



# Australian T.O.S. Links

November 2017

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### Coordinators report

Welcome everyone, this is my last report as National Coordinator of the Theosophical Order of Service (TOS). My term of six years is finishing at our AGM in Brisbane next year, during this time many friendships were developed as I got to know more and more of our hard-working members. There were many changes and I have listed some of these under;

A Five-Year Plan as part of a development and educational programme instrumented by TOS International. This was the outcome of intensive workshopping at the last international convention of TOS held at Wheaton USA, in 2013. (The next TOS international convention is in Singapore Aug. 2018) Our groups accepted the guidelines, with impressive results We have now sown seeds of "building a nucleus" of servers. All our groups have benefited, inspiring each other as we share knowledge on how we fund-raise. Learning from each other develops a stronger sense of fraternity as we move towards a more living and alive TOS.

Changing our Constitution by democratic vote to allow for our executive officers to be elected. Nominations have been received for our three executive positions and are to be ratified at our next AGM in January 2018.

Joining TOS Italy in their national project in assisting refugees travelling through their country as well as those staying on within their borders. Recently the TOS Italy has organised a pediatrician to work in a large refugee camp on the border of Turkey and Syria. We have had an incredible amount of support from all

groups with this national project and were able to forward the amount of \$9,000 to TOS Italy.

I encourage all of you to step up and do service, as service without self is the basis of leading a theosophical life. "Service" takes many forms which we can all apply to our daily lives, whether we are cooking a family meal, driving a neighbour to an appointment or doing many of the mundane everyday acts that living demands. Through selfless service life becomes a joyful expression of living theosophy.

Thank you all for supporting our national projects year after year, and to the undermentioned who have supported team TOS over the past six years. Our secretary Travis James who now leaves us for a role with TS Adelaide as their new president. Congratulations, Travis, and to Carolyn Harrod this truly amazing woman who never ceases to inspire us all and to Geoff Harrod our web master, Donald Fern our auditor and to so many others who personally give of themselves continually. To Barbara Atkinson from the Brisbane Lodge for her much-appreciated proof reading of these TOS Links. Finally, a sincere thank you to our national president of the theosophical society, Linda Oliveira who includes TOS in the TS convention programme and regularly attends our AGM meetings.

I wish all our dedicated team leaders all the best for the upcoming Christmas holidays and all the very best for the New Year. It has been a privilege to meet so many authentic people that serve so graciously, yours Jean.

**The work of the Theosophical Order of Service is Sacred. It was started to provide theosophical society members with a platform to put theosophical concepts into action, to make those principles concrete. Can there be anything more sacred? It is right action with love and respect, with compassion between the server and served. It is service to the living god within every being.**

**B.L. Bhattacharyya**

## TOS at the Golden Link College

### Gayle Thomas

HPB states in the, Key to Theosophy, 'that members can best help the movement of theosophy by living it by practicing altruism'. The Golden Link College (GLC) in the Philippines provided a perfect venue for me to volunteer to teach English as a second language. GLC is based in Caloocan city, a very poor area of Metro Manila.

GLC was established by the Theosophical Society and the Theosophical Order of Service. Vicente Hao Chin (2016) wrote the curriculum, 'On Education'. Based on the philosophy and vision of the school, the curriculum's aim is, "to promote a kind of education that is free of the many harmful elements of standard education, such as ranking, competition, use of fear and anger in teaching, over focus on grades and examinations etc" (Hao Chin 2016)



The curriculum, believes firmly in the importance of total human development rather than simple academic preparation. It gives opportunities to all students to rise and be the best that they can. Having just completed an Education Masters subject on Testing and Assessment, I can attest to the controversy the NAPLAN testing is having on our Australian curriculum. Schools are focused on achieving high NAPLAN results which concentrates on numeracy and literacy. This often comes at the expense of other subjects such as the arts, physical education and other vital developmental subjects. At GLC, quoting Vic (2007) again, 'the core curriculum must enable the student to have the needed foundation for the essential aspects of living'.

