

THE AUSTRALIAN

Sahaja Newsletter

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OCTOBER 7th '94

"The love of God, unutterable and perfect,
flows into a pure soul the way that light
rushes into a transparent object.

The more love that it finds, the more it gives
itself; so that, as we grow clear and open,
the more complete the joy of heaven is.

And the more souls who resonate together,
the greater the intensity of their love,
and, mirror-like, each soul reflects the other."

DANTE



News from the United Kingdom

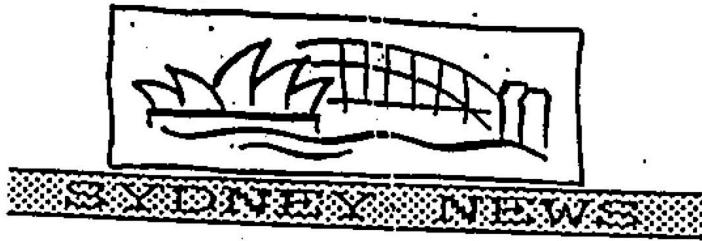
Last night we finished the first of our Discovery Courses. We have just asked the attendees to complete another questionnaire and I have started looking at it. I will send you a copy of it for your records (and any other stuff we have created in the meantime). We are now changing tack. We are going to move away from the knowledge emphasis onto the feeling emphasis. So we have invited them to three seminars spread over three weeks. Two will be all day jobs at a suitable ashram where we will show them a full Puja tape (probably that of Kundalini Puja '91) after a meditation, then lunch, then the Australian Shri Ganesha tape, then a candle workshop. The final seminar will be a music programme (hopefully Indian classical). 43 of them have registered for a combination of these. About 5 went to the Shri Ganesha puja here in the UK last weekend, and from what I have heard they enjoyed it. On the other hand some of them are not even close to recognition. Ah well. :)

We are coming up to the end of the second Foundation course at the moment too (I told you things are busy) and hopefully we will be able to move around 50 to 60 people onto the next Discovery Course starting on October 5th. They really seem to respond to the concept of the course over here. We're noticing a few things. One, they relate to us guiding them (as opposed to letting them aimlessly discover things for themselves) along the early stages of their journey. Two, they feel sufficiently comfortable with us to bring their friends fairly early on, and the type of people has moved to more normal professional types rather than those ravaged by years of tortured seeking (if you see what I mean). Three, they respond to being registered. This seems to make them feel involved in the whole process a lot more and they consequently keep coming back. Four, They enjoy working on themselves (as opposed to yogis working on them all the time) they seem to feel more empowered. They appreciate the slow pace of the courses, bit at a time, technique at a time, slow intro to the picture and candle and to workshops.

On the other hand we have had a lot to learn. It is very strange starting a new Foundation course, because it means being strong and not doing workshops, not handing out photos etc. People have also worried about registering because of course new people come every week. In fact all we have been doing is registering every new person every week, we figure there's no real problem up to week 5, at which point we still register them but suggest that they go round the next Foundation course again to get the full benefit. Something seems to be happening, though, because these courses are now starting up around the country (and in fact the world, since you, America, Scandinavia, and Germany also have requested copies of the course material). Yeah, I know, but you tell me what's going on, because I don't know. At Shri Krishna puja Shri Mataji made a point of quizzing me about the courses (Oh no, Her Attention is on us) and I stumbled through a lame explanation at the end of which She simply said "and are they intelligent?". Floored me for a while, until I think I realised that She was suggesting that we balance the course content by ensuring that we emphasised that the knowledge was really not as important as the feeling, the being. Otherwise SY becomes just another mental exercise. Anyway we progress from pillar to post, creating new bits as we go. These seminars are just our way of keeping the momentum up, and trying to introduce them to the collective, to feel a little more. Probably the most important part of the days will be lunch (yeah, very Sahaj man).

It's really good fun (even though we're sort of attending up to four meetings a week to make sure that we learn what's working and what's not) and we're all really growing as we do it.





Our love and best wishes to Fred and Ilse and their new daughter Athena. Congratulations!

Wattlegrove Festival

This is a beautifully planned area and all the new people came from nearby. So many seekers got their realisation and the children who received theirs, ran and brought back their friends to feel it too. So beautiful - these children are the really special ones!

