



FRIEDRICH'S
NEWSLETTER 2018

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This year's Newsletter has been edited and co-authored by Javier Gómez Rodríguez.

Dear Friends,

One of the biggest events for me this year was my goodbye to Davos and to my mountain hut. To begin with, Claudia and I stayed in the art deco Berghotel Schatzalp above Davos, which used to be a luxury sanatorium for people with tuberculosis. Most of the rooms have large balconies, where the patients would rest and take fresh mountain air. There are fantastic views over the mountains and October is especially beautiful with the larches turning golden.

This place was made famous by Thomas Mann's classic book *The Magic Mountain*, and in recent years some Hollywood films have been made there, for example *Youth* (released in 2015, starring Michael Caine and many other famous actors). There are some quotes from Mann at the entrance to the hotel, on the Thomas Mann Walk and on a nearby 'Thomas Mann Rock'. I was not much impressed. Claudia said this is because I've been 'spoiled' by the depth of Krishnamurti's insights. Anyway, the hotel is close to where I went to school during the war, and therefore where I learned to ski. One morning while we were there everything was white with snow. It had indeed become a magic mountain.

After one week, we moved on to Partnun, near St Antönien, Graubünden, close to the Austrian border. This is where the 2,130 m high Sulzhutte is, the mountain hut that I'd been renting for 43 years. It's in the most amazing landscape: majestic mountains with sheer cliffs and light-grey shards of rock, broken off from the cliffs, rising straight out of green grass hills that were starting to turn brown. There is great solitude and quiet in the land. Most of the time the only sound is the wind and the call of birds, but nowadays small airplanes can sometimes be heard.

My sons, Christoph and John, and our friends Raman, Jurgen and Javier joined us, along with two former Brockwood students. All enjoyed it very much. The others went for long mountain walks, while I contented myself with walking up to and down from the hut and exercising while being up there. Christoph and John stayed in the hut, while the 'base camp' for the rest of us



The Sulzhütte, at 2,130 m, in Partnun, near St Antönien, Switzerland

was Berghaus Alpenrosli, at 1700m. The weather was glorious for the 11 days we were there, and there were still a few flowers, butterflies, deer and some birds. Christoph and John even saw some white-tailed ptarmigan and a black grouse. In spring and summer the diversity is even greater.

In the photos above – but much better in the one below – you can see the nearby 100 m high Schijenzahn rock, broken from the rest of the mountain. I climbed it with my friend and mountain guide, Andreas Scherrer, who a few years earlier at 21 had been the youngest mountain guide in Switzerland. It took three lengths of rope to get to the top. There is very little space up there, just enough to lie down to have a rest, which I did. Andreas attached me to a big stone that I didn't find very secure, but he assured me, "No, it's fine." Some months later he told me – with a small, embarrassed smile – "You know, that rock came down."

Behind Schijenzahn is the wall of the Schijenfluh, mostly light-coloured instead of being stained grey with hundreds of years of rain. This is because that part of the mountain is over-hanging. It takes two days to climb this overhang – on the way, bivouacking from the ropes. Andreas did it.

The Sulzhutte was originally a shepherds' hut. But on a rainy day in 1974 when Andreas and I arrived there, we found that it wasn't used any longer and was crumbling. He had the idea that I rent it from the Alpgemeinschaft, an association of farmers whose cows spend the summers up there. So I did, and we repaired the roof and fixed other things and stayed there several times as a base for our monthly mountain walking, climbing or ski mountain tours. Over a total of five years we climbed more than 200 peaks all through the Alps.

Tragically, Andreas died in 1975, at age 27, guiding someone else. The week he died I was booked to go with him but called to say that I was sorry, I had changed my plans. He said, "It's okay, I know what to do." So I wonder what would have happened if I had gone with him. Would he not have died, or would one or the other of us still have died? (The person who was with him survived.)

After this, I went to the hut often, either alone or with family and friends. Many of our Brockwood friends have stayed there, always enjoying it very much. I often went with my sons when they were young. We even spent Christmas there four times in the 1970s – you can imagine the snow. In the '90s, some of Andreas's family improved the hut and now it's in perfect condition. They also look after it, and they and my sons have taken over the renting of it. During this, my last visit there, we spent a great time with Andreas' extended family.

What touched me most during this final visit, besides the presence of family and friends, was all of the water cascading down the mountains in little rivers. In older days, farmers watered their high, sloping pastures via a system of secondary channels. The water has lots of minerals, so they didn't need fertilizer. Now these channels are too much work to maintain, and the water streams where it will.

When I was younger I envisioned no longer being able to ski or hike in these mountains as something quite terrible. But as I've grown older and older, I've realised that I can let it all go, simply enjoying the things I can still do. It was a glorious goodbye, without regrets.

The Sulzhutte had welcomed many friends over the years who had treasured its remoteness and solitude in the midst of the natural splendour of the mountains. The hut's guestbook was full of their drawings and observations. So I shared this goodbye to the mountain hut with them. Here are a couple of their replies. The first is from Gary Primrose, former Brockwood staff and working for many years now at Yewfield in the Lake District:



The 100m high Schijenzahn rock, in Partnun, near St Antönien, Switzerland

Hello Friedrich

My apologies for not getting back to you sooner. I have returned recently from Canada after an extended stay there as my mother passed away in the middle of October. She lived a remarkable life and died a remarkable death. After a particularly severe bout of pneumonia she decided that her life should come to an end and asked the doctor to take her off the machines. A week later she passed away peacefully. I was fortunate to be there and witness it all and when I read your moving account of ending your relationship with the Sulzhutte, it brought back to me the extraordinary simplicity and beauty of an ending, whether it is with a person or a place.

Thanks to you, Christina and I visited the Sulzhutte on a number of occasions and it still stands as one of my favourite places anywhere. It was not only the mountains, the flowers and the quality of light and silence that was there but also the *gemütlichkeit* of the hut itself. It was designed and built in harmony with its surroundings and cared for by its visitors. Thank you for the opportunity to experience such a place as it has had an impact on my own life and efforts to replicate that delicate balance of trying to live in and with nature.

I remember you talking about Andreas. I also dreamt one day of being a mountain guide and following in his footsteps but came across Krishnamurti and Brockwood before I could complete a guide's apprenticeship, so that dream was shelved. Still, mountain environments continue to play a central role in my life and that is something we both share and value.

Thank you for the gorgeous calendar, your newsletter and Javier's booklet. I shall treasure them, curled up in front of a fire with a mug of tea and nibbling lebkuchen as the winter nights draw in. I hope you are well and that the winter sun shines down on Rougemont.

Big hugs to you and your team there,
Gary



Top Left: Friedrich on his last walk up to the Sulzhutte, at about 2,000m. It was October, but warm.

Top Right: My sons, John and Christoph, waving from the hut.

Centre Left: Christoph and John bringing water from the fountain.

Centre Right: Andreas carrying material to repair the Sulzhutte, 1974.

Bottom Left: from left to right – Raman, Javier, Jurgen, Friedrich and Claudia. (missing are Nick – in New Zealand – and Rabindra, in Ojai).

Bottom Right: Jurgen, Raman, Claudia and Javier walking down and waving goodbye to the hut.

K: Ending the stream of consciousness

When you or another die, you and the other are the manifestation of that vast stream of human action and reaction, the stream of consciousness, of behaviour and so on: you are of that stream. That stream has conditioned the human mind, the human brain, and as long as we remain conditioned by greed, envy, fear, pleasure, joy and all the rest of it, we are part of this stream. Your organism may end but you are of that stream, as you are, while living, that stream itself. That stream, changing, slow at times, fast at others, deep and shallow, narrowed by both sides of the bank and breaking through the narrowness into a vast volume of water – as long as you are of that stream there is no freedom. There is no freedom from time, from the confusion and the misery of all the accumulated memories and attachments. It is only when there is the ending of that stream, the ending, not you stepping out of it and becoming something else, but the ending of it, only then is there quite a different dimension. That dimension cannot be measured by words. The ending without a motive is the whole significance of dying and living. The roots of heaven are in living and dying.

Krishnamurti to Himself, pp. 37–38

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The theme of death and ending is of course central to our existence and something that we do not seem to give very much attention to on a daily basis but which is thrown into sharp relief as that ending becomes a reality. Such endings are intimately bound with the broader context of what we most value in life. It is the ending that often reveals the real worth of what we had been used to and taken for granted. Here is **Lorenzo Castellari's response** to my report:

11 November 2017

Dear Friedrich,

thank you for sharing your story of the Sulzhutte. Simple things which contain some of the essence of life, and death.

Three basic factors in my life are nature, people and the inner exploration, and there they are in your story as well. I find nature beautiful wherever I encounter it: the Swiss hills and mountains, the water bodies of the earth, big and small, still and flowing, the forests as well as the arid rural areas of India. And then you have to meet people, almost wherever you go. Engaging in meaningful, challenging work and activities together, and in searching conversation, brings about good relationship.

I am writing from the GBS, where our first group of students this year is almost at the end of its fourth and last week. Has anything important happened for these kids in these weeks? They have seemed happy throughout, and enjoyed being close to nature. That is already a good thing, but maybe not enough.

I was reading an article today in the papers about scientists issuing a new warning to mankind about the great urgency of addressing the world ecological crisis, since everything except the ozone layer has become worse since the previous such warning 25 years ago.

What has come of all the kids who have passed through our schools and programmes during all these years is a question that stays with me.

My greetings and love to you and the ones around you,
Lorenzo

K: Helping the world.

What is the world in need of at the present time – or at any time, in the past or in the future? People who have the capacity to be completely human;

that is, people who are not bound up by their narrow circles of thoughts and prejudices and the limitations of their self-conscious emotionalism. Surely, if you really want to help the world, you cannot belong to any particular sect or society, any more than you can belong to any particular religion. If you say all religions are one, then why have any religion? Religions and nationalities really enrage people, trammel them. This is shown throughout the world, throughout history; and the world has come now to more and more sects, more and more bodies enclosed by walls of beliefs, with their special guides; and yet you talk of brotherhood! How can there be real brotherhood when this possessive instinct is so deep, and so must lead to wars because it is based on nationalism, patriotism.

The Collected Works, Vol. II, pg. 25
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The GBS is the Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary in Kerala. Lorenzo has been associated with the work there for many years. The GBS is now run by former Brockwood student Suprabha Seshan. After years of patient and painstaking conservation work at the Sanctuary, she has launched a wider programme of environmental regeneration in the immediate area under the heading of **The Green Phoenix** (<http://www.gbsanctuary.org/thegreenphoenix.html>). The following is a brief distillation of the more extensive report she recently shared with us:

The Green Phoenix is a vision grown out of the Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary's work in plant conservation, land restoration, nature education and forest-farm practices. We won the Whitley Award in 2006 under this name. Its key ideas are:

- landscapes are living unities;
- every species matters in and of itself;
- the natural world as a whole will be vibrant once again when we start to live in it as members of land-based communities;

- “gardening back the biosphere”, a rubric to cover species conservation, habitat restoration and forest farming is an appropriate response to land, livelihood and biodiversity issues;
- ecological and social justice share the same platform; a radical approach to these issues recognizes that the world’s remaining natural areas are homes for indigenous and traditional peoples who show the rest of us that it is possible to live without destroying other species.

The aim now is to extend the work currently being done at the GBS to the wider community of local farmers and landholders interested in bringing back vegetation and wildlife and improving the river flow and quality. This project will involve the participating members shifting to organic farming, leaving large tracts of their land to wild regenerative processes, diversifying crop patterns and creating plant nurseries. They will also be encouraged to provide services such as local delicacies for tourists. They will become educators in biodiversity and land stewardship, so that eventually we can launch the Green Phoenix School of Restoration Ecology.

Lots of activities have been carried out over the last six months and significant objectives are being achieved. A massive and ongoing effort to purify the river resulted in 17 km of it being cleaned of all pollutants. The fish population has surged along different stretches of the river as a result of night patrols reducing the use of poison and dynamite in fishing and preventing the dumping of pollutants into the water. Weekly patrols of the forest are preventing indiscriminate interference from people. The seeds of rare species are collected and grown in the nursery. The flowering and fruiting of trees is being recorded in connection with climate change. Records are also kept of the presence of different bird species and forest animals. To protect these forest animals, such as the elephants, who eat the crops, we are devising schemes to compensate the farmers for their losses so we can all coexist peacefully.

Education is fundamental to the project. Students visiting the area are exposed to the environment and to the conservation work. They are also introduced to different cultural approaches and their respective knowledge

bases. We are developing a broad cooperative network. We are participating in river conservation, waste clean-up and recycling initiatives with the local government and with a recycling company at district level. We are also working together with the forestry service in their restoration efforts.

We believe that people are ready to shift to biodiversity friendly practices. This is now underway. At the same time, enormous infrastructural changes are happening in the area, which will pose new ecological challenges. We believe that together we can meet these challenges for the recuperation and preservation of the natural habitat so that all living things can thrive together in this beautiful forested region.

For further information, please contact Suprabha Seshan or Jaimon Joseph at writetogbs@gmail.com or call (+91) 04935-260426.

While all this beautiful and promising work is being done in Kerala, India, our friend Sebastian Runde, who had also been a visitor at the Sulzhütte, sent us his **report from Umbria** detailing the challenges he is having to face due to human action, natural disasters and climate change, all of which threatens to undermine his environmental and educational project there.

16 November 2017

Dear Friedrich,

We are looking back at a most turbulent year here at Campogrande, the earthquakes, the terrible drought – all had rather severe consequences. Most of the damage the house suffered, I managed to repair, but the drought left us with empty pastures, no medicinal herbs for the products and naturally very little food in the vegetable garden; the provisions for winter are scarce and I shall not be self-sufficient this winter. I actually had to start feeding hay to the donkeys already in June. The effects of climate change are so obvious when working the land. Only two of my beehives survived and there are much fewer wasps and hornets around.



The tower at Brockwood Park, England

I found an old blacksmith workshop and eventually was given all the tools. Now I forge the tools for the forest school. It is quite a challenge to convince an Italian mum to let her children use knives, saws and axes, but the kids are able to do great work; it gives them so much self-confidence. If it hadn't been for my dad, who let me use all the tools in his workshop (he always said "You may use any tool you want, but first I need to show you how to use it"), I guess I wouldn't have survived out here on the farm. Apart from working with the land, one needs to be a carpenter, blacksmith, farrier, builder, tailor, mechanic, electrician.

The children enjoy learning crafts connected with nature. We build simple furniture, carve bowls and spoons, weave baskets; they learn about plants, animals and nature conservation. And most importantly, they are outside, get dirty and manage to forget their mobile phones for a few hours.

Unfortunately, my landlord is trying to get me to move out. For ten years I restored the house, took care of the beautiful forest, turned it into a sanctuary. Now they want to cut it down, harvest the wood. There are huge, most beautiful oak trees and there is nothing I can do about it. My lease explicitly states that I cannot prevent them from harvesting the forest. This is something brutal. In Italy, they can do it every twenty years and they basically cut everything down. My farm was abandoned for many years, the forest thus developed beautifully. It is quite unique in the whole area.

Many people come here, stay for a week or two and connect with nature, learn about nutrition and do a "digital detox". If they cut down the forest, they basically take my livelihood away, something they do quite intentionally, as they cannot throw me out so easily. But I just wanted to let you know that for now I am still alive and kicking.

Dear Friedrich, thank you for everything.

With fond regards,
Sebastian

The effects of global warming and climate change are being felt in ever more dramatic and extreme ways, with increasing disruptions to weather patterns and natural habitats. The wild fires in Southern California this past December were an alarming sign of the devastating implications of this global trend. They affected a wide area, from Ventura right down to Los Angeles. Michael Krohnen sent us the following **report from Ojai** detailing the threat of the so-called Thomas Fire, considered one of the largest in California's history. Luckily the Foundation and Oak Grove grounds were spared.

8 December 2017

Dear Friends,

The Thomas Fire started Monday evening, Dec. 4th, and continued until Wednesday morning, burning a large area in the east and south of the Ojai Valley – the upper Ojai Valley and the whole region of Sulphur Mountain. The ferocity and speed of the winds driving the fires were phenomenal, perhaps 60 or more miles an hour. By Tuesday noon the winds died down, and the property of the KEC seemed to be untouched by the flames, even though just half a mile away the fire burned down the whole hillside around a house belonging to Thacher School. During the night the fires continued, primarily on the south side, and by morning the whole airspace was filled with dense smoke and ashes.

All the guests and helpers evacuated the KEC property by Monday evening. I remained to monitor the situation, but ready to evacuate should it become too dangerous. Ivan also stayed in Lindley House and Rex at his residence across the street. On Wednesday afternoon two fire trucks stopped by to check on the situation, gave us some advice and warned that the winds might pick up again in the evening.

When it was getting dark, the air was still filled with heavy smoke and ashes, but the winds seemed calm; the fires appeared burned out – at least toward the east and south. But when I went outside to have a look, to my horror I noticed that the whole northern sky was red. Walking up McAndrew

Road toward Thacher School, I could see that the whole skyline of the Los Padres Forest, from the Nordhoff Range to Twin Peaks and over to Horn Canyon Peak, was aflame. If the northerly winds should pick up again, they might yet drive the fire in our direction.

Even though the fires came dangerously close during the past few days and nights, the KEC, PTR & Library are all right. One helpful circumstance was that the winds remained fairly calm. Even so, the fires continued burning in various locations of the valley and the air is still filled with smoke. So, while we trust the worst is over, there is still danger of flare-ups.

I hope this gives you a certain perspective on the grim situation here.

Fondly,
Michael

As this is a global issue, it is a great joy to read about other promising projects all over the world. More and more native peoples are taking the initiative to arrest the current wave of environmental destruction. They are the best custodians of the planet, having lived in harmony with nature from before the emergence of civilisation. Our old friends Marcelo and Rafaela Fiorini, anthropologists, film makers and nature activists, sent us a beautiful **report from Brazil**, an edited excerpt of which is reproduced below. What they report on is very much along the lines of Suprabha's Green Phoenix initiative in Kerala.

