



THE KROTONIAN

KROTONA INSTITUTE OF THEOSOPHY, OJAI CA

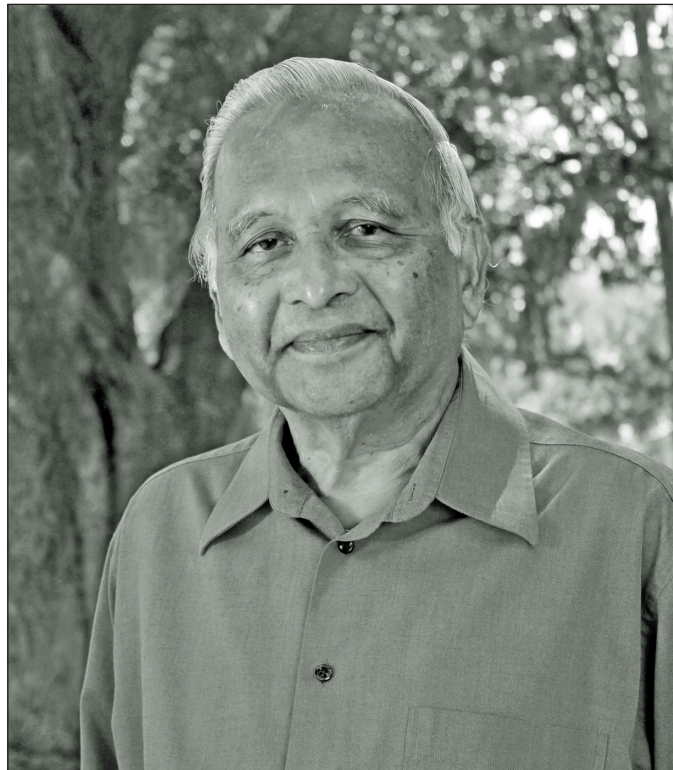
FALL 2020

Krotona is an international center inspired by a vision of the oneness of all life and dedicated to the spiritual awakening of the human family.

Holding Steady in Challenging Times Guru Prasad

I would like to thank you for your continued support of Krotona during these very challenging times. My hope and wish is that you and your family are doing well despite the on-going health threat of Covid-19. Whenever we read about or see images of tragic incidents all around the world, it occupies our mind for a while and then we may forget about it. The constant barrage of instant news about poverty, wars, diseases, and shootings is difficult to witness and sometimes the suffering we see overwhelms us. When I first learned about the virus infecting people in a continent far away, I also remember thinking, very naively, that it would be contained effectively and would not spread to the United States. Nevertheless, it has come to our part of the country and the virus has infected many in our city. It is here.

One of the lessons of COVID-19 is that it changes the way we look at pandemics and suffering, especially when it is so near to us. Facing impermanence may cause us to look at life differently. No matter our age, where we live, our social status, or who we are, the virus does not care. The pandemic has contributed to increased suffering, rising poverty, and other social unrest. However, while it may be difficult to recognize in the middle of a pandemic, the impact of climate



change has the potential to be even more devastating if we do not take corrective action soon. According to leading climatologists and scientists, it is the biggest challenge facing humanity because it is an existential threat to the survival of life on this planet.

Human ingenuity, science, and perseverance, can provide us with solutions to these difficult problems. However, the most important thing we can do individually to affect a change is to become the positive change that we want to occur in the people and the external world. This is the most effective way of helping others and it can have a direct influence in creating a more harmonious and

compassionate world. For all of us at Krotona, it is more important to live up to the vision of Krotona, which is to contribute to the realization of oneness of life.

Because of the pandemic, the Bookshop, Library, and the Krotona School are currently closed. Until it is safe to reopen, we will stream classes on our website, starting this fall. The course schedule is available on our website. We plan to announce the schedule on other theosophical websites, in journals, and elsewhere. We hope that you will be able to attend them. In the meantime, we are following the guidelines given by the Health authorities such as wearing masks, maintaining social distances, and going out when necessary.

Dr Hein Van Beusekom (1925 – 2020) Robert Ellwood

Hein van Beusekom, past Executive Vice President of the Krotona Institute of Theosophy, Regionary Bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church, and a member of the International Order of Co-Freemasonry, was a beloved spiritual teacher long associated with Krotona. His passing this year at the age of 94 marked a loss and the ending of an era for many.

Hein was born on August 31, 1925, in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), where his Dutch parents were associated with the petroleum industry. He lived there until 1937 when, at the age of 12, he was sent back to the Netherlands to continue his education. Although his parents were strict followers of the Dutch Reformed Church, the house in which Hein first resided belonged to adherents of Anthroposophy, Rudolf Steiner's version of the Theosophical tradition. Hein read their books widely and began to be drawn to new ideas.

