



**FRIEDRICH'S NEWSLETTER**  
AUTUMN 2008

## *Dear Friends*

Some years ago, I planned to stay for a few days at a previously famous hotel (one can see it from Mürren, where the 'Saanen' gatherings now take place). I had heard it had become rundown, so I called the portier and asked how many stars they had. "Oh," he said, "when there are no clouds, they are innumerable."

### **The Link**

Recently I spoke with an old friend who mentioned that some of the articles in The Link are rather intellectual and difficult for her. English is not her first language, and this is of course true for many Link readers. So I thought it would be good if we asked ourselves once again what The Link is actually for. These are some of the points that our editor Javier came up with: The Link is a literary contribution to the global dialogue around K's teachings and a source of general information on many of the related organisations and their activities. It is an open and international forum for the expression of diverse approaches to the teachings, some more experiential and others more philosophical, including current discussions on consciousness and education. It aims at maintaining a high quality with an eye to the authenticity and insightful nature of the pieces published and always includes excerpts of original K material. The question remains, however, as to whether it does fulfill its purpose, and we welcome readers' comments.

### **Brockwood Park School**

The following extract is from a letter sent to me by the mother of a Brockwood Park student from Mexico. **Aura Ponce de León** does research in the History and Philosophy of Science, specifically concerning theories of human evolution, and occasionally teaches Philosophy, the History of Mexico, and Contemporary Social Thought at university level:

Front Cover: At Buchillon, Lake Geneva, Switzerland

... The more I think about it, the more I conclude that I would never have known about K and his teachings if I hadn't found that issue of *The Link* that talked about Brockwood. It is my impression that here in México, the word "Krishnamurti" is very little known. I mean, we know that he existed... once upon a time... but... we don't know very much about him, and those things that we know I think are rather wrong. It is a pity, because the more humanity goes into that whirlpool of life that our society is building, the more important the teachings of K are. But I think it is very difficult to disseminate them (for the same reason, the whirlpool).

It strikes me that the teachings are, in a certain way, paradoxical. They are easy, and difficult. They are simple, and profound. On one side they are clear, transparent. What you have to do is change your mind. Now. Change your life. Now. Live each moment as a singular moment. Be alert. Be conscious. Be aware. Love. Now. Yes, they seem to be easy. The actions, however, for we human beings, are not, trapped as we are with all kinds of com-



At Buchillon, Lake Geneva, Switzerland

mitments and wishes, small and big. One must make a great effort to stop, which is not easy. ... Well, one has to try.

Even more, to understand some of the teachings I feel it is necessary to renounce all one's pre-established ideas. At least most of them. It doesn't matter if they are believed by society to be the most essential knowledge. They are not. One must be aware that they are just the conditioning of our minds. Again, it is not easy, is it? But, still, one must try. And every time try to go deeper. We have a lot of work to do, don't we?

I think that people like you who met him directly were really fortunate. I am happy for this. You have something like... a sensorial memory of the perfume. Thanks for taking it and trying to show it to others. With your work, many of us who didn't meet him can... smell a little bit of that perfume. Can have an idea, an approach. That's wonderful. The truth is that, having met him or not, everything is a matter of personal work. Yours, mine, theirs.

I realize that I am very fortunate too. Because now I know that such a complete teaching is there, just waiting to be known and lived. During these months I have realized that, in a very literal way, you were my link to K. You founded The Link, so I could find that article written by Toon Zweers that presented Brockwood Park School to me (I am grateful to him, too). You wrote that article about that father from Canada who was accompanying his daughter for her prospective week – do you know which article I am talking about? It made me think: "...mmmhhh, I could go with Diego, not leaving him alone, and in that way I could help him with any insecurity, and at the same time I could see the school and know the Centre." You don't know, but before reading it I felt very unable to materialize the idea of Diego going to Brockwood. Even though I wanted to do it. But that anecdote helped me to see a simple and clear way to go to Brockwood. So, unaware of it, you were a real link between K and us (my son and me).

