



THE KROTONIAN

SPRING
2020

KROTONA INSTITUTE OF THEOSOPHY, OJAI CA

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.



The Pillars of Krotona Robert Ellwood

Visitors to Krotona are greeted by two pillars at the bottom of the hill, adorned respectively with initials: APW and MP. Informed Theosophists and friends will know the letters stand for Albert Powell Warrington and Marie Poutz, two names that supremely stand out in the founding and history of Krotona.



AP Warrington (1866-1939), a native of Maryland, started in railroad work, then studied law and established a practice in Norfolk, Virginia. He joined the Theosophical Society in 1896. This commitment shaped the rest of his life; full of enthusiasm, he retired from the legal profession in 1911 in

order to devote himself wholly to Theosophical work. One of his greatest achievements for the Society was his leading role in the 1912 founding of the first Krotona in Hollywood. He stayed on at Krotona to serve as its Resident Head, as editor of *The American Theosophist*, and as President of the American section of the Theosophical Society 1912-1920. Warrington resigned in the latter year to work at Adyar in close association with Annie Besant, also engaging with her in world travel on behalf of the Society.

Warrington returned to California in 1922 accompanied by Krishnamurti and his brother Nityananda. They came to the Ojai Valley with the intention of finding a permanent home for the two brothers and, as it turned out, also discovered a new home for Krotona. In 1924, with the consent of Mrs. Besant as International President, the Hollywood center was sold and its work moved to the new location in Ojai.

With Los Angeles burgeoning into a great city and the movie industry making Hollywood its epicenter, a place of greater quiet and natural beauty seemed required for Krotona's inner work. It was Warrington who selected the site for Krotona because of its inspiring atmosphere and scenery. After returning to California, Warrington resumed leadership at the then-rustic Krotona, assisted by Marie Poutz as his secretary.

In 1928 Warrington became International Vice President of the Society on the nomination of Annie Besant. He was required to move to Adyar in 1931 because of President Besant's illness, making it necessary for him to fulfill some of her duties. Upon her death in 1933, Mr Warrington served as Acting President until the installation of the next President, George Arundale, the following year. Warrington then returned to Krotona in Ojai, where he lived quietly and served as Resident Head until his death on June 16, 1939. His widow, Betty Warrington, whom he married in 1931 and who was known as a gracious hostess both at Adyar and Krotona, continued to live in Ojai until her passing in 1986.



Marie Poutz (1860-1951), Warrington's secretary succeeded Warrington as Resident Head of Krotona from 1939 until her own passing in 1951. Her name is one that also will forever be deeply associated with Krotona.

Miss Poutz was born in New Orleans. Her family spoke French at home. During the Civil War, which broke out

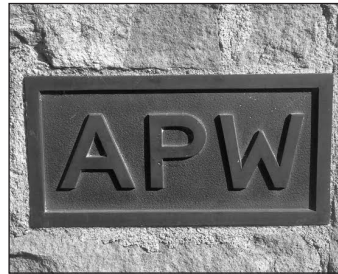
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The Pillars of Krotona *Continued from page 1*

only a few months after her birth, the household moved to France to escape its ravages. Seven years later, however, the Poutz's had to return to Louisiana, with nearly all of their once-ample means having been lost in the internecine conflict. Despite this, Poutz was able to receive an excellent education, and as a young woman supported herself teaching music. She was an avid reader, deeply interested in philosophy and spiritual issues, less so in social life. Although she never married, when she was twenty-one a family friend died, leaving two small children who she adopted.

Poutz left her natal Roman Catholic church as a teenager, searched widely for a deeper philosophy, and joined the Society in 1898. In 1907, entering full-time Theosophical work, she became assistant to Warrington in his varied Theosophical responsibilities, first in Norfolk, VA, then Chicago, then Hollywood, and finally in 1924 at the new Krotona in Ojai. She was Warrington's co-worker for thirty years and, in his frequent absence, was an effective leader in the life of Krotona during the tumultuous years of the Great Depression, the Second World War, and the postwar era with its immense changes.

