



Nordic Workers' Workshop

15.-17.7.2005 at Kreivilä, Finland

1(11)

Nordic countries in theosophical co-operation

Subject: Theosophical work

Conducted by the President Mrs Radha Burnier

For the representatives from the Theosophical Society in Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Estonia. Denmark not present.

Time: 15.-17.7.2005

Place: Kreivilä, Summer-estate of the Finnish Section, Finland

Participants:	Radha Burnier	The President	Director of the workshop
	John (Jonni) Holmström	Finland	Workshop facilitator
	Marja Artamaa	Finland	Workshop secretary
	Kalevi Dunder	Finland	General Secretary
	Mirva Jaatinen	Finland	
	Sampsa Kuukasjärvi	Finland	
	Juha Poimio	Finland	
	Sauli Siekkinen	Finland	
	Heli Veivo	Finland	
	Pertti Spets	Sweden	General Secretary
	Monica Ostelius	Sweden	
	Göran Söderqvist	Sweden	
	Ing-Britt Wiklund	Sweden	
	Gisli Jonsson	Island	General Secretary
	Halldor Haraldsson	Island	
	Agnes Gåsemyr	Norway	Regional Representative
	Kata Skiljo	Norway	
	Tiiu Strauss	Estonia	Chairman of the Lodge
	Helga Timmerman	Estonia	
	Olavi Lahtinen	Finland	Listener
	Eero Lehtola	Finland	Listener
	Pertti Loiri	Finland	Listener

Target:

To find means and co-operation to support the theosophical work in the Northern area of Europe.

Purpose:

The purpose of the workshop was to find out what we can do to dynamise the theosophical work in the Nordic area and how to help in reactivating areas which are totally unorganised, inactive or have for a long time been in a static state.

The method:

With a specific workshop-method led by John (Jonni) Holmström, the needs, ideas, views, necessities, proposals and task-lists were worked out in several discussions with the whole group and in smaller groups. It was important to have a basis of sharing and sincere considering of theosophical aspects, and also an open mind. The workshop also served in getting to know brothers of the neighbouring countries in deeper level, to form a network for co-operation.



Nordic Workers' Workshop

15.-17.7.2005 at Kreivilä, Finland

2(11)



Nordic workshop participants

Front from left: Eero Lehtola (Finland), Halldor Haraldsson (Iceland), Sampsa Kuukasjärvi (Finland), Pertti Spets General-Secretary for Sweden, Kata Skiljo (Norway), John Holmström workshop leader (Finland), Radha Burnier the President, Kalevi Dunder General-Secretary of Finland, Sauli Siekkinen (Finland), Marja Artamaa (Finland).
Back from left: Gisli Jonsson General-Secretary of Iceland, Agnes Gåsemeyr Regional Representative for Norway, Göran Söderqvist (Sweden), Tiiu Strauss (Estonia), Monica Ostelius (Sweden), Ing-Britt Wiklund (Sweden), Heli Veivo (Finland), Helga Timmermann (Estonia), Olavi Lahtinen (Finland), Juha Poimio (Finland), Mirva Jaatinen (Finland).

Contents

1. Orientation by Radha Burnier
2. Situation in the countries
3. Why are you in the work?
4. Needs behind the work
5. Most important areas and tasks
6. What to do – finding out detailed tasks
7. How to help the areas – what to do together – decisions
8. Meditate on brotherhood
9. There is work and life to live together



Nordic Workers' Workshop

15.-17.7.2005 at Kreivilä, Finland

3(11)

15.8.2005 Friday evening

1. Orientation by Radha Burnier

There is an atmosphere of violence in the world, which shows that brotherhood is needed. People have their own problems and difficulties, which make them not to be active. People seem not to have time and energy to study. We should think sincerely what we do for the new millenium.

We need to be conscious of the different perspectives of people. There are educated people, young people, different temperaments, interests and backgrounds. We must not reject anybody by prejudice. We should think what to do to appeal to different people and how to distribute theosophy. Not in theoretical terms.

