

A full-page photograph of a sunset over the ocean. The sun is a bright, glowing orb in the upper center, casting a long, shimmering reflection down the center of the water. The sky is a mix of soft orange, yellow, and pale blue. The ocean is filled with waves of varying sizes, their white foam catching the light. In the middle distance, a person is seen lying on a surfboard, riding a small wave. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

# FRIEDRICH'S NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2007

## Dear Friends

IN ONE OF my previous Dear Friends letters, I mentioned the wish of a study centre guest and friend to have more humour in The Link. So, I'll begin with a joke. I heard this from Radhika Herzberger at Rishi Valley: A little mouse with her mother sees a bat and exclaims, "Look mother, an angel!"

And one morning I was walking in the Black Forest near Haus Sonne (our friends Christian and Eva's guesthouse) and met a man who asked where I was staying. I explained, and he said, "It's all vegetarian, isn't it?" Yes. "No alcohol?" Right. He hesitated and then, looking very serious and extremely doubtful, proclaimed, "Hard!"



This edition of The Link includes several photographs taken during a two-month stay in India this past winter. I spent most of the time at Rishi Valley – and if one wants to meet the world, one can simply go to Rishi Valley in winter! There were people from Russia, Iran, Turkey, Poland, Switzerland, Germany, Britain, USA, Mexico, and of course from all over India, plus the many old and new friends living year-round at Rishi Valley. One feels very much at home there. I went for many walks in the valley and, during the second half of my stay, Ramola Vijendra took me on his well-known, so-called 'power walks'.

Besides the school, other interesting places to learn about in the valley include the hospital, which tended to nearly 16,000 patients this past year, the rural school, and the satellite schools with their now-famous RIVER programme. This teaching/learning programme has been adopted by UNESCO, which, when considering multi-grade teaching in India, identified RIVER schools as having the highest learning scores in language and maths in the country. For more information, please see pg. 37.

Another interesting place is the ecological village nearby, where they use bio gas and solar energy for cooking. We were told that the villagers save two months of work each year in not needing to search for wood in the sur-

Front Cover: Adyar Beach at sunrise, Chennai, India

rounding area, which is now almost treeless. A sign in the village, which is also in Telugu, says:

Wood & LPG (Gas)-Free Village: Bysanivari Palli, Chittoor District

1. Number of Households	36
2. Number of Bio Gas Plants	23
3. Number of Solar Cookers	26
4. Number of Families Using Traditional Stoves	NIL
5. Reduction of CO2 (tonnes/year)	104
6. Saving of Firewood (tonnes/year)	72
7. Saving of LPG (gas units/year)	5,832

I had never before taken so many photographs of the beautiful villagers around Rishi Valley. It was also the first time I used a digital camera. I showed one elderly woman her photo on the camera screen, and after a while she came running after me – shouting – because she wanted to see her picture again! The villagers are very friendly and, it seems to me, more welcoming than ever. This is maybe partly due to the many interactions between Rishi Valley School and the villagers: for example, many villagers in the valley work on campus, and they also receive food. Additionally, there are the hospital, the rural school and the village schools – all set up by the School. And Rishi Valley students go to the villages and spend some time with the families there.

I was also in Chennai, at Vasanta Vihar, for a few days. Mark Lee, one of the KFA and KFI trustees, was also there, along with two new KFA trustees: Craig Walker, who as a young man attended the original Malibu discussions with K in the 1970s and is now the KFA Secretary, and James Paul, an



A shepherd near Thettu village, Rishi Valley, India

## K: To look without a word

The brain is active from the moment you wake up until you go to sleep; and even then the activity of the brain is still going on. That activity in the form of dreams is the same movement of the day carried on during sleep. The brain has never a moment's rest, never does it say, "I have finished." It has carried over the problems which it accumulated during the day into sleep; when you wake up those problems still go on – it is a vicious circle. A brain that is to be quiet must have no dreams at all; when the brain is quiet during sleep there is a totally different quality entering into the mind. How does it happen that the brain which is so tremendously, enthusiastically active, can naturally, easily, be quiet without any effort or suppression? I will show it to you.