These were difficult times. Although his parents later went to the Netherlands to join him, Hein's father had to return to the Indies because of business, where he was caught up in the Japanese occupation of that vast empire of islands in 1942. In the homeland, Hein, now living with his mother, continued his schooling. In 1940 the Netherlands was occupied by Nazi Germany, a disaster which produced much suffering. (In an interesting anecdote, Hein related that once, when he was captured by the invaders and about to be sent to forced labor in Germany, he was rescued by an "invisible helper" like those described in CW Leadbeater's book of that title. Unlike all too many Dutch of that generation, he was never compelled to leave his home or country.)

At the end of the war in 1945, several important developments occurred for Hein. His curiosity reviving, he explored a large number of churches and spiritual teachings, and became a Theosophist. In 1950 he was baptized in the Liberal Catholic Church, becoming a priest of that church in 1957. He completed his medical education at Leiden University and commenced a flourishing practice as a physician in Friesland, in the north of the Netherlands. He married Emmy van der Laan, with whom he had three children, Justus, Elizabeth, and Helena.

That marriage ended and, in 1977, Hein married Joan Wils, a Dutch-American woman of a prominent Dutch Theosophical and Liberal Catholic family, which had also been active in the Resistance during the War. The marriage took place in the Theosophical center at Naarden. The same year the newly-wed couple came to the US, settling on Orcas Island in the Puget Sound, site of the Theosophical camp, Indralaya, and not far from Joan's American home city, Seattle. Hein met Dora Kunz, also of Dutch Indies background, and became interested in Therapeutic Touch.

Ten years later, in 1987, the van Beusekoms moved to Krotona, where they were called to support the Theosophical work there. That same year Hein was consecrated a bishop in the Liberal Catholic Church, becoming Regionary Bishop in 2000. Hein served as Resident Head of Krotona from 1991 until 2001.

Joan died in 2002 and, in 2004, Hein married Pauline Petchey, who survives him, living in their home in Taormina. Hein died on February 17, 2020. He will long be remembered for his deep spirituality, his continuing willingness to be available for whatever Theosophical work needed to be done, and his gift of friendship to many.



Remembering Lakshmi Narayan (1928 – 2020) Cynthia Overweg

Beloved by many people in Ojai and by friends throughout the world, Lakshmi Narayan, 91, peacefully passed away at home in Santa Cruz, CA, on June 30 with her family at her side. Lakshmi lived at Krotona for twenty-five years, serving as head librarian for the Krotona Library before retiring on her 89th birthday in September, 2017. She then moved to Santa Cruz to be with her family.

During her long tenure as librarian at Krotona, Lakshmi assisted thousands of students, visitors and scholars who come to Krotona's library to study, do research and borrow books. With a twinkle in her eyes, a spring in her step, and a welcoming smile, Lakshmi made everyone feel at home. Her readiness to listen and offer friendly help prompted admirers to call her "the face of Krotona," and "Krotona's goodwill ambassador." These honorary titles fit Lakshmi perfectly.

When she wasn't in the Library, Lakshmi loved hiking in places where she could experience the grandeur of nature. Climbing a mountain and walking in the woods with family and friends were very dear to her heart. When she was home, she enjoyed sitting quietly and watching Krotona's rabbits, squirrels, and families of quail dash across her front yard. Just before sunset, she enjoyed sipping tea as birds frolicked in a neighbor's birdbath. Lakshmi loved the simple things in life and never lost her sense of wonder.

Lakshmi was born in 1928 in Bhaga, Bihar, in Northern India. Bihar is the state where it is said the Buddha



Lakshmi at her 89th birthday party.

attained enlightenment while meditating under a Bodhi tree in Bodh Gaya. When Lakshmi was born, women were expected to marry and remain at home rather than pursue a higher education and career, but Lakshmi's parents wanted their three daughters, as well as their two sons, to be educated. At the time, India was under British colonial rule, so Lakshmi was sent to a British boarding school for her early education. Later she attended the University of Madras, earning a Master's Degree in geology in 1953. She worked in a geological survey laboratory in Calcutta for a few years and had the distinction of being the first

Indian woman to become a working geologist.

Lakshmi married Sellapa Narayanaswami, a geologist and teacher, but was widowed in 1978 when he suffered a heart attack. After her husband's death, Lakshmi joined the Theosophical Society (TS) in Chennai, Adyar, India. In 1980, she was invited by the late Radha Burnier, TS international president, to work in the Adyar library, where she catalogued books and greeted visitors. In 1982, Lakshmi was named head librarian at Adyar. A few years later, Dora Kunz, then president of the TS in America invited, Lakshmi to work in the library at the national headquarters in Wheaton, IL, where she became head librarian in 1987. In 1992, she was invited by Hein van Beusekom, then Krotona's Executive Vice President, to manage the Krotona library.