To facilitate these teachings, all teachers participate in the Self-Transformation seminars. Self-Transformation is the mastery of the self and awakening of our higher potentials. I was also fortunate to attend one of Vic's Self-Transformation seminars on my arrival to the Philippines.

GLC is living proof that Vic Hao Chin's belief to revolutionise education is one of the most important actions we can do. Vic often quotes Krishnamurti when he says, 'It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society'.



**Quiet time in class at GLC**

This brings me to reflect on the work of the TOS. How living in the Western world where it is easy to drop some money into a box for poor hungry children in Africa, or to help some flood victim, or survivors of an earth quake or donate clothes for the homeless we are never sure if the money reached those in need or those in greed.

But now I can say I have visited the recipients of TOS student sponsorships, looked them in the eye experienced their joy, their hugs and felt part of the oneness of life. I am sure Bev Parker from Cairns can also attest to this. I spoke to Bev before travelling to GLC and she shared her lovely experience with her sponsored student. This opportunity to provide sponsorship is open to us all and the joy tangible. I thank the TOS as their sponsorships for GLC students from financially challenged families enables them to achieve improved life opportunities.



**Gayle with students from GLC**

## Your Stories – “I had a dream”

An edited version of an article from the late Dr Viqar Zaman, Karachi TOS (featured in memory of a great soul)

One-night Socrates came to me in my dream and how splendid he looked in his white beard, large black eyes and flowing robes.

I asked him, whether he regretted drinking Hemlock after being sentenced to death. He said “To sell one’s conscience is also death. If I had apologised, like Galileo did, I would have died twice. In any case, death never scared me, and I am so happy here, in the company of great philosophers. I often meet Confucius, Buddha, Russell, Gibran and many others. I have learned a lot from them,”

I asked if he was still sceptical about democracy. He said “For democracy to work a literate and informed citizenry is required. As I had said before, you don’t allow inexperienced sailors to elect their captain. The captain is elected based on his qualifications, ability and integrity. A good captain should be able to guide, to control and protect his ship. The ship of a country is no different”.

On education, he said “Education should moralize and internationalize society, and get rid of prejudices and superstitions. Education gives knowledge, which is the greatest of all gifts. Knowledge is to know and to know what we do not know. An illusion of knowledge is worse than no knowledge”.

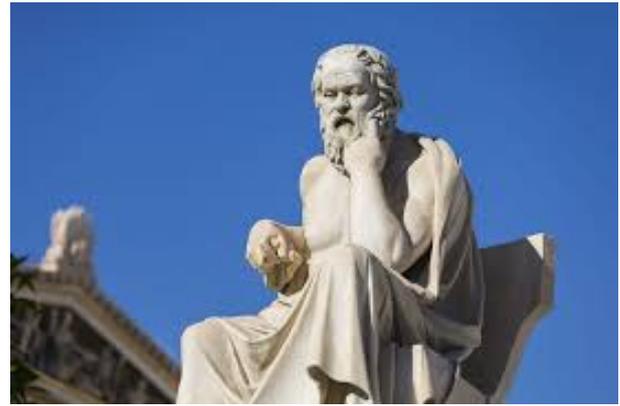
On law and justice, he said “Law should protect, not harm and free not enslave. It should be completely impartial and not like a spider’s web, which catches only small insects, but lets the big ones’ pass. Justice is fairness tempered with compassion. It is fair to claim, “an eye for an eye” but unfair to inflict such a punishment.

On war, he said “War is the ultimate folly of man. It often leads to more problems than it solves. It devalues life, which is a miracle in the universe and the greatest of all created things”

On nationalism, he said “Nationalism is a primitive instinct, born out of fear and insecurity, on whose altar millions have been sacrificed. Nature recognises no national boundaries. If you look at the earth from where I am it appears no bigger than a speck of sand, yet humans want to divide it into nations”

On truth, he said” Truth must stand the test of time before it is accepted as truth. During my time the sun went around the earth, in yours, the earth goes around the sun. Truth is universal but not universally understood. It stands on its own without any aid or

assistance. Its seekers must go with an open mind and without any preconceptions, only then does it embrace them”



**Socrates - father of experiential education**

On reality, he said “Reality is much more than what humans can perceive through their senses. Human perception has its limitations, but reality has not. Rarely is a human being who can perceive reality better than others, such a person is an enlightened being”

On time, he said “Time dominates the universe and everything in it. Societies that do not value time are doomed to failure. To make the best use of time, live in the present moment, and not be obsessed by the past, or be allured by the future.

