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THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF WORLD CULTURE

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MYSTICISM IN THE U.S.A.

April 6th, 1950

This thoughtful paper read by Shri L. Shankara Dorasami was prepared for the Indian Institute of Culture by Miss Katherine Merrill of Los Angeles, a Life Member of the Institute. In it the strange and various expressions of the mystical urge in the great American Republic are analyzed. Spiritualism, Christian Science, that which claimed to be Rosicrucianism, and New Thought are a few of the channels sought by man's yearnings towards the Divine, prompted by an inner assurance that there is something in man that survives death, that is in some Miss Merrill suggested way related to the Cosmic Whole.

That these various mystical seekers were at least kept by their interest in these cults from falling into sacerdotal-ism, which was a strong trend in the United States at the present time. But she recognized how far were most of these expressions from the ideal of true mysticism as known in the ancient world. (This paper was published in full in The Theosophical Movement (Bombay) for October 1950.)

Dr. N. S. N. Sastry's comment from the Chair was that there was little of the mystical in the cults described, the aspects of true mysticism in the country not being advertised and remaining hidden. Shri K. S. Nagarajan contrasted mysticism as described in the U.S. A. with the Indian tradition, to the former's detriment. There was as much more discussion as time permitted, one of the speakers citing the testimony of Elected Silence, a recent book by Thomas Merton (Father Louis), to the growing appeal which the contemplative life held for mystically inclined Roman Catholics in the U.S.A. However re-stricting the influence which sectarianism might exert upon the spontaneous urge towards union with the Divine, that inner urge was always hopeful and potential-ly regenerating. The degree of mystic realization depend-ed upon something deeper than orthodox conformity to any body of dogmas, though such realization was often held back from full universality by creedal limitations and sought expression in familiar creedal images.

THE SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF MANKIND

April 13th, 1950

The description of the important Unesco project under this title, prepared by Dr. Armando Cortesao, the Secretary General of the project, was received by the Institute through the courtesy of the author. The paper was read by Dr. L. S. Dorasami at the specially conven-ed Discussion

Meeting. It traces the history of the project from the General Conference of Unesco held in 1947, a resolution of which called for preparations for the production of books which will provide, for the general and specialist reader, a wider understanding of the scientific and cultural aspects of the history of mankind, of the mutual inter-dependence of peoples and cultures and of their contributions to the common heritage.

" " The Committee of Experts to draw up a plan for the proposed publications met in December 1949, defining the aim as the establishment of a world civilization" and the problem as "What are the Elements from all Civilizations which ought to be combined in the World Civilization?" The revealing of the "mutual indebtedness of all peoples" will be an important contribution of the project to mutual understanding and sympathy between the nations.

Dr. Cortesao declares truly that "it is by serving Mankind that the individual man can best serve himself, assert his self-respect, defend his freedom." The finding of what Dr. Cortesao describes as the great tributaries of that mighty river which we call Civilization" is indeed full of promise for world unity. "

The Chairman, Shri P. Kodanda Rao of the Servants of India Society, emphasized the basic unity of culture, which not only included all branches of knowledge but also was of all nations. The downfall of a nation did not mean the stoppage of culture. Rome, for instance, had fallen, but Roman law still had to be understood for the study of law. Each country was all the time appropriating the cultures of other countries and assimilating them.

The constructive suggestion was made in the discussion that those competent to deal with ancient Eastern culture should be adequately represented on the project, the tendency having been to overlook the basic contribution of the ancient East among the antecedents of Western culture.

THE NATURE OF MAN

April 15th, 1950

Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao of the Gujarat College, Ahmedabad, outlined the spiritual and materialistic views about man's nature. The former viewed man as a special being whose essence was spirit, not matter. But Copernicus had given the earth, and consequently man, an insignificant place in the universe; Darwin had presented him as the outcome of Nature's selective work; Freud had shown his mind a series of complexes,

instincts, etc., and Watson claimed him to be but a Behaviourist. The Rational Humanists had challenged man's being a mechanism with their ideas of human perfectibility and the paramountcy of reason. Dr. Nagaraja Rao maintained that belief in reason was still an act of faith, as much as belief in a creed; freethinking was no thinking.