As we said, during the day it is endlessly active. You wake up, you look out of the window and say to yourself, "Oh, awful rain," or "It is a marvellous day, but too hot" – you have started! So at that moment, when you look out of the window, don't say a word; not suppressing words but simply realising that by saying, "What a lovely morning," or "A horrible day," the brain has started. But if you watch, looking out of the window and not saying a word to yourself – which does not mean you suppress the word – just observing without the activity of the brain rushing in, there you have the clue, there you have the key. When the old brain does not respond, there is a quality of the new brain coming into being. You can observe the mountains, the river, the valleys, the shadows, the lovely trees and the marvellous clouds full of light beyond the mountains – you can look without a word, without comparing.

*The Impossible Question, pp. 76–77*  
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orchestra conductor. One day we began a sunrise walk on Adyar Beach at 5.30. Coming up to the Vasanta Vihar gate, still completely dark, we saw two men wrapped in pieces of plastic and sleeping in the driveway.

We continued these walks, and also walked again in the late afternoon. On one – with Gautama, the principal of The School-KFI-Chennai, who is now starting another school, in Vallipuram – we met a nice fisherman named I. Karuna Karan. He spoke English quite well and had been to the Olcott School of the Theosophical Society. He spoke respectfully about K. Later, on the last walk of my stay, I was with Raman and Rabindra when we came upon Karuna again. He told us that once, when he was a shy little boy, K had grasped his hand and took him for a fast walk – he said almost nobody could keep up with K. K must have gone to the village, too, because he also told us that K could just look at somebody who had fever and the fever would be gone.

Karuna explained that, during the tsunami of December 2004, he had run to higher ground when he'd seen the first wave, and then the second wave demolished his hut. He showed us the small foundation that remained, then invited us to see his new place. It was again a little hut, without windows, crammed into a tiny alleyway. He introduced us to his brother and little daughter, who was with two other small girls, very interested in this white man with the strange sunglasses that can be flipped up and down. Contrary to

other children, these fisher children strike me as very natural: when you take pictures, they don't freeze up or pose – but they are wilder. The hut is in an area of government-built housing, but much too small. Karuna was told that he could add a storey onto it but that he would have to pay for it himself. I thought I had some dollars in my rucksack, but I



A little girl in the hills above Rishi Valley, India

had put them somewhere else, so he suggested he could see me at Vasanta Vihar. When he came, I gave him a shoulder bag with all the biscuits Raman and Rabindra and I were given at the school in the mornings and could never eat, and some dollars, pounds and



Boys selling papayas, Rishi Valley, India

francs, along with The Beauty of the Mountain. He was very pleased and tried to touch my feet and asked for my blessing. I didn't know how to give it!

On the flight back, I sat next to a doctor, and after a while we started talking. He was from the Reddy family in Madanapalle and has lived in New York for 36 years. One of his sons had studied for two years at Rishi Valley in the early '80s. He said the School, with its excellent curriculum, had given his son a solid basis for his future. He then asked me what I thought about the current Sai Baba celebrations in Chennai, and I said it felt like a circus. He said he totally agreed.

This year was the Krishnamurti Centre at Brockwood Park's 20th anniversary. There was a small celebration in July, at which some short talks were given. In mine (read out by Claudia, because I couldn't be there), I mentioned that I like to ask guests how they came upon K. Usually it's through a book. There was one story of a man from Spain who began reading a Krishnamurti book in a bookshop, and he continued reading it for hours, unable to stop. Finally, a saleswoman approached him and asked, "Don't you want to buy that book?!" Another story is from Brockwood's dance teacher, Bettina. She was browsing in a bookshop, and something distracted her, but she nevertheless

reached for a book, without looking. And – it turned out to be a Krishnamurti book, and that book changed her life. So many of the stories I hear are told as if, like lightning, the book just appeared and created a great deal of light.

In August, the ‘Saanen’ Gathering took place in a small, high-mountain Swiss village called Mürren. Gisele Balleys is almost a genius for running the gathering without too much authority. The friendly hotel, with fantastic snow-capped mountains and glaciers all around, made everyone want to return there next year. Gisele has already made the booking, and next year’s dates can be found on pg. 54.



Brockwood Park School has a full complement of students (67) for the year beginning September '07, and in fact a waiting list of 14. This is good news. There is now a vital debate going on there concerning how to secure the School’s future. One option is to provide more accommodation that might house a few more students – without losing that special quality that comes from being a small school based on fundamental enquiry as K envisaged it.