Poutz often expressed her appreciation of Krotona, sometimes calling it the perfect place, an antipodes to the chaos of the outer world, a "place of peace" and renewal. She is remembered as being like a mother to countless pilgrims on their journeys of struggle and discovery, writing letters or holding conversations full of wisdom and compassionate support with seekers for over fifty years. It would be fair to say Marie Poutz represented Krotona at its best.



Shiva's Sacred Flower *Cynthia Overweg*

Situated on over one hundred acres of beautiful mountain vistas, Krotona's lush meadows and flowering gardens provide a rare opportunity for visitors and students to reconnect with the rhythms of nature, and engage in silent inquiry. There is always something new to discover in the diversity of classes offered at Krotona School, in the Library or Bookshop, and on the land itself. A recent discovery along Krotona Road is a wild-growing, lily-shaped flower with special significance in India. In Hindu mythology it is called the "Sacred Datura," and it is offered in symbolic gratitude during certain festival days to Lord Shiva, the creator, preserver, and destroyer of worlds.



According to legend, the Datura flower was created when Shiva drank the Halahala poison that was churned up in the ocean by the Devas (angels) and Asuras (demons), as they competed for Amrita, the nectar of immortality. The poison was so potent that it would have destroyed all of

creation. So, out of compassion, Shiva drank it and a white Datura flower then grew out of his chest. The poison was transformed into something beautiful. In Hinduism, flowers, plants, trees, mountains, and animals are seamlessly woven into many spiritual stories, often symbolizing compassion, transcendence, and wisdom.

Botanists have given the Datura flower several other names, including Jimsonweed and white thorn-apple. Components of the flower are used for medicinal purposes by Hindus and Native Americans to treat inflammation and pain, but the flower also has hallucinatory properties and is dangerous if it is eaten,

so even Datura experts approach it with both reverence and caution.

One of the most amazing things about the flower is that, before it blooms, it has the shape of a nearly perfect spiral, one of the most beautiful patterns in nature, and a symbol

Continued on page 3.

Krotona School Highlights Maria Parisen

Krotona School hosted its first biennial “Secret Doctrine Forum” from October 29 through November 2, titled “The Proem: Inquiry and Application.” An essential study for anyone seriously interested in Helena Blavatsky’s major work, the Proem is an introduction to the most basic, but profound principles underlying Theosophy. Faculty from three theosophical organizations facilitated the five-day inquiry: Elena Dovalsantos, Martin Leiderman, and Pablo Sender (Theosophical Society, Adyar); Jerry Kiffe, Jon Fergus, and Pierre Wouters (United Lodge of Theosophists); and Herman and Johanna Vermeulen (Theosophical Society, Point Loma) who traveled from the Netherlands to be with us. Thirty-nine participants attended the presentations

and focused inquiry, portions of which were streamed internationally. The next Forum is planned for fall, 2021.

During 2019, we offered twenty-four class series, including retreats, seminars, and workshops, all based on or relevant to core theosophy. Students traveled to Krotona from twenty-four states and ten different countries. One-hundred-three were accommodated in on-site housing. Several work-study scholarships were granted for tuition and/or housing, according to need and service to the Society. Classroom audio-video capability continued to be upgraded for efficiency, quality and outreach ability, with ongoing staff training.

Krotona School Fall Program Lineup: Bridging Worlds

Sept 29 - Oct 2 (four mornings) Pablo and Michele Sender
Understanding Ourselves: A Cosmic Perspective

Oct 2 - 4 (weekend retreat) Pablo Sender
Meditating on Cosmic Principles

Oct 6 - 9 (four mornings) Dorothy Bell
The Rainbow Bridge: Seeking the Divine Within

Oct 13 - 16 (four mornings) Carolyn Wayland
The Spiritual in 20th Century Art: A Continuing Lineage

Oct 17 (Saturday) Elena Dovalsantos
Morning: **The Thirst for Immortality**
Afternoon: **Alchemy: The Ancient Secret Art of Transformation**

Oct 20 - 23 (four mornings) Jon Fergus
Divine Ethics: Practical Teachings of the World's Great Sages

Oct 27 - 30 (four mornings) Minor Lile
Living with the Laws of the Universe

Oct 30 - Nov 1 (weekend) Pat Moffitt-Cook
Mantric Language, Vedic Chant, and Sound Healing Applications

Nov 6 - 8 (Spanish Weekend) Elvira Carbonell, Idarmis Rodriguez, Luz Tamarit, Gaspar Torres
Perlas de las enseñanzas de Helena Blavatsky

Shiva's Sacred Flower *Continued from page 2.*



of the flowering of human consciousness in spiritual myths. The spiral has been a source of human fascination as far back as 12,000 years ago when it was carved inside caves and on rocks. It can be seen on snails, seashells, and on many plants and other flowers.