... I am still surprised by the fact that my son is now at Brockwood. His (and my) life has totally changed, it is like a little miracle. He has changed a lot by being there and has been deeply touched. Of course. Being at Brockwood – it doesn't matter if it is for studying or for staying at the

Centre – is an extraordinary and unforgettable experience. He is a very happy young man there. And, for this, I am a very happy woman.



In each Newsletter, I'd like to include information on what a former Brockwood Park student does for a living. This time it's **Rajesh Ranganathan**, who was recently made a trustee of the KFT:

My schooling included nine years in Krishnamurti Schools – four of them at Rishi Valley and three at Brockwood Park in the late 1980s. My undergraduate degrees in Biology and Chemistry are from Amherst College and my PhD in Biology is from MIT (both in the USA).

For the last five years, I have been working in the research division of Novartis, a large Swiss pharmaceutical firm, where I am the Director of an internal office of Education. This role has allowed me to pursue my passion for both teaching and the discovery of new medicines. I live in a suburb of Boston, USA with my wife, Lisa Pawley (who also studied at Brockwood), and our children Néa and Myka.

Looking back, the three years I spent at Brockwood were the most formative of my life: I met Lisa, I discovered my passion for biology through a chance interaction with a visitor, and I was able to undertake a personal journey of inquiry into K's teachings.

For the last two years, my work-related travels have brought me to England, which has led to a renewed and sustained association with Brockwood. I have had a chance to experience once again, albeit in small morsels and from a different perspective, the magic that is Brockwood – a quality that is hard to capture in writing but is probably obvious to anyone who has spent time there. The trustees of Brockwood often have to make difficult, sometimes unpopular, decisions. As an alumnus trustee, I hope to strengthen the communication between the trustees and the Brockwood students and staff, so that all concerned have a better understanding of these decisions.





From Sulz Hütte, near St. Antönien, Switzerland

### **K: Why are you afraid of death?**

Why are you afraid of death? Is it perhaps because you do not know how to live? If you knew how to live fully, would you be afraid of death? If you loved the trees, the sunset, the birds, the falling leaf; if you were aware of men and women in tears, of poor people, and really felt love in your heart, would you be afraid of death? Would you? Don't be persuaded by me. Let us think about it together. You do not live with joy, you are not happy, you are not vitally sensitive to things; and is that why you ask what is going to happen when you die? Life for you is sorrow, and so you are much more interested in death. You feel that perhaps there will be happiness after death. But that is a tremendous problem, and I do not know if you want to go into it. After all, fear is at the bottom of all this – fear of dying, fear of living, fear of suffering. If you cannot understand what it is that causes fear and be free of it, then it does not matter very much whether you are living or dead.

The Book of Life, *November 12* (Life Ahead, p. 41)  
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## **K: Transformation without motivation**

How am I to transform? I see the truth – at least, I see something in it – that a change, a transformation, must begin at a level that the mind, as the conscious or the unconscious, cannot reach, because my consciousness as a whole is conditioned. So, what am I to do? I hope I am making the problem clear? If I may put it differently, Can my mind, the conscious as well as the unconscious, be free of society? – society being all the education, the culture, the norm, the values, the standards. Because if it is not free, then whatever change it tries to bring about within that conditioned state is still limited, and therefore no change at all.

So, can I look without any motive? Can my mind exist without any incentive, without any motive to change or not to change? Because any motive is the outcome of the reaction of a particular culture, is born out of a particular background. So, can my mind be free from the given culture in which I have been brought up? This is really quite an important question. Because if the mind is not free from the culture in which it has been reared, nurtured, surely the individual can never be at peace, can never have freedom. His gods and his myths, his symbols, and all his endeavours are limited, for they are still within the field of the conditioned mind. Whatever efforts he makes, or does not make, within that limited field, are really futile in the deepest sense of that word. There may be a better decoration of the prison – more light, more windows, better food – but it is still the prison of a particular culture.