HPB has said that in Unity alone is strength. What can we do together and also individually. If we take responsibility in our own area, it will bring new life in our Society. Our work is to break new grounds for spreading ideas. There were underlying questions with which to orientate to the workshop:

- what to do to appeal to different people
- how to distribute theosophy
- what are the needs
- what is lacking and how to fill that lack
- how stronger can help the weaker places
- and finally what can we do together and also individually.

16.8.2005 Saturday morning

2. Situation in the countries

To get the idea what the situation is in each country, the representatives told shortly the main work being done and problems. A short list is in at the end of this report. Sections send reports each year to the European Federation of the TS (EFTS) and the General-Secretaries receive the summaries through the EFTS Chairman with Newsletter.

The main situation facing this workshop was: In Sweden the work lay in the shoulders of the few enthusiastic members, but new members are not attending. Iceland is very active and alive. In Finland the situation is good, but it has been similar for a long time. The work in Estonia is quite alive although small in membership, but it should be stronger by itself. In Norway and Denmark there are some individual members, but only some or no activity.

3. Why are you in the work?

Theosophical enthusiasm depends on each individual. There are various reasons and backgrounds which have led to become a member. The participants told their own relation to the theosophical work and what has raised the interest. They were: need to dive deeper to the aspects of life, open minded, many questions to find answer together, crisis, to learn something of the unseen, that there is science in spiritual, born to a theosophical family, library, no gurus or authority, to learn how the mind works, radio program, catholic view was not enough, brotherhood. When the soul is ready theosophy comes.

Theosophy is like an ocean. Do we have tendency to ignore different levels of understanding? Simple, mature and more intellectual teachings are needed. In the objects of the TS we have in a way 3 doors of which the third object, powers latent in man, is less handled in public.



Nordic Workers' Workshop

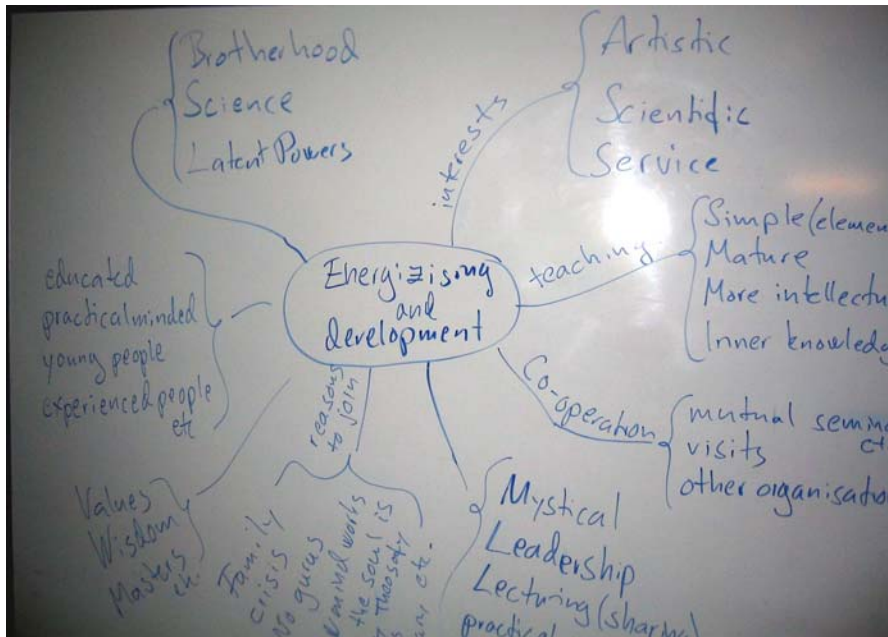
15.-17.7.2005 at Kreivilä, Finland

4(11)

16.8.2005 Saturday afternoon

4. Needs behind the work

From the discussions of the morning session Jonni and Marja gathered the perspectives and needs which are behind the work, or which needs to be kept in mind when planning the work. The following aspects came up (they are not in preference order):