THE DESTINY OF MAN

April 17th, 1950

Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao continued in this lecture the analysis of the defects of materialism, begun in the preceding one, objecting to the false identification of the "I" with the body, feelings, thoughts, etc. Even the Humanists could offer man no destiny other than final obliteration when the earth could no longer support life. The Hedonists could offer nothing better than sensualism. Dr. Nagaraja Rao maintained that there was an essential spirit in man and that it was in man's power to know his true self, the Universal Self; the destiny of man was to manifest the Spirit.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE INDIAN REPUBLIC

April 20th, 1950

Shri M. Ramaswamy's lecture was a condensation of his article on the Indian Constitution published in the Canadian Bar Review. Especially interesting was his clarification of the position of the President. Normally the latter, like the English King, acted only on the advice of his Ministers. He appointed the Prime Minister and then the other Ministers on the Prime Minister's advice. He had to follow their advice because they controlled the supply tap, without which no government could function, though the Act did not say that he must act only on their advice. As long as the Congress Party continued in power, as it was likely to do for many years, there was not likely to be much difference between the President and his Ministers. When other parties came to power, however, and minority parties joined forces, there would be rise and fall of ministries. Unless the President had certain residuary powers, things would be at a standstill.

THE CULTURE OF THE PHILIPPINES

April 29th, 1950

The native culture of the Philippines had been driven out during four centuries of Spanish occupation before the Americans took the Islands over at the beginning of this century, Mr. Lorenzo Bautista said. The only exception was found among the "Pagans in the hills. There was one dialect which had been made the official language of the people but only

in name, for English was the chief language and the medium of instruction for higher education and for much primary education also. Spanish was the second language.

Since coming to India to represent his country, the Philippines, at the Peace Conference, Mr. Bautista had realized he was more Indian than Western, but most Filipinos went the American way and knew little of Indian culture. It had, he said, been proved that the origin of the Philippine dialects was South Indian. There was today full educational and political equality of men and women. Most of the people were Roman Catholics, some Protestants, the rest Pagans, the hill people holding to the remnants of the old faith now sadly corrupted. The Islands had rich natural resources, but the people were very poor, except for the wealthy proprietors.

NORWEGIAN CULTURE

5th April 1951

At this meeting the paper specially prepared for the Institute by Mrs. Inger Aubert Daan of Oslo was read by Shri L. Shankara Doraiswamy under the chairmanship of Prof. N. A. Nikam of the Maharani's College, Bangalore.

In her paper Mrs. Daan sketched the history of her country; its early Runic stones and its Eddas; the daring Viking explorations; the long Danish period succeeded by the union with Sweden, peacefully terminated after 91 years; described Norway's literary and other cultural attainments; and gave a convincing picture of a liberty-loving, peaceful, law-abiding people, solicitous for popular education, health and general well-being and with a great enthusiasm for 'One World.' "

Mrs. Kodanda Rao began the discussion by describing how well the hard-working Norwegians had adjusted themselves to American life, the United States having more people of Norwegian descent than Norway itself had. She touched also on the beauties of nature in the Land of the Midnight Sun. "

Shri J. T. Pashupalaty commended the country's freedom from the spirit of revenge, against which many a patriot about to die at the hands of the enemy had warned in the last war, as Mrs. Daan had brought out. He praised also the country's relinquishment of its old colonies of Iceland and Greenland without a struggle, when it had separated from Denmark in 1814; and its having had the first written laws in Western Europe.

In answer to a question from one of the audience, Mrs. Kodanda Rao

explained the early Norwegian method of the burial of Kings in their boats, fully equipped.

Before Professor Nikam closed the meeting with stress on the early mythology of the Norse people, their sense of eternal values and of the universal processes of Nature, Shri P. Kodanda Rao gave at his request a brief report on the Congress for Cultural Freedom which he had just attended at Bombay.

An innovation in connection with this Discussion Meeting was the arranging of a second Meeting on Norwegian Culture, five days after the first, at which, besides a short talk on the subject, there was an exhibition of photographs mounted on cardboard. Many smaller photographs illustrative of Norwegian life and culture were shown with the epidiascope and some typical records of Norwegian music were played to an appreciative audience.

THE U. S. GOVERNMENT'S INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE OF PERSONS PROGRAMME

7th April 1951

Mr. Wayne M. Hartwell, Cultural Affairs Officer of the United States Information Service, Bombay, brought out in this lecture under the chairmanship of Shri P. Kodanda Rao of the Servants of India Society the importance of international exchange of persons for international understanding and the well-being of the various countries. Under the Fulbright Act, he explained, about 70-80 Indian students could go annually to the U.S.A. and both students and professors from the U.S.A. could come to India. The leader-specialist exchange plan under the Smith-Mundt Act had first brought Mr. Norman Cousins to India; and 40 eminent Indians would go to the United States for three months. He mentioned the several mimeographed bulletins distributed by the U.S.I.S. in India, and its American Reporter, and referred to a plan to print here Indian editions of needed books, thus ensuring more employment in India as well as cheaper prices.