The Book of Life, *October 30*

*London, 1955, Talk 4*

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I've heard from several university professors that former Brockwood Park students are generally more mature than students from other schools. Following is another extract from a letter I received recently, this time from Kris Gorski, a student at Brockwood Park in the early 1990s:

... Brockwood provided space and time in which I could combine academic education with that of another sort – where loneliness, love and relationship are addressed by students and staff. How often did you find yourself talking after classes with your maths or physics teacher about the kinds of issues one faces in relationship with other people and with the world in general, where you both look into them not as student and teacher but rather as two people concerned about something and willing to give their hearts and minds to the matter? It is those shared moments that have given me insight to find myself at ease with the world I live in. Although so many issues remain, I feel confident in the human capacity for understanding, compassion, love. Brockwood, through K's passionate discourse, has brought me to face the simple fact that we are the fractal part of the world at large – being the world, in a sense. And whatever complaints one may have against it, it is with oneself that everything begins, and ends.

My stay at Brockwood was made possible through a scholarship fund. Many other students like me were also able to stay there thanks to the generosity of those who've supported the school for so many years. Although donating money to the school is one direct way of supporting it, there is another one, just as important.

I've been visiting Brockwood annually for many years now, sharing with current students my knowledge, though workshops, about the kind of work I do. It is worth noting that once they hear of my previous involvement with the school as a student, they ask me to share memories of it. This has made me realise how unique a former student's position is there. We're adults, staff, teachers, and yet we have that connection with the students through shared experience. Time and again it's been evident how beneficial that is in my interaction with them.

Other former students, many of whom were at Brockwood in my time, have become staff members at the school or return occasionally, like me, to help





Morges, Lake Geneva, Switzerland

through workshops or some other form of work. It's a very rewarding thing to do, both for the school and for us: coming back to one's roots, in a way. I recommend it to any former student who has yet to do it. Brockwood benefits greatly from this kind of input.

... Brockwood has been made possible thanks to an enormous amount of dedicated work from hundreds of people – staff, trustees, donors, students, friends of many kinds. I would like to thank them all from my heart.

## **Krishnamurti Foundation India and the Schools**

In The Link you will see that our good friend **R. R. Upasani** has passed away. It was in 1985 that we first met, the last time I accompanied K to Rajghat. After one of our regular walks there, K asked Upasani, who intended to retire as principal of the Agricultural College, if he would stay on to work for the

Foundation. Upasani agreed to continue as long as K was there. I said I thought Upasani should stay on even when K wasn't there, and K immediately asked Upasani: Sir, stay another year or more. Upasani was so moved that he wept. And in 1987, after K's death, he took on the position of Secretary of the Indian Foundation. I worked with Upasani as he began and built up the retreat centre at Uttar Kashi and the Bhagirathi Valley School there, later called Nachiket. (Both the school and the centre are being relocated – see next paragraph.) I visited Uttar Kashi twice. The last time I saw Upasani was in January 2007, when he told a story about one of K's last Talks, that he'd had the feeling that someone was going to shoot K. When he told K this, K said yes and that it took all his energy to prevent it.

