

Network News

New Network East-West Group

John Clarke

'There has been a dialogue going on for 3000 years between the two ends of the Old World; greatly have they influenced each other' (Joseph Needham)

'He who knows himself and other will also recognise that East and West cannot be separated' (Goethe)

As these quotations indicate, the mutual influence between the civilizations of Asia and Europe goes back a long way. Europe's impact on modern Asia is well-known, but we are not always quick to recognise the important influences that the East has had on European culture and thought over a long period of time.

The teachings of early Christianity were probably shaped in part by influences emanating from India. Many of the leading figures of the Enlightenment period such as Leibniz and Voltaire greatly admired the civilization of China and drew it into their revolutionary new ways of thinking. Goethe was only one of many thinkers of the Romantic period who were fascinated by ancient writings coming through to Europe from India for the first time. And in the nineteenth century Buddhism was seen by some, not only as a rival for Christianity, but even as a 'positivist', 'agnostic' religion which, more than Christianity, was compatible with the new scientific ethos.

In recent decades these contacts have intensified and proliferated over many areas of thought, experience and practice. In the area of scientific thinking Capra and others have sought to bring into some kind of synthesis the ancient world-views of the East and the philosophical assumptions of post-Newtonian physics. Joseph Needham, in his monumental work on science in China, has also brought into closer dialogue the scientific traditions of East and West, raising important question about the uniqueness of the scientific revolution in Europe. In the field of medicine, not only have practices such as acupuncture come into vogue, but traditional Asian theories concerning disease and health have helped to place the Western scientific medical traditions into wider context, and Eastern techniques have helped to bring about a revolution in our thinking concerning mental and physical health and well-being. The use of oriental meditation techniques has contributed towards a radical rethinking of the nature of spirituality, and has begun to play a significant role in consciousness studies. Traditional Eastern attitudes towards nature have begun to play an important catalytic role in the formulation of a more holistic ecological paradigm. And even in the realm of philosophy, where Eastern systems of thought have often been dismissed as irredeemably 'mystical', there is evidence of a new belief in the fruitfulness of comparative East-West studies that places traditional Western thinking in a wider perspective.

This is only a very brief summary of some of the broad areas of East-West dialogue that have begun to flourish of late. It is evident that they represent areas which are likely to be of interest to SMN members, and many issues that have been debated within SMN forums, even where they have not been explicitly concerned with Asian thought, have drawn on and made creative reference to thinkers and ideas from Eastern traditions. I am therefore proposing that the SMN should set up an East-West Group, perhaps along the lines of the Consciousness Group, which would provide a focus for these interests. I am not proposing

the development of a forum for the study of Eastern philosophes or belief systems as such, for this would take us well beyond the aims of the Network, but rather a focus for the discussion of those typical SMN issues which have an East-West dimension.

David Lorimer has indicated that the SMN would welcome such an initiative, and we are therefore planning a conference on March 11th 2000 in London which will aim to examine a specific and popular East-West issue, and which at the same time will enable us to sound out interest in this initiative and explore possible ways in which it might develop. The title of the conference is 'Jung and the East-West dialogue', with papers by Leon Schlamm, Stephen Karcher and myself, and with time set aside for discussing this proposal. In the meantime I would welcome any feedback from members.

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Network Forum for Integrated Medicine

CHARMIAN WYLDE writes: June 2000 will see the inaugural meeting of network's 'Forum for Integrated Medicine'. Its first subject will be "Moving Depression", the venue in London. The aims of this important new group will be:

- to stimulate vigorous thinking towards finding solutions to modern health problems
- to enable the communication process between 'orthodox' and 'complementary' practitioners
- to establish a 'voice' for the S & M within the arena of integrated medicine

Other topics to follow include cancer, addictions, the practice of compassionate medicine and a workshop for women on the challenges facing women's health. We envisage four meetings per year and there will also be a slot at next year's AGM for members to suggest ideas and participate in the development of the Forum. To ensure you don't miss the mailings for this group, please register your name with the office.

Network Bibliography Project on Web Site

LANCE BUTLER and I have made good progress on this project since the last issue, thanks to the hard work put in by contributing members. The first dozen entries will be up on the private side of the web site by Christmas and others will be added as they come in. Among the entries you will find are Goethean Science, Theoretical Approaches to Consciousness, Philosophy of Science, Ayurveda, Pscyhosynthesis, and Telepathy and Clairvoyance. Readers will remember that the idea behind this project is to produce position papers and essential references for those wishing to find out about a particular field.

Grant Awarded for Development of Speaker Service and Web Links

The Polden-Puckham Trust has awarded a grant of £2,500 to the Network to develop its current speaker service for schools and universities and to establish web site links with university departments. Among the team involved with me in the Speaker Service development are Trustee JANINE EDGE, JAYNE WARREN and CAROLINE WEBB. The web links will be co-ordinated by Lance Butler and JOHN CATON. More news in the next issue.

Continental Meeting in Sweden, May 2000

The next Continental Meeting will be hosted by Dr. Bo Ahrenfelt in Sweden from 12-14 May. The theme will be 'Through the Glass Darkly: Proof at the Frontiers of Science and Spirituality'. Continental Members will automatically receive an invitation to this meeting but anyone else interested in attending should contact the office. UK Members who have attended previous meetings will also receive an invitation. The invitation will be posted on the web site in the New Year.