Music of Joy concert, 8th October 7.30pm

St Lawrence Arts Centre, 505 Pitt Street City

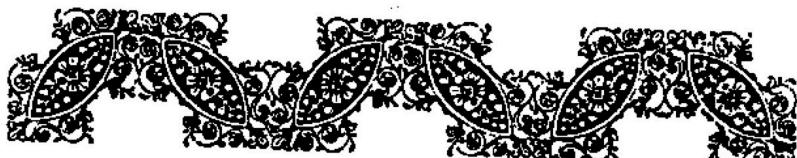
Please try to buy tickets from Dhananjay Varma on Friday night at Burwood to avoid queues.

RAYMOND: 2 movements from Mozart Clarinet Quintet
 2 Indian Dance items: - Classical Dance & Stick Dance
 Raga Combo - sax, sitar, sarod, flute didgeridoo & tabla
 Various favourite bhajans with variations
 Western choir featuring music from 14th century Spain & Tribal Africa

NEWCASTLE FESTIVAL

Musicians should be at the Newcastle Festival by 9.30am, Sunday 9th October.

For details - Nick Buff or Chris Kyriacou





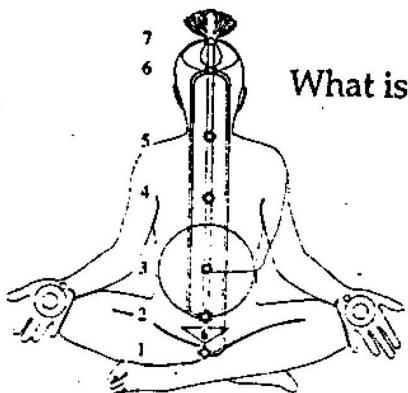
4.

Sahaja Yoga

4 week introductory

MEDITATION COURSE

University of Technology Sydney
Broadway Campus, Level 19, room 14

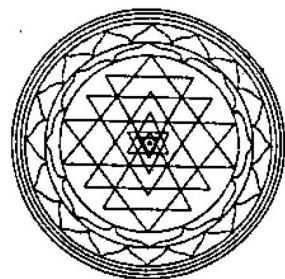


WEEK I
What is concentration, relaxation and meditation?
Introduction to the Subtle Body
The Experience of True Meditation

WEEK II
Progress reports and discussion
Balancing the Subtle Body
Affirmations for clearing the Chakras.

WEEK III
Feedback and question time
Establishing vibrational awareness
Vibrational techniques for clearing the Chakras

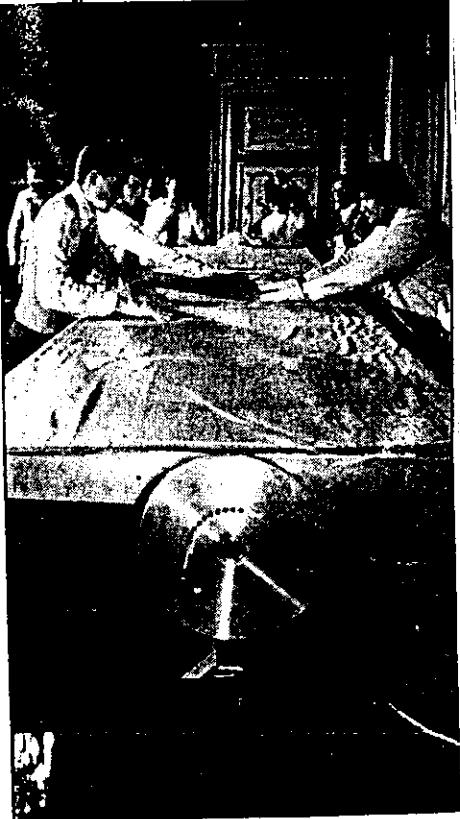
WEEK IV
Personal problem solving workshop
Aspects and qualities of Chakras
Using elements for clearing the Chakras



Every Tuesday from 5 to 6 pm
FREE AS ALWAYS Enquiries 745 2393

The Jesus conspiracy

Six years after scientists declared the Turin Shroud a fake, sensational findings suggest that it really is Christ's gravecloth. If true, the new theories could rewrite the story of the Resurrection and raise profound questions in the Church worldwide. ANNE DE COURCY reports



Handle with care . . . cloth workers prepare the shroud for examination

THE Turin Shroud has been a constant source of controversy since its appearance in a tiny French village in the 1350s. Could this 2.7m by 1m length of ancient linen, imprinted with the face and figure of a crucified man, really be the gravecloth in which Jesus was wrapped when he was taken down from the Cross? Or is it nothing more than a clever medieval fake?

