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The Peace-Thread in the International Work of the Theosophical Society

by Grace Knoche



INTERNATIONAL THEOSOPHICAL HEADQUARTERS
:: :: :: Point Loma, California, U. S. A. :: :: ::

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The Theosophical Society is international in the highest sense. — H. P. BLAVATSKY

Let us be of and for peace. — W. Q. JUDGE

Let us, by playing our part well, evoke the God of Peace, that it may brood over our fair land and breathe into the hearts of all a larger tolerance and a greater love for each other, for all nations, and all people.

KATHERINE TINGLEY

The Peace-Thread in the International Work of the Theosophical Society

THE International Theosophical Peace Congress, convoked by Katherine Tingley, Leader and Official Head of the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society throughout the world, which is to be held at Visingsö, Sweden, June 22 to 29 of the current year, is the last and fairest fruitage upon a great peace-tree, the seed of which was sown by H. P. Blavatsky in 1875. It is also the fruition of special and direct efforts put forth by Katherine Tingley during the past seventeen years in the interest of international peace.

While directed along the lines laid down by H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge, the Founders of the Theosophical Movement in this era and both of whom were unequivocal in their appeal for a better understanding between the nations and for the abolition of war, the work accomplished by Katherine Tingley has been for several reasons, more direct and wide-reaching than that of her Predecessors. For one thing, she has had the advantage of a body of helpers at the International Theosophical Headquarters, Point Loma, California, also student-workers and members all over the world, who are pledged to the service of humanity on the broadest international lines, free from dogma, bias, political affiliation or creed; and also, owing to changing world-conditions, much that could not have been done by her Predecessors has been

done by her because new doorways have been opened. Moreover, with that genius which marks the absolutely unselfish, whenever opportunities are not at hand — she makes them.

To summarize briefly a few of the events which disclose this shining Peace-thread at their center :

In June, 1896, less than three months after her duties had been assumed as Leader of the Theosophical Movement throughout the world, as successor to H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge, Madame Tingley inaugurated and carried to a successful conclusion a Crusade around the world, which had for its declared object the cementing of the bond of brotherhood between the nations. The time was wisely chosen, for, as she then stated, and as was plainly shown by the events of the subsequent two years, war was imminent, not only in the Occident but in the Far East. It was a critical time, when international affairs all over the world were in the balance and nations everywhere felt the strain.

This Crusade, the members of which included Madame Tingley and seven representatives from various nations, occupied ten months, and the following countries were visited: England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Holland, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, Egypt, India, Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, Canada, and finally the United States.

In all of the meetings and Congresses held in these countries a public appeal was made for a higher patriotism, a greater spirit of brotherliness between nations, and a broader international love. It is probable that at the

Visingsö Peace Congress this summer there will be present from the far corners of the earth men and women whom Madame Tingley met during that Crusade for the first time, and who then and there pledged themselves voluntarily to work under her leadership while life should last, for universal brotherhood, the fraternization of nations.

This Crusade is fully described in other papers, but mention should be made here of the saving work done by Katherine Tingley and her staff for the starving Armenian refugees in Greece, among the famine-sufferers in India, and among the submerged poor in London and many other large cities — work which had, and which was intended to have, an important bearing upon the problem of international peace. For while immense service was rendered, and suffering and even death averted, by the dispensing of medicines, clothing, and food, an infinitely greater work was done in reaching the people's hearts with the message of international unity and its burden of hope and love, thus breaking through the general mental crust of despair, insularity, and suspicion. No creeds were ever offered, no dogmas ever introduced, politics were not touched — there was only the simple message that, to quote Katherine Tingley's own words, "as all men were of God's great family, so all nations were; that war was a passing mistake, and that love was immortal."

The peace-thread in Madame Tingley's work among the Maoris in New Zealand cannot be overlooked, for while no relief of a material kind was needed there, the remnant of this once mighty race, because of what it had

suffered at the hands of its white "brothers," had become discouraged and suspicious. In a long conference held with the Chief of the leading Maori tribe, a highly educated man and a profound thinker, among other topics the broad theme of international peace was introduced by Katherine Tingley.

That this conference bore fruit the following greeting, which was sent to Katherine Tingley by the Ngatipoa Tribe of the Maoris upon the occasion of the Universal Brotherhood Congress held at Point Loma in April, 1899, bears eloquent witness. The full text of this greeting, which was sent written in the Maori language and was read at the Congress by one of Madame Tingley's Students who had personal acquaintance with the Maori peoples, is, translated, as follows:

Aotearoa, New Zealand,
February 18, 1899.