The Datura flower in the shape of a spiral is one of nature’s gentle reminders that our own inner flowering is mirrored back to us in the natural world, when we pay attention. And since it is the flower that was born from Shiva’s compassionate heart when the universe was almost lost, the metaphor of the Sacred Datura belongs to everyone.

Sanctuary Cecil Messer

This article about Krotona's Sanctuary of Connections located on Laudahn Lane adjacent to Krotona School is reprinted, in part, from the Spring 2009 Krotonian. The Sanctuary was designed and created by then Krotona resident, Cecil Messer, with the generous contribution of Robert Jordan who, with his wife Sara, lived and worked at the Institute for six decades until the end of their lives. The tiles with symbols representing each tradition were hand-made and painted by Nathan Voirol. Ed.

The Sanctuary of Connections is a place where meditation can be. Here, one can sit quietly or walk the links connecting the various traditions. Pausing for contemplation at each icon, one may sense the profound unity. The boulders along the way are nodes in the network of religious or philosophical traditions. Each has a representative sign or symbol. Thus the Three Objects of the Theosophical society are mirrored in the sanctuary: unity, study, and the unfolding of consciousness.

You are invited to walk through the Sanctuary and reflect on the universality of the core teachings of each tradition.

Theosophy: On the first stone is the seal of the Theosophical Society. Theosophy is not defined, but its essence is in its Sanskrit motto: Satyan Nasti Paro Dharma, translated: There is no religion higher than Truth. Its view is also in Annie Besant's mantra:

*O Hidden Life, vibrant in every atom;
O Hidden Light, shining in every creature;
O Hidden Love, embracing all in Oneness.
May all who feel themselves as one with Thee,
Know they are therefore one with every other.*

Taoism: On the left beside the lotus pond is the icon of Taoism.

*The Tao that can be expressed is not the Eternal
Tao... Nevertheless, something there is formless
yet complete. In the beginning it existed. Its name is
not known, but it is called Tao. It is the Mystery of
Mysteries.* Lao Tzu, Tao Teh Ching

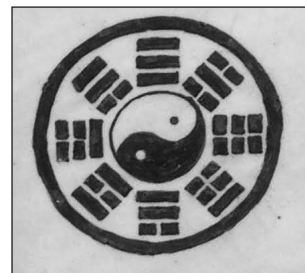
Buddhism: On the right is the Buddhist stupa. The eight spokes of the turning wheel of the Dharma represent the Noble Eightfold Path. Encircling the stupa is the Mani mantra in Tibetan script, Om Mani Padme Hum, alluding to the Light of the Buddha realized in the lotus of our heart center. Traditionally, while circumambulating the stupa clockwise, one recites the mantra.

Krishnamurti: The next stone on the right holds an empty vessel and the famous statement of the teacher, Jiddu Krishnamurti, when he renounced his imputed designation as "The World Teacher:" *Truth is a Pathless Land.* Perhaps he echoed the teachings of the Buddha on emptiness when he stated:

*As the cup which is empty can be filled up, so
the emptiness within can be filled up with that
which is everlasting.*

Hinduism: Next on the left is the boulder for Hinduism. Its symbol is the Sanskrit letter "Om." In the Tandya Maha Brahmana, it is written:

*In the beginning was only the Lord of the Universe.
His Word OM was with him. The Word was his
second. He contemplated. He said, "I will deliver
this Word so that She will produce and bring into
being all the world."*



Taoism



Hinduism

Judaism: On the right is the stone for Judaism bearing a mezuzah, a small rectangular box containing a parchment scroll with verses from the bible. The back of the mezuzah often has the Hebrew letter *shin* on it, which is the first letter of one of God's names. Surrounding the stone are four species of trees: citron, palm, myrtle, and pepper. These plants are used in the Jewish tradition to acknowledge His omnipresence.