Carbon dating in October 1988 appeared to settle the matter conclusively, when three of the world's most technically sophisticated laboratories declared categorically that the shroud was no older than the 14th century.

Now, the controversy seems set to re-open. Two startling new books declare not only that the shroud is genuine — that it is the one used to wrap the body of Jesus in AD33 — but also that a "Jesus conspiracy" could mean we will have to rethink the Resurrection.

So what about the seemingly incontrovertible fact of the carbon dating?

First, quite simply, the carbon dating was wrong, believe both Cambridge-educated scientist Rodney Hoare, author of *The Turin Shroud Is Genuine*, and German writers Holger Kersten and Elmar Gruber. Kersten is a religious and theological historian, Gruber a scientist.

Gruber and Kersten's amazing theory, elaborated in their book *The Jesus Conspiracy* (Element Books, £34.95), is a sensational one: they believe a fraud has taken place.

"The dating by the laboratories was impeccable," said Gruber. "But the samples they dated do not stem from the shroud." The centimetre-square samples were distributed in conditions of the utmost secrecy, he claims, and the samples switched before they left the Vatican.

The obvious question is: why should the Vatican wish to prove the shroud a fake? He replies that the image on the shroud was imprinted by the body of a living man who could be none other than Jesus. "If the Vatican had to admit this, they would be destroying the claim that Jesus rose from the dead and thus the whole myth of the Resurrection."

Hoare agrees with both premises, though reaching them by a different

route. All three labs were bound to get wrong results, he says, because — unlike most relics — the shroud has had constant exposure and handling.

Hoare said: "The part of the shroud they took the samples from has had countless fingerprints, the candlelight by which it was viewed for hundreds of years would have given it other pollutants, and the fire in which it suffered damage in 1532 would have affected it, too.

"All this would alter the carbon date, making it appear more recent than it actually is."

Kersten and Gruber claim the shroud was brought from Jerusalem to eastern Turkey, where it was rediscovered in the sixth century. In 944 it was captured by Byzantines and taken to Constantinople, where it was seized by the Crusaders in 1204.

What is undisputed is its history from the 1350s (a time when relic counterfeiting was known to be rife). Its first documented appearance was in France, in the ownership of Geoffrey de Charny of Lirey. His granddaughter Marguerite gave it to Louis, Duke of Savoy, in 1453. A 100 years later it was damaged by fire; then, in 1578, the reigning Duke of Savoy took it to Turin, where he installed it in the Royal Palace where it was brought out for veneration from time to time.

On one of these occasions, in 1898, it was photographed for the first time. The result was dramatic. Suddenly, the faint ochre marks on the battered cloth leapt into life. Now, with highlights and shadows reversed, a positive image replaced the faint negative one that was all anyone had seen so far — and full-length back and front views of a naked, crucified man could clearly be seen.

And there the matter seemed to rest, until two (agnostic) scientists presented a paper to the French Academy stating that they believed the marks on the shroud to be a mixture of blood, sweat and embalming fluid and concluding, "the man of the shroud is Christ". Thereafter, interest was constant.

In 1931 the shroud was photographed again, and this time even more details showed up. From then on, its original became a matter of fierce argument, with scientists, archaeologists and other experts lining up on either side.

In 1978 a team of American scientists, who had been allowed a small strip of

the linen, claimed the marks on the cloth were "strongly suggestive of actual blood" with two of the chemists declaring they had found no evidence of any dyes, stains or paint pigments.

It had to be the very cloth cast aside by Jesus when he miraculously rose from the dead, said the enthusiastic — after all, it was well established that traces of pollen in the linen were from Palestinian flax and that some of the pigment was human blood.

Not so, said the sceptical: even if it turned out to date from AD33, what proof was there that it had wrapped Jesus? Even the Catholic Church said merely that it was an object "likely to prompt profitable prayer" rather than an undoubted relic.

