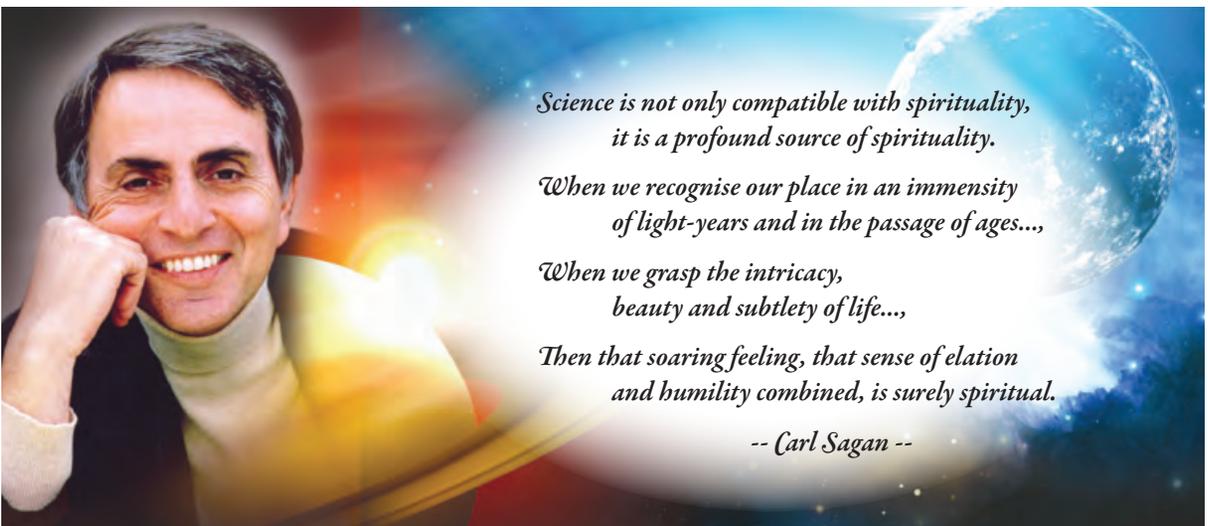
Once you begin holding only good thoughts about



*Mental Poisoning by Dr H Spencer Lewis.*  
 [Available from <http://www.amorc.org.uk/collection>]

yourself, your neighbours and the whole world, you will stop mentally poisoning yourself and others; and the practice of black magic will be once step closer to extinction. And isn't learning to use our thoughts to raise the world rather than pull it down really something worthwhile? Of course it is. Be vigilant, watch your thoughts!

1. The book *Mental Poisoning* by Dr H Spencer Lewis is available from *The Rosicrucian Collection* at <http://www.amorc.org.uk/collection>.



*Science is not only compatible with spirituality,  
 it is a profound source of spirituality.*

*When we recognise our place in an immensity  
 of light-years and in the passage of ages...*

*When we grasp the intricacy,  
 beauty and subtlety of life...*

*Then that soaring feeling, that sense of elation  
 and humility combined, is surely spiritual.*

*-- Carl Sagan --*



# Autumn Equinox at Greenwood Gate



*Group photo of London visitors.*



*Group photo of Brazilian members before their symbolic 'pyramid'.*

**R**OSICRUCIAN'S hold at certain times of the year special ceremonies to honour some of the deeper principles of life. The Equinoxes and Solstices are ancient landmarks in many societies, and are marked off on the Rosicrucian Calendar for four special ceremonies.

The northern hemispheric spring equinox, on or around March 21<sup>st</sup> was in ancient times celebrated all over the northern hemisphere as the beginning of a new year. And for Rosicrucians this is still the case, as they

hold special commemorative ceremonies in their temples throughout the world to mark the beginning of a new year.

When the sun reaches its zenith in the northern hemisphere on June 21<sup>st</sup>, mid-summer is celebrated by millions of people in the mid to high latitudes north of the equator. Rosicrucians worldwide celebrate it too with a special ceremony known as the *Meditation for Peace*. Members and their family and friends gather together in open places for a half hour ceremony which includes a deeply moving collective attunement in the service of world peace.



The northern hemispheric autumn equinox on or around September 21<sup>st</sup> is a time of thanksgiving, and for Rosicrucians it is a time of sharing with family and friends in a celebration conducted outdoors known as the *Pyramid and Memorial Ceremony* where gratitude is expressed to our ancient forbears and the great sacrifices they made to make our modern lives as refined, comfortable and rewarding as they are.

And finally, as close as possible to the northern hemispheric winter solstice around December 21<sup>st</sup>, the Rosicrucian *Festival of Light* is celebrated in Rosicrucian temples throughout the world. It too has ancient origins and is steeped in beautiful symbolism.