Be still and know that I am God. Psalm 46:10



Islam

Islam: Next is the stone holding the symbol for both Islam and its esoteric sister, Sufism. Since Islam prohibits symbols, per se, a stylized version of the Arabic word for Allah is presented.

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Sanctuary *Continued from page 4*

Central to Islamic thought is the profession of faith in Allah supported by the concept of jihad. The Prophet Muhammad emphasized jihad as an internal, individual, spiritual struggle toward self-improvement and moral purification.

Whichever way you turn, there is the face of God.
Quran

Sufi:

*Whether you love the One or another human being,
if you love enough, in the end you will come into
the presence of Love, itself.* Rumi

Christianity. Near the end of the path is a pair of rocks within a boundary shaped like a fish. The whole represents the scene of the resurrection of Jesus, the Christ. The large stone has a cave-like inclusion; the small stone is rolled back to show the empty tomb.

*Beloved, let us love one another; for the love is
of God, and he who loves is born of God and
knows God. He who does not love does not know
God; for God is love. There is no fear in love, for
perfect love casts out fear.* 1 John 4, 7-18

On a large boulder near the pond are symbols for four

religious or philosophical traditions:

Baha'i: The utterance of God is a lamp whose light is these words:

*You are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one
branch. Deal with one another with the utmost love
and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship.*
Baha'i: Epistle to the Son of the Wolf

Zoroastrianism:

*He who sows the ground with care and diligence
acquires a greater stock of religious merit than
he could gain by the repetition of ten thousand
prayers'* Zoroaster

Jainism:

Friendship to all living forms, delight in the qualities of the virtuous ones, unlimited compassion for all suffering beings, equanimity towards all who wish me harm, may my soul have these dispositions now and forever. Jain prayer

Sikhism:

*The One God pervades all and seeing Him,
I am wholly in Bliss.* Sikh Courier International

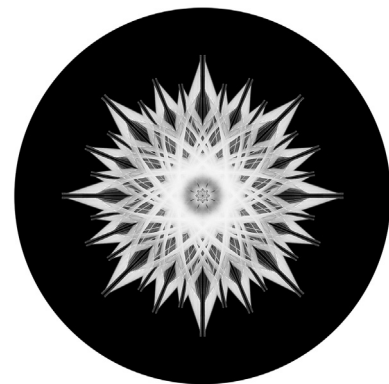
Library News Mary Jo Kokochak

Multimedia visual artist David Orr presented a series of classes on mandalas at Krotona School's fall session, and the Library had the unexpected good fortune of being decorated with David's unique blend of art and whimsy. He hung a banner of his mandalas from the balcony, wove ribbons of gold between the handrails, and placed Zen-like sayings around the room:

*All is All
Every Thing is Everything
Absurdity Requires Meaning Requires Absurdity*

David's exquisite mandala designs also graced the adjoining Music Room, adding a new dimension of meaning and beauty.

After his classes ended some of David's friends came to Krotona to see his mandala exhibit at the School. He also showed them the Krotona Library and, as they were chatting, other Library patrons gathered around to listen to him describe his art. Attracted by his enthusiasm, the crowd grew, Krotona staff was drawn in, and we moved into the Music



Room where David gave an impromptu talk. He explained that he photographs a mystical, sacred, or philosophical text, then digitally recombines the results into an abstract form created from the text. The result is a mandala-like structure, each unique and representing a particular belief system. The original text is obscured, and, as David says, is meant "to evoke the world beyond reason ... each is meant to serve as symbol and beacon of an ideal -- sparks of thought in the dark." It was a Sunday afternoon of unexpected wonder and delight!

Of Note Nelda Samarel

Farewells and Welcomes: The **Kamir Family** (Michael and Ann, and children Ruby and Adelka) will be leaving Krotona but still will be close by in Ojai. We wish them well in their new home. And we welcome back **Idarmis Rodruguez** who has returned to the US after four years at the TS international center in Adyar, India. Idarmis has been staying at Krotona as a guest and also staying with friends locally. Now she has returned to the center as a resident. Idarmis has been working for the TS for almost twenty-eight years.