An Affectionate Greeting [literally, Sigh] to Katherine Tingley, the Real Leader and Permanent Head of the Gathering together for the Universal Brotherhood [literally, *the causing to become one*] of the whole of the Races of the World, also called the Elder Brotherhood and the Younger Brotherhood of the Races of the World under one Parent.

Salutations to you, Dear Old Lady [*Ekue*, a term of veneration and love used only with women of high rank, "old in wisdom"].

Great indeed are the congratulations which proceed from us to you and our love to you and to our Elder and Younger Brothers of the whole world, assembled on the 13th day of April at Point Loma, at the Great School of Antiquity founded by you for the revival of the Wisdom of the Great Teachers who really Knew in former times.

Salutation to you all, to you our Elder Brothers and our Younger Brothers assembled there at Point Loma, America, to arrange for the salvation of the downcast Races of the Whole Earth.

Very great indeed is the love that proceeds forth from us to you, and very great are our rejoicing and congratulations at the good news, at the great news of your great work, of your strong work, of your strenuous work to assist the Races of the Whole Earth, that they may receive the Word of the Great Enlightenment, and the enlightenment of truth and justice, and of liberation, and of the solidarity of discouraged humanity.

[*Note:* It is difficult to convey in English the intense force of the Maori words. *A ka whakapuina uga hihi* means that every race shall come together and cast all the burdens down in one heap to be shared and borne alike by all.]

This is the Heartfelt Word of the remnant of the Maori Race, the aboriginal Race of the North Island. [Mystically, *Aotearoa* is the *New Island* or *Dawn of the New Day*; *Waipoumu*, the Water of the Green-stone, is the South Island, type of the everlasting Past.]

Let us all be Very Strong, one united Body, to save all Races sitting in darkness; to consolidate and unite them under the bond of Justice, that we may act to each other as Elder and Younger Brothers. Let us be exceedingly Strong in everlasting Power forever, and forever more, and that our efforts may become renowned forever and forever more.

From T ——— P ———

On behalf of the Ngatipoa Tribe, New Zealand.

At the port of Apia, Samoa, Katherine Tingley met one of the native Samoan Chiefs, in whom she discovered a highly developed nature, a man in whose life the Golden Rule was the precept and the guide, and who, like his associate Chiefs, still cherished the tribal tradition of a

mighty ancestry, which Katherine Tingley told them was linked in the far past with Egypt. Recognizing in her a friend whose sincerity and compassion placed her as one apart, he listened to her words of advice. He declared that he would carry to his associate Chiefs her message of brotherhood and peace. "For," said he, "now that we know that out of the great and destructive White People has arisen one, even *one*, to raise the banner of brotherhood and establish the Ancient Wisdom, ultimate peace to the world is assured. *The Samoans must not go to war.*" Nor did they at that time. Through the word of peace in the right place, a war, with its grim toll of sin and blood had been averted.

This Peace-Crusade closed with the founding of the School of Antiquity at Point Loma, California, where, to quote from the Prospectus shortly thereafter issued,

were gathered people from all lands, without regard to creed or race, all concentrating their minds on the great object of gaining and putting into practice the true spirit of Universal Brotherhood. . . .

For the purpose of this School of Antiquity is to establish a Temple, a Beacon Light, a Home of Peace, stretching out the strong hand of Truth, Light and Liberation, inviting the world to partake of its spiritual benefits. To this end Group Homes will be established where Students of different races and nations will find welcome, without interference with such of their home-customs and habits as are good and helpful.

At the ceremonies incident to the laying of the cornerstone of the School of Antiquity, international representatives were present, carrying the flags of all nations, and

the spirit of international unity which alone can bring about the realization of the ideal of universal peace, was the dominant note throughout.

In April, 1897, as soon as she arrived in New York after the close of the Crusade, Katherine Tingley founded the International Brotherhood League, for practical humanitarian work, which afterwards became an integral part of the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society. Two of the objects of this League especially provided for the educating of

children of all nations on the broadest lines of Universal Brotherhood,

and the bringing about of

a better understanding between so-called savage and civilized races, by promoting a closer and more sympathetic relationship between them.

Katherine Tingley declared that these objects alone, if carried out, would suffice to bring about international peace in no long time.

In addition, all the objects of the League have an international peace basis, and as the Students selected by the Leader especially to work in this League represent as many different nations as possible, all the League's work has necessarily the international touch.

In August of the following year — that is, in 1898 — Madame Tingley broadened the scope of her work between the nations by the establishment of an international War Relief Corps for the purpose of helping the suffering people of Cuba, and the fevered, sick, and wounded

soldiers. But preparations were no sooner well under way — and in these preparations Students and workers from nearly every country in the world were represented — when to the general surprise peace was declared. This, however, afforded an opportunity as unique as it was unexpected, to promote the cause of national peace.