7 January 2018

Dear Friedrich,

Thank you so much for your letter from last year. The main reason we did not reply to your e-mail immediately is because we spent the entire year working with cinema, theatre, television production and documentary film-making while constantly on the move.

However, we always remembered your letter and thought of sending you news of the new project we have embarked on with Benki Pyãnko Ashaninka. Benki is perhaps best known for his reforestation work in his native Amazon region of Acre, on the border with Peru, where he has planted over 2 million trees in the last 20 years. He also heads other interesting projects, like the creation of an agro-forestry village in the nearest urban centre. Through this he managed to transform the local prejudices about Indians into a positive relationship, as the locals saw that indigenous peoples had so much knowledge of how to relate harmoniously with the environment without destroying it. This project was so successful, it changed the lives of all small-scale farmers in the area. Benki was then invited to run for mayor but, since he had too many other commitments, declined in favour of his younger brother, who was elected. As the agro-forestry project gained momentum, Benki, in partnership with some recycling companies, set up the first supermarket in town to exchange rubbish for fresh fruit and vegetables. He thus managed to change the life of many poverty-stricken people in the area, making them allies in cleaning up the local water sources and rivers.

We had known of Benki's work only superficially. We have been living in São Paulo, which is quite far from Acre, and we never met. Then last year we were asked whether we would invite and accompany an Amazonian shaman, whose work had an intrinsic relation to the environment, to participate in the Film Festival in Germany, organized under the theme "Human – Nature Relationship". We contacted him immediately but he did not reply for several weeks. This was in July, when we were visiting Peru. As we were entering the Sacred Inca Valley on our way to Machu Pichu (a visit that changed our lives), Rafaela's phone rang and he said that in a dream he had seen he must come with us to the Festival; he added he had cancelled several trips and appointments and was ready to go. His visit was a great success. And just after accepting our invitation, he was also nominated and selected for a special environmental prize from the UN.

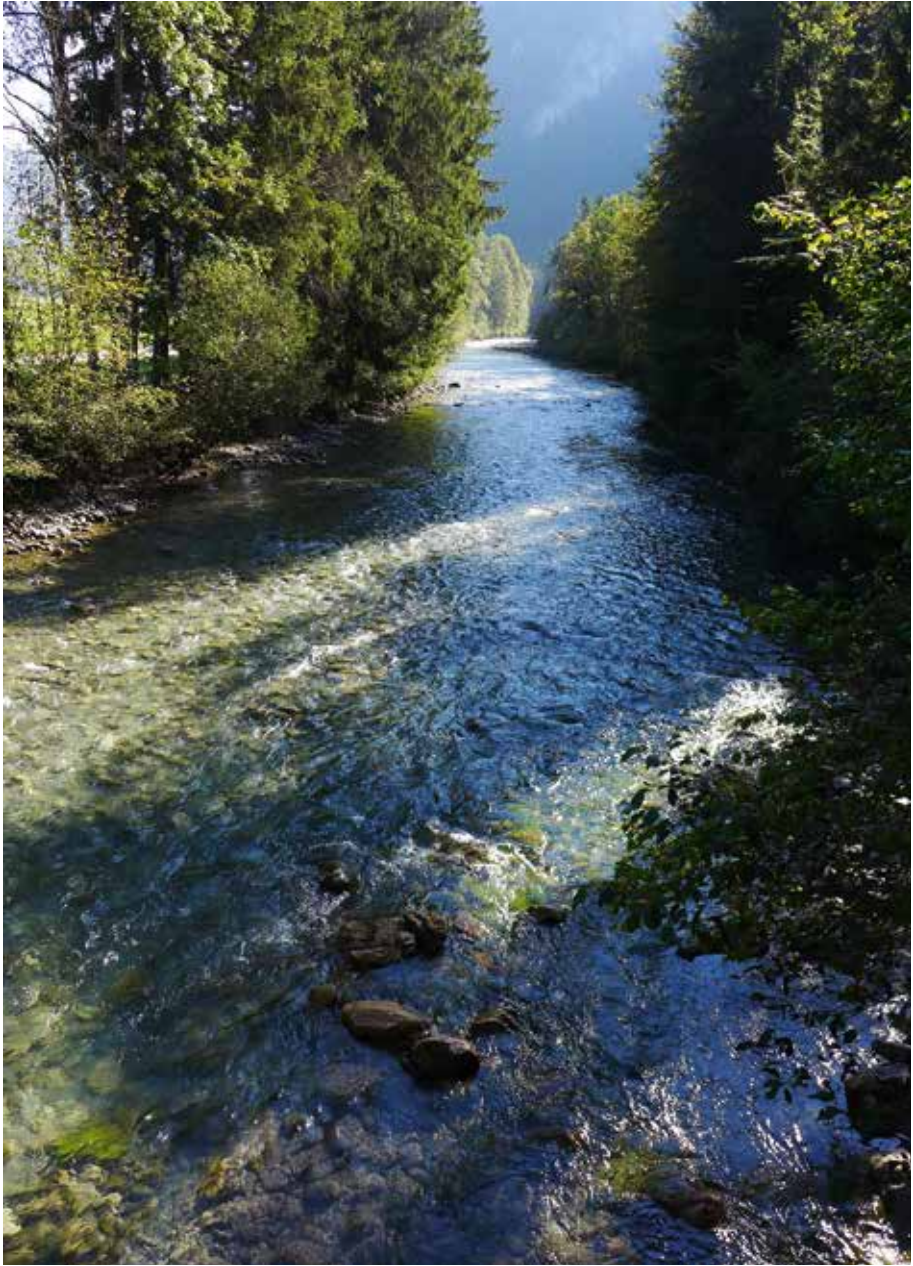
Together with 10 other collaborators of his choice, including scientists, medical doctors, biologists, social media project specialists, architects, art-

ists, etc., we have been helping him to design a full-fledged project for a Healing, Education and Spirituality Centre. By this he means a reconnection with the environment and with people and places around us without resort to any form of authority or violence. Benki then invited us to visit him in Acre. We have just arrived and will stay with him for the whole of January to mature the ideas we have been talking about over the last 6 months.

We hope this e-mail finds you well and we plan to write again when we emerge from the rain forest in about a month, during which time we hope to reconnect with nature, as in the wonderful 'The Story of a Tree' from CFL's educational Newsletter. We hope not to lag behind with our communication this year. We plan to write to Brockwood soon.

Please do keep us posted on any new communication between/from the K networks and schools.

Best wishes for the New Year,
Marcelo and Rafaela



Saane River, Saanen, Switzerland

K: The place of discipline in education

Question: What is the place of discipline in education?

Krishnamurti: I should say, none. Just a minute, I will explain it further. What is the purpose of discipline? What do you mean by discipline? You, being the teacher, when you discipline, what happens? You are forcing, compelling; there is compulsion, however nice, however kind, which means conformity, imitation, fear. But you will say, 'How can a large school be run without discipline?'. It cannot. Therefore, large schools cease to be educational institutions. They are profitable institutions, for the boss or for the government, for the headmaster or the owner. Sir, if you love your child, do you discipline him? Do you compel him? Do you force him into a pattern of thought? You watch him, don't you? You try to understand him, you try to discover what are the motives, the urges, the drives, that are behind what he does; and by understanding him, you bring about the right environment, the right amount of sleep, the right food, the right amount of play. All that is implied, when you love a child; but we don't love children, because we have no love in our own hearts. We just breed children. And naturally, when you have many, you must discipline them, and discipline becomes an easy way out of the difficulty. After all, discipline means resistance. You create resistance against that which you are disciplining. Do you think resistance will bring about understanding, thought, affection? Discipline can only build walls about you. Discipline is always exclusive, whereas understanding is inclusive. Understanding comes when you investigate, when you enquire, when you search out, which requires care, consideration, thought, affection. In a large school, such things are not possible, but only in a small school. But small schools are not profitable to the private owner or to the government; and since you, who are responsible for the government, are not really interested in your children, what does it matter? If you loved your children, not just as

toys, as playthings to amuse you for a little while and a nuisance afterwards, if you really loved them, would you allow all these things to go on? Wouldn't you want to know what they eat, where they sleep, what they do all day long; whether they are beaten, whether they are crushed, whether they are destroyed? But this would mean an enquiry, consideration for others, whether for your own child or your neighbour's; and you have no consideration, either for your children, or for your wife or husband. So, the matter lies in your hands, Sirs, not in the hands of any government or system.

Educating the Educator, pp.34–36

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One remarkable thing K says in this quote is that large schools cannot be run without discipline. Large schools may be profitable for the government, the headmaster or the owner but they cease to be educational institutions. This is one reason K wanted his schools to remain small. But small schools are not financially easy to maintain, so where is the balance? Have some of our schools become too large? And are the small ones not big enough? Are the large ones able to remain educational institutions in spite of their size? And are the smaller ones able to remain centres of learning in spite of the financial constraints?

One of the oldest and largest K schools is Rishi Valley. Here is Siddhartha Menon's **letter to parents** dated this past November. In it he emphasizes the significance of the geographic and social environment of the school as a special opportunity for the students to learn about their responsibility in relation to the world.

1 November 2017

Dear Parents,

I concluded my last letter in July by observing that the clouds were heavier than the rain in Rishi Valley! Happily, as you would have seen or heard, we had plenty of rain in the second half of the term, well over the average for

this time of year. So the valley remained lush green all through the term, and by the time the children left for their vacation the ponds and tanks were filling up and we had the unfamiliar sound of running water on parts of campus and near culverts along the road. The winter rain has yet to reach Rishi Valley, but at the time of writing it has hit the east coast and we hope that in a few days it will reach the campus as well.

Around then, a little before the children return, we are hosting an alumni meet, six years after the last major one that we hosted. We expect to have alumni who passed out of the school as recently as ten years ago to those who were here in the 1950s, a time that feels like a different era because the school was in many ways quite different from what it is today. It was a much smaller community, less known and its identity less formed, than it is today. And yet we know it was a vibrant and thriving place, basking in a post-independence optimism and nurtured by a team of remarkable educators, not least among them the principal, Mr FG Pearce, who was deeply committed to an educational vision vested in freedom and went on to found the Blue Mountain School in the Nilgiris, where his 125th birth anniversary was recently commemorated.

For all the changes over the years, one is struck more forcefully by the continuities, ranging from details of daily living and the schedules we follow to our worries about rain, and to the educational and spiritual challenges we are having to grapple with all the time. I do not mean to imply that these challenges of living and learning are an insurmountable problem that the school has failed to address in its long history, but that the school renews itself – or must – by addressing them continually, and seeing itself as a work in progress for the people who are there at any point of time. These challenges lie in Krishnamurti's vision – learning without fear is certainly one of them – and have to be faced squarely in the hurly burly of each day's work and human interactions. The school's reputation or past successes do not make these any easier!

One thing that has changed significantly since the 1950s is the extent of what might be termed our outreach work. The term is misleading because

this work – in rural health and education, and on a smaller scale in farming and livelihoods – is as integral to the Rishi Valley Education Centre as the school in which your children are studying. In fact, we have been trying to find ways to extend their connection with it, in the few years that they will live in rural India, in spite of linguistic and timetabling constraints. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution that parents of our children, including some of you, have made to these efforts, both monetarily and by lending expertise and advice.

I would invite all of you, when you next visit the school, to spend a little time learning more about these projects and about the history of the school. The former seek to embody another aspect of Krishnamurti's large vision for this valley. In his dialogues with students he would frequently ask whether they noticed the people from the villages and hamlets nearby, whether we were at all concerned with their lives, for instance with the children who had to walk several miles each day to and from their schools, and if we were concerned, what we would do about it. These sorts of questions that he raised insistently are more than ever relevant today, as we become increasingly aware of the ecological and social catastrophe of trying to live in isolation. It is more than a truism to say that we would wish our children to learn, in their time here, and continue to learn after they leave the school, what it is to be related to the world.

With best wishes,
Siddhartha Menon

After reading in Gautama's school report that they had 103 students, I asked him how many students he thought Pathashaala should have. It's interesting to see that our bigger schools are only a third, or a tenth, of the size of the common and well-recognised large schools in India. Our bigger schools also do a great job. However, perhaps it would be wise to limit the numbers to 150. This is a critical figure in terms of preserving **the quality of relationship** that is so essential to a K education, as Gautama pointed out in his reply.

Dear Friedrich,

I had to face this question of size when drawing up the plans for Pathashaala. The existing schools had the following student numbers: Sahyadri 240 (now approaching 300), Oak Grove 240, Rishi Valley 350, Rajghat 350, The School 350, The Valley School 400. Brockwood with 60 to 70 and CFL with similar numbers were $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{7}$ the size of the bigger schools. (The bigger schools themselves were $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{10}$ the size of the well-recognised big schools in India.)

I had to decide on a number and needed a rationale for it. Luckily, I read *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell, where he describes the maximum size of a group allowing everyone to know everyone else. This is known as the Dunbar number and is estimated to be 150. This was an important clue. Much of the chaos in a system occurs when anonymity prevails, when you don't know everyone by name. The numbers determine the relationship patterns, and in our schools relationship matters more than numbers. If everyone knows everyone, such places could run on relationship rather than rules. So, we settled for a total of between 140 and 160 residents. This choice has served Pathashaala well so far and we have not hit the ceiling yet.

When schools are too small, students do not experience enough diversity. The bigger schools, on the other hand, need strong structuring and many teachers fill slots without participating in the larger endeavour. It is my feeling that in a K school both factors need to be balanced: there must be a culture of working together and being responsible for the whole, as well as enough diversity so we don't unwittingly become a cult.

There is an organizational point as well. When we do things on a large scale, the resulting complexity necessitates specialisation. While some specialisation is unavoidable, if it becomes the mainstay of the institution I think we have a problem. As Schumacher pointed out in his *Small is Beautiful*, systems on a smaller scale allow for wider participation and self-government.

In our board, there has been some discussion about whether 120 is too small and sometime in the future we will need to think about increasing numbers. The main fear of small schools has been financial viability. I think Pathashaala can prove that it is feasible in the present circumstances and so far we have not faced any pressures. If there should be greater demand for a school like Pathashaala, then we will encourage people to start other similar small schools.

I hope this is not too long an answer to a short question.

Warm regards,
Gautama

Gautama's arguments for limiting the number of residents in a K school to 150 seemed rather convincing, so we sent his letter around to other educators and here are a couple of the responses we got, the first from Jodi Grass, of Oak Grove, and the second from Kabir Jaithirtha, of Shibumi. They raise additional issues concerning the quality of the relationship in the school besides the total number of students and staff, as this quality will also vary according to the intent and structure of the school.

6 January 2018

Dear Friedrich,

I enjoyed reading Gautama's email. Thank you for sharing. **The "right" number of students** is a question we often ask ourselves. Malcolm Gladwell's rule of 150 is certainly compelling. Currently I happen to know the names of each of our students and their parents, but that does not signify a quality of relationship, does it?

Essential to Oak Grove's philosophy is the engagement of the parent. On February 11, 1974, the day the school was officially announced, Krishnamurti said: "This school is entirely different from the other schools in India and

England. Here the parents are involved in it, which is a new kind of experiment because if the children are going to be different that parents must also be different, otherwise there is a contradiction between the child and the parents, and there will be conflict between them. So to avoid all that we thought it would be right that the parents as well as the teachers and the students work together as a family unit.”

If Oak Grove had a community of less than 150, including parents, teachers and staff, our number of students would be around 40. One way we have mitigated for size is to operate as three distinct “sub-divisions” or programs. Our Early Childhood Program (preschool-K) has 39 students, 8 teachers, one director and 81 parents. Our Elementary School (1–6) has 92 students, 11 teachers, one director and 188 parents. The Secondary School (7–12) has 84 students, 16 teachers, one director and 172 parents. Many of the parents have students in more than one program, but for the sake of this question around relationship I repeated the parent numbers for each program to get a better sense of the people that encompass each of our sub-groups. Our current total number of parents is 326. We have other adults on campus daily, like our cooks, maintenance staff, office staff and friends of the school (i.e. Board members, former students, former parents, neighbors, KFA staff and Trustees, etc.).

There are many important considerations. Obviously, most of our sub-groups exceed 150 individuals. So, our questions might include: *How do we measure the quality of relationship and from whose perspective? Is the student’s perspective the priority or does the objective number of people automatically translate into a level of quality?* Gautama mentions the concern around being too small in terms of providing diversity. This is an important aspect to consider as well.

Gladwell points to the breakdown or disassociation and to the inevitable reliance on hierarchy for groups over 150. In the case of Oak Grove, we have recently moved to a shared leadership approach in running the school. We have a group of ten adults in what we term The Leadership Team. This group represents each aspect of the school: Program Directors (ECP,



At Chalet Solitude, Rougemont, Switzerland

Elementary, Secondary School, Boarding), Business Office, Admissions, Outreach, Director of Teaching and Learning, Operations and Head of School/Principal. We meet regularly and make decisions collectively as much as possible. Since this is new to Oak Grove, it will need time to make a better assessment of how it is working.

According to our conditional use permit, Oak Grove is allowed to have 245 students, but for now we have limited our total number to 220. We are currently experiencing wait pools for more than half of our grades, which include students and families that would not only be great fits for the school community, but some are siblings of children already enrolled, children of alumni and, in some cases, children of staff. It is particularly difficult to deny admissions to children of staff or alumni. However, this has unfortunately been the case at times.

Thank you again for including me in this discussion.