There is much more to report from India. **Rajghat Besant School**, near Varanasi, will host the 2008 Krishnamurti Schools annual teachers conference, with several hundred participants, and will celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2009. Rajghat, which has always allowed local villagers to use a path on its grounds and its pedestrian bridge over the Varuna River, is going to replace the current bridge, often washed away during the monsoons, with a much more solid pedestrian bridge. Rajghat is a historic place where Buddha, coming from the Ganges, once landed to walk to Sarnat. The State Government of Andhra Pradesh has taken the singular step of declaring **Rishi Valley** a specially protected area. **Sahyadri School**, near Pune, has formed an environmental group that brought water consumption down from 150,000 liters per day to 90,000 liters. Their most recent term began with staff meetings around the theme *Living and Learning in a K School* and other educational topics, conducted by Alok Matur, and the school will host the 2008 KFI annual gathering, with the theme *Man – Nature – Relationship*. **The School-KFI-Chennai** has completed the first stage towards establishing a new, associated school near Vallipuram, about 90 miles from Chennai. It will serve as a boarding school and allow those students who would like to get away from the city to do so. As part of the project, there will be a Tamil Primary School for local children. There is also news from **Uttar Kashi** in the Himalayan foothills. KFI's small retreat centre there, which has not been used for several years, is going to be sold, and a new retreat centre will be set up at Jalno, near Nainital, in the foothills of the outer Himalayas. And **Nachiket School**, which after more than 20 years had to be closed for local political reasons, is being re-launched in Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu, near the state of Kerala.



Hydrangea in the Grove, Brockwood Park, England

In my previous Newsletter/The Link, there was information about the village-satellite schools programme at **Rishi Valley**. We also mentioned a documentary film about the schools, made by Robert André ([www.robertandre.blogspot.com](http://www.robertandre.blogspot.com)) and produced by Mosaïque Films in Paris ([www.mosaïque-films.com](http://www.mosaïque-films.com)), called *School without Walls*. The film received the “Prix du Jury” at the 2nd annual Festival of Documentary Films Ambigat, at Chateaufumeillant (Cher) in France. It was also shown on French television. The directors of the school project, Y. A. Padmanabha Rao and A. Rama Rao, have written the following about the film:

We do like Robert’s film a lot. In fact a lot of people are writing to me for copies. Once we have the resources we would like to dub it into other Indian and African languages so that many more remote-school teachers can see how quality education is possible with meagre resources in far flung corners of the underdeveloped world. We really liked the undercurrent commentary that runs across the film.



**Suprabha Seshan**, a former student of The Valley School, Rishi Valley, and a student at Brockwood Park in the mid-1980s, and who you may remember has written several times for The Link, was recently asked by the KFI to write an article regarding K for one of the Indian newspapers. What follows is an extract from that article. Suprabha helps to run the Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary in Kerala, India ([www.gbsanctuary.org](http://www.gbsanctuary.org)), which is in the process of preparing a website that will offer online guidance for restoration projects in India:

I write this with some embarrassment. I have never believed it to be my place nor my particular purpose to discuss Krishnaji's teachings or any other aspect of his life, or his impact on my life, in a public forum. I write this now in response to a request from the Krishnamurti Foundation of India, because I am beholden to Krishnaji personally and also to the schools that he founded, where I received much love and tender attention. I hope it is all right if I present my thoughts in a simple and personal way and completely sidestep any systematic analysis of a person whose extraordinary sharing defies any form of conventional speculation.

... I always felt one could talk about anything and everything with Krishnaji, all it required was a lively engagement with the issues somebody or the other raised: fear, authority, nature, conditioning, passion. I loved the way he fenced with us, teasingly, affectionately. And how he urged us to find out if there was something we truly loved. For my teenage years these were exciting possibilities: what did I love? Nature of course! To not follow in others footsteps mindlessly, to question, to explore this marvelous world, to find out what divided me from other people, and others from each other, what made me afraid, what gave joy...all this was an opening into another way of looking, and it overturned any need to find security in conventional, mainstream ways.

When I look back most of the things we talked about were to do with the land, with birds and other creatures, with the ancient rocks of Rishi Valley (and later the woods and gardens of Brockwood Park), with nature. Once a group of us listened to Beethoven's 9th with him in his room at Brockwood Park. At other times there were snatched discussions in the corridors and lanes of the schools.

Of course we did talk about conditioning, one's upbringing, growing up and so on, but these don't really stand out in my mind nearly as much as the simple attentive open regard of the natural world he so effortlessly and so affectionately invited us to.