CARBON dating seemed the only way to settle the argument. Three laboratories — in Oxford, Zurich and Arizona — were sent samples, along with "blind" samples of cloth prepared by the British Museum. The date that emerged from all their computers would show when the flax that made the linen had been harvested.

It was a nail-biting wait. Most experts believed the shroud would turn out to be older than the fifth century — if only because crucifixion was banned during the reign of the Emperor Constantine, who died in AD337, and no later forger could have known details as accurate as those on the shroud.

Nails, for example, were clearly shown as hammered through the wrists of the figure on shroud — the only way a body could be supported on a cross, we now know — whereas every early representation of the Crucifixion showed them through the palms.

But when, on October 13 1988, the results emerged, all three labs were in agreement — the shroud was no older than the 14th century. Or as their statement more guardedly put it: "there is a 95 per cent probability that the flax was harvested between 1260-1390". And that seemed to be that — until now.

First step for Hoare, chairman of the British Society For The Turin Shroud, was to establish that the image on it was not created by a paintbrush. "It is a negative image that holds three-dimensional information of a type no painting can produce," he said.

Or, as Gruber puts it: "How could a medieval artist have produced a negative image? No-one knew what one was until photography was invented."

What this image shows is quite clear: a naked man of 1.76m tall and about 79kg in weight. The fact that it was a living rather than a dead body is shown by the absence of any sign of rigor mortis and the even distribution of the markings, indicating a functioning circulatory system. Experts at England's East Midlands Forensic Laboratory pointed out: "Taking into account all the facts, the body which lay in the linen was still alive."

Said Hoare: "We can tell the man has been scourged, and has nail wounds through the wrists and feet, and that there are a series of small wounds on the head. These show the crown of thorns — always depicted by early painters as a circlet — was in fact a cap.

"He has a spear wound in the side from which emerged a pleural effusion — water mixed with blood. When victims are beaten on the chest, as with scourging, water gathers in the bottom of the lungs. So when the spear was thrust into his body, water came out as well as blood."

"Comparison with the Gospel account particularly the crown of thorns, which according to records was unique to Jesus, and the lancing of the chest, which is reported in only two more contemporary cases, shows it must have been Jesus." Nor were the legs of the man in the image broken, as was customary.

Hoare believes the man taken from the Cross was in what we would now call a coma. "Scientists have pointed out that he would have been dead by the standards of the time — his breathing virtually invisible, temperature low and the lance wound in the chest, which is where life was then thought to be situated, as good as a death certificate."

Hoare believes that when Jesus was taken down from the Cross by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus on the Friday evening, the burial ritual was interrupted by the Sabbath, when no work was possible. They left him in the tomb, returning on Sunday evening.

"They would then have discovered that Jesus was warmer than a dead body should be. They would have taken him away to see what was happening, keeping him in the shroud for warmth, leaving the graveclothes on a shelf to mislead St John into thinking there had been a supernatural resurrection. He could have remained in one of their homes for three weeks before going north to re-inspire his disciples."

Gruber goes further, believing that Jesus's survival was pre-planned by Joseph. "First, all sources say he was on the Cross for only a few hours — usually people hung there for days. Then it is very strange that on the