With affection,
Jodi

7 January 2018

Dear Friedrich,

I feel that too much energy can be wasted in finding the magic ‘right’ number. I think it is far more important to find **the right kind of teachers and parents** and let that decide, in a natural and factual way, what the numbers can be. For example, in Shibumi, when we were only 7 teachers who were committing their lives to this education, we could take care of about 45 students. This is partly because two of the seven were new and needed to absorb certain necessary skills unrelated to self-enquiry. Now we have a committed group of 10 people, including three very serious young people under the age of 30, and we have increased the numbers to 53. This is, again, because of the teaching skills available and finding parents who really understand what this education is about. Our parents are willing to

put in the energy for a year or more of weekly dialogues and workshops followed by a long interview to understand each other. After admission, we find that we need to work with each other and with parents to keep alive and deepen the intent. In this process, we constantly have insights that inform the curriculum and keep it from crystallising into a routine. We find that one experienced teacher can work with about 10 or 12 children in the age group of 5 to 8 and can be so alert to what is happening to each of them, that there is an order which does not depend on structure. When these children grow up they have the capacity to have an order which is not dependent on rules and norms. It also seems that if adults want to work together without creating a hierarchical structure, around 12 to 15 may be a good number. All this points to a school of about 15 adults and about 60 to 65 students. But it is better not to be ideological and move instead from fact to fact, keeping the intent paramount.

Warm regards,
Kabir

Giving a general perspective of what constitutes 'K education' is apparently not that easy. K's vision is perhaps too encompassing and immediate to be reduced to any kind of formula. Even K's occasional formulations seem to be curiously incomplete. It is as though the creative truth of living must forever remain beyond the organizing pale of thought. Every description is necessarily limited by the fact that the description is not the described. Nevertheless, there are certain pointers that might be worth reiterating and bearing in mind.

Recently we re-discovered 'Krishnamurti's Rules for a K School', dictated by K to Jackie and Sarjit Siddoo, and taken down in longhand by Sarjit, while K and Mary Zimbalist were visiting Wolf Lake in 1978, at a time when the school was having some difficulties. In her book, and by way of a preface to the list of rules, Jackie wrote: "*It is important to understand that Krishnamurti was addressing the immediate crisis and issues we were facing in our school. It was extremely unusual for Krishnamurti to suggest a list of rules for his schools, and what is presented here should not be considered a part of his approach to education.*"

Perhaps it is somewhat misleading to call them 'rules', as this suggests something rigid that needs to be imposed. They are more like general guidelines. However, even though some elements in these notes were clearly dictated by circumstance, I find that the overall list is very much in keeping with K's approach to education. It is similar, for instance, to the 'School Agreements' that everyone has to sign on joining Brockwood Park. So for me this list is something of a jewel that might deserve wider consideration by parents, students and educators.

K: List of rules for a K school

April 22, 1978 Wolf Lake School, Canada

This is a Krishnamurti school with Krishnamurti's teachings to cultivate the development of the whole human being both academically and psychologically so that the student grows up without any conflict whatsoever and without fear. The school is the students' home, where they feel protected, secure and cared for.

1. This is a religious school in the deepest sense, but without dogma, belief or sectarian spirit. It is religious in the sense that we are concerned with right behaviour, right action, and right way of living.
2. The intention of the school is to help the students to put all things of life in their right place, i.e. money, sex, knowledge, amusements, etc., and not let any one of these predominate over the others, and to bring up children who will have no fear and no conflict.
3. The school is international, co-educational and vegetarian.
4. There shall be no meat eating, no smoking, no drugs, no sex.
5. The children must be exposed to the best of everything, i.e. art, music, etc.
6. The children must have a sense of dignity, respect, and consideration for others.
7. The intention of the morning assembly is to gather energy for the coming day. It would be good if all members of the school come to these

morning meetings in which one sits quietly with the eyes closed and with self-revealing awareness. There may be reading of Krishnamurti's teachings, poetry or other writings that are non-sectarian. Music may be played. This is not a time for discussions or yoga.

8. The whole school must be punctual in all their activities, including bed-time. In this is a concern and respect for others.
9. There must be no visitors sharing rooms, i.e. girlfriends or boyfriends. We must first see what the community stands for, otherwise outsiders will come in and smother us.
10. We must all work together. The teachers should not separate themselves from the rest of the staff. We must all share the responsibility together, but the ultimate responsibility rests on the two sisters. The sisters are responsible to Krishnamurti, to all the Krishnamurti Foundations, parents, students, and the government.
11. All the staff (whosoever is at the school at that time) shall be consulted in the election for students and staff. It would be best to have an interview also with the student and parent, and to have the child come and stay with us if possible. Every staff member should meet the child.
12. There should be no competition in academics or games. We play games for the game's sake. No marks are to be given in academics.
13. We are responsible for the students' behaviour, their clothes, their manners, their cleanliness, etc. This implies sensitivity in all things.
14. The year's academic work must be covered. It is the responsibility of the staff to help the students to understand without psychological pressure the necessity to cover this work.

CONCLUSION: Apart from the responsibilities that have been listed as the ultimate responsibilities above, the staff must all work together as a unit. Krishnaji has said that the sisters must make this very clear to the staff.

Jagdis K. Siddoo, *Listening is the Guru:
A Diary of Conversations with J. Krishnamurti*, pp. 139–141.

Given the challenge of having any kind of ‘rules’ for a K school, I sent this list around to a number of educators. One of the most extensive and illuminating responses came from Hillary Rodrigues. Hillary is himself a former Wolf Lake School teacher and the author of *Krishnamurti’s Insight: An Examination of his Teachings on the Nature of Mind and Religion*, which is an expanded edition of his thesis for a Master’s degree in religious studies, subject he currently teaches at Lethbridge University, Canada. The personal experiences he shared so openly and honestly with us raise the question as to the understanding and proper use of such ‘rules’ in dealing with concrete situations. To Hillary the way they were applied at a time of ‘crisis’ seemed to contradict their broader educational intent to care. For him this particular **implementation of the ‘rules’** raised serious questions about their ultimate value.

5 February 2018

Dear Friedrich:

Not too long after I joined Wolf Lake School, Sarjit told me about these “rules”. I said I was surprised that there was such a thing. She said that the school had been in a crisis and when K visited they asked him for rules. He declined repeatedly, because it was not at the heart of what he wanted for his schools, in which “responsibility” arose in response to what was going on, and not according to a preconceived set of authoritative statements. However, the Siddoo sisters were at their wits’ end, and so they “sat him down on the bed,” I think Sarjit said, and forced him to produce them.

Later that year, when Wolf Lake School faced its own self-constructed “crisis,” the rule sheet was pulled out. The “crisis” was that while the Siddooos were away in India, some students (through no malicious intent, but mere mischievous teenage curiosity; “rules are made to be broken,” as the saying goes, though I’m not sure they really knew “the rules,” which had not been hammered into them) had engaged in sex and smoked pot. The Siddooos were made aware of this just as the teachers were discovering it. So the teachers did not have time to respond to the situation in a meaningful

and engaged way with the students, because it was labelled as a crisis and began to be treated as one.

The school was still then, in my opinion, somewhat prudish, with a sort of post-colonial Indian ashram cultural model transplanted to the Canadian context. While we had received sex education classes when I was a teenager in public high school (it was somewhat *nouveau* then), Wolf Lake was still debating the merits of doing that for their students a decade later.

Were Wolf Lake a public residential school in 1980 in Canada, the students might have been obliged to engage in a firm and serious discussion on the inappropriateness of their behaviour, asked to contemplate why it was inappropriate, and commit to avoiding such behaviour in future, with the possible punitive consequence of expulsion. A public non-residential school would probably not have cared about their behaviour at all, leaving this feature of education to their caring parents. In 1980 in the US and Canada, attitudes to sex were not as liberal as they were in ancient Greece, or as they were in imaginary Verona at the time of Romeo and Juliet (she was 13 in Shakespeare's play), but attitudes were also not like Victorian England in the 1800s, or India in 1980. The students' parents were early baby-boomers, some of the Woodstock generation. Smoking pot was regarded by many in North America as fairly innocuous. The pot that the students got at Wolf Lake had come back with them from their homes after the Christmas holidays. Canada will legalize cannabis next year for people over the age of 19.

However, at Wolf Lake at the time, it was decided to apply the "rules," without adequate attention to what I believe K's paragraph prior to the numerical "rules" stresses. He talks about the school being a "home" for the students, in which care for their well-being overrides other things (such as the school's reputation, for instance, I would imagine). About three young couples admitted they had engaged in sex, and about 80% of the student body had at least puffed on a joint of marijuana. As a staff member in whom students openly confided, I was tasked with speaking to each one of the entire student body to determine who did what, and the degree to which they did it!

One could not expel 80% of the student body for “drugs,” but the six students who admitted to engaging in sex (whether completely true or not), were expelled. It was at that time that I submitted my resignation, committing to finish the school year for the benefit of my students. I could not continue to work in an institution that appeared to place its own well-being over the lives of the people there. If a school that purported to try to educate real human beings about how to live meaningfully and responsibly was unable to handle the behaviour of North American teenagers, its own students, in what countless other schools and homes routinely dealt with, it struck me as seriously flawed by its evident values, ideology, and approach to problem-solving. “We can’t handle real life, please go somewhere else,” was the gist of its approach. I am not implying that there are no circumstances in which expulsion is warranted, but for me this was not such a situation. It was at that time that I abandoned K organizational affiliation, realizing that for me the world is the school in which I wish to work.

I phoned each parent to tell them of their child’s expulsion. And I later even wrote letters on behalf of two students in support of their applications to Brockwood. I was deeply moved when all three sets of parents of the expelled students went out of their way to express gratitude (not really necessary) later on.

I forget the sequence of events, but many of the teachers wanted to go down to Ojai and speak with K, to explain the way things actually unfolded, and about how they might best proceed with K’s advice. This may have been before or after the expulsion of the students. The Siddoos would not permit it, wanting to discuss the situation with K themselves, even though they were not there when the “crisis” (which frankly, from my perspective, was not a crisis) had occurred. I wrote a long letter to K, explaining the circumstances from my perspective (just one among many), and asked Sarjit if she would be kind enough to give it to him. On her return, she said she had given it to him, but I do not know if he read it, and what his response was, if any. In the letter, I did suggest that if the priorities were not appropriate (i.e., students, not the reputation of the school and its founders), in my estimation the school should be closed. This is what the Siddoos said that



Grand Pont on the Orbe River, Orbe, Switzerland

K eventually recommended for the school, namely its closure, but I don't know what his rationale was. They did try to run it for a year or two later, I believe.

So, for me, the “rules” are not a jewel at all. And if both Jackie now, and Sarjit then, say that they should not be considered as K's approach to education, I would likely take them as speaking from their first-hand experience. Jackie's opinion in particular is valuable because it may mark a deep realization of their intrinsic shortcomings. In the case of Wolf Lake school, the “rules” seriously affected the lives of all the students, their parents, teachers, and ultimately Wolf Lake school itself, and not in a positive way.

However, they are K's words, and they do relate to education, and that is a fact.

Warmly,
Hillary

We are part of nature. If we lose contact with nature we lose contact with ourselves and the rest of humanity. We have heard this in many forms from K. And all of our schools – as well as CFL, Shibumi, Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary, Sholai School and others – feel this too. K was also very emphatic in saying that we learn more from observation than from books. The following is from the CFL Newsletter 2017. It's about how groups of students were immersed in nature through spending time with a tree. They even spent the night in the trees. It must be amazing to see the stars rise and set among the branches. It's such a beautiful and inviting idea, that maybe some of you might be inspired to experiment with it.

The Story of a Tree

In our last newsletter, we wrote about the importance of cultivating a familiarity with, as well as a love for, nature in our community of students and adults. We feel this is important both from the point of view of the

daily experience of the individual as well as from a global environmental perspective. Last year, our mela was on the theme of trees; specifically, we called it *The story of a tree*. We wanted to become intimately familiar with one particular tree on campus and its surroundings. We did this by spending many hours in a particular habitat in school – almost a hundred hours over two terms! The juniors were clustered around a *Pongamia pinnata* (honge), the middle schoolers were observing a *Ficus benghalensis* (banyan), the high school students studied an *Acacia leucophloea* and the seniors studied an *Albizia odoratissima*.

We learnt to be quiet and still around our particular tree, to observe it and all the creatures around it and on it, to become friendly with the space. We climbed our particular tree often. We built tree platforms (*machaans*) and spent nights on them feeling like we were aboard leafy ships on wind-blown seas. To see the moon and stars rise and set among the branches was a profound experience. We studied barks, lichen, creepers, ants, birds, soil composition, colourscapes and soundscapes. We produced sketches and artwork and puppet forms inspired by the life around us. We constructed walkways and hammocks in the branches. In some subtle ways, our minds were changed by this hundred-hour encounter. For that space of time, our habitual world – saturated by social dynamics and the media – retreated just a bit, and a leafy consciousness, a bird-and-insect-consciousness, became possible.

It was not always comfortable going, of course. Heat and sunlight, insect bites, uncomfortable seating spaces: given our predominantly indoor-oriented lives, these were significant challenges, particularly for the young. But these discomforts became a part of our learning as well. We did not expect, and did not get, endless entertainment. Rather, we aimed for an understanding that was more real, grounded, and hopefully we all got a taste of it.

On the *mela* day, we invited the parents of the school to walk around our specific trees and groves, while the students presented their understanding of the theme in a variety of ways: interactive sessions, talks, plays and artwork. It was a very different kind of mela day, quiet and introspective and yet full of feeling and colour.

The story of a tree was ultimately an experiment in attention. We learnt to wonder about how to pay attention to a tree in all its glorious complexity. In the process, we also inevitably began observing, again, our inner worlds of enjoyment and resistance, in all their glorious complexity. This is really the heart of our educational venture.

K: School is a place of leisure

A school is a place of leisure, where the educator and the one to be educated are both learning. This is the central fact of the school – to learn. We do not mean by leisure having time to oneself, though that is also necessary. It does not mean taking a book and sitting under a tree or in your bedroom, reading casually. It does not mean having a placid state of mind, and it certainly does not mean being idle or using time for daydreaming. Leisure means having a mind that is not constantly occupied with something, with a problem, with some enjoyment, with some sensory pleasure. Leisure implies that a mind has infinite time to observe what is happening around oneself and within oneself, to listen, to see clearly. Leisure implies freedom, which is generally translated as doing as one desires, which is what human beings are doing anyway, causing a great deal of mischief, misery and confusion. Leisure is having a quiet mind, with no motive and so no direction. It is only in this state of leisure that the mind can learn, not only science, history, mathematics but also about oneself. And one can learn about oneself in relationship.

The Whole Movement of Life is Learning, pp. 8–9
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Mary-Ann Ridgway, Head Teacher at Inwoods, shared with us, after some painstaking work, the following brief description of holistic education. This followed months of travel to different alternative schools in India and Europe. In our last Newsletter, we printed her report on her trip to India and in the

current article she concentrates on her first-hand experience of a number of independent schools in Germany, France and Spain. This experience is then brought beautifully together in a graphic representation of the key elements and the resulting deficiencies when any of them is missing. This schematic framing is the outcome of direct observations and reflections over a number of years and it is intended to assist the on-going inquiry between parents and teachers regarding the complexity and challenges of education.

Holistic Education

Many alternative schools across the globe use the term ‘holistic education’ to describe their approach or some other phrase that attempts to define an educational environment that integrates numerous fields of learning rather than the mere pursuit of academic trends and specialised skills. Being closely involved in such a small school, where the word ‘holistic’ is bandied around somewhat loosely, I set out to unravel this appealing but too easily assumed term. This process involved a two-month tour of some unique independent schools in Europe. A Venn diagram inspired by a Japanese one called *‘Ikigai’*, meaning ‘a reason for being’, emerged at one point as an interesting reflection of the aspects involved.

Here is an overview of the perceived virtues and of what I felt were significant missing elements in the five alternative schools that I visited. It is important to note that these schools had been highly recommended, did not use reward and punishment, and had been running for a number of years. Prestigious pedagogies such as Piaget, Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and others were extensively quoted on their websites. I felt very privileged to be welcomed into these well thought-out and caring educational places.

Two of these schools followed the model that ‘it takes a village to raise a child’. Typical school structures such as classes and timetables were deliberately removed and children, if they wished, could engage in apprentice-like learning with those living near them. However, children mostly hung

together with their peer cohort or their habitual adult caretakers, participating in activities that were familiar, comfortable and playful, while the village went about its usual business. It seemed that simply knowing that one can learn from people outside the school walls is not enough. The child needs to feel the adults' interest in him, the acceptance of who he is whatever his personality; then the flame of interest in a particular skill can be awakened.