A little while ago, there was a university professor from Mexico staying at the Centre. She’d come across Brockwood by searching the internet for the phrase “in loco parentis”, and a Link article came up by one of Brockwood’s former academic directors, Toon Zweers. She was very thankful for this, as she had never before heard of the School, and she ended up bringing her son here and he’s now a student.

At the end of June each year, those students and staff members who won’t be returning for the following academic year give speeches at a special school dinner. The following speech was given by Lucile Demory, a leaving student. It speaks for itself, I think:

It all began that one evening. My sister was helping me revise a history lesson when she realised how ridiculous the way I had been learning was. And she started telling me about this school she had read about, in England, where teaching is done differently and where students sit on sofas during classes. She was very enthusiastic about it, but of course I wasn’t. It was simply not for me. There was no way I would even consider it – yet, somehow, I came, and it has been four years.





I always felt as though my turn to leave would never come, as if I always had so much time ahead of me. I couldn't imagine my life outside Brockwood. And yet, when I started going to leaving-students meetings, leaving-students camp, leaving-students breakfast, well, I finally realised that I was leaving, and that the time had come to write this very dreaded speech.

I guess a perfect word to describe my time here in Brockwood is 'euphoria'. I must have had the four happiest and fruitful years of my life here, and I've really learnt to enjoy every day's little pleasures. And how could I not in such an environment where so much is offered, where everyone is so open to each other, where there is nothing to fear? It may sound over-idealized, but this is really how I feel about Brockwood when I look back at it – as such a harmonious place. Just look at it. You're walking in the garden, the sun is setting, there is someone watering the plants, someone else is playing guitar, and you are on your way for a walk. How much more perfect could it be? Really, can you think of another school where students go pick strawberries in their pyjamas for breakfast, or a school where people come out crying after a dance performance because it was so powerful, or a school where people gather around fires, sing and eat veggie burgers?! All these little unique moments and opportunities we have here are what make the place so special. And not just the place but the people in it have contributed so much to making Brockwood what it has been to me. I have always been so amazed at how, somehow, this little place brings such beautiful people and so many talents together. Living with you all has just been such a great experience and so much fun. I have made the most incredible friends. You guys have made my time here so unbelievable.

In my first year someone told me that I would get fed up with the place after a while. In a way I wish I had – it would have been easier to leave! But it's ok, because I've realized that it was possible to lead what I consider to be my dream life.

I find it reassuring that there is such a place as Brockwood in the world. It must really go on, and I hope for as many students as possible to go through what I did. I couldn't have dreamt of better school years.

Good luck to you all. I will miss every single one of you.

We are always interested to hear what former Brockwood students go on to do, like Andrés Nader, who joined the school in 1983 for four years. He said he'd arrived at the School well prepared academically, but that Brockwood helped him to go even further, not only because of the classes he took but also because of the other, more special, aspects of the place. He said the most important thing was that students were taken seriously by the teachers. In a difficult time of adolescence, one was living in an international environment where respect for others, responsibility and freedom weren't empty slogans but rather lived or at least taken seriously. He said Brockwood gave him special friendships, trust in the world and in himself, curiosity about the world, openness towards others, and many other things.

Andrés, from Argentina, studied at Bennington College in Vermont, then at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. He was a professor in German studies at the University of Rochester in New York until moving to Berlin with his wife, Agnès Benoit, and their two children. Agnès, also a former Brockwood student, is a dancer. Andrés now works at the Amadeu Antonio Foundation in Berlin. The foundation was created in 1998 to strengthen a democratic civil society and to combat right-wing extremism, racism and anti-Semitism. His book *Traumatic Verses: On Poetry in German from the Concentration Camps, 1933–1945* is coming out in October 2007.

By the way, I know several former Brockwood students who work as professors, in various fields, and several who work as dancers or dance teachers. On a different note, there are also quite a number who bring their children to the school, and more and more are returning as staff members.



Paul Herder, a former Brockwood Park School teacher and former Oak Grove School teacher, sent a report on this year's Teacher's Academy at Oak Grove, which he heads. There were 10 participants, several still undergraduates in education degree programmes.

What stood out for me was the extraordinary enthusiasm and dedication these people showed for both education and Krishnamurti's teachings.