- 1) different interests of people (artistic, scientific, service); some are interested in arts, poems, etc. to find deeper aspect to life through those; some increase understanding through science and theories
- 2) levels of teaching (elementary, mature, intellectual, inner knowledge); some need basic knowledge of theosophy to start with; some want to go on to deeper study in specified matters; some need spiritual inner approach; some are happy with self study
- 3) different emphasize to the objects (brotherhood, science, latent powers); there are needs for practicing brotherhood and to concentrate to increase that; some concentrate to scientific subjects and get meaningfulness through that; some want to learn more about the human being and laws of nature
- 4) several approaches to work (mystical, leadership, lecturing, practical work); some are good leaders and a society needs those who want to organise and give their work for people; some are talented in lecturing and so revealing knowledge and intuition to others; some give their work through service in many ways
- 5) different individual backgrounds and reasons to join the TS (family, crisis, freedom of thought, to learn how the mind works, library, when the soul is ready theosophy comes); all are different, what appeals to one is much based on the background through which he or she has found theosophy; respect for all walks of life
- 6) life status (young, experienced, educated, practical minded); how to take into consideration what might attract young and what experienced
- 7) different temperaments (temperament, seven rays); to respect and give all skills a possibility
- 8) co-operation needs (mutual seminars, visiting lecturers, visits, contacts to other organisations); to see how theosophy can be shared
- 9) the underlying attitude (values, wisdom, Masters); there are many values which might depend on nation or geography; wisdom tradition has own aspects; some may view life on the basis of believe in Masters.



Nordic Workers' Workshop

15.-17.7.2005 at Kreivilä, Finland

5(11)

5. Most important areas and tasks

Keeping the various needs in mind the workshop continued to discuss with pairs. They were asked to write down what they think are the most important tasks to be done. 4-5 concrete suggestions. After this the pairs were combined to five groups, which were asked to discuss the matter together and to formulate five most important tasks on paper. These were placed on the wall. There came 22 tasks. Together with all participants the groups shared their points of views, why they saw their tasks to be important. Then from all the suggestions on the board, each one individually thought which he or she finds most important and marked those on the paper (not more than 2 suggestions of own group was allowed).

To make sense of the whole picture, the tasks were then grouped with similar ones. Thus was found seven main categories of improvement, which were seen to be the most important at present. Jonni told that it is almost a rule that there turn out to become 7 (or 9) categories, although this is not tried consciously.

The categories or areas became to be as follows (in brackets are the points given by participants):

- 1) activation: interesting lectures and planning activities together (total 24)
 - waking up resting lodges and members (8)
 - activate participants through projects (8)
 - every country/city to be visited by many lecturers (7)
 - repeated lecturing (1)
 - lecturing program to new areas (lecturer to site1, site2 etc) (1)
- 2) members: to pay attention to attitudes and how members may contribute (total 19)
 - how to reach people – communication skills (8)
 - take care of new and old members (7)
 - mentor for new members (4)
 - party groups for young people
- 3) communication: to improve communication means and skills (total 13)
 - internet – to introduce the TS (11)
 - common Nordic (or European) website in English (2)
- 4) publicity: right channels and good translations (total 11)
 - co-operation with public libraries, University libraries and bookshops (6)
 - modernize books (5)
- 5) co-operation: between countries and lodges (total 7)
 - 2007 follow-up in connection with the Congress (4)
 - Nordic workshops annually (3)
- 6) brotherhood: the aspect of sharing (total 5)
 - visits between lodges (5)
 - co-operate with other spiritual groups
 - service
- 7) study: what and how (total 2)
 - meditation before every lodge meeting/study group (2)
 - inquiring mind
 - self-knowledge
 - different study levels



Nordic Workers' Workshop

15.-17.7.2005 at Kreivilä, Finland

6(11)





Nordic Workers' Workshop

15.-17.7.2005 at Kreivilä, Finland

7(11)

16.8.2005 Saturday evening

6. What to do – finding out detailed tasks

Each participant had now worked from one group's angle, individually and together. As thoughts develop and new dimension may occur, it was time to grind what to do within the categories. Each chose a category with which he or she wanted to continue. Five categories rose interest and within these the workshop continued again: activation, members, communication, publicity and brotherhood. Now the groups were to work out tasks in more concrete detail than earlier and the results were:

Communication	Activation	Members	Publicity	BROTHERHOOD
1	2	3	4	5
WEBSITES 	INVITE POSSIBLE LEADERS TO THE CENTRE	ATTITUDE: EVERY MEMBER IS IMPORTANT	IT'S IMPORTANT, THAT WE HAVE TS-BOOKS IN OUR OWN LANGUAGE. - TRANSLATORS ARE NEEDED	Brotherhood is a state of mind → it cannot be given?
TRAINING IN LECTURE TECHNIQUES	INVITING TO INFORMATION MEETING (LOCALLY)	LODGE: - OPENNESS - ABILITY TO SOLVE PROBLEMS - FAMILY ATMOSPHERE	PUBLISHING BOOKS IS NEEDED, WHEN PEOPLE ARE SEEKING DEEPER KNOWLEDGE.	Theosophy is servicing, we have to find out new (and old) "jobs" in our lodges
LEADERSHIP SKILLS	PLANNING ACTIVITIES TOGETHER	TEACHING WITHIN THE LODGE - APPRECIATION - LECTURING / SMALL TALKS	FIND OUT THE WAYS AND CHANNELS - LIBRARIES - BOOKSHOPS	workshops between lodges / areas / countries
GROUP TECHNIQUES	INVITE EXTERNAL LECTURERS	COMMUNICATION SKILLS - RETHORIC - BODY LANGUAGE - PERSONAL TOUCH		You can share brotherhood by loving.

- 1) activation: interesting lectures and planning activities together
 - invite possible leaders to the centre
 - inviting to come to information meeting (locally)
 - planning activities together
 - invite external lecturers
- 2) members: to pay attention to attitudes and how members may contribute
 - attitude: every member is important
 - lodge: openness, ability to solve problems, family atmosphere
 - teaching within the lodge: appreciation, lecturing/small talks
 - communication skills: rethoric, body language, personal touch
- 3) communication: to improve communication means and skills
 - to make a Nordic website, which would include each Section generally, gather activities, TS in general, events, articles, pictures, translations, towns in map...
 - training lecturing techniques, dialogue training with audience
 - leadership skills
 - group techniques



Nordic Workers' Workshop

15.-17.7.2005 at Kreivilä, Finland

8(11)

- 4) publicity: right channels and good translations
 - it is important that we have TS-books in our own language: translations are needed
 - publishing books are needed, when people are seeking deeper knowledge
 - find out the ways and channels: libraries, bookshops
- 5) co-operation: between countries and lodges
 - there was nobody to work on this category, but from the previous workshop we get:
 - 2007 follow-up in connection with the Congress
- 6) brotherhood: the aspect of sharing
 - brotherhood is a state of mind -> it cannot be given
 - theosophy is servicing: we have to find out new (and old) "jobs" in our lodges
 - workshops between lodges, areas, countries
 - you can share brotherhood by loving
- 7) study: what and how
 - there was nobody to work on this category, but from the previous workshop we get:
 - meditation before every lodge meeting/study group
 - inquiring mind
 - self-knowledge
 - different study levels





Nordic Workers' Workshop

15.-17.7.2005 at Kreivilä, Finland

9(11)

17.8.2005 Sunday morning

7. How to help the areas – what to do together – decisions

The previous day was to go into the depths of needed work and tasks in common level. Now a new perspective was to be taken. Attention was paid specifically to the areas where help is needed, i.e. Denmark and Norway. The discussion was made all together, not in groups.