BERNARD SHAW AND POLITICS

12th April 1951

Professor A. N. Moorthy Rao, lecturing under the chairmanship of Shri C. B. Srinivasa Rao, began with a picture of the romantic, optimistic and smug Victorian attitude to life, which Shaw had set himself to breaking down. Repeatedly in his plays Shaw had exposed the control of government by big business and the hollow pretences of the politician,

with his ignorance and party spirit and fine speeches, fooling the masses of blind followers. He had believed that progressive evolution would eventually bring man to a higher level, but had no constructive suggestions for making people more mature here and now, beyond proposing to increase the span of life to 300 years or so!

THE CHALLENGE TO GOD FROM GREEK AND ENGLISH LITERATURE

19th April 1951

In this lecture presided over by Prof. N. A. Nikam, Shri L. S. Seshagiri Rao, Lecturer in English in the Central College, dealt first with the Greek dramatists: Eschylus had showed the Gods as evolving, learning from their blunders, but also had depicted the implacable justice of law; Sophocles had agreed that the sinner never escaped suffering but showed that sometimes the innocent suffered too; it was all for discipline; Euripides' ironical praise of the Gods had proved his disbelief in them.

Marlowe's Dr. Faustus had shaken the ordinary notions of God and justice. For Marlowe, as for Spenser, Keats and Shelley, Beauty was the object of faith; Keats had equated it with Truth; this poets' religion had been continued in Bridges and Brooke. In Prometheus Unbound Shelley had showed Zeus strong only through man's weakness; when he had forgiven Zeus, Prometheus had been released. Hardy had showed suffering inevitable for the individual but serving a universal purpose. Shaw's Life-Force, he had showed, would master man unless man conquered nature.

Such had been some of the ways in which great thinkers had met the challenge of the God idea.

LEONARDO DA VINCI DAY

15th April 1952

The 500th anniversary of the birth of Leonardo da Vinci was celebrated by a Special Meeting under the chairmanship of Sir Samuel Runganadhan, former Indian High Commissioner at London.

The special paper on "Leonardo da Vinci," prepared for the occasion by the distinguished art critic, Prof. O. C. Gangoly of Calcutta, which was read by Shri Shankara Doraiswamy, with illustrative slides, has been published as the Institute's Transaction No. 14.

The Chairman said that the remarkable versatility of Leonardo's genius had been less generally remembered than his great paintings and his

place as a grand figure of the Renaissance. Celebrations in honour of this great man were being held this year in many places. An exhibition of his drawings was being held in Burlington House, London. He touched upon Leonardo's mechanical genius and the ideas in which he had been far ahead of his times.

The meeting unanimously passed a Resolution proposed by Professor Gangoly and read by the Honorary Secretary :-

RESOLVED That this meeting of the Indian Institute of Culture respectfully and earnestly recommends that, having regard to the fact that thousands of students graduate from the University of Mysore brilliantly equipped in all phases of culture save and except Indian Art, the finest flower of Indian civilization and culture, the University of Mysore should introduce the study of Indian Fine Arts as a subject of major study and that until such study be introduced in the curriculum the University should arrange courses of extramural lectures on Indian Art by a competent expert every year.

Many members of the Bangalore Arts Club and the Kalamandir were among the audience.

YOUTH FINDS A WAY

17th April 1952

This paper sent by Mr. W. Roy Breg, Executive Secretary of Allied Youth, Inc., was an address delivered by him in July 1951 before the Institute for the Prevention of Alcoholism at the School of Medical Evangelists, Loma Linda, California, and not yet published. In it he described the large organization which has grown up in the United States having as members young people opposed to the drinking of alcohol, offering wholesome recreational opportunities and seeking to build up high ideals of life and conduct among people of their age group.

After the reading of the paper by Dr. L. S. Dorasami, there was nearly three-quarters of an hour of lively discussion of the problem. While alcohol consumption by young people was less of a problem in India than in the United States, there were other directions in which self-restraint and self-discipline were necessary, Shri C. B. Srinivasa Rao, Retired First-Class Magistrate, brought out. Internal restraints were more effective than external, but a laissez-faire attitude would not do. Prohibition had been strongly advocated by Gandhiji.

Mr. James O. Mackenzie dwelt on the effect of alcohol on the higher brain centres, as brought out by the paper, having the effect of an

anæsthetic. People's desire to escape from the personal consciousness, which led to drinking, was due to the lack of adequate ideals, a lack which Allied Youth, Inc., was trying to supply. He condemned alcohol as a source of revenue, as it meant the Government's participation in the debauching of its citizens.