## **K: Meditation is the passing away of experience**

It was early but all the birds had been out long before the sun was on the water. Even at that hour the river was awake with the light of the heavens and meditation was a sharpening of the immensity of the mind; the mind is never asleep, never completely unaware; patches of it were here and there sharpened by conflict and pain, made dull by habit and passing satisfaction, and every pleasure left a mark of longing. But all these darkened passages left no space for the totality of the mind. These became enormously important and always breeding more immediate significance and the immensity is put aside for the little, the immediate. The immediate is the time of thought and thought can never resolve any issue except the mechanical. But meditation is not the way of the machine; it can never be put together to get somewhere; it is not the boat to cross to the other side. There is no shore, no arriving and, like love, it has no motive. It is endless movement whose action is in time but not of time. All action of the immediate, of time, is the ground of sorrow; nothing can grow on it except conflict and pain. But meditation is the awareness of this ground and choicelessly never letting a seed take root, however pleasant and however painful. Meditation is the passing away of experience. And then only is there clarity whose freedom is in seeing. Meditation is a strange delight not to be bought on the market; no guru or disciple can ever be of it; all following and leading have to cease as easily and naturally as a leaf drops to the ground.

Krishnamurti's Notebook, pp. 313–314  
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Every participant arrived deeply touched by K's insights and shared for these intense three weeks a passion about changing society through a revolution in education. I must say, working with them was a great privilege. ... I'm sure that eventually a few Academy participants will filter into the K schools. And I believe that those who go elsewhere will have an impact in bringing about a different kind of education. ... After three successive years of running the same curriculum, we are able to submit the program of study for accreditation with an existing university. ... Through shared dialogue these educators move inexorably into action. This is healthy and necessary and a vital part of the future of K's teachings. There is still much to do as regards ongoing support and development – one participant has asked for an advanced Teacher's Academy for next year. But I am confident that we are on the right track.



I recently read in a K book something along the lines of: When only the sense of seeing is active (as opposed to all of the senses being alert), then thought arises. This reminded me that whenever I walked with K I had the impression that he wasn't looking all around; rather, he seemed to be looking straight ahead and walking rather fast. But he nevertheless appeared to be completely aware of everything, and he conveyed the feeling of that sensitivity to the others walking with him.

We know that one of the main duties of the Foundations, apart from running the Schools and Centres, is to make the so-called teachings available. And K used to say: To spread the teachings you have to live the teachings. It is an old, open question what it means to live the teachings. So, when a friend asked me what I think it means, I tried putting it in the following words:

What does it mean to live the teachings? It's not an easy question, especially considering that, as K said, the "so-called teachings" aren't teachings in the ordinary sense, there being no prescription. He was sometimes forceful in the points he made, but trying to carry them out through will seems pointless.

On the back cover of *The Beauty of the Mountain*, it says, "... this extraordinary human being did indeed live the 'teachings'." It was clear to me that K lived what he was talking about. He was incredibly attentive and of course radically insightful and considerate. But I'm wary of reducing it, which is why I included every little thing I remembered – so one could get a general impression without (hopefully) my circumscribing it.

Nevertheless, it's true that I have a feeling about it. I suspect that living the teachings means being attentive to what is going on "outside" and "inside", and if thoughts or anything else interfere with that attention, to be aware of those factors. To care, and to notice when one isn't caring. Not to feel separate. To doubt, not only others' experiences but also one's own.

*Friedrich Grohe, September 2007*

P. S. I found it interesting that at the end of a talk in Chennai (Madras) in 1979, there was a long pause, and K said: "One mustn't sit too long silently. It can lead to deception."

### **Photo Website**

An updated catalogue of photographs by Friedrich Grohe, including those printed in *The Link*, can be viewed online at [www.fgrohephotos.com](http://www.fgrohephotos.com). The website features slideshow viewing, a facility to order prints and posters and to send online greeting cards, and links to the Krishnamurti Foundations and Schools.



Photos can also be uploaded as mobile phone wallpaper in India and so far eight other countries. For further information, contact [vish@imimobile.com](mailto:vish@imimobile.com). All proceeds go to the Krishnamurti Foundation India.



New rice fields near Rishi Valley, India

The page numbers mentioned in Friedrich's Newsletter refer to various articles in the upcoming issue of the Link No.27, 2007–2008.

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