Norway: inspiration, confidence and trust for the work needs to grow

- Pertti Spets and Hans Liljenström have promised to go to give lecture-tours in Norway; Oslo and Bergen
- Pertti will e-mail to Tobiassen in Oslo for arrangements there and Agnes organises lectures in Bergen
- Pertti promised to inform about the events in Sweden to Norwegians members; Agnes will e-mail membership-list to Pertti
- Sauli Siekkinen is willing to give lectures in other countries in English

Denmark: to start from somewhere

- Pertti will contact Ove Skuld, Jensen and Hansen in order to go there and feel the situation
- Pertti will contact Jensen, if he could arrange a lecture in Copenhagen
- Danish members can easily join the Swedish weekends and summer-school, which are held in south-west of Sweden; information will be distributed

Estonia: how to be one group, keep going

- to increase lecturing by own members (so far most of the lecturing is done by the Finnish members)
- from Sweden Hans Liljenström to give lecture in Tallinn
- one open weekend in the new flat, with many talks
- to increase planning together

Sweden-Finland: sharing

- the Swedish speaking lodges in Finland and Sweden can change lecturers and visit each other; lodges in Finland are in in the west coast in Vaasa, Åbo (Turku)
- to inform about the programmes by e-mail between the Swedish speaking groups and lodges
- Åland (the islands), which belong to Finland, but is totally Swedish speaking area, could be viewed if there is any interest

Iceland: sharing

- to give information to other countries of the forms of work in Iceland

Concerning all countries

- If any northern country will invite a visiting lecturer, like P Krishna or Ravi Ravindra, the information will be given to the General-Secretaries. A shared lecturing tour can be arranged then.
- Activities and events of the countries will be e-mailed to each other between the General-Secretaries, who will give the information further in their areas. This will work better after we have the common website, but it will take time.
- there are some lecturers who are willing to tour: Pertti Spets, Hans Liljenström, Sauli Siekkinen
- 1 day follow-up to be arranged in connection with the European Congress 2007; Kalevi and Marja will organise



Nordic Workers' Workshop

15.-17.7.2005 at Kreivilä, Finland

10(11)

8. Meditate on brotherhood

Each participant made commitments to do something for the theosophical work in one's own area. It is inspiring to do together, link is there, not alone, much job to keep going.

Brotherhood, Unity and the 3rd object came up in discussion. Nothing can exist without everything else. Scientific field support this and comes closer to what is said of brotherhood. Biologists have come to the conclusion that all effect to everything else. Meditate on brotherhood, let it keep in you all the time.

9. There is work and life to live together

During the days many tasks were pointed out, many ideas for the work were brought. Which of them will come true, which of them will be taken to the planning of the work, we do not know yet. The strong intention is that this workshop would give strength to carry on the work and to find new ways to distribute theosophy.

This kind of working together in the Nordic area is most welcome and inspiring. It was decided to make a follow-up after two years in connection with the European Congress in Finland in 2007.

At the end the President said: We have about 70 countries where we have theosophical activities. Small percentage is conscious that there is common work to be done over the world to awaken human consciousness, to bring about transformation in our lives towards altruistic way of living. Altruism is the very soul of theosophical work. Meeting together like this weekend we begin to think that there is work and life to live together. On the whole there is a worldwide workshop working for the highest ideas. One can be like a seed thrown, which can grow and perhaps create a different kind of view. Working together gives spiritual upliftment for the welfare of the world.





Nordic Workers' Workshop

15.-17.7.2005 at Kreivilä, Finland

11(11)

NOTES

Situation in the countries shortly

Sweden:

3 study groups (lodges), courses on the Secret Doctrine and Patanjali's Yoga sutras, public lectures monthly, the bookshop is open two days a week, as well the library, website. Own department in Stockholm.

Iceland:

11 lodges, dialogues, Friday evening lectures, Saturdays open house, Sundays meditation, Summer-schools, Library, Book service, Newsletter for members, Magazine, website also with articles. Own building in Reykjavik.

Finland:

22 lodges, public lectures every Sunday in Helsinki and monthly in several other towns, meditation course, summer-schools, lodge presidents day, libraries, magazine, website. Own department in Helsinki.

Estonia:

1 lodge, 22 members, public lectures twice a month, SD study group, summer-days, library open once a week, website, own room for gatherings.

Norway:

no lodge, members about 20 scattered around Norway, public lectures rarely, letters to members.

Denmark:

no representative, no public lectures, some individual member.

APPENDIX 1 – Needs behind the work

APPENDIX 2 – Detailed tasks