Idarmis Rodruguez

In November Krotona resident, **Pablo Sender**, led the Central America and Caribe School of the Wisdom in San Jose, Costa Rica. His subject was "Meditation: Theory and Practice." Pablo's wife, Michele joined him and volunteered with food preparation for the participants while practicing her Spanish.

In December, Krotona Quest Bookshop manager and former Krotona resident, **Carol Nicholson**, hosted a holiday party in her new home for residents and friends of Krotona. Following a delicious buffet, we enjoyed singing Christmas carols, building a gingerbread house, and sharing each others' company on this special season.

December was the party season for Krotona residents and friends as the Institute hosted a New Year's Eve party at the School. Following a delicious Tibetan buffet, all enjoyed celebration and comradery.

Krotona resident, **Elena Dovalsantos**, directed the School of the Wisdom in Adyar, India from January 27 to February 7 where she presented "Key Teachings in the Secret Doctrine and their Relevance Today." Elena's husband, **Pablo Minniti**, accompanied her, along with Krotona resident, **Idarmis Rodriguez**.

It Takes a Village – To Run a Bookshop! Carol Nicholson

The Krotona Quest Bookshop is quite a special place. People who have never been here before feel it when they walk in the door. Perhaps one of the lovely things people respond to is the way the bookshop is run as an embodiment of the spirit of Brotherhood.

Everyone who staffs the Bookshop, whether paid or volunteer, really has the best interest of the Bookshop, their fellow workers, and the customers at heart. For example, when one volunteer needed to be away for two months this past year, the other staff members easily filled in the

schedule so the bookshop hours were uninterrupted. Then, the person who was away volunteered to fill several shifts while others were traveling. It is all done seamlessly with no one complaining about changing things around.

This selfless way of helping is the heart of being of service in a Theosophical way. Having people with right motivation staffing a business makes for team spirit and a sense of harmony. If only all businesses were run by people with this attitude!

The Krotonian

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Dear Friend of Krotona,

When we read, listen, or watch news from all the various media sources, it appears that most of the news is gloomy and sad. We rarely hear or see any good news in the media. This does not mean that all aspects of life are deteriorating. For example, in his book *Enlightenment Now*, Steven Pinker provides details of how human life has improved meaningfully in the past few hundred years. There have been great strides in science, medicine and technology, as well as improvements in literacy, healthcare and in the quality of life in many parts of the world. While it's true that humanity is going through a very difficult period and that climate change is a serious threat, it's also true that many dedicated and caring people are working tirelessly to solve these unprecedented challenges and alleviate suffering.

A quiet and serene place like Krotona gives visitors and students an opportunity to reflect on these important matters and contemplate the deeper aspects of life. Surrounded by majestic mountains and lush meadows, Krotona offers a silent space for meditation and reflection. Sometimes the mountains are covered by an early morning mist; they often turn pink just before sunset; and they always stand strong day and night to remind us of their constant presence in the midst of life's challenges. Krotona's marvelous trees, lily ponds, birds, and wild life remind us that we share the Earth with them, and we must treat them with dignity and respect.

The Krotona School classes are in full swing and have good attendance. Mary Jo Kokochak, Director of the Krotona Library, has been working hard over the last 6 months to reorganize the library. The goal of this effort is to provide better service to our patrons by making books easier to find, and adding space for additional books. There is also a lot of work taking place in the maintenance of our facilities which include the School, Library, Bookshop, and student and resident accommodations.

This year we are planning to connect to the municipal water supply for emergency water needs, especially when we are not able to supply water to the community due to failure in our well water supply system or a power outage. This is an extremely important project and requires approval from different authorities. The cost of the project is expected to be approximately \$50,000. Any support you can give us to assist this effort is greatly appreciated. Your donations are tax deductible and may be made at our website: www.krotonainstitute.org Donations can also be sent to us by mail.

We hope you will support Krotona, and we thank you very much for your patronage.

Please visit us soon.

Sincerely,

Guru Prasad
Resident Head



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*You are an aperture through which
the universe is looking at and
exploring itself.*

Alan Watts

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.