Lakshmi died at her son's home June 30, 2020. Her beautiful spirit and giving heart touched many lives. She is greatly missed and will be remembered with love.

Of Note Nelda Samarel

Krotona library director, **Mary Jo Kokochak**, and companion, **Al Hebert**, left Krotona in early August to return to their home state of Michigan where their families reside. They will continue their Theosophical work as active members of the Detroit Lodge of the Theosophical Society.

In mid-July, **Southern California Edison (SCE)** completed a week-long pole and wire replacement project on Krotona property, upgrading several utility poles and wiring. The older wooden poles were replaced with composite and the new insulated wiring is designed to not spark should a tree branch make contact with it. Thank you, SCE, for doing your part for fire abatement just ahead of our fire season, and thanks to Krotona resident and land manager, **Dana Hachigian**, for coordinating this.

Krotona Institute of Theosophy consists of 118 acres of land, all of which needs to be maintained in compliance with the Ventura County Fire Hazard Reduction Program (FHRP). This requires that all our vast fields and rolling hills are mowed and weed-wacked before June 1 in order to

reduce available fuel that feeds the well-known California wildfires. This enormous task is completed every year by our maintenance staff, **Francisco Calderon**, working all day every day during the month of May to bring us into compliance with the mandates of the FHRP. This year, **Joshua Deutchman**, a frequent volunteer at Krotona, drove from his home in NY to reside at Krotona for five weeks in order to assist Francisco.

Many people from the surrounding neighborhoods within Ojai, as well as resident Krotonians, love taking frequent walks through Krotona, enjoying its peace and beauty. Our informal **community of walkers** are, indeed, a community despite the fact that, often, they may not be aware of others' names or origins. When one of our regular walkers recently passed away, word immediately spread throughout the "community of walkers," many of whom provided support for his widow. Community may be found in the most unexpected places.



THIS

Before mowing.



+ THIS

Josh Deutchman and Francisco Calderone.



= THIS

After mowing.

Cuba and Krotona in My Life Gaspar Torres

My first experience in a Theosophical Society (TS) Center abroad was in July 1988 when attending the Synod of the Liberal Catholic Church (LCC) in the Netherlands, and visited the International Theosophical Center (ITC) in Naarden. This was my first trip out of Cuba.

In 1991 LCC Bishop Lawrence Smith invited me to the 75th anniversary of the LCC founding, celebrated in Ojai. Upon my arrival, I visited Krotona, my second TS Center visit. In 1997, at the invitation of the then international president of the TS, Mrs Radha Burnier, I visited the TS Headquarters in Adyar, India, for three months, and there met Idarmis Rodriguez, who would later become my wife.

I was fortunate to have visited Krotona eight more times between then and 2011, when I went to give a seminar in Spanish for the Krotona School. It was during that visit that Idarmis and I married, and I made the US and Krotona my permanent residence. I have many family members in FL and NJ, as well as close Theosophical friends in LA, particularly the Garbalosa and Carbonell families.

Krotona always enjoyed a good relationship with Cuba. Two of Krotona's early leaders, AP Warrington and Marie Poutz, visited the Island. Maybe that is why (probably for karmic reasons) Krotona was the Center that I visited most frequently.

In Ojai full time now, I have the opportunity to serve both the Theosophical and Liberal Catholic Church communities. As an ordained Bishop in the LCC, I continued the work I began in LA with the late Fathers Rolando Garbalosa and David Kokochak, confirming many young members in Spanish. My Theosophical work includes presenting classes by Skype in Spanish four days each week, with participants hailing from across the US and Latin America. Also, I regularly volunteer for Krotona. In addition, I return to Cuba to present Theosophical lectures there, as well as to officiate for the LCC in three cities.

Visiting and residing in TS centers throughout the world, I learned what it was like to live in one's home with family; it is a totally different atmosphere from the way I had previously been living. Being a vegetarian my entire life and having a meditation practice, I previously was unable to maintain the vibrations required for my spiritual life. Whether in the ITC, Adyar, Krotona, or any other Theosophical Center, I find it is much more harmonious to live among people who also practice vegetarianism and meditation.

In summary, Dharma, or natural duty, is what I have tried to learn. Dharma leads us to realize the consciousness of Unity, of the One Life, which enables us to dissolve all separateness, leading to the unselfish physical action that is truly useful and compassionate. I am grateful to have been blessed to have the opportunity to live fulfilling what I see as my Dharma.



"There is no way to happiness. Happiness is the way."

—Thich Nhat Hanh

Library News Mary Jo Kokochak

In late February just prior to closure due to COVID-19, the Library underwent a significant change in its collections.