Network Consciousness Group on Transformation

The group held a meeting in September to discuss consciousness transformation in science and medicine. Dr. ANN RODEN shared the results of a student project from an Ayurvedic viewpoint that considers lifestyle the primary cause of disease. She spoke of the importance of a partnership with patients and the fact that the disease can be a point of transformation. Practice, she maintained, was as much about being as doing. SUTAPAS BHATTACHARYA talked about his own transformation as recounted in his book *The Oneness-Otherness Mystery*, reviewed elsewhere in this issue by Alan Mayne. Science, he maintained, was an abstraction from the spatio-temporal order and formed part of a deeper transcendental order. In Indian traditions the Light is identified with pure consciousness and yogic practices involve the deconstruction of everyday perception. He distinguished between two levels of transformation, cognitive restructuring and the deeper emotional inside-out transformation of being. KEVIN KINGSLAND presented his logical model of possible perspectives of consciousness and knowledge, distinguishing the roles of science as a process, a body of knowledge and an element of culture. He explained his programme in holistic research methodologies, commenting that one role for Network members might be as supervisors for subjects currently considered marginal.

Network Esoteric Group

The group had a most stimulating day with Dr. JULIAN CANDY in October on 'Goethe and the Esoteric'. He covered a huge amount of ground including Goethe's life, science, poetry and philosophy to put the theme in context. He also spent time unravelling the symbolism of one of his main fairytales. He will be lecturing on this theme in June at the Theosophy and Science weekend. In the meantime, readers who would like to know more can contact him at 11 Shamrock Way, Hythe, Southampton SO45 6DY.

Network Book in Universities

Wider Horizons is now being used in two US universities as a course book for students. I also used it when I taught a week's course in Sweden in the summer. Prof. MARTIN LOCKLEY has sent us the following comment from his students: 'I have just started teaching my "Evolution of Consciousness" class at the University - using "Wider Horizons" as one of the texts. The students, more or less third year level, are already giving me good feedback, saying this "is just what they need right now to bring everything into perspective."'

Blaker Foundation Diary IN BOX IF POSS!

Further to the announcements in the last issue, the following programmes will be running:
12-13 February: The Participatory Universe, with Prof. Chris Clarke
19-20 February: Western Depth Psychology and Eastern Mystical Philosophy, with Dr. Chris Lyons
5 March: Living into Dying with Dr. Jenny Kitchen

The programme 'Implications of Modern Science for a New World View' will also be run. Please contact the administrator for further details at Bordesley Hall, Alvechurch, Worcs B48 7QB. Tel: 01527 61919

Comments on the Continental Meeting at Petzow (Potsdam)

Prof. WALTRAUD WAGNER took a great deal of trouble in preparing the booklet of abstracts for the meeting. She found that the worldview of American Indians helped her understand that of the Russian Scientists in so far as it is holistic and nondual. She comments that 'the difficulty in understanding how fields can be at the same time mental, psychic, magnetic and electromagnetic, energetic and even substantial is rooted in the sometimes hopeless dualistic view of people, who have suffered an education in western thinking, and so are unable to be aware that they experience the different aspects of these fields in daily life' She continues: 'It was an important concern for me to draw attention to the fact, that the father of the theory about morphogenetic fields is ALEXANDER GURWITSCH. Very little is known in western science about Gurwitsch's extensive work under the hard conditions in Russia. There are publications in English and German, written by Michael Lipkind (Israel, member of the International Institute of Biophysics, Neuss, and SMN-member). Meanwhile I have got the English version from Prof. Lipkind. It was published in 1998 in the Canadian paper '21st Century Science and Technology.

'Some other contributions, which necessarily will be the basis of a holistic science in the future, are indeed difficult to understand, if one has not thought about it before, but they should have been mentioned in the Report. However, in spite of language difficulties **the Russians did understand**, and it was the beginning of a co-operation between Russians and Germans. That's what I would expect from a SMN-meeting: a start or ongoing co-operation of scientists.'

Mystics and Scientists Report Apology

We would like to apologise for omitting proper reference to JANE RIDDER-PATRICK'S lecture in the report. ALAN MAYNE writes as follows: The mystical aspects of the solar theme were well explored by JOHN MORIARTY, JANE RIDDER-PATRICK, and RAVI RAVINDRA, speaking from very different, partly complementary, viewpoints. Jane began by outlining Robert Assaggioli's map of the human self, which is general, then described the astrological map (birth chart), which applies to the individual. Our birth chart is our drama, where the 'planets' are the actors, with common themes; for example, the Sun represents the personal self and corresponds to the 'element' Fire. Jane then gave some details of the following aspects of the person in relation to the Sun: the physical body, the person's roles, the qualities of Fire, and mythology, including common features of the hero's journey, which represents symbolically the development of consciousness and individuality.

College of Psychic Studies Lecture - Apology

I must apologise to members who turned up to Peter Fenwick's lecture at the CPS on the strength of the announcement in the last Calendar. I should have noticed that advance booking was required, but did not have previous experience of CPS lectures being completely sold out in advance - I underestimated Peter's popularity!