Shri K. Revenna, Retired Director of the Forest Services, Mysore, referred to the revenue from alcohol as bearing hardest on the poor. He thought that the benefits of prohibition far outweighed its so-called evils.

Shri M. V. Venkataramiah thought that the extent of drinking among Indian young people was still small and if strongly discountenanced would disappear; but they were given bad examples in cocktail parties and screen exhibitions of drinking.

Shri C. Bhaskariah, Retired Deputy Accountant-General of India, who presided, came out strongly against alcohol consumption and insisted that there should be prohibition, from which the poorer classes, who were the chief addicts, would benefit. There should also be education in the schools on the evils of alcohol, and better sources of revenue should be sought.

DAIRYING IN ANCIENT INDIA

3rd April 1952

Some interesting similarities were pointed out by the lecturer, Rajasevasakta Shri A. K. Yegna Narayan Aiyer, Retired Director of Agriculture, Mysore, between the dairying practices in ancient and in modern India. He cited numerous texts from the Vedas, the Arthashastra and some ancient Tamil classics in support of this and pointed to the temple carvings in proof of much the same types of cattle having been used in ancient India as to-day. The texts gave numerous details as to type and quantities of feed for liberal milk yield, the number of milkings varying from time to time. They also threw light on the knowledge of medicinal herbs for various diseases of cattle in ancient times. Since Asoka's day, the lecturer mentioned, there had been hospitals not only for human beings but also for cattle. Bulls had been carefully selected for specific qualities, and there were even bull-fights mentioned, similar to those of modern Spain.

Butter, ghee and curds had been produced as today, the churning having been done by whirling the rod by a rope. The lecturer made it clear that much of the knowledge of animal husbandry, etc., which had been built up in the last century in the West had been possessed by the ancients.

Shri R. Ramachandra Rao Bhombore, the Retired Commissioner of Labour, who presided, pointed out the contrast between ancient days, when the land had been so freely flowing with milk that even a portion was returned to the cow in its daily diet and the present, when milk was now denied to most of our village children. He had been the Chairman of a Commission which had found that practically the whole product was being sold either as milk or milk products.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF AYURVEDA

10th April 1952

An exposition of the philosophy underlying the Ayurvedic system of medicine was given at the Institute by Shrimati G. Sumati Taranath, a practising Ayurvedic physician, under the chairmanship of Shri Y. Partha- narayan Pandit, Medical Officer, Sri Jayachamarajendra Institute of Indian Medicine.

Ayurveda, the lecturer said, meant literally "knowl- edge of life," and included the spiritual and mental as well as physical aspects of life. Of very ancient origin, Ayurveda had been systematized in the period of the Darshanas. Its foundations, the Tridosha Siddhanta, rested on the theory of the five elements, approximately rendered as earth, water, fire, air and ether, and their interaction. Man was the microcosm of the universe and the inner world of consciousness and the outer world were of the same substance and so were interconnected. What the elements were to the universe the doshas were to the individual. The rationale of healing was to re- establish harmony by correction of excess or deficiency in these.

The Ayurvedic physician took into account also the qualities, physical properties and special characteristics of medicinal substances, the season, the altitude and the climate; and the patient's constitution and age.

The interaction of body and mind was recognized by Ayurveda, Shrimati Taranath said. It was possible to classify even young children by their types. Ayur- veda could be of great assistance to mothers in bringing up their children healthily; and rudimentary knowledge of the herbs which it prescribed would have real value. The principles were the same throughout the country, though each part had its own natural remedies. The pulse played a prominent part in diagnosis, the lecturer explained.

The Chairman gave in closing a short review of the history of Ayurveda. Its position in the new democratic State of India, he said, was critical, as it

had no State protection. He pointed out the difference between Ayurveda and modern theories. Ayurveda was a science, but modern remedies praised today were often discarded to- Ayurveda, he declared, should be rejuvenated. morrow.

TOWARDS A STATE OF INNOCENCE

19th April 1952

Shri N. Madhava Rao, Director of Food Supplies, Mysore, lecturing under the chairmanship of Dr. M. V. Govindaswamy, Superintendent of the Mental Hospital, Bangalore, brought out the lack of integration of the modern man. He ascribed it to his viewing life from too short a perspective. How many ages did we not epit- omize in our nine months' gestation! Pythagoras and others had spoken of the past lives they could remember. But the man who thought of his age as but a few score years felt unable to face the cosmos with confidence.