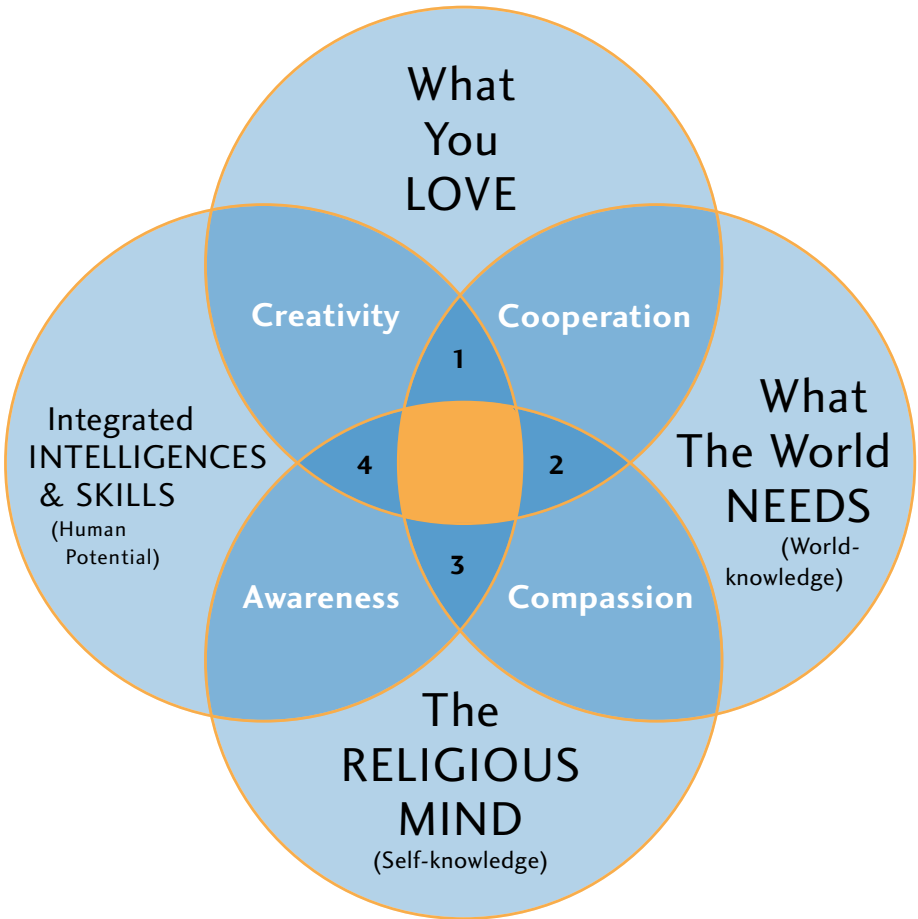


Two other schools were of the 'no-interference' sort. The environments were replete with every possible learning apparatus, beautifully and invitingly presented. Adult interventions were considered invasive of the child's inherent learning, so besides no reward and punishment, there was

also no encouragement, no correction, no guidance, and no evaluation. The only responsibility of the adult was to be there, observing, fully present, and ready to respond to any requests for 'teaching' or help. As a result, two worlds became distinct: the world of the child and the world of the adult. But if we have created a beautiful space with abundant resources and the caring presence of adults, then let's bring the two worlds of child and adult together, for we are all learning about our relationship with life as a whole.

The one school that defined itself as democratic combined these two worlds through a system in which the children and adults together decided by a majority vote on all the rules of structure and behaviour. Children learnt to state their wishes and accommodate their actions under the weight of numbers. But, as history shows, there is a great deal of disorder in the world, whether from following the will of the masses or accepting the authority of the few. The awareness of this movement in our relationships with our peers, parents and teachers may awaken the intelligence of sensitivity that can bring about independent compassionate action rather than the compulsive need to follow others.

Pedagogy and curriculum in relation to Inwoods' intentions for holistic education



- 1 Responsible and focused but internally fragmented
- 2 A sense of purpose but limited in effectiveness
- 3 Contributing but lacking Joy and enthusiasm
- 4 Happy but individualistic

What seemed to be lacking in these environments, as it is the case with all manner of institutions, is attention to the fact that learning arises out of 'relationship'. Relationship not only between people, but with objects, with nature, with ideas, with ourselves and the world. While questions of structure, freedom, direction, curriculum and behaviour are important to debate in education, none of them will find their right place without relationship, without a genuine loving connection that awakens interest in life and what it needs; that values sensitivity as part of intelligence, not just knowledge; that uproots blockages and inspires inner change; that welcomes silence to deepen connection and unite all minds and hearts. Perhaps if schools nurtured this kind of relationship, the rest would fall into place.

With this in mind, the above Venn diagram that attempts to give a graphical representation of the purpose of 'holistic education'. The four petals signify what was perceived at the time of the exercise as essential focal elements in a school setting, and the intersections between these petals show the qualities arising from their combined effect. The numbered sections nearer the centre describe the resulting deficiencies when one of the petals is missing.

'Integrated Intelligences and Skills' encompasses not only academic skills but those that involve the body, hand/eye coordination, artistic flares, expressive art forms, team work and oracy. They require not only the mental capacities but social and emotional intelligence, and an awakening of the senses working together.

'What you Love' speaks for itself. When one truly loves what one does, one does it not for anyone else's approval but for the energy and joy that it brings. Incorporate doing what you love with a range of skills and this is a recipe for 'Creativity' and the human potential to shine.

'What the World Needs': It needs looking after in every respect, environmentally, socially, culturally, and politically. When we realise what is going on in the world and understand our relationship with it, we begin to care,

and when there is care, we act. If in that action there is love – and doing what one loves – ‘Cooperation’ emerges.

Finally, there is the ‘Religious Mind’, not the mind that attaches itself to some dogma or fabricated spiritual story, but one that is continuously enquiring into the nature of the self and the inner workings of the heart and mind in its factual relationship to nature and the world of humankind. Self-knowledge, integrated with world-knowledge and human potential, allows for ‘Awareness’ and ‘Compassion’ to blossom.

But what if we take one petal out of the four away? We can do what we love in the context of what the world needs and while paying attention to the inner workings of our minds, but without the development of integrated skills one is likely to be limited in effectiveness. Without doing what one loves there may be a sense of contribution but also a lack of joy and enthusiasm. Without world-knowledge and participating towards a better world, one may be prone to an individualistic livelihood. And finally, without a religious mind life could feel continuously fragmented.

So what would these essential elements actually look like on the ground?

Libraries for reading, corners for writing, materials and worksheets for calculating and experimenting to learn and practice those skills that develop the intellect and lay the ground for further independent research and communication. Opportunities to play, interact with a range of ages, listen to the views of others, solve problems, participate in team initiatives and creatively work things out together, thus supporting a more socially and emotionally integrated being. Space and time to move, dance, run, climb, stretch and attend to the physical body and its needs through a range of invitations, and a daily rhythm of physical activities. All of this naturally in an atmosphere free of evaluation and time-specific targets.



Learning and doing what you love needs unstructured open spaces with an array of resources, inspirations, and opportunities to learn alone and with others. It requires adults to spot interests, be unbiased in their offerings, follow up on a child's requests for guidance, and allow uninterrupted time for the mind and hands to be absorbed in their creative work.

Finding out what the world needs requires both a direct contact with it, in terms of seeing and experiencing the lives of others (human and nonhuman) and the workings of the earth, as well as developmentally appropriate presentations of the bigger world picture and how our local actions impact that. Trips outside the school setting that include social, cultural and environmental participation, alongside topics that explore energy, waste, food systems, political systems, ecology etc. will help gain the world-knowledge necessary for a deeper understanding of what and how one is impacting it.

Finally, the 'Religious Mind' is cultivated when all knowledge is put aside, when there are opportunities for quietness and solitude by sitting or walking in nature alone or with others, in sharing a candlelit meal in silence, by joining a quiet group circle, and in valuing reflective moments to notice the interior workings of one's heart and mind. Free from instruction, free from judgment, simply being.

'Holistic' in this sense is the integration of all these petals of life; the essential elements of both the inner and outer, the me and the you, what I do in relationship and in the context of everything around me. Fragmentation happens when the parts are isolated from the whole or missing altogether. When there is attention to relationship in its truest, widest, deepest sense, in the educational setting (rather than to mere knowledge and explanations) then learning becomes meaningful, and born out of an energy that has its own momentum for content, rather than a preconceived and adult imposed idea of it. Ideas about how and when to 'step in' or 'step back' from the child's learning are dropped. Instead we can walk side by side in an affectionate relationship of sharing, offering, receiving, observing, and listening, unhindered by authorities and educational idealists. Perhaps then the flowering of a human being can happen.

K: What does it mean to be rightly educated?

Education is the cultivation of the mind so that action is not self-centred; it is learning throughout life to break down the walls which the mind builds in order to be secure, and from which arises fear with all its complexities. To be rightly educated, you have to study hard and not be lazy. Be good at games, not to beat another, but to amuse yourself. Eat the right food, and keep physically fit. Let the mind be alert and capable of dealing with the problems of life, not as a Hindu, a Communist, or a Christian, but as a human being. To be rightly educated, you have to understand yourself; you have to keep on learning about yourself. When you stop learning, life becomes ugly and sorrowful. Without goodness and love, you are not rightly educated.

Commentaries on Living, Third Series, pp. 112–113

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Mary-Ann shared with us this lovely letter from Bronwyn Jones, my osteopath in England, about how her daughter Aurelia looks back at her time at Inwoods. Aurelia is now in secondary education and having to deal with the challenges of a mainstream educational institution that doesn't have the capacity to create meaningful relationships with the children. Aurelia's account to her parents offers a child's perspective in relation to **'before and after'** their time at Inwoods. This is a rather unique testimonial, as Inwoods generally does not get this kind of feedback.

25 January 2018

Dear Mary-Ann and everyone at Inwoods,

Aurelia has asked me to thank you all for allowing her to spend a day with you at Inwoods. It has been a truly invaluable experience.

Aurelia spent the evening sharing her day with us and explaining how nourishing it was to reconnect with all her memories right down to the tiniest

details, like the click of the light switch in the girls' loo and the sound of the extractor fan that always came with it. That little detail surprised her and made her smile.

Watching each child being given enough space to speak and the freedom to ask questions, and noticing how they are carefully listened to without being told what to do or how to be, made her heart feel heavy, she said, and with that she remembered and deeply longed for that "invisible thing" which had been just an ordinary everyday part of her experience at Inwoods; and how knowing that again today she felt its absence in her secondary school environment all the more. She went on to describe how noisy, disruptive and fragmented the classroom atmosphere is now for her; there is little respect for what is being taught, and she feels no real connection or relationship with her teachers. "They just do zany goofy stuff to make you like them but they don't really listen, they haven't got time, everything's taught so fast and then you're just tested to see what you remembered!," she said.

Aurelia spoke of noticing and feeling the stillness in the Inwoods classroom again, how calm and grounded it made her feel, and remembered how important for her concentration that had been and how it had informed her ability to absorb what she was learning, qualities that are not available for her to connect with at school now.

I wanted to take the time to share some of this with you. It was evidently important for Aurelia to communicate it with us, she made a point of it, and so I feel obliged on her behalf (and mine) to pass it on, mostly because for me what she says speaks deeply into the space you are all so committed to providing for these children, how you are all such ambassadors for and truly dedicated custodians of Childhood. I am so very grateful to you for that and always have been; and it feels clear to me that the love, dedication and energy given to this vision that is Inwoods does live on and continues to inform children like Aurelia, who have had and are having the amazing opportunity to know what it is to grow with you and alongside you, held by Nature. What you make available is an exquisite and invaluable resource for the next generation and so very needed in these troubled times.



At Brockwood Park, England

Aurelia's sharing of her experience today and all that it made her see in remembering her days at Inwoods filled my heart to bursting and I will be forever grateful to you all for gifting her the opportunity so she could remember, reconnect, re-evaluate and remind herself of her true values.

That she can feel there is a difference and that she knows what feels right for her, is everything and I trust that, as we continue to provide the best soil, the roots of that 'knowing' will grow deeper and deeper and so become the North on her compass through life and, all being well, may continue to inform all the choices she will come to make and guide her through all the challenges life will without a doubt wash up on her shore.

With my warmest and most heartfelt gratitude for all that you give of yourselves.

Bronwyn

We were deeply moved by this letter, which reflected so clearly and passionately the deepest parental concern for the total welfare of one's children. But we thought it might be best if we also heard from the child herself and this is **Aurelia's account**. When she was seven or so, and after we had met only briefly once or twice, she asked me if I would be her grandfather. I replied that that was very nice of her, but that it would be better if we were friends. And we have become friends with the whole family, who now have been twice to Rougemont.

18.02.2018

Dear Friedrich,

Last week the secondary school I am at now had an inset day and so I asked Mary-Ann if I could visit Inwoods and help her for the day, and she said yes.

It has been nearly two years since I spent a whole day at Inwoods and a lot has changed. What hasn't changed is the atmosphere. The stillness to concentrate was still there and the space to ask questions was still there. The

children were interested and they listened to their teachers. They were able to ask lots of questions. They weren't bored or misbehaving. I remembered what it was like to learn like this and how helpful and important these things were for my learning.

I love to ask questions. I love to find things out with other people, discovering together with others to find an answer. I miss this way of learning; it doesn't happen very much at my secondary school. I am mostly told what to learn now. Nobody is really interested in what I feel or have to say about something. There isn't any time to ask questions. It's a different way and learning is not as interesting anymore.

Is it snowing in Rougemont? I loved being in the snow and seeing the mountains.

Lots of love from me to everyone,
Aurelia

THE TEACHER AND THE TEACHINGS

K: On teachers and pupils

Dr. Besant said to all the members, and I used to hear this very often, “We are preparing for a World Teacher. Keep an open mind. He may contradict everything you think, and say it differently.” And you have been preparing, some of you, for twenty years or more; and it does not matter whether I am the Teacher or not. No one can tell you, naturally, because no one else can know except myself; and even then I say it does not matter. I have never contradicted it. I say, “Leave it. That is not the point.” You have been preparing for twenty years or more, and very few of you have really an open mind. Very few have said, “Let us find out what you are talking about. Let us go into it. Let us discover if what you say is true or false, irrespective of your label.” And after twenty years you are in exactly the same position as you were before. You have innumerable beliefs, you have certainties, and your knowledge, and you are not really willing to examine what I am saying. And it seems such a waste of time, such a pity that these twenty years and more should go wasted, and you find yourselves exactly where you were, only with new sets of beliefs, new sets of dogmas, new sets of conditions. I assure you, you cannot find truth, or liberation, or nirvana, or heaven, or whatever you like to call it, by this process of attachment. That does not mean that you all must become detached, which only means you become withered, but try to find out frankly, honestly, simply, whether what you are holding with such grim possessiveness has any significance, whether it has any value; and to find out if it has any value there cannot be the desire to cling to it. And then when you really look at it in that way, you will find something which is indescribable. Then you will discover something real, lasting, eternal. Then there will be no necessity for a teacher and a pupil. It will be a happy world when there are no pupils and no teachers.

Collected Works, Vol. II, pg. 31
Talk to Theosophists, Auckland, NZ, 31 March 1934
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Characterizing K or giving an adequate picture of him does not seem to be easy. He has been variously described as a philosopher, an educator, a psychologist, a religious teacher, a mystic, either singly or in their various combinations. He may have been all these things and none of them, depending on how such terms are understood. After all, he himself said he was nothing. But each of us naturally makes his own valuation of K and his teachings. Here is Michael Krohnen's personal homage to him.

A Human Being Wandering in Pathless Emptiness

Ojai, California, November 23, 2017 (Thanksgiving Day)

For most of the 20th Century he travelled the globe, crossing oceans and continents, to share his revolutionary insight into the human condition with all its problems and complexities, and to suggest the fundamental wholeness and beauty of life.

For more than sixty years he persevered in his intent, verbalized in 1929, to set human beings absolutely, unconditionally free – free from the burden of fear and tradition, free from guilt and conditioning, free from division, conflict, violence and war.

He gave public talks to audiences of thousands on five continents, in large cities, at schools and universities; had dialogues with individuals and groups, inquiring into the perennial questions that have concerned human beings since the dawn of history.

He demonstrated the clarity of simple observation and the astonishing freedom of what he called 'choiceless awareness', pointing to a realm beyond knowledge and words, where the sacred is present in every moment of our day-to-day living. He made clear that this is not something to be accomplished through effort, practice or ritual; it can only happen of its own accord.

To help bring about a transformation in human consciousness, he suggested a different kind of education, and therefore founded schools in India, England and California, meeting regularly with staff, students and parents, conveying a new and different way of inquiry into and perception of nature and humanity.

Throughout his life he considered himself a guest on Earth, and his respect for all living things was profound: he cared for trees and flowers, for animals, for nature and the universe, but without any proprietary sense.

He clearly saw and pointed out the destructiveness of psychological measurement and comparison. To perceive beauty in all living things, outside the personal arena, in the living, breathing moment at hand – the ‘*what is*’ – may allow truth to manifest.

He lived this way; he embodied goodness.

Michael Krohnen

Some of us who have been significantly touched by the teachings end up feeling that we have thereby awakened to a **deep responsibility for our lives** and the world as a whole. We also feel a certain responsibility in relation to the teachings themselves. But what that responsibility involves is its own challenge. Here is an interesting message we received from Lawrence Balan, originally from Bucharest, Romania who, together with his Russian wife Marina, has lived in the US for over 30 years.

6 November 2017

Dear Mr Grohe,

I only became aware of K’s talks in the late ‘80s via his published books. I read some and thereafter went about my business for a number of years. Recently, after moving from NYC to LA, I suddenly remembered and

renewed my interest in the subject of K's revelations about the nature of consciousness. I made a trip to Ojai and visited Pine Cottage, where I had the wonderful opportunity to meet Mr Krohnen.

After a follow-up discussion with Mr Krohnen on some of the contents of his *One Thousand Lunches with Krishnamurti*, he lovingly handed me your succinct, wonderful account of your time with Krishnaji. I just finished reading it and would like to take the opportunity to thank you very much for sharing your experiences.

As you most certainly have been feeling for decades now, it seems to me more and more that every one of us who came in contact with K's insights into the nature of humanity has a deep responsibility to himself personally and to the world at large to look inwardly and understand the workings of consciousness, thereby opening the door for right action. This is of course much easier said than done, but one "has to try."

I'm putting "has to try," in quotes, for lack of a better wording. I recall Krishnaji mentioning over and over again that any application of willpower brings one back into the cage of one's network of thought, so one mustn't "try"; rather, one should come upon a state of mind where the watching of one's own actions and the workings of one's mind occurs naturally due to genuine curiosity rather than an act of will. I must admit that at this point in my life (I'm 54), not applying any will seems the hardest thing to do. If over the decades I formed and strengthened the habit of walking through life in a reactive mode, on automatic pilot, as it were, it seems to me that such natural attention cannot happen without an initial effort of some kind to break that habit.

But I get lost in reveries, so let me not take any more of your time. Thanks again and hopefully our paths will intersect in a not too distant future.