It was at this time that Madame Tingley, realizing the awful suffering of the soldiers, and their unrest, rushed at once with her workers to Montauk Point, where the U. S. troops were being landed — at that time a scene of untold misery — and established hospital accommodations for their relief.

The full history of the work at Montauk Point is embodied in other reports. Suffice it here to say that while hospital tents were filled to overflowing — over nine thousand men receiving temporary care and help from the League nurses and physicians under the direction of the Leader, while there were only two deaths among the soldiers received into the hospital — in addition to the medical attention and good nursing they had, the chief effort put forth was to reach the *minds and hearts of the men*, that this swelling tide of unrest and despair might be turned into the channels of a higher courage and a renewed patriotism. This wonderful thing was accomplished. Men who came into the League's field-hospital worn-out and discouraged, went out from that hospital and to their homes all over the United States restored to health, with their feeling wholly changed. Heartened and filled with hope, they went out once more willing to lay down their lives, if need be, for the sake of principle, and

true peace, and international fraternity. Which is full of significance when one considers that thousands of men were reached and helped.

It was due to this effort in behalf of the nation that General Joseph Wheeler, who was in command of the camp at Montauk carried to President McKinley the report of Katherine Tingley's splendid work for the suffering soldiers. President McKinley was so interested by this report that later, through the acting Secretary of War, he offered to Madame Tingley free transportation to Cuba, Porto Rico, Manila, or any of the United States territories where help was needed, for herself and her workers, and also the privilege of establishing hospitals in Cuba and Manila.

The work at Montauk completed, Madame Tingley and her staff of workers, with a great quantity of food, medicine, and clothing, on a government transport (free transportation having been given to Madame Tingley by President McKinley), hastened to Cuba to carry out her original intention of relieving at least part of the suffering of the U. S. soldiers still remaining there, and also that of the Cuban people, especially of the women and children.

Even worse than anticipated were actual conditions found to be. In Santiago de Cuba, the city in which she established her relief headquarters, a revolution was feared by the officials of the city, so insistent were some of the young Cubans that no part of the United States soldiery should be left on the Island. This seems strange at first glance in the light of America's sacrifice. But

what were the facts — facts which gave Madame Tingley a most unusual opportunity to do telling work in the cause of international peace?

On the one hand, a certain type of foreigners who always follow in the wake of an army had been in Cuba, exploiting the people, even their misery, for the sake of the almighty dollar; on the other, many of the poorer Cuban families had suffered cruelly from the selfishness and license of a certain type of soldier to be found in every army.

Then, too, there had to be reckoned with among the Cubans an intense unfriendliness towards Spain which if unrelieved must seriously affect their best interests and peace of mind, however much from the worldly point of view, it might be justified.

This, therefore, was the double problem that faced Katherine Tingley in Cuba — how to handle the stupendous task of supplying food and clothing, medicines, medical attendance and nursing to that multitude of starving and sick, and how to create in the hearts of those with whom she came in contact a better spirit of brotherliness. The words of Katherine Tingley and her helpers lifted thousands to the spiritual heights of forgiveness, a willingness even to forget the past, and called forth from their hearts a new desire for peace. The anticipated revolution died unborn as the news of this international work spread through Santiago and the surrounding country, and the Mayor, the Honorable Emilio Bacardí, appreciating these efforts in behalf of international peace and the material aid brought to the sufferers of Cuba,

worked with Katherine Tingley heart and hand. When the latter established a Cuban Liberty Day celebration, in which thousands of children took part, Mayor Bacardí rendered every possible assistance and later officially proclaimed that day — March 12 — as an annual holiday in the city of Santiago de Cuba in perpetuity. Part of the ceremonies of that day consisted in planting two peace trees at the two ends of the Plaza de Dolores, one representing America and the other Cuba. Special representatives from several nations with their national flags were present upon that occasion, and in this, as in Katherine Tingley's other work, the dominant note of the addresses was that of peace.

On historic San Juan Hill, where the last battle was fought and where peace was arranged, Katherine Tingley purchased a large tract of land for an international educational center, one of her first undertakings being the erection of a monument "to the Cuban and American soldiers" who fought together and died together.

Much more might be added on this line, for in the long chain of Katherine Tingley's work for Cuba — by means of international schools established there, and also through the bringing of Cuban and Spanish children to her international College at Point Loma, California, to receive free education which would fit them to go back to their own land as true patriots and worthy citizens — there is not a single activity which has not at its foundation the same steady effort to promote international peace.