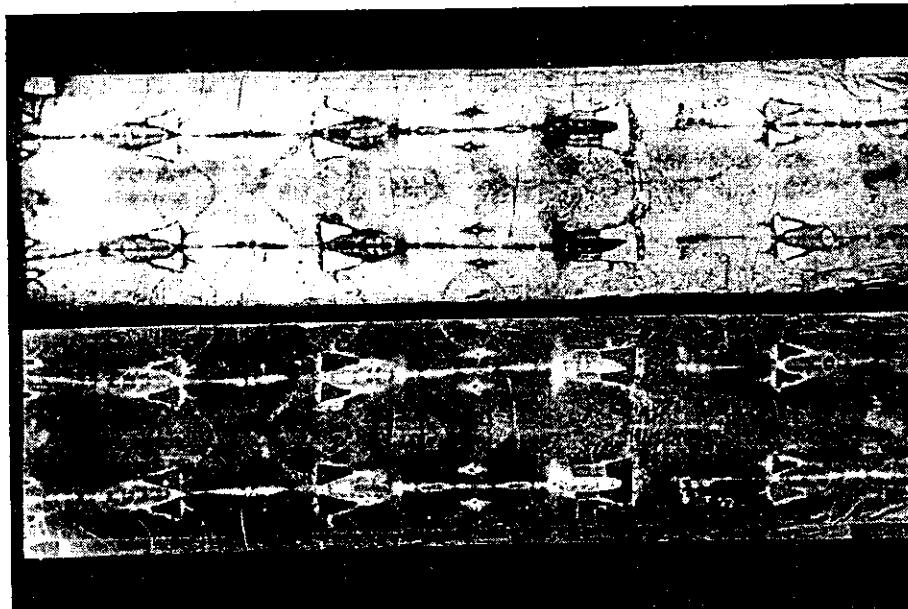
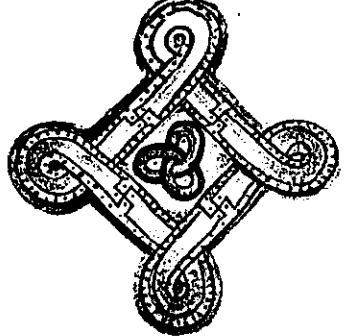
Cross, where people die of asphyxiation, Christ had the breath to be able to make a loud cry and say, 'It is over', reportedly instants before death."

Christ's cry came immediately after receiving the sponge of vinegar. Gruber and Kersten believe that some narcotic, anaesthetic substance — probably the easily-obtainable opium — was mingled with the vinegar, causing almost immediate loss of consciousness to someone already in terrible suffering. Once taken down and hidden, he could be nursed back to strength.

Look at it like this and much of what the Gospels say makes new sense, says Kersten, a teacher of religion.

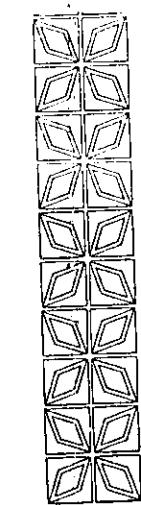
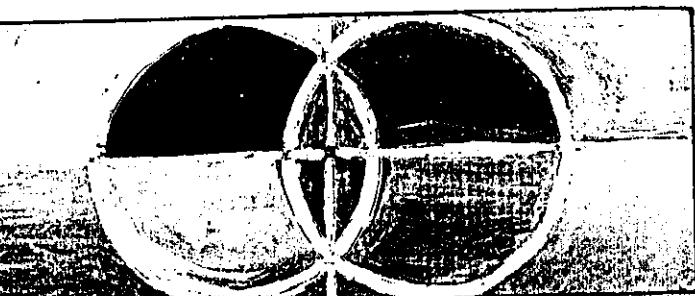
When Mary Magdalene does not immediately recognise the gardener as Jesus, it is understandable as his injuries would have caused his face to swell and the aloë-myrrh solution with which his body had been treated prior to "burial" would have turned his skin a darkish brown.

These "discoveries" are certain to reopen one of the longest running and most fascinating debates of modern times. But one thing is for certain: it's a mystery that will never be completely solved in this life.



Mystery . . . The Turin Shroud (above) has mesmerised scientists and sparked heated religious debate for more than 600 years

Holy sight . . . experts claim new evidence proves beyond doubt that the haunting image of a face (right) was imprinted on the shroud by Jesus, just hours after his crucifixion



Cheers,
Claire Deness
ph: 953 5339

I thought these comments from (Dr) Masao Katayama might be of interest.

I would like to first of all express my gratitude to you all for coming to the Program in Tokyo. The Australians backed us up in many ways, but the participation of yogis and yoginis was appreciated most. I am sure that without their presence the vibrations would not have been that good. Shri Mataji was very happy after the program, that most of the people felt the cool breeze.

Since the program, there are about a dozen people who come to the followup programs. Most are ladies ... the Japanese men seem to have difficulties. They come for a while and leave, without much reason. Though one interesting gentleman is a Shinto priest! He said there is something quite similar to the cool breeze in the real authentic Shintoism. Sort of like Gnostic Christians, maybe? minority and not widely known, but the real people.

NEWS FROM OVERSEAS

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