... There was much about life that I wanted to understand, much about nature, but I needed to find things out for myself. I needed to learn how to make sense of the things I saw and wondered about: in my own way, using my own medium. This may be a case of extreme individualism, or it could be that there is a great thirst in each of us that has to be listened to and allowed free rein and this listening takes you (perhaps *through* the path of self-centredness), *towards* the thing that is pulling you, captivating you. For me, this *thing* was the great beautiful earth with its mountains and forests and rivers and sparkling seas.

... Krishnaji certainly kept you on your toes, some kind of internal balancing act was required! There was something compelling he revealed in plain conversation. It was all deadly serious but it was also play. He once told me not to take him too seriously, and especially not to fall into an attitude or posturing of seriousness. He told me several times to "throw it all away."

... Eleven years of K schooling primed me for one thing: the unknown. This is the greatest security one can hope for. And it is in wilderness (in which I include the wild outback regions of the human mind) that I find the clearest mirror of my life.



## **Krishnamurti Foundation of America, Krishnamurti Retreat, Oak Grove School**

In Ojai, Krishnamurti's long-time friend and assistant **Mary Zimbalist** passed away. As most of you will know, Mary was a trusted advisor and close friend to K from 1964 to his death in 1986. She was a founding trustee of the KFT and of the Brockwood Park Krishnamurti Educational Centre, as well as a founding trustee of the KFA and Oak Grove School. A warmly admired figure in the

Schools, Centres and Foundations, she remained active in the KFA to the end. Mary died quietly at Pine Cottage in Ojai on 17 June 2008, at the age of 93.

Also in Ojai, another old friend, **Frances McCann**, passed away. There is more information in [The Link](#).

Pine Cottage has become part of the Krishnamurti Retreat, and Arya Vihara can now accommodate several more than its previous seven guests. Oak Grove School has a new principal, **Meredy Benson Rice**. And Oak Grove's senior students still spend a month in India each winter visiting some of the seven Krishnamurti Schools there, with the preparation and follow-up being part of their World Religions and Cultures, and English, courses; a community service project is also part of the trip's purpose.

## **German Krishnamurti Committee**

Germany has a very active 'Krishnamurti Committee'. They produce a newsletter, *Krishnamurti-Forum*, maintain a loan programme to help German students to study at Brockwood Park, and host one meeting of up to 50 participants and five smaller meetings a year. One of the meetings is held as a kind of retreat and takes place, together with another one, at Haus Sonne, the vegetarian guesthouse in the Black Forest.

## **Legacies and Donations**

Last year, a few of the K Schools received a legacy from a German man who had been a naturopath in Switzerland. We had met him several years earlier at the Saanen gatherings, where he mentioned that he was concerned about the difficulty of channeling a legacy to several places outside Germany and Switzerland. So, we suggested the AG Educational Trust, which he ended up using as a vehicle, and it worked very well.

It is unlikely that Brockwood Park School and Oak Grove School could exist without legacies and donations.

## Personally

More and more reports are being published confirming that the raising of cattle for meat contributes as much towards air pollution as all the world's traffic put together, as well as terribly polluting the land and water. Not only that, livestock rearing causes vast deforestation and an extraordinary depletion of water resources, and uses many times more food than humans could be eating than the resulting meat produced. Yet I didn't read anything about this in the news coverage of the world food summit.

Lastly, a short personal note: When I left school, I was wondering what to do... and unfortunately, there was no chance for me to be a mature student at Brockwood Park. I don't think I was searching, particularly, but I wanted to understand what was going on in myself. I thought about studying psychology, but when confronted with the curriculum for it realized that I would be more confused than ever! Instead, I entered my father's company, but with that story I could fill a hundred pages...

*Friedrich Grohe, September 2008*

### 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.



Anthurium at Chalet Solitude, Rougemont, Switzerland

Friedrich's Newsletter is sent out in advance of The Link (printed towards the end of each year), as this allows a more immediate and somewhat personal contact.

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