Sincerely,
Lawrence

K: The first step is the last

Meditation is not a way to something. To discover in every moment of daily life what is true and what is false is meditation. Meditation is not something to which you escape, something in which you get visions and all kinds of thrills – that is self-hypnosis, which is immature, childish. But to watch every moment of the day, to see how your thought is operating, to see the machinery of defence at work, to see the fears, ambitions, greeds and envies – to watch it all, enquire into it all the time, that is meditation, or a part of meditation. Without laying the right foundation there is no meditation, and the laying of the right foundation is to be free of ambition, greed, envy and all the things that we have created for our self-defence. You do not have to go to anybody to be told what meditation is or to be given a method. I can find out very simply by watching myself, how ambitious I am or not. I do not have to be told by another; I know. To eradicate the root, the trunk, the fruit of ambition, to see it and totally destroy it is absolutely necessary. You see, we want to go very far without taking the first step. And you will find if you take the first step that it is the last step, there is no other step.

Collected Works, Vol. XII, Saanen Talk 9 (13.08.1961), pg. 227
© 1992 Krishnamurti Foundation of America

In his brief introduction to K's teachings, David Bohm describes how he came upon K, how they met and their subsequent wide-ranging and fascinating dialogues into the understanding of consciousness, the transformation of society and the nature of the beyond. One thing I find especially significant in this piece is the way Bohm goes into the subject of meditation as central to K's approach to the general lack of self-awareness of thought. And in the process, he clarifies why such transforming awareness does not involve the exercise of will.

A Brief Introduction to Krishnamurti's Teachings

My first acquaintance with Krishnamurti's work was in 1959 when I read his book *The First and Last Freedom*. What particularly aroused my interest was his deep insight into the question of the observer and the observed. This question had long been close to the centre of my own work as a theoretical physicist who was primarily interested in the meaning of the quantum theory. In this theory, for the first time in the development of physics the notion that these two cannot be separated has been put forth as necessary for the understanding of the fundamental laws of matter in general. Because of this, as well as because the book contained many other deep insights, I felt it was urgent for me to talk with Krishnamurti directly and personally as soon as possible. And when I first met him on one of his visits to London, I was struck by the great ease of communication with him, which was made possible by the intense energy with which he listened and by the freedom from self-protective reservations and barriers with which he responded to what I had to say. As a person who works in science, I felt completely at home with this sort of response because it was in essence of the same quality as that which I had met in these contacts with other scientists with whom there had been a very close meeting of minds. And here I think especially of Einstein, who showed a similar intensity and absence of barrier in a number of discussions that took place between him and me. After this, I began to meet Krishnamurti regularly and to discuss with him whenever he came to London.

We began an association which has since then become closer as I became interested in the schools, which were set up through his initiative. In these discussions we went quite deeply into many questions which concerned me in my scientific work. We probed into the nature of space and time, and of the universal, both with regard to external nature and with regard to mind. But then we went on to consider the general disorder and confusion that pervades the consciousness of mankind. It is here that I encountered what I feel to be Krishnamurti's major discovery. What he was seriously proposing is that all this disorder, which is the root cause of such widespread sorrow and misery, and which prevents human beings from properly

working together, has its root in the fact that we are ignorant of the general nature of our own processes of thought. Or to put it differently, it may be said that we do not see what is actually happening when we are engaged in the activity of thinking. Through close attention to and observation of this activity of thought, Krishnamurti feels that he directly perceives that thought is a material process which is going on inside of the human being in the brain and nervous system as a whole.

Ordinarily, we tend to be aware mainly of the content of this thought rather than of how it actually takes place. One can illustrate this point by considering what happens when one is reading a book. Usually, one is attentive almost entirely to the meaning of what is being read. However, one can also be aware of the book itself, of its constitution as made up out of pages that can be turned, of the printed words and of the ink, of the fabric of the paper, etc. Similarly, we may be aware of the actual structure and function of the process of thought and not merely of its content.

How can such an awareness come about? Krishnamurti proposes that this requires what he calls meditation. Now the word meditation has been given a wide range of different and even contradictory meanings, many of them involving rather superficial kinds of mysticism. Krishnamurti has in mind a definite and clear notion when he uses this word. One can obtain a valuable indication of this meaning by considering the derivation of the word. (The roots of words, in conjunction with their present generally accepted meanings often yield surprising insight into their deeper meanings.) The English word meditation is based on the Latin root “med” which is, “to measure.” The present meaning of the word is “to reflect,” “to ponder” (i.e. to weigh or measure), and “to give close attention.” Similarly, the Sanskrit word for meditation, which is *dhyana*, is closely related to “*dhyati*”, meaning “to reflect.” So, at this rate, to meditate would be, “to ponder, to reflect, while giving close attention to what is actually going on as one does so.”

This is perhaps what Krishnamurti means by the beginning of meditation. That is to say, one gives close attention to all that is happening in conjunction with the actual activity of thought, which is the underlying source of



From Rougemont to Saanen, Switzerland – view on Giferspitz

the general disorder. One does this without choice, without criticism, without acceptance or rejection of what is going on. And all of this takes place along with reflections on the meaning of what one is learning about the activity of thought. (It is perhaps rather like reading a book in which the pages have been scrambled up, and being intensely aware of this disorder, rather than just “trying to make sense” of the confused content that arises when one just accepts the pages as they happen to come.)

Krishnamurti has observed that the very act of meditation will, in itself, bring order to the activity of thought without the intervention of will, choice, decision, or any other action of the “thinker.” As such order comes, the noise and chaos which are the usual background of our consciousness die out, and the mind becomes generally silent. (Thought arises only when needed for some genuinely valid purpose, and then stops, until needed again.)

In this silence, Krishnamurti says that something new and creative happens, something that cannot be conveyed in words, but that is of extraordinary significance for the whole of life. So he does not attempt to communicate this verbally, but rather, he asks those who are interested that they explore the question of meditation directly for themselves, through actual attention to the nature of thought.

Without attempting to probe into this deeper meaning of meditation, one can however say that meditation, in Krishnamurti’s sense of the word, can bring order to our overall mental activity, and this may be a key factor in bringing about an end to the sorrow, the misery, the chaos and confusion, that have, over the ages, been the lot of mankind and that are still generally continuing without visible prospect of fundamental change for the foreseeable future.

Krishnamurti’s work is permeated by what may be called the essence of the scientific approach, when this is considered in its very highest and purest form. Thus, he begins from a fact, this fact about the nature of our thought processes. This fact is established through close attention, involving careful listening to the process of consciousness, and observing it assiduously. In

this, one is constantly learning, and out of this learning comes insight into the overall or general nature of the process of thought. This insight is then tested. First, one sees whether it holds together in a rational order. And then one sees whether it leads to order and coherence on what flows out of it in life as a whole.

Krishnamurti constantly emphasizes that he is in no sense an authority. He has made certain discoveries and he is simply doing his best to make these discoveries accessible to all those who are able to listen. His work does not contain a body of doctrine, nor does he offer techniques or methods for obtaining a silent mind. He is not aiming to set up any new system of religious belief. Rather, it is up to each human being to see if he can discover for himself that to which Krishnamurti is calling attention, and to go on from there to make new discoveries on his own.

It is clear then that an introduction, such as this, can at best show how Krishnamurti's work has been seen by a particular person, a scientist, such as myself. To see in full what Krishnamurti means, it is necessary, of course, to go on and to read what he actually says, with that quality of attention of the totality of one's responses, inward and outward, which we have been discussing here.

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K: Thinking together.

We must be able to think together, but our prejudices, our ideals, and so on limit the capacity and the energy required to think, to observe, and examine together so as to discover for ourselves what lies behind all the confusion, misery, terror, destruction, and tremendous violence in the world. To understand, not only the mere outward facts that are taking place, but also the depth and the significance of all this, we must be able to observe together – not you observing one way and the speaker another, but together observe the same thing. That observation, that examination, is prevented if we cling to our prejudices, to our particular experiences, and our particular

comprehension. Thinking together is tremendously important because we have to face a world that is rapidly disintegrating, degenerating, a world in which there is no sense of morality, where nothing is sacred, where no one respects another. To understand all this, not only superficially, casually, we have to enter into the depths of it, into what lies behind it. We have to inquire why it is that after all these millions of years of evolution, man, you and the whole world, have become so violent, callous, destructive, enduring wars and the atomic bomb. The technological world is evolving more and more; perhaps that may be one of the factors causing man to become like this. So please let us think together, not according to my way or your way, but simply using the capacity to think.

The Network of Thought, pp. 1–2

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For many, the collaboration between K and Bohm was highly significant in opening new ways of understanding the teachings. And one of the most creative developments to come out of it was perhaps Bohm's dialogue proposal. Here is an excerpt from a paper written last year, on the occasion of Bohm's birth centenary, by our friend Stephen Smith, entitled **The Common Ground of Humanity**, in which he brings this out beautifully.

This year marks the birth centennial of David Bohm (1917–1992) so it is singularly appropriate that we spend some time with him and evaluate his importance for the unfoldment of the teachings.

Bohm spoke of “participatory consciousness”, which is something that can happen in dialogue when the sense of being an individual is temporarily suspended and what remains is the topic or question under review, revolving like a crystal ball with different lights shed on it. It is qualitatively different from the “talking-heads” scenario where each one voices his or her opinion. It is the group endeavour that is important, not its constituent ele-

ments. As such, it may be called the “work of the whole”, as that is where it begins and ends. Its movement is cyclical, rather than linear. By its nature, it is something that we hold *in common*: it belongs to no one, individually. It is common consciousness becoming aware of itself.

David Bohm knew this – he was a democratic dialoguer – feeling that participatory consciousness could come about if people were willing, constant and serious enough. He preferred the dialogue circle to the public platform, from which he rarely spoke except as a physics teacher. He helped bring the teachings to the common man – by questioning and, at times, forcing K to explain himself. It is to him, for instance, that we owe the phrase “thought is a material process”, rather than the vaguer “thought is matter”. He also, in the series of dialogues that were published as the book *The Ending of Time*, was the one to introduce the term *the Ground* as connoting that state beyond thought & time for which K, hesitating, was at a loss for a word. In these, and certainly other, instances Bohm may truly be said to have “grounded” K and made him more amenable to scrutiny – a service for which we owe him a debt of gratitude.

Gratitude alone, of course, is not enough; it is, indeed, only a beginning. We need to anchor ourselves in this kind of process, the unfolding of meaning in dialogue. There is no background meaning, given *a priori*. Meaning flows into and through the discourse when there is coherence of thinking, *thinking together*. This thinking together is a kind of alignment, moving from a common, rational base, for without rationality there can be no dialogue. Bohm was fond of saying that “universal reason is the first step in the awakening of intelligence”. We need to see and appreciate this for two reasons:

- It expands our horizons and gives us access to something beyond our narrow self-interest (much of the value of education lies here).
- At the same time, and as a corollary, it introduces us – ontologically and psychologically – to the notion that our thought originates in the general, and not in the particular as we are wont to think. We are, first and foremost, socio-cultural beings as anyone who has observed conditioning must know.

Establishing, thus, a foundation for dialogue, there is some chance that we can think together. It is not a “given”, any more than is meaning: it is something we have to work our way into. Once there, however – and *there* means *understood* – we can begin to savour the fruits of “sweet reason”. It is a foretaste merely, but it is genuine, the first step on a road that has no end.

Some, however, consider that the teachings don’t necessarily need this kind of democratisation or collective engagement in order to flower. They feel **the teachings work underground**, i.e. in an implicit rather than explicit or deliberate manner. K had suggested that the teachings had their own subtle effect beyond any of the obvious activities of giving talks, publishing books and running schools and study centres. He seemed to base such a notion on the sense that his own transformation was tacitly affecting the whole field of consciousness. Here is a statement along these lines by our old friend Alexandra Trifler.

20 December 2017

Dear Mr Grohe,

I am convinced that K triggered off the first really significant movement/revolution in the world which is affecting human minds and hearts in depth. The Teachings’ healing process is invisible and it takes place within the most secret recesses of man’s psyche. It is an underground movement and it should remain as such. It is not to be approached in a conventional manner. No need for dissemination. What is needed is living them, absorbing them, studying them, keeping constantly in touch with them. Loving and caring for them.

Most respectfully,
Alexandra

Some sense that this subtle transformation of human consciousness is actually happening. Others are rather sceptical, as they do not see much significant evidence for it. In places like Saanen, which were so central to K's work, there is more interest in him and his teachings on the part of the international community – English, Dutch, French, Belgian and many more – than on the part of local people. It's mostly rural here, despite the tourism, and politically to the right. Most of the locals were never interested in K and have forgotten about him. The person they celebrate is Yehudi Menuhin, whose Music Festival is one of the yearly cultural highlights in the area. They even have erected a bronze bust in his honour in downtown Saanen and they quote him on the signposts of the 'philosopher's trail' along the river. This festival, together with the tennis tournament, brings money into the local economy.

However, recently they have also started an annual Conference on Religions in Gstaad. We're in contact with the man who organizes it, one of the owners of the valley's famous bakery. Long ago this man attended a Krishnamurti talk. He'd been told that they were selling bread at the venue, so he went to see what kind of bread it was! A friend then took him inside, and he was quite impressed by what he heard. This is why he thinks that the teachings should be part of next year's Conference. There will also be an exhibition on K in the Saanen Museum, from July to September, to include videos, audios, posters, dialogues and so on.

We've also managed to reserve a little corner for K and the teachings in the Saanen Tourist Office, including a few books and brochures. People who come looking for anything to do with K are happy to find at least this much. Chalet Tannegg, where K used to stay, was taken down some years ago and the place where the tent stood was turned into a football field. Although they built a cultural centre near this football field, there is not even a photo of K in the place. So I asked the Tourist Office to direct serious inquirers to me, and in this way I've met some interesting people.

K's way was indeed like the eagle that leaves no mark in its flight, which is the beauty of freedom.

ON INTERPRETATION

K: On studying what K is saying

If I went there [to a K Centre] to study what K is saying, I would want to investigate it, question it, doubt it, not just read something and go away. I would be reading not just to memorize, I would be reading to learn; to see what he is saying and my reactions to it, whether it corresponds or contradicts, whether he is right or I am right, so there is a constant communication and interchange between what I am reading and what I am feeling. I would want to establish a relationship between what I am reading, seeing, hearing and myself with my reactions, conditioning, and so on; a dialogue with him and me. Such a dialogue must inevitably bring about a fundamental change.

J. Krishnamurti's Intentions for the Centre, pg. 1
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For some time now a number of academics, principally Theodore Kneupper and Hillary Rodrigues, have been trying to set up the **Association for Krishnamurti Studies**. In their experimental website (krishnamurtistudies.net/test/) they describe the AKS as an independent organization whose primary intention is to bring Krishnamurti and his teachings more fully into the academic world so as to facilitate a wider recognition of their significance. More specifically, their stated aims are:

1. to establish a forum among all interested individuals for the serious exchange of views related to the philosopher and educator J. Krishnamurti.
2. to promote the in-depth scholarly study of J. Krishnamurti, particularly by those at institutions of higher education, based on accepted standards of scholarship within their respective fields of expertise.

3. based on those standards, the communication of findings to the broader academic community and society so as to encourage the careful examination and study of J. Krishnamurti within those wider contexts.

The incorporation of K's teachings in university studies has been a recurrent topic for many years now. For some it is the most logical thing. Given the significance of the teachings and their far-reaching implications, it would seem natural that such an extensive and insightful body of work should be rigorously studied and explored at the highest academic levels. Others, however, consider that K's teachings do not belong in the academic world at all, as the latter is fundamentally analytical and discursive, whereas the teachings concern themselves with direct perception at the most existential level of daily life. The middle way would suggest that both positions might have merit and could even be seen as naturally complementary.

In considering this complementarity, the question was raised as to the possible association of the AKS with the K Foundations. On the one hand the AKS felt it would be best not to be affiliated with any K institution in order to preserve its independence. The Foundations in turn indicated that the AKS would not come within their purview because such academic institutions concern themselves with interpretation, something K constantly warned against. This was perhaps best expressed by Radhika Jayakar, the rector of Rishi Valley:

Regarding the setting up of an Association for Krishnamurti Studies, I think it best not to locate such an Association in any of the K Foundations. Krishnaji was against interpretation and for academics interpretation is their *raison d'être*. Under the circumstances, conflict is inevitable.

A similar sentiment was echoed by educator and KFI trustee Kabir Jaithirtha:

Krishnaji said that our own perception into the teachings is essential for it not to become an authority. Perception is free of the personal and is not interpretation. Academics will argue and interpret and end up with differing positions. That has nothing to do with the transformation. Therefore,

it is better that such activities should happen in universities rather than in our centres.

K: Concerning the foundations and the teachings

The Foundations have no authority in the matter of the teachings. The truth lies in the teachings themselves. The Foundations will see to it that these teachings are kept whole, are not distorted, are not made corrupt. The Foundations have no authority to send out propagandists or interpreters of the teachings. As it has been necessary, I have often pointed out that I have no representatives who will carry on with these teachings in my name now or at any time in the future.

The Foundations will not give rise to any sectarian spirit in their activities. The Foundations will not create any kind or place of worship around the teachings or the person.

In this chaotic and disintegrating world what is of the greatest importance is how each person lives these teachings in his daily life. It is the responsibility of each human being to bring about his own transformation which does not depend on knowledge or time.

*“A Statement from Krishnamurti”, 10 July 1973
KFT Bulletin No. 19, Autumn 1973, pg. 2
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This raised the question of interpretation. K always said that when we talk about the teachings we should say how we see it, and not assume any authority. There is the story of someone asking K: “You say the truth. When I repeat it, is it still the truth?” And K replying: “Of course. But there is no truth in it.” For me it is always difficult to use my own words, because K said it all so perfectly. I can’t do it any better. And what he said doesn’t need interpretation.