The unique and valuable collection of antiquarian books and journals has been housed on the balcony for many years. Some books were brought from Krotona of Hollywood when it moved to Ojai in 1924, while others were donated by early residents of Krotona in Ojai. The library's steep, narrow, and winding staircase, however, made it difficult to access these rare items and so they languished, little used, on the shelves.

Happily, the collection now has a new home at San Diego State University (SDSU). Krotona's works will be part of SDSU Library's Special Collections Perennial Wisdom Resources which consists of three library collections and, together, comprise approximately 9,000 volumes. The other two collections in the Perennial Wisdom Resources are the Lomaland Theosophy and the Peter Philip Collections.

The Krotona Institute of Theosophy Collection at SDSU primarily includes writings published in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The works cover a broad range of perennial wisdom subjects, including books on Western Esotericism, Eastern philosophy and religion, Christianity, Neoplatonism, and Theosophy.

The Lomaland Theosophy Collection contains books and

periodicals from Lomaland Theosophy community in Point Loma, San Diego (1897 – 1942). The community, founded by Katherine Tingley, was known for its emphasis on creative arts and education, with its Raja Yoga School as the central focus. The collection includes a broad range of writings from the perennial wisdom traditions.

The Peter Philip Collection of Western Esotericism was inspired by HP Blavatsky's understanding of the essential unity of all religions and the Theosophical Society's motto "There is no religion higher than Truth." The collection focuses on the: perennialism found in the Greek philosophies of Plato, Pythagoras, pre-Socratics and Neoplatonism; Greek drama; mystery schools; Gnostic literature and Christian mysticism; Hermetic philosophy and alchemy; Kabbalah; and global mythology.

The three collections share a common thread, complement each other in many ways, and create a unique resource which will attract researchers and others interested in early literature on esotericism and the theosophical movement.

It's important to note that the Krotona Library still retains all of its holdings, including its collection of periodicals such as *The Herald of the Star* and *The Star Bulletin* which promoted Krishnamurti as the World Teacher and are important to the history of the Ojai Valley.

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The administrative center for the Esoteric School of Theosophy (EST) in North America is located at Krotona. For information about the EST, contact 805.646.3021 or email essecretary@krotonainstitute.org

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School Highlights Maria Parisen

The School of Theosophy will present the several classes this fall as Zoom webinars:

Sep 29 to Oct 2: Weekday mornings, Tue through Fri from 10 AM until noon, with Michele and Pablo Sender, **“Understanding Ourselves: A Cosmic Perspective.”**

Oct 3: Sat from 10 AM until noon and 2 until 4 PM, with Pablo Sender, **“Meditation on Cosmic Principles.”**

Oct 6 to 9: Weekday mornings, Tue through Fri from 10 AM until noon, with Martin Leiderman, **“The Voice of the Silence: An Integrated Approach.”**

Oct 13 to 16: Weekday mornings, Tue through Fri 10 AM until 11:30, with Ravi Ravindra, **“The Transformational Teachings of the Christ.”**

Nov 6 to 8: Weekend program, Fri 7:30 – 9 pm, Sat 10 AM until noon, 2 – 4 PM, Sunday 10:00 AM – noon, with Elvira Carbonell, Luz Tamarit, and Gaspar Torres, **“Enseñanzas**

esenciales de los escritos de Helena Blavatsky.” This program will be in Spanish only.

Dec 15: Tue 10:00 AM until noon, with Cynthia Overweg, **“The Silent Teaching of a Global Crisis”**

See our full class descriptions and registration options at www.krotonainstitute.org, or contact us directly at 805-646-1139 or schoolinfo@krotonainstitute.org.



Krotona Quest Bookshop: An Active Pralaya Carol Nicholson



The Krotona Institute Board of Directors has made excellent decisions in keeping Krotona closed during this pandemic, their foresight keeping us from feeling the effects of the coronavirus resurgence this summer.

However, for the bookshop, dormant does not mean deserted. During this time, one person at a time, always following safety procedures, has been working to cull and update our collection. New areas of interest have been formed and old books have been put on sale. Many used books have been donated by Robert Ellwood, greatly increasing the depth of the collection.

While we are currently not receiving in-person customers, if you want a particular book you may call or email the bookshop (805-646-0873 or bookshop@krotonainstitute.org) and we will fill your order if we can.

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Fall 2020

*The supreme purpose and goal for human life
is to cultivate love.*

Ramakrishna



As a Theosophical community, Krotona:

1. Nurtures living in harmony and compassion with self, others, and nature;
2. Inspires spiritual transformation through an earnest quest for Truth and living the ageless wisdom, Theosophy.
3. Offers a peaceful, welcoming environment to encourage a life of self-inquiry, study, meditation, and selfless service.