## Visitors from London

**T**HIS YEAR, a large group members from London came on Saturday September 21<sup>st</sup> to Greenwood Gate, headquarters of the Rosicrucian Order in the United Kingdom, to celebrate the autumn equinox in the woodland garden setting of its beautiful grounds. This wonderfully inspiring event set outdoors on the lawns among old trees and mature rhododendrons, with fallow deer grazing contentedly in the distance, and the constant sound of birdsong, was a perfect setting for a day of collective work, worship, laughter and fraternal bonding.



*Members in deep discussion next to the piano that was used by the world renowned Rosicrucian pianist Albert Ferber.*

*Early morning arrivals to the London Chapter Symposium at Greenwood Gate*

**Greenwood Gate is set in large gardens among old trees and mature rhododendrons, with the ever present fallow deer grazing contentedly nearby.**

*A small group of members meet in the main reception room.*

*Seminar in progress in the Great Hall.*



## Visitors from Brazil

SUNDAY morning is usually a peaceful time at Greenwood Gate, but not so on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, for the house was buzzing with activity as it was being prepared for the arrival of a group of 51 Brazilian Rosicrucians and their Grand Master to celebrate the autumn equinox.

It was the final day of their three week tour of Celtic sites in the British Isles, and all they knew when they left their hotel that morning was that on their way to the airport for their evening flight home, they were stopping off 'somewhere' for lunch. But it turned out to be a lot more than just food, and brought to this old house again the love and refinement that is found wherever Rosicrucians meet.

The big tour bus headed through the green gates, past the two Californian giant sequoia trees and down the kilometre long drive towards the house. But the bus

was too long, too wide and too tall to get all the way, so everyone got off, and still unsure of where they were, walked down the rest of the way on a road bordered by mature conifers, oaks, beech, ash and silver birch trees, as well as tall rhododendron hedges..., until they turned a corner and the beautiful view of the house opened up in front of them. It is a site many members have witnessed over the years when they arrive at Greenwood Gate for the first time, and it is something truly to remember.

The rest of the day was a delight to behold. Fifty one members in the small Grand Temple for a *Council of Solace* attunement period, followed by a sumptuous lunch and a deeply solemn *Pyramid and Memorial Ceremony* in the forest garden..., and then it was off to Heathrow airport for the long flight back to Brazil and a return to the ordinary things of everyday life. What a treat, both for them and for us, but especially for Greenwood Gate itself, the beneficiary of so many bearers of Light.





*A time to reflect and take stock.*

# Domaine de Silence

## The Annual Supreme Grand Lodge Meeting

*by Sven Johansson*

**E**VERY YEAR, Grand Masters and other directors of the Supreme Grand Lodge of AMORC meet in the first week of October at the *Domaine de Silence*, a French Grand Lodge owned retreat centre outside the town of Lachute in Quebec, Canada. Every second year, they are joined by Administrators of the Order as well. These are much anticipated reunions, bringing together for a week of meetings members of the Rosicrucian Order who have primary responsibility for the wellbeing of the Order in some 20 different languages, 13 Grand Lodges and 6 Administrations from all corners of the globe.

This past October was one of the most beautiful and inspiring week of meetings I can recall. A great deal of material is covered each time we meet, and there are always problems that need to be sorted, advice to be asked for, and agreements to be arrived at. All matters are discussed at length, and the Imperator who chairs the

meetings encourages all members present to participate fully in the discussions.

Meetings begin at 08:30 with a short Convocation and group attunement period in the Lodge temple. Following this, and feeling charged and inspired for the day ahead, the discussions begin, and continue until between 17:00 to 18:00 when we adjourn for supper and an early night. We have an hour and a half break for lunch which is usually followed by a long walk in the woods around the lake. There is good-natured talk and laughter throughout the day. Although more serious and less humorous issues are dealt with as well, they are always resolved as fairly as humanly possible.

And finally there comes the last day and with sadness we part company as each member of the board is taken for his or her flight to a far-away Administration or Grand Lodge, there to channel all energy available in service to the great spiritual ideals for which the Rosicrucian Order exists. May Light, Life and Love ever surround and protect this wonderful school of mystery and spiritual unfoldment.



*'Rose-Croix Lake' at the  
Domaine de la Rose-Croix  
Lachute, Quebec, Canada*



*Treasurer  
Maximilian Neff*

*Imperator  
Christian Bernard*

*Secretary  
Julie Scott*



*Vice-President  
Burnam Schan*

*Supreme Board of the Rosicrucian Order*



*So you should view this  
fleeting world ....*

*A star at dawn, a bubble  
in a stream;*

*A flash of lightning in  
a summer cloud;*

*A flickering lamp,  
a phantom,  
a dream.*