Partnunsee, near Sulzhütte, St. Antonien, Switzerland

However, when it comes to discussing the teachings, charges of ‘interpretation’ are equivalent to ‘distortion,’ terms that can all-too readily and glibly be used to dismiss contrary points of view. Javier, who had been dealing with this question for some time, contributed the following reflections:

Interpretation is a form of translation and, as with any translation, the point is to preserve the identity of meaning across the difference of language. Interpretation is necessary when something is not understood in the language in which it has been expressed. Interpretation, in this sense, is a useful tool for understanding. A great deal of what K has said is not understood in the way it was expressed and it needs to be questioned and gone into in order to understand it. This kind of interpretation is inevitable both within the K institutions as well as in academia. To that extent the opposition between them is purely ‘academic’. So the problem is not interpretation but understanding.

Perhaps a deeper issue is the question of ‘intellectual understanding’ vs. ‘living the teachings’. On the one hand K said that intellectual understanding is no understanding at all and on the other he encouraged people to understand, even intellectually, what he was talking about. For him intellectual understanding might be necessary but was certainly insufficient. For those who dismiss intellectual understanding, the latter is neither sufficient nor necessary. As a result, those who dismiss intellectual understanding often find it rather difficult to give a cogent view of the teachings and base their certainty and adherence on some kind of faith in their inherent truth. At the opposite end of the spectrum we have the intellectuals who appear to grasp the teachings but lack any sense of their real significance because they either dismiss on principle or have never had any inkling of the deeper inner dimensions K was talking about. So maybe it’s not a question of either/or but of simple honesty.

Is the intellect of any use in this matter of the inward journey? I personally tend to think that it has its place. To begin with, it helps to clear unnecessary verbal confusion and aids in probing into the meaning of what K has said. A lot of what goes on in the K institutions concerns verbal clarifica-

tion and in this domain a quality of clear thinking may save a good deal of unnecessary debate over purely semantic differences. Properly employed, the intellect can be a useful tool in the service of intelligence. For example, a careful study of the teachings can provide an accurate sense of their nature, approach and intent. There is plenty of confusion concerning the teachings and such clarification might contribute significantly to their deeper existential exploration.

Human consciousness is currently out on a limb and the gathering weight of humanity is threatening it with imminent collapse. To grasp the whole of that consciousness is the issue and, as K accurately stated at the end of his life, neither those in the inner circles nor those outside have grasped the essence of the thing and become conduits for the devastating energy of goodness. That should be reason enough to make us all doubt our categories and attachments and begin to look.

Theodore Kneupper, who is one of the key professors behind the AKS initiative, wrote a very interesting response on **K's counsel not to interpret**. The following is an edited version of it:

The very nature of words is that they express meaning and almost every word has several meanings. The word 'interpret' has three somewhat different dictionary definitions and 'interpretation' has seven. Thus, it is not clear in which sense these words were meant in K's counsel not to interpret or give an interpretation of the Teachings.

Of course, one could simply say that one's own meaning of 'interpret' and 'interpretation' is the one that K intended. However, if one approaches the Teachings in this way, it leads to a kind of 'dogmatizing' or 'canonizing' of K's words, or more precisely of one's particular reading of his words, removing them from the dynamic relation that I think he saw they had with life and with *what is*, which can never be fully contained in words. That would serve as the foundation for a new sort of 'church', with its hierarchy of 'curia' and 'laity', K being the Author of the sacrosanct 'Teachings'. But

given the very fact that the meanings of words can be understood in many ways, that would also lead to the formation of various ‘sects’ based on differences of interpretation of those ‘sacred’ words, including rivalries among different ‘churches’, perhaps even condemnation of those who are not in agreement with one’s own interpretation and passionate battles over which has ‘the Truth’.

When we consider K’s own statements, which were put together by Hans and Radhika Herzberger in their working paper entitled “Krishnamurti on Interpretation”, on page 14 we find the following quotation: “*Interpretation is one thing and writing a book about the teaching is another ... you can write a book saying: ‘I think he is right in this way [and] wrong in this.’ Discuss, criticize. Go into it. That is not interpretation ... ‘Does he mean this, does he mean that?’ Discuss. That’s not interpretation + {That’s} legitimate, logical, sane + You don’t interpret. ‘This is what I think he says: this may be what he means ... I’m not sure ... I don’t completely understand’. That’s perfectly honest.*” (KFA 1 Mar 72)

I think this makes quite clear that K himself was fully aware that ‘interpretation’ can be understood in several ways so that, in academic terms, what he says about it calls for interpretation. Thus the claim that every kind of interpretation of his teachings is strictly ‘*verboden*’ would be something totally inconsistent with his stronger and, in my view, much clearer warning not to make him into an authority.

In the introduction to this same paper, the Herzbergers summed up their views concerning the case that K was against interpretation: “*While he was indeed highly critical of certain kinds of interpretation – those that are dogmatic, irresponsible or dishonest – there is little reason to suppose he would be against pliable, responsible and honest interpretations. He left clear room for genuine attempts to explore and critically examine his teaching, by saying they would not even count as ‘interpretations’ in his qualified sense ... For these reasons, we feel that on balance the evidence does not show him to have been against interpretation in any unqualified sense.*” (“K on Interpretation,” p. 4, Comment 7)

Thus, I think that the interpretation of K's statements as a 'proscription' would make him say the opposite of what he actually teaches. Adherence to such a proscription would also place him entirely outside consideration by academics like myself, or by anyone intent on understanding the truth, and would more problematically generate major criticism of the Teachings. I can see no other way to get to the bottom of it than by careful inquiry, not only into the meanings of his words but of one's own response to those meanings. The latter is what I think is most important and, from a more charitable perspective, what can be called 'interpretation' in the best sense of the word.

K: The teachings as a mirror

Sir, the speaker has written a great many books, unfortunately. He has talked a great deal throughout the world for the last sixty years. So they have invented a word called 'his teachings'. The 'teachings' are not something out there, in a book. What the teaching says is, 'Look at yourself, go into yourself, inquire into what there is, understand it, go beyond it', and so on. You are not to understand the teachings; you are to understand yourselves. Do not try to understand what the speaker says, but understand that what he says acts as a mirror in which you look at yourself. When you look at yourself very carefully, then the mirror will not be important; you will be able to throw it away.

On the Teachings, pg. 168

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Our friend Hillary Rodrigues made the following contribution to this conversation, adding a subtle distinction between **interpretation in theology and in religious studies**.

As for interpretation, I struggled with this issue when deciding to do my MA thesis on K, which eventually became the book *Insight and Religious Mind: An Analysis of Krishnamurti's Thought*. That was many decades ago, and I continue to reflect periodically on the matter. Since I am a religious studies scholar by profession, we are in the business of “interpreting” other people’s religious writing but, quite importantly, not making religious writings of our own. That is what the discipline of religious studies does, and this is why it is different from “theology,” where learned people interpret scriptures to “further” the religious tradition itself. Theologians are religious folk who are expanding the religion to which they belong. Religious studies scholars, whether they are religious or not, study with as much neutrality and objectivity as they can the original works and the work of theologians because these are part of the expanding “religious tradition.” The type of “interpretation” done by theologians is different from the type of interpretation done by religious studies scholars. My understanding is that K did not want to create a “religious tradition,” so he would be against “theologically-styled” interpretation.

Christian theologians, for instance, eventually constructed the notion of original sin, immaculate conception, included and excluded certain of Jesus’ gospels, created the priesthood, and so on. The academic study of Christianity can lead one to see how these ideas were not in the original sources, but which are nevertheless now intrinsic parts of Christian belief. Often people no longer read the Bible or the New Testament for themselves (despite Martin Luther’s success at translating the Bible into German for the benefit of the common folk 500 years ago), but get their understanding through a priest, or minister, or some such secondary source, such as theological writings. Theological interpretations gain traction and grow a religious “tradition,” because they often win support by appealing to human emotions, political pressures, institutional objectives, then-current cultural norms, and so on, and rarely develop as a result of a rational examination of the primary teachings. This is why the “scholar” and the “theologian” do not always see eye to eye.

Imagine a few centuries from now, if the “culture” of the K Foundations inadvertently or purposefully promoted the notions that K promoted celibacy or monogamy, vegetarianism, yoga, Sanskrit chanting, long brisk walks, dialogue, respect for his words, his unique persona, that nobody but K was psychologically transformed, and a litany of other “beliefs and practices” that continue to develop into the “K religious tradition.” Maybe one does not have to wait for a few centuries ...

To prevent people from distorting the teachings through interpretation, K took measures to ensure that subsequent generations would have direct access to his own words in the form of books, audio and video recordings. This is a marvelous resource for anyone who is seriously interested in learning from K through his own words.

When examining K’s teachings, I surmised that K was against the “theological” style of interpretation, which he felt might distort his message. But he was not against persons trying to understand what he was saying as clearly as possible. This is what the academic style of interpretation attempts to accomplish. If the interpretation is incorrect, or unjustified, others can clarify or rectify the error. So, like science, it has a built-in self-rectifying capacity. Theologically-styled interpretations are less open to such criticism and correction because they are typically rejected outright or endorsed and promoted by institutions around which the religious “tradition” and “dogma” is built. Consider the countless debates, and even blood spilled, over theological differences in “interpretation” by Catholics and Protestants about what Jesus meant by equating his body and blood with the bread and wine they were eating at their last meal together. As I understand K, he was not in favour of having disputing religious traditions and dogmas such as these develop around his persona and teachings.

There is, of course, the broader issue of the questionable value of producing or reading academic studies, even if they are based on rational and non-dogmatic inquiry. Put simply, they may be helpful to some, because they might, as Javier points out, help to clarify features of K’s writings that seem puzzling. The Hindu tradition identifies three main temperaments that

human beings have, which extend to their spiritual “journeys.” These are intellectual, action-oriented, and emotionally based. The academic study of K might thus appeal to intellectually oriented persons. For those with the “action-oriented” or “feeling-based” temperaments, such academic studies are often dry, overly “cerebral” stuff, and of little value.

On the issue of what K’s teachings were arguably about, I don’t think that the deep psychological transformation to which K pointed would necessarily be thwarted or assisted by reading academic studies, or anything else for that matter. Intellectual study and analysis through thought could actually be an obstacle because it may prevent us from seeing the very thing, i.e. thinking, that is the obstruction. However, it need not be, because some wise folk have pointed out how one can sometimes use a thorn to remove a thorn.

Every moment, regardless of what one is doing, presents us with “what is,” and thus life offers us perennial opportunities for discovery. It is our thinking, judging mind that partitions the world into good/bad, worthwhile/worthless, etc. So, yes, Javier’s thoughts on this are also discerning. After all, I do not think that K was pointing us to him or his teachings, interpreted correctly or not. He and his teachings are the proverbial finger pointing to the moon. Both academic writings and theological writings are overly concerned with the finger.

I feel that K was pointing us to our own lives, unfolding moment to moment, whether we are reading K or the newspaper. If we are upset when reading something that portrays K in a bad light, or his teachings incorrectly interpreted, or if we are gratified by words that praise him as a person or uplifted to read something that resonates with our own “interpretation,” it is an opportunity to observe how our sense of identity is being constructed, and how this process can separate us from the wholeness of existence.



View of the Eiger from Mürren, Switzerland

Professor Krishna contributed the following comments on **the dangers of interpretation**, subject that he covered extensively in his book *A Jewel on a Silver Platter*:

2 January 2018

My view about the dangers of interpretation are stated in my book *A Jewel on a Silver Platter*. I quote from pages 169–170:

“K often told us that we should neither accept nor reject what he says but investigate it in order to come upon the truth for ourselves. When we investigate his teaching, we can of course share our perceptions and thoughts with each other and he clearly advocated the value of dialogue. Now, if we just repeat his views then we can be accused of plagiarism and if we express what we understand from his words then we can be accused of interpretation. So, it would mean we just cannot speak about his teaching, which was obviously not his intention. This question was put to him by David Bohm and he gave a very clear answer. He said that so long as we are making it clear that what we are saying is how we understand what he says and do not claim to be an authority or assert that that is the truth he was speaking of, it is perfectly honest and therefore legitimate; but if we insist that we know what he meant without having perceived the truth for ourselves then it becomes interpretation and that is dishonest because we are attributing our meanings to him.

Now it is not that someone becomes an authority on K’s teachings by speaking about it and that it is a wrong thing to do. Rather it is important to realize that accepting something as truth on the authority of another, including K, has no value since truth is not an idea. Ideas can be shared and communicated through words but truth cannot be, since it lies at the level of perception. Only then does it transform consciousness and end illusion. That is why professors of philosophy are not nearer to the truth than other human beings. They are analysing, discussing words, definitions, ideas and arguments, not describing their own perceptions. That is why agreeing and disagreeing with a statement are both unintelligent responses to that statement, whoever may have made it. It does not change anything and certainly

does not alter our consciousness. So, what is an intelligent response? If we listen to the statement, neither agree with it nor disagree, but ask ourselves: what does it mean and is it true? Then, not answer that question quickly, since quick answers come from memory, which is conditioned and therefore subjective, but stay with the question and observe oneself and life and learn from observation, then it may be possible to perceive a deeper truth beyond the intellectual level. One must of course doubt that perception too, since one may be deceiving oneself into thinking that it is a deep perception and not a piece of knowledge. If one is honest, it is easy to notice the difference, because a deep perception will alter consciousness, and that is noticeable.

In my view, this is the “hard work” Krishnaji asks us to do. When he says it is not a matter of time I think it means time does not help us to come upon perception. One does not perceive truth gradually. Either one has perceived it or one hasn't. But there is not just one truth to be perceived, and as one keeps inquiring and observing, the more superficial prejudices (illusions) drop away but deeper ones may still persist. So one goes on living with a “learning mind”, wherever it takes you, and there is no such thing as a goal to be arrived at. Learning here means perceiving for oneself what is true and what is false. There is also no end to this state of learning. K was learning even on his deathbed!

In this field of inquiry, one is completely alone and authority has no meaning. The reason we can inquire together is because the ultimate truth is the same for everybody, just as much here as in science. Authority has meaning only in the field of knowledge, where there is also hierarchy. In the quest of truth there is no hierarchy. Truth comes into being only when a consciousness observes “what is” (the fact) without any distortion. To come upon it again one has to perceive it again and not remember it from one's previous investigations. Therefore, memory has no value in this quest and is an obstacle if one is not aware of this danger.

That is why K went into every question afresh, though he told me one day in November 1985, at the end of a dialogue with several people, “Sir, a

completely new generation and the same questions!?” These are perennial questions of human beings and each one has to discover the truth all over again.”

It is important to realize that even when we read K's books or hear his speeches, our mind also interprets the meaning of his words. So, interpretation is unavoidable. But why should we accept what our own mind tells us to be the truth? Is it also not conditioned and therefore not the truth? Truth is not an idea, neither ours nor someone else's. It lies at the level of direct perception, which is what K called insight. The rest are all opinions and opinions are not truths. If one is aware of this, one does not mistake an opinion for truth. Then interpretation ceases to create illusion.

Michael Mendizza, former KFA trustee, author and film maker, sent his own contribution to this dialogue explaining why the teachings inherently imply **no interpretation:**

The cognitive realm, generally what we call abstract, symbolic, verbal, intellect, is a very specific and narrow form of intelligence, to use that word loosely. I forget the estimated percentage, but what we call conscious awareness of this cognitive realm represents at best five to ten percent of one's total neural activity. The so-called teachings point to something the teachings are not and will never be. The word chair is not the chair. All cognitive, verbal, abstract activity remains in this small realm. This realm, being an abstraction, is always an interpretation or representation of something other. Krishnamurti, as well as Samdhong Rinpoche in *Always Awakening*, describes how direct perception of what is referred to as 'truth,' vast-immediate-perception is implicitly reduced, stepped down and converted into what the listener already knows – to be known. This conversion of the vast-direct into the narrow-already-known, to be known, is the essence of interpretation, as I understand Krishnamurti's use of that term. Once the vast-immediate-direct is converted into the verbal-known, it can morph endlessly as a reflection in a house of mirrors. The reflection is not and will never be what is being reflected. To miss this, and we all do, is to

remain stuck in the cognitive realm, believing the reflection is what is being reflected.

The teachings are simply a window to look through. Interpretation plays no part in this looking through. If one gets stuck examining the window, instead of looking through the window and having an insight that we are not the window, seeing directly who and what we actually are, classically “going beyond even the concept of beyond,” the point is missed completely, which was obvious to Krishnamurti, and thus no interpretation of the teachings. One either looks through the window the teachings are or we get stuck in the reflection, in what is already known, where everything is always morphing but never changing.

David Bohm had himself reflected extensively on this question of interpretation and wrote a short piece on the subject, which we include here as part of this general exchange.

On Interpretation

Krishnamurti has repeatedly warned against the danger of distortion of what he teaches through interpretation. And yet, with equal emphasis, he has urged that each person not only live in harmony with the substance of what he is pointing out, but also in this very action of living, be himself a teacher who points out the truth for all who will listen. Is there not a contradiction here? For, if one is living in this way, it is not enough merely to repeat Krishnamurti’s words, in order to be sure that one is not bringing in something of his own interpretation. Nor is it sufficient to disseminate what Krishnamurti says by publication of books, selling tapes, or by working to make it possible for him to give talks all over the world. For to disseminate means, literally, “to spread the seed.” If everyone does nothing but spread the seed, and no one allows the seed to grow in the action and relationship of living, then no fruit can ever come out of such a mode of activity. And in this regard, it is not enough for the essence of what is

pointed out in the teachings to penetrate the ordinary activities of daily life. In addition, as Krishnamurti had emphasized, each person has to be able to communicate with others concerning the substance of the teachings; and in so doing, he needs to put what he has to say in his own way. To do this is evidently a kind of interpretation.