" Man, the lecturer declared, was a spiritual and psy- chic as well as a physical being. The physical memory, however, kept us so busy with details that we did not tap the vast resources of our inner consciousness. Primitives, like children, lived in an 'age of innocence," for they lived fully integrated lives and were happy. Then came the stage of the matriarchate; but with the growth of population and the passing of supremacy to the male, the human being found himself in an age of uncertainty and discord, at war with outside nature and with himself. His return to a state of innocence or integration had to be through non-attachment. The example had been set by some, like Jesus and Gandhiji. Only a return to the point where modern civilization had branched off from the main current of human development could save it.

Dr. Govindaswamy, after commenting on Shri Madhava Rao's lecture, said that the turning-point of evolution had been when man had learned to think for himself. He went also into the way in which physical adaptations, the insulation of the body by its skin against temperature changes, and the functioning of the blood, had freed man for the supreme task of thinking and direct- ing his life free from concern for his bodily mechanism.



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CULTURAL PROGRAMMES APRIL - 2024
PROGRAMMES WILL BE HELD IN WADIA HALL

April 7th Sunday 6:00 PM : Sri Kripanarayan Iyengar and Sri B. I. Nagaraj Memorial Programme Nostalgic Memories of Vintage Music(Remembering versatile Music Director and Singer C. Ramchandra)Video Presentation and Talk

Topic : Life and Music of Sri Chitalkar Ramchandra (1918-1982)

Speaker : Sri H N Narahari Rao (President, Suchitra Film Society)Presided by : Dr. T. S. Sathyavathi (President, IIWC)
Collaboration :Smt. Ranganayaki Iyengar,
Smt. Pramila Nagaraj and family

April 26th Friday 6:00 PM : Sri K V Ramachandra Rao and Smt. D V Padmavattamma Memorial Programme Bharatanatyam Dance Recital
By : Kumari Rasagnya Collaboration :Koppa Family

OTHER PROGRAMMES : APRIL - 2024

April 4th Thursday 6:00 PM : Book Release Program Niyogi Publications

April 7th Sunday 10:00 AM : “ಅಕ್ಷೀ” Film Screening

April 13th Saturday 6:00 PM : Drama Program – Team Rangantra

April 14th Sunday 10:00 AM : “ರಾಮಾಯಣ ಪಾತ್ರ ಕಥಾ ಮಾಲಿಕೆ”
ಪುಸ್ತಕ ಬಿಡುಗಡೆ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ

April 14th Sunday 6:00 PM : Drama Program – Team Rangantra

April 20th Saturday 7:30 PM : Drama Program – “ಮಳೆ ನಗೆಯ ಹೊಳೆ”
Team Neralu

April 21st Sunday 10:00 AM : Sawanna Publications Book Release Program

April 21st Sunday 6:00 PM : Sri M A Narasimhachar Music Foundation Celebrates Sri M A Narasimhachar Centenary Celebrations Carnatic Vocal Concert
Vocal : Vidwan Siddharth Prakaash
Violin : Vidwan Vaibhav Ramani
Mridangam : Vidwan Panindra Bhaskar
Ghata : N S Krishna Prasad

April 30th Tuesday 6:00 PM : Bhanumathi Nruthyakala Mandiram Trust Bharatanatyam Dance Recital

ALL ARE WELCOME

The other Programmes are by external individuals or organizations and are only hosted on the premises of the IIBC. IIBC does not necessarily endorse the views/opinions of the sponsors or the proceedings of the programmes and IIBC does not take any responsibility for these programmes. **WH: (Wadia Hall)**

***Our Recent Publications Transactions List
available in the Library / Office***

SPECIAL CLASSES

- ART CLASSES : Directed by Sri T.K.N. Prasad, Dr. Ramaa and Ambuja Rao Meets every Tuesday and Thursday between 3.30 pm to 5.30 pm
- ART CLASSES (SENIOR BATCH) : Directed by Sri Sanjay Chapolkar meets every Friday, Saturday and Sunday between 11:30 am to 2:30 pm and 3:30 pm to 6:30 pm

ACTIVITIES

- Library has a collection of about 80,000 volumes on culture, history, literature, philosophy etc.
 - Reading Room receives about 200 magazines and periodicals from all over the world.
 - Children's Library has about 20,000 books in a separate building and caters to the needs of students and youth.
 - Behanan's Library has a special collection of important works and reference books.
 - Publication consist of a monthly bulletin, transactions, books and reprints. Sale as well as exchange arrangements are welcome. Programmes are held each month consisting of literary, visual and performing arts. About 15 to 20 activities are planned every month.
 - Bequests, donations and endowments enjoy 80G Concession. Inquiries invited.
-

**LET US ALL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW
COVID 19 PROTOCOL FULLY TO STAY SAFE.**

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WORKING DAYS	:	Tuesday to Sunday (Monday Holiday)
OFFICE TIME	:	10.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.
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