On death, he said “Death is both an end and a beginning. Life cannot escape death and death cannot escape life. Like beads in a necklace, all beings change positions, but maintain their essential unity with each other.

On the mind, he said “The mind is the repository of all events since the beginning of time. It has all the wisdom, all the intelligence and all the knowledge that is needed. Thoughts are its secretions and they are best when the mind is gathered unto itself, free from sight and sounds of the outside world. Then it opens up to reveal its many secrets.

Finally I asked him if he has any message to give to mankind. He said “Shun consumerism as the earth’s resources are finite, and greed, which fuels consumerism, is infinite. Rise above race, religion and nationality to live in peace with each other and share the bounties of this, the most beautiful of all places in the universe”

To move the world, we must  
first move ourselves.

Socrates

**Reports from national groups**  
**Sydney 2017 Annual report Richard Larkin**

Our past year has been very interesting now that we have settled into our new location. Our "Open Circle Saturday" programs have continued covering developments at the TOS Golden Link College in Manila; musical events and explorations of comparative religion such as gnosticism. We had a "Tibetan Winter" with 3 talks and DVD's about Tibet's spiritual and cultural heritage, plus a deeply absorbing discussion with the Rev. Bill Crews about his reflections of the past few years.

Our fund raising activities continued, mostly coming from audience donations from our "Open Circle Saturday" as noted above. There was a focus on two of the National TOS projects – The Golden Link College (which we have supported for a number of years now) and the Italian TOS Syrian Refugee Fund. Altogether our group donated a total of \$3,180 in the year to various charitable groups (not including expenses for our TOS T Shirts and a plaque for the Manor's Bodhi tree) However, included in this figure was \$300 to the Golden Link College and \$950 to the TOS Italy Syrian Refugee Fund.

It has not been all good news this year. We mourn the passing of our former vice president Anthony Raymond, who died suddenly around Christmas. We still miss a valued friend and colleague. Vale old friend. There are many people to thank including our speakers and committee members, the staff at Blavatsky Lodge and of course our National TOS leadership for the direction they have given during the year to our Australian Section. It was a good year overall, which I am confident can be repeated in the year ahead. Most importantly we have endeavoured to make the work of the TOS and its values known to the public.



**Lucille  
Crocker,  
Sydney  
TOS  
treasurer  
with Pablo  
Sender**

**The world is shaped by those who  
act.**

**Brisbane 2017 Annual report Janet Harding**



**Brisbane heritage listed headquarters**

During 2017, TOS Brisbane held three fund-raising events. These were: (a) In June, afternoon tea in Annerley Community Bookshop. The profit of \$300 from the event was given to the Red Cross Queensland Refugee Program, and (b) Two classical concerts with afternoon tea. The concert in September enabled BTOS to give \$1,100 to the Pakistan Home Schools. The concert in November is still to come and is expected to raise approximately \$1,000 for the Golden Link College.

In addition, from our annual TOS/TS AGM collection, BTOS was able to give \$700 to Bush kids Queensland plus early in the year a TS member held a Chinese cultural concert and donated the profits to BTOS to help Asian women. This amount of \$333 was donated to the Women's Welfare Centre at Adyar. Also, from its investments, BTOS was able to send \$300 for 2 educational scholarships in Pakistan; \$2,000 to Syrian refugees; \$750 for mobility aids in Arunachalam and Assam; \$750 to the Olcott Memorial school, and \$750 to the Animal Dispensary at Adyar. In addition to the above, the BTOS members had a very enjoyable social film and dinner outing. Thanks to all the wonderful members of Brisbane Theosophical Order of Service for working so hard to help other needier people.

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