If one now assumed that all interpretation of what Krishnamurti teaches was harmful, one would indeed be led into a contradiction. For it would then follow that only Krishnamurti was capable of teaching, while all others have to be restricted to passing on the message of his teachings, as accurately as possible. But this would reduce people to a largely mechanical function, which is, of course, quite contrary to the essential content of what Krishnamurti constantly indicates, i.e. that each person has to perceive everything deeply for himself, and to act freely and creatively from this insight, in every aspect of life.

One sees, of course, that there is no real contradiction here. For it is not interpretation as such that is harmful. Rather, what distorts is the kind of interpretation in which, unknowingly and without intending to, one slips in one's own conclusions, as if they were integral parts of the meaning of the teachings. So one needs sensitivity and intelligence, which make possible a perception of the difference between the two kinds of interpretation. The pointing out of the need for such sensitivity and intelligence, not only in this context but also quite generally, is indeed one of the key features of what Krishnamurti teaches. To suggest that no one other than Krishnamurti is capable of this sort of sensitivity and intelligence is to imply that what he says has no value at all. For what would be the use of Krishnamurti's continual pointing out of this need to people who were intrinsically incapable of the kind of response that he calls for?

As Krishnamurti himself has frequently emphasized, the content of what he says is not a particular and definite body of knowledge, which could belong to a specific person, either himself or somebody else. Rather, it is only a pointer, which indicates truth and so, can give rise to insight. This

insight is like a flame, which may spread from one human being to another, in such a way that the question of to whom the flame belongs has no meaning.

So the crucial point at issue is whether a given person is responding to the genuine flame of insight or to illusions arising from his or her own prejudices and conclusions. Of course, there will always be the danger of responding with the latter, which is a destructive kind of interpretation. But trying to avoid this danger by keeping away from interpretation altogether would be equally as destructive. An essential part of a creative response is, in fact, to be so attentive and aware that in the very act of communication on such questions, one continually sees the ever-changing line between communicating one's own insight in one's own words and imposing one's arbitrary opinions and conclusions. In this way, there will be freedom from the destructive kinds of interpretation, and this freedom will itself be an example of the deep meaning of what Krishnamurti is pointing out. (1976)

R. E. Mark Lee, *Knocking at the Open Door: My Years with J. Krishnamurti*, pp. 162–164

PUBLICATIONS

K: Reaching the source of all energy

JK: One night at Rishi Valley in India I woke up. A series of incidents had taken place; there had been meditation for some days. It was a quarter past twelve; I looked at the watch [Laughs]. And – I hesitate to say this, because it sounds extravagant and rather childish – the source of all energy had been reached. And that had an extraordinary effect on the brain, and also physically. Sorry to talk about myself, but you understand, literally any sense of ... I don't know how to put it ... any sense of the world and me, and that – you follow? – there was no division at all. Only this sense of tremendous source of energy.

DB: So the brain was in contact with this source of energy?

JK: Yes. Now, coming down to earth, and as I have been talking for sixty years, I would like another to reach this – no, not reach it. You understand what I am saying? Because all our problems – political, religious – all are resolved. Because it is pure energy from the very beginning of time. Now, how am I – please, not “I”, you understand – how is one not to reach, not to help, or push, but how is one to say, “This way leads to a complete sense of peace, of love”? I am sorry to use all these words. But suppose you have come to that point and your brain itself is throbbing with it. How would you help another? You understand? Help – not words. How would you help another to come to that? You understand what I am trying to say?

DB: Yes.

The Ending of Time, pg. 19

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As I indicated in the Publications section of last year's Newsletter, I've been quite enthusiastic about David Moody's book *An Uncommon Collaboration*, in which he explores the relationship between K and Bohm. I was particularly fascinated by David's four chapters on *The Ending of Time*, from which the above quote was taken. And I'm not alone in this. After reading David Moody's book, our old friend Hanns-Peter Trautvetter, a retired experimental physicist from Germany, sent us the following **grateful appreciation**.

17 January 2018

Dear Friedrich,

On Monday the book arrived and I can already say that it has had a great impact on me. I want to state right at the beginning that I'm the last person to judge the book because I never met either K or Bohm in person. For me, historical accounts are narratives flavoured by the ones who write them. I would prefer to look at the teachings without any comments. But it is difficult to avoid reading or hearing different views. And this is not the fault of my surroundings but my own for listening to all that. However, in the case of this book, I got many deeper insights into myself. For one thing, it is extremely well written and Moody has a wonderful way of preparing us for what's coming up next. In the end, we are left to make up our own minds as to whether K or Bohm tells us something of value or not. That is all that counts.

Being an experimental physicist I'm not qualified enough to assess Bohm's theoretical work. Nevertheless, he was very important for me in better understanding what K was telling us. But the deepest impact of K was that I always felt the truth of what he was saying because I had experienced it by myself before I read any of his words. That is why I'm thankful to Moody for the chapter "Revelation", where he describes that K himself did not know from what source he received the teachings. Please, with these words I'm not claiming that my little insights are comparable to K's; I'm only saying that every time I have a little understanding I don't know from where it comes. The explanation that the mind has to be empty is certainly a pre-

requisite for seeing clearly. To express what has been seen needs a language, be it English, German, French or Mathematics. K and Bohm struggled to develop a language combining content and form to create meaning. Moody has worked out this process masterfully in his book. So I'm very grateful to you for sending me the book and to Moody for having taken the trouble, and hopefully having had the joy, of writing it.

With my best regards,
Hanns-Peter

However, in his review of this book Javier had felt that K's religious or spiritual dimension was not being sufficiently acknowledged or given due prominence. David's reply to this review was the last item we published in the Newsletter. Subsequently, having received similar comments from other people, David felt the need to explain his position more clearly and sent us the following **open letter**:

13 February 2018

Dear Friedrich,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for kindly providing support and encouragement for my book, *An Uncommon Collaboration: David Bohm and J. Krishnamurti*. In particular, I appreciate that you have generously recommended and even sent the book to many individuals. One of the by-products of your generosity has been to prompt a variety of people to offer commentary, reflections, and criticism of the book. All of these comments and critiques, without exception, were interesting and revealing to me, and help me understand the audience for my work.

The responses I have received, both through your network and from other sources, have been largely positive, but a few criticisms have also been expressed, which are at least as important as the praise. In this letter, I



In the Grove at Brockwood Park, England

would like to address one of the criticisms, since it has been expressed by more than one individual and seems to represent something of a common thread or theme.

As I understand it, some readers of my book feel that it is somewhat unbalanced in its presentation of Krishnamurti's work, insofar as the book seems to emphasize the strictly secular and psychological side of the teachings, at the expense of including sufficient attention to the religious or spiritual elements. So, I would like to take this opportunity to address this issue more fully.

My book was designed and intended for an audience wider than the community of people already interested in and well-versed in Krishnamurti's work. Part of my task, therefore, was to describe or characterize the teachings to people not already familiar with them. For this purpose, as stated in my book, I considered "the teachings" per se to consist specifically of Krishnamurti's vast body of recorded statements delivered from a public platform.

In other words, for purposes of communicating his work to a wider audience, I did not include in the teachings per se things he said prior to his break with Theosophy; nor did I include his private diaries; nor did I include what some may consider the spiritual *implications* of his public statements. I limited my consideration to recorded, explicit statements delivered publicly subsequent to 1930.

It is my contention – as stated in my book, and again to you, here and now – that the teachings, so defined, consist almost exclusively of the detailed description of secular, psychological dynamics, that is, of the ordinary daily consciousness of normal individuals throughout the world. When I say "almost" exclusively, I am acknowledging that there is a small fraction of the teachings – perhaps one or two percent – that addresses issues beyond secular psychology, specifically when K refers to something unknown, unlimited, and sacred. But I contend in my book, and I contend now, that 98 percent of the teachings are confined to the detailed description of

ordinary, everyday consciousness, without reference to anything religious or spiritual – except to castigate the false and meaningless character of all forms of religious organization.

Now this is not to deny that a religious or spiritual element was important to Krishnamurti personally or to his work. Of course, it was vitally important. In my book, I include attention to this element in several ways: with a description of the 1922 event under the pepper tree; with a whole chapter devoted to the private diaries, in which the spiritual element is much more prominent; with sustained attention to “the ground” in the *Ending of Time* dialogues; and in various other ways.

But all of these elements are extraneous to the teachings per se, and so have little or no place in characterizing them. Indeed, I think that Krishnaji’s insistence on keeping his 1922 experience out of *Candles in the Sun* and out of public view tends to corroborate my impression that he deliberately avoided mention of anything beyond secular, psychological descriptions of consciousness in his public talks.

I hope this clarifies my point of view with regard to this matter. I really appreciate and welcome my critics who have brought this issue to my attention, and who have precipitated this opportunity to address this matter more fully. Perhaps you would like to share this letter with those critics and with others, or even to consider including it in the next issue of your Newsletter.

In any case, I thank you again most sincerely for your kind efforts on behalf of my book, and on behalf of Krishnamurti’s work more generally.

With warm regards and best wishes,
David

K: Religion encompasses the whole of life

To me, religion is something to which you give your whole heart and mind and body, everything that you have. It is not something to turn to as a hobby, or to take up when you are old with one foot in the grave because you have nothing else to do, but something that becomes devastatingly important, something intensely necessary as a whole way of living from the moment you wake up until the moment you go to sleep, so that every thought, every act, every movement of your feeling is observed, considered, weighed. To me, religion encompasses the whole of life. It is not reserved for the specialists, for the rich or the poor, for the elite or the intellectual. It is like bread, something that you must have.

Collected Works, Vol. XIII, pg. 288

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Since David suggested I share this letter with his critics, I sent it to Javier and asked him if he would reply. Initially he declined, arguing that the question as to whether to qualify K's teachings as religious or as 'secular psychology' might not be all that relevant, since the proof of the pudding is in the eating, not in verbal disputation over the label. On the other hand, labels are supposed to reflect accurately that which they represent and since he still had some strong reservations on the matter, I suggested he reconsider. To encourage him, I added that this is meant to be an amicable exchange of views. He said he'd think about it and quite recently sent us the following **response to Moody**:

25 June 2018

Dear Friedrich,

I'm sorry it has taken me so long to get back to you on this. I desisted from replying to David point by point because it felt like starting a polemic, which was never my intention. Determining what constitutes 'the teachings per se' or to what extent they are 'secular psychology' I'd rather leave to the discern-

ing reader. I thought, however, that the issue as to whether the teachings should be characterised as ‘secular’ or ‘religious’ might be worth addressing. So that is what I propose to do.

One thing that strikes me about the teachings is their inherent thematic progression from world to self to ‘other’. In his exposition K makes it very clear that the understanding of consciousness is the key to connecting the cosmic with the cultural, so there is no question about the central importance of the psychological in the teachings. My contention, however, is that in the context of the teachings the study of consciousness is the necessary foundation for the emergence of the religious mind, which is what accesses the spiritual dimension. K does not explicitly describe this other dimension in his public talks, or not much, because for him that is a state of being that cannot be described. Even so, in his diaries and other writings K gives us a glimpse of such states of non-duality, ecstasy, benediction and ‘otherness’. *The Ending of Time* is centred on an exploration of this other dimension beyond the time-bound sphere of self. This very thematic progression clearly indicates that the religious or spiritual elements are central to the teachings, so not at all extraneous or foreign to them.

I can see a couple of possible reasons for this confusion. One is K’s via negativa. His approach to such things as love, truth, beauty, religion and the sacred is by way of negating what they are not. Statements such as “Beauty is when the self is not” are characteristic. K does not define beauty but affirms its existence in the absence of the self. The key to beauty is the mental state that can actually see it. That’s why the understanding of consciousness is of the essence, for these qualities emerge when the self is not. This is so fundamental that, when asked to summarise his teaching, he said: “What is the teaching? Right? I’ll say it in a few words, and that is: *Where you are, the other is not.*” (*Krishnamurti at Rajghat, pg. 116*) This negative approach is easily mistaken for a denial of the spiritual, whereas it is the key to its very existence for us. This ‘other’ is the core concern of the teachings, so they are not in the least secular.

A more specific reason may be that ‘religion’ appears to have lost its meaning ever since over a century ago Nietzsche found God dead at the hands

of science. K's denial of what he called 'organised religion' would appear to support the secular stance. This might then be translated as the teachings being secular too. What does not seem to be understood is that by denying what religion is not, K is only affirming its true nature. Labelling the teachings as 'secular' might help to reach a secular audience but, in my view, doing so would be a misrepresentation.

What ultimately matters, however, is not the label but the living, and in that, I dare say, the 'religious' and the 'secular' are very much in the same boat.

Un fuerte abrazo,
Javier

Are the teachings religious or secular? Feeling that this question outstanding between Javier and David Moody was not likely to go away, I asked Dr. Krishna to address it and this was his knowledgeable and clarifying response.

18 July 2018

Dear Friedrich,

Whether Krishnaji's teachings are religious or secular, depends on what meaning we give to the word 'religious'. The whole world usually considers religion to be belief in a concept of God, rituals, a method of worship and a moral code to be practiced. Krishnaji regards all these as illusory, so with this definition his teachings would be classified as secular.

But he regarded religion to be a quest for truth, the discernment of what is true and what is false at such depth that it leads to the ending of the false. This, according to him, ends the disorder in consciousness, bringing in virtue which is order. This "flowering in goodness" is the very essence of all religion. To him virtue was a state of being, a state of consciousness and not merely the decision to practice a moral code. Indeed, he says you cannot practice non-violence so long as there is violence in your conscious-

ness. Ending of violence is only possible when the causes of violence within our consciousness are eliminated. That is then the religious quest and it is synonymous with the quest for truth.

This definition of religion as the quest for truth is not a new one in the East, but it did not exist in Christianity. In the West, Socrates pointed out long ago that there is only one virtue and that is order in consciousness. The Theosophists borrowed their motto from Hinduism and Buddhism which said, “Truth is the highest religion” or “There is no religion higher than Truth”. Krishnaji’s teachings accept this definition and are thus the very essence of all religion.

In the East, the concept of secularism is very different from that in the West. In the East it is equal respect for all religions, whereas it is being without any religion in the West; which means one also throws out the quest for virtue. The antagonism between science and religion arises from the western definition of religion as belief. Science does not accept belief. But the eastern definition of religion as the quest for truth does not contradict science and is complementary to it. I explain all this in great detail in a chapter of my book entitled *Science and Spirituality*. I also spoke on this at a conference of psychologists in England and they have put the talk on YouTube. You can see it by clicking on this link: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/ZLee3imTcr0>.

With best wishes.

Affectionately,
Krishna

The China Study, by T. Colin Campbell and his son Thomas M. Campbell II, is an amazing book on nutrition and I cannot recommend it enough. I believe it should be available to everybody who is involved with food in our Schools and Study Centres. I’m sending you an extract from the introduction to the latest revised and expanded edition. Here is where you can get the book: <http://www.benbellavegan.com/book/the-china-study/>.

Given the barrage of information, are you confident that you know what you should be doing to improve your health?

Should you buy food that is labelled organic, to avoid pesticide exposure? Are environmental chemicals a primary cause of cancer? Or is your health “predetermined” by the genes you inherited when you were born? Do carbohydrates really make you fat? Should you be more concerned about the total amount you eat, or just saturated and trans-fats? What vitamins, if any, should you be taking? Do you buy foods that are fortified with extra fibre? Should you eat fish, and, if so, how often? Will eating soy food prevent heart disease?

My guess is that you’re not really sure of the answers to these questions. If this is the case, then you aren’t alone. Even though information and opinions are plentiful, very few people truly know what they should be doing to improve their health.

This isn’t because the research hasn’t been done. It has. We know an enormous amount about the links between nutrition and health. But the real science has been buried beneath a clutter of irrelevant or even harmful information – junk science, fad diets and food industry propaganda.

(...)

After a long career in research, policy-making, and lecturing to a wide variety of public and professional audiences, I now understand why Americans are so confused. As a tax-payer, who foots the bill for research and health policy in America, you deserve to know that many of the common notions you have been told about food, health, and disease, are wrong:

Synthetic chemicals in the environment and in your food, as problematic as they may be, are not the main cause of cancer.

The genes that you inherit from your parents are not the most important factors in determining whether you fall prey to any of the ten leading causes of death.

The hope that genetic research will eventually lead to drug cures for diseases ignores more powerful solutions that can be employed today.

Obsessively controlling your intake of any one nutrition, such as carbohydrates, fat, cholesterol, or Omega-3 fats, will not result in long term health.

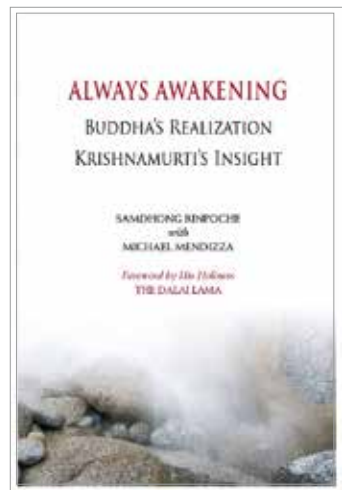
Vitamins and nutrient supplements do not give you long term protection against disease.

Drugs and surgery don't cure the diseases that kill most Americans.

Your doctor probably does not know what you need to do to be the healthiest you can be.

Michael Mendizza has just published a new book, **Always Awakening: Buddha's Realization, Krishnamurti's Insight** (Mendizza & Associates, Solvang: 2017), co-authored with Samdhong Rinpoche, close associate of the Dalai Lama, former principal of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, former Prime Minister of the Tibetan government in exile, and KFI trustee. This book essentially consists of a series of interviews between them conducted in the US, UK and India between 2008 and 2014. It is also richly illustrated with photographs and contains a wealth of quotes from K and Buddhist sources. I have not managed to read it through as yet so I cannot comment on it, but others have been rather enthusiastic in their reviews. Here are a couple of them.

Always Awakening is a religious “experience” more than reading a religious text, an experience that invites a leisurely but rigorous journey toward a deeper understanding of both Buddhism and Krishnamurti's insight. Turning the pages one feels as if they have been invited to silently participate in a most



intimate and wise conversation. *Always Awakening* is not a book to be read quickly, but rather savoured slowly and thoughtfully. With luck, as described in the introduction, you will catch wind of what Krishnamurti called “the perfume of the teachings” or catch a glimpse of your own “Buddha nature” along the way.

Meredy Benson Rice (former Head of Oak Grove School)

I find this book to be one of the most important I’ve ever read. Understanding Krishnamurti more fully, directly is one of the gifts. And the same regarding Buddhism. I trust that a good publisher will soon make this book available everywhere.

James Paul (Symphony conductor and former KFA trustee)

While the title might hint at a comparative study, this does not seem to be the intent. Samdhong Rinpoche makes this quite explicit in his prefatory statement to the book:

Comparative study is valid only in fields like physical science or history. There is no comparative study in the spiritual field. Therefore we cannot compare the Buddha’s teachings and Krishnamurti’s teachings. We have to be very clear about this. Having said that, we are conditioned or trained in Buddhist philosophy, logic, metaphysics, and so forth. When we come to Krishnamurti, his message resonates with a person who has a Buddhist background. In a similar way, a person familiar with Krishnamurti’s insights will find that his message complements Buddhist philosophy. Our efforts must be in this direction, not in finding similarities and dissimilarities. Not comparing. Not finding agreements and disagreements. Using Buddhist language, agreements and disagreements are all in the realm of relative truth, and there is no end. But the modern westerner has been trained in comparative study. That is a good academic exercise but it does not help in understanding Krishnamurti or in understanding Buddha.



Between Rougemont and Saanen, Switzerland

In his preface, Lee Nichol, former Oak Grove teacher and editor of Bohm's *On Dialogue*, *On Creativity* and *The Essential David Bohm*, all published by Routledge, suggested that these friendly and probing exchanges are very much in line with the nature of dialogue, something that both Nichol and Mendizza learned to value and appreciate in their direct interactions with David Bohm.

Underlying all of its remarkable content, *Always Awakening* demonstrates a true spirit of dialogue. Very likely, some of Mendizza's penchant for such dialogue was fostered by his relationship with David Bohm. For many of those who inhabited the world of Krishnamurti in the 1970s and '80s, meeting and working with Bohm was an unanticipated opportunity for deepening inquiry and learning new aspects of dialogue. This was a remarkably rich and creative period, between Bohm and Krishnamurti, and between each of these men and the constellation of people who worked around and with them. A careful reading of *Always Awakening* indicates that Mendizza has "done his homework" from that time, and is contributing to the ongoing flowering of dialogue itself.

Recently two new books related to K's biography were self-published by Scott H. Forbes. One is Mary Zimbalist's unfinished memoir *In the Presence of Krishnamurti* (SHF Publications 2018) and the second is *Krishnamurti: Preparing to Leave* (SHF Publications 2018), which is Scott's detailed record of the last six months of K's life.



Mary Zimbalist was Jiddu Krishnamurti's assistant, traveling companion, hostess, and the person closest to him in the last twenty years of his life. Krishnamurti asked her to write about what it was like to be with him. From his death in 1986 until her own in 2008, she worked diligently and continuously at putting together an account of his life with him using the detailed notes in her daily dairies as her source. She

never completed it, but this beautifully written text is a fitting testimony to the life of a remarkable man and to their unique relationship. Although unfinished, it conveys the uniqueness of K the man and the wholeness of his life and teachings.

The author spent six to eight hours a day with Krishnamurti from the end of May 1985 until Krishnamurti's death in February 1986. This was a time of such seismic changes in the Krishnamurti organizations in America, England, Switzerland, and India, that the author, who was thirty-seven years old at the time, kept detailed notes. At the request of Krishnamurti's official biographer, Mary Lutyens, the author assembled his notes and lent them to her for the final volume of her biography of Krishnamurti. She encouraged the author to publish his assemblage, and advised him "not to change a word". Thirty-one years later, the author set out to do that. However, over the intervening decades, the author found he had additional things to write regarding this extraordinary time in his life, and he does so with footnotes and appendices to preserve the original material. Consequently, this book uniquely shows the last nine months of Krishnamurti's life through the eyes of Scott H. Forbes at both thirty-seven and sixty-eight years of age.



READERS' COMMENTS:

Here is Usha Mukunda's enthusiastic, encouraging comment regarding last year's Newsletter. She finds that it flows together as **a continuous narrative** with a 'gentle rhythm', qualities that are probably not only my own but also due to Javier's editing, which he did for the first time last year.

Dear Friedrich,

Thank you so very much for the pre-Christmas package of 'goodies'! I could not tear myself away from the Newsletter and was deaf and blind to all else around me.

One of the things that particularly struck me is that it is a continuous flowing narration studded with gems from K and with letters from friends in the K world. I think it would never have had the same gentle rhythm if you had broken it up into chapters. After all there are no divisions or breaks in what you have shared.

The other thing which was very moving to me as I too grow older is to read about your daily and yearly routine, Dr Krishna's reflections as well as Michael Krohnen's.

Another thought that struck me is the ease with which you write about K and your interactions as well as your reflections on K's teachings. It is so accessible!

Thank you again for making me feel connected in a literal sense, which goes along with this deep connection I feel inwardly with the K dimension. With warm regards and wishing you will continue with your vibrant days for all time!

November 2017

Usha

Gini Ahadeff, a writer in New York who is very enthusiastic about *The Beauty of the Mountain*, the Newsletter and other writings, sent us her appreciation

Dear Friedrich,

At last, your new calendar came yesterday! I was starting to worry and on the brink of writing to you to find out where it might be or how to obtain one. I look at it every single day as it hangs in the kitchen and, for want of a better expression, it just makes me happy.

I have also been reading your Newsletter. All in all, the package that arrived seemed to have been borne in on **a cloud of optimism**, bringing with it a whiff of the universe of ideas that we love and keep us alive. Thank you!

And warmest best wishes for Christmas and the new year, to you and your family,

December 2017

Gini

Stephen Smith sent us a note expressing his **regret at the demise of The Link**, our previous publication, and thanking us for doing what we can to publish articles and keep the wider network alive.

Dear Friedrich,

Many thanks for your words of appreciation. Since the demise of *The Link*, there is no immediate forum where articles around the teachings can be published. I continue to feel that this was a great loss to the wider field of “K studies” and that publishing online is no substitute (I doubt if I am alone in this). It left a gap that nothing else has filled. This said, many thanks for your efforts.

December 2017,

Liebste Gruesse aus Indien,

Dein Steve

And here is a letter from our friend Vinay Dabholkar, from India. His letter reflects the central intention of our publications, which is **to link the world-wide network of friends.**

Dear Friedrich,

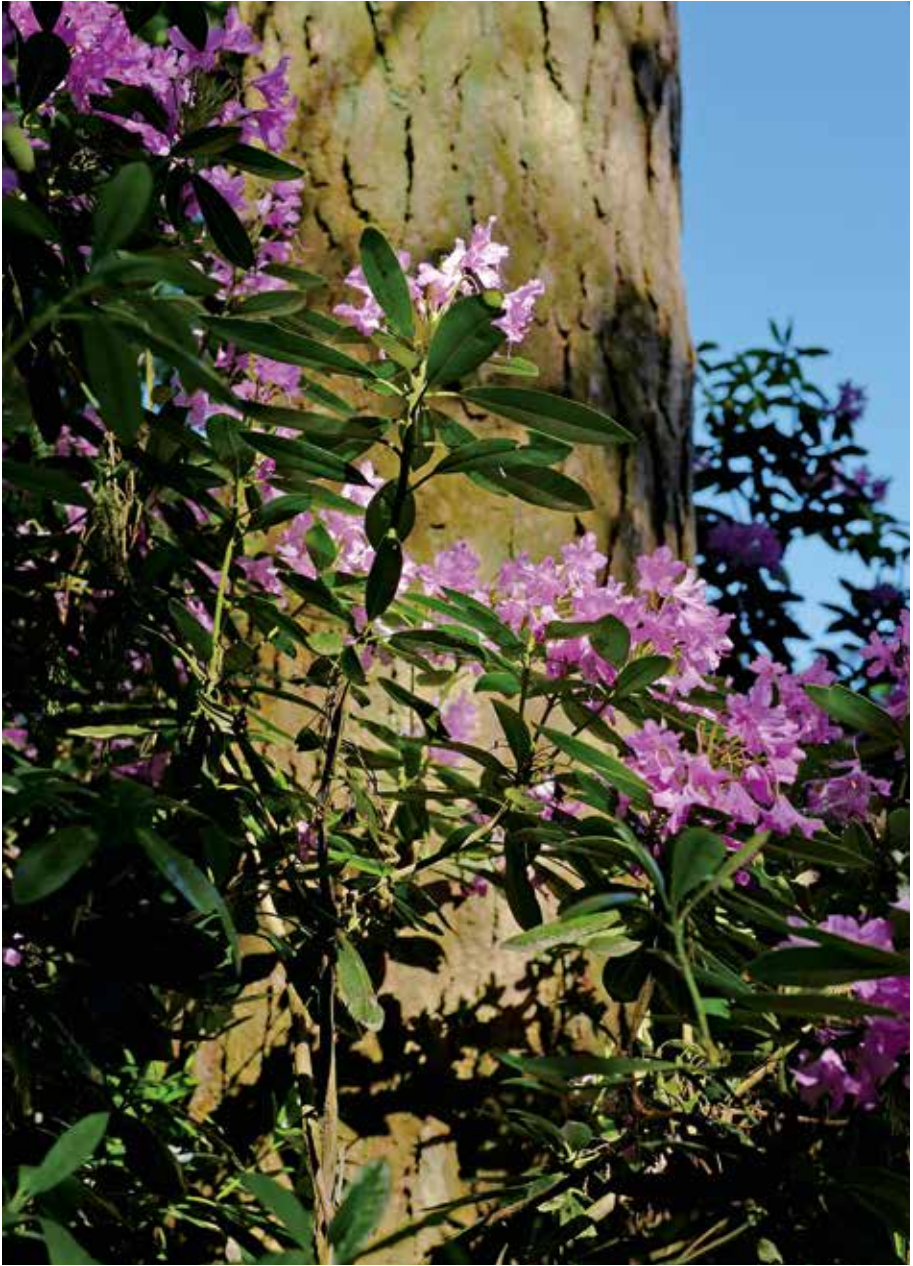
It was a delight to receive the 2017 Newsletter, calendar etc. I am going to use the calendar in my home office. Wonderful pictures.

Read the Newsletter. It was nice to read about Gerard, whom I met in Mürren earlier this year. The week after the Mürren gathering, he was to perform in the play *The Lesson* in Paris for a week or two. Amazing energy! He was planning on visiting India this year as well, but he wasn't at the annual gathering in Sahyadri last weekend. So perhaps he hasn't visited yet. However, he has referred me to a few plays where the illusion of time is depicted and I am pursuing those.

It was good to read Stephen Smith's review of *An Uncommon Collaboration*. Apparently his keynote speech was one of the highlights at the annual gathering in Sahyadri. I didn't attend it but my wife and my parents did. Steve has distributed a copy of his talk, so I will get to read it.

Also read Javier's review and David Moody's response. That has increased the curiosity about the book further. I am sure I will read it in the next few months. I agree with David, though, that the view of a journey-to-a-goal is misleading. Spiritual literature in India is full of this jargon. And people confidently argue about which state their favourite guru is or was at. How pointless!

It was also nice to read P. Krishna's letter. I am currently translating chapter 3 of his book *A Dialogue Between Krishnamurti and Three Scientists* into Marathi – the only other language I have some familiarity with. I find this dialogue fascinating because I have not come across any other place where K had to face the argument that there is worthwhile progress in the field of fragmentary perception for a whole two hours. In fact, there are places where it is not a dialogue in the true sense, as between K & Bohm. K responds with phrases like “Go jump” and “What is the matter with this man?” Of



Picture-Text

course, my reading of K is limited. Maybe there are other dialogues of a similar nature.

Anyway, thanks again. I checked your photo website. Looks great!

November 2017, Regards,
Vinay

K: A marvellous moment of light

It was a marvellous moment of light, clear and incredibly rich. Far away there was the sound of a bugle and a motorcycle roared, but the blue sky remained and there were a thousand shadows. There is no space in light, no journey to be taken, nothing to be fulfilled and the pain of frustration; there was no death in that clear light nor time to gain; it was a marvellous moment and it is always there, not a thing to be remembered, to be pursued. It is there but you have to turn the corner, just beyond your property, your family, your work and responsibility. You have to be alone without loneliness.

Krishnamurti's Notebook, pg. 338

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Kabir Jaithirtha (1949–2018)

Ceaseless exploration

Kabir Jaithirtha passed away on September 18th at the age of 69. His wife Viju, children Anuruddha and Karuna, family, friends, and the many who were touched in some significant way in their contact with him, all feel the grief of his loss and recall his life in respectful and grateful memory.

In a magazine interview, Kabir recollected that as a young boy he was a bit of a loner. What was done at school did not make sense to him. “I would read, dream and think a lot.” He was 17 or 18 when he discovered K’s writings. Soon after his degree at IIM, Calcutta, he saw a post about a K-school opening in Bangalore. But since the school would not start for a few years, he went to work for an NGO in Delhi. While in Delhi he read that K was in the city. In Kabir’s words, “I was on fire to meet him and found out where he was staying. I was nervous to go alone and took a friend along. I had thought it would be a 10-minute meeting but Krishnamurti talked with us for an hour! During that meeting, and others later, I was shivering.” It took a few years before the shivering stopped!

In 1978 two momentous things happened in his life: he married Viju and joined The Valley School. There was no Principal and all decisions were taken by a small committee after a thorough discussion among the entire teaching staff. In 1982 Kabir became a Trustee of KFI and remained so until the end. The Valley School was small and the young teachers set out to make it radical in many ways. In 1990 KFI brought in sweeping changes that were not palatable to some in the group. As a result, Kabir, Viju, and a few others left to start a new school and Centre For Learning was born.

CFL had many of the ideas and principles that The Valley School had begun with. There was no hierarchy and the small group of teachers took all the decisions. Here Kabir came into his own and many creative ideas came out of the lively and sometimes heated dialogues. Kabir's impatience and frustrated anger were at times too much for the others to take, but he was quick to face the impasse and to talk it through with the others. This ability to move on past hurts and disappointments was best illustrated when he tried to bring CFL into the KFI fold. The rest of the group was strongly against it and he would gracefully relent when they turned down his repeated attempts.

Kabir went on to take up residence at The Valley School. There he ran a Post School programme which had been flourishing at CFL. But he had the strong urge to start a new school incorporating all the things that he had missed in the two previous ones. Thus Shibumi came into being. One big difference was that Shibumi emerged out of intense weekly dialogues. Out of this 'trial by fire' the group emerged that joined him and Viju in the endeavour. Over the years, some things seemed to have distilled for Kabir. One was that parents had to be active partners not just in their children's education but in the process of self-enquiry. He also felt that new teachers must understand and be completely one with the school's intent. For him the key was "to know where one is centred to begin with: in the development of knowledge/skills or in the awakening of a reflective mind."

Kabir had mellowed. The angry young man had morphed into a man who could see our human limitations and was patient and compassionate in dialogue. He was still uncompromising. He would still say, "That is the wrong question!" But this was tempered with affection and understanding and he would rephrase the question to restore the sense of shared enquiry. His way of using K also changed. Now he would often say: "In dialogue, we use K as a starting point. We are enquiring with K as a part of our group. Not as an authority." He had seen that many people were put off by the sense of authority around K or even Kabir himself. He would repeatedly ask, "Can the human brain transform itself through enquiry and dialogue?" For him this transformation was our highest human responsibility and the core intent of holistic education.

While Shibumi was still burgeoning, KFI reached out to him: the Rajghat Besant School in Varanasi needed a Principal. Kabir's commitment to K and the schools was unwavering. This stay in Rajghat was one of the happiest times for him, Viju and Karuna. The school welcomed him with love and he reciprocated ten-fold. Rajghat came alive with daily teacher dialogues and older students revelling in the light-hearted yet serious discussions which they remember to this day. At the end of this three-year stint, there was great reluctance to let him go. But back he came to Shibumi to face the challenge of finding the right teachers, the right parents, and meeting the needs of space and money. This helped Shibumi to grow into a remarkable place with a committed core of teachers.

While at Shibumi, Kabir's feeling that time was ticking and that he had not given himself wholly to self-enquiry, began to possess his every waking moment. So he went on a solitary retreat. He spent almost a year and a half at Kausani, in the Himalayas, where he was later joined by a few close friends. This was a watershed moment because it became clear that it was imperative to give oneself wholly to the teachings if there was to be any depth to the enquiry. Back in Bangalore, Kabir infused fresh energy into the group and there was a new urgency to the Shibumi dialogues.

In May this year, Kabir had a serious setback in his health. After long hospital stays and two major surgeries, all borne with uncomplaining patience and humility, he seemed to be on his way to recovery. He was happy to come home and be in the bosom of his family. But this was not to last. On the morning of September 18th, he suffered a massive cardiac arrest and was gone in minutes.

For Kabir, the exploration of the self was the whole of his life. In his ceaseless dialogues he had the uncanny ability to bring out a new insightful understanding of K's teachings and he tried in all kinds of ways to light this same spark in others. He was ceaselessly concerned with the implementation of this passionate engagement with the teachings in the field of education, to bring about the quality of wholeness and freedom that K had intended as the natural flowering of inner transformation. His founding of CFL and Shibumi are a

living testimony to his deep commitment to implementing K's vision of holistic education. Although we grieve his passing, we also gratefully celebrate his unstinting and enduring contribution to this universal and compassionate endeavour.



Friedrich at the Brockwood Study Centre, 2018

© Jill Furmanovsky (who specialises in documenting rock musicians)

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