Not long after the Cuban work was inaugurated, Madame Tingley and another staff of Student-workers

made a trip to England, where a great Congress was held at Brighton, with its note of international peace in every session; later extending the trip to Sweden where Madame Tingley met the late King Oscar, Europe's great Peace-maker, who, with his suite, attended one of her Congress meetings.

As reference to the records will disclose, the questions of peace between all nations and the abolition of war were touched upon in conversation by Madame Tingley and the King, as was also the case when, during her visit to Sweden in 1907, she was received by King Oscar in an interview at Drottningholm Castle. Upon the latter occasion the king expressed great interest in Madame Tingley's plan to establish a Râja Yoga College at Visingsö, Sweden, where children of all nations should be educated on the broadest international lines; and within a few weeks after this notable interview Madame Tingley secured property for the erection of this College in the Royal Forest on the historic Island of Visingsö.

In 1903-4, Madame Tingley and party made a second trip around the world, during which the work in the interest of international peace, begun on the first World-Crusade, was carried forward, and in the course of which she was able to visit several nations, among them Japan, not included in the earlier journey.

There is not space, even were other sources of information lacking, to speak in detail of subsequent journeys to various countries — to England, France, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, Russia, and last year to Italy.

On all these journeys the peace spirit has been constantly accentuated in its national and international significance, at public meetings and in private audiences, with the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, the influential and the obscure. And with regard to the most recent trip, if no record of it existed, the fact that the direct outcome of the study then made by Madame Tingley of European and world-conditions is the forthcoming Peace Congress—a veritable messenger of Light and Promise hovering over Europe—would be sufficient to mark the trip as of unusual importance and this Congress as one of the great efforts, and one of the wisest-timed, in the history of the Theosophical Movement.

In the dramatic work inaugurated and carried out by Katherine Tingley, through the Isis League of Music and Drama which was founded by her in 1898 on an educational basis, the peace-thread shines through. Of all the dramas presented, from *The Eumenides* of Aeschylus, the earliest, to *The Aroma of Athens*, the latest, not one but has sounded a definite and strong appeal in behalf of universal peace and good will, and against war.

This is doubly true of all the publications edited and published by Katherine Tingley; chief among them being *The Theosophical Path*, a continuation of the old *Century Path*, in the very first issues of which international peace was made a dominating note, and which had the international touch on every page, particularly in a series of articles written by Katherine Tingley herself during the first Crusade around the world. Among other publications are *The Râja Yoga Messenger*, a magazine for

children and young folk, which is edited, under Madame Tingley's supervision, by a staff of the younger Students in the Râja Yoga College; and also *The New Way*, a paper published for free distribution in prisons. A veritable "Peace-encyclopaedia" could be made up from the volumes of these publications alone.

Add to this brief summary the fact that the parent body of Students organized at Point Loma, California, by Madame Tingley is wholly international in character; that Students coming from all nations and all parts of the world work together here in a true international spirit, and that the aim of each, as indicated in the Prospectus quoted above, is to prepare himself to go later to his own fatherland or wherever he may choose and there work for the establishment of international peace and the abolition not only of war but of all forms of unbrotherliness and injustice — and it becomes plain that no one can over-estimate the effect that this factor alone is bound to have in promoting the growth of a general peace spirit in national life in the future.

Because of this it has been possible for Madame Tingley to inaugurate an order of social life that is unique, ringing as it does with a peace sentiment that is as wide as the world. Located as Lomaland is, "midway between East and West, where the Rising Sun of Progress and Enlightenment shall one day stand at full meridian," it has been, since the foundation, the reception hall of visitors from all nations — governors and rulers, reformers, educators, thinkers, artists, musicians, writers, diplomats, and men high in the service of the army and navy in both

our own and foreign lands. Scores of times the officers and men of the great warships of the world have been entertained, and many in their turn have, on their own vessels entertained Madame Tingley or her representatives — ships representing nations as widely separated as Japan and England, or our own Pacific Fleet and that of France. On the occasion of such receptions, the Rotunda of the Râja Yoga College has often echoed with the ringing words of the Leader — words that were stirring in their appeal for a broader international love and a better understanding between the nations. Again and again a most heartfelt and unexpected response has been evoked. And that her respect for the splendid examples of honor and ability in our navy is deeper than merely the spoken words, the aid rendered by herself and her Students at the time of the terrible *Bennington* disaster in San Diego harbor, when nearly one hundred brave sailors lost their lives, is evidence enough. Add to all this the fact that the peace literature of the Theosophical Movement is to be found in the libraries and upon the reading-tables of many of our own warships and those of foreign lands, and it is plain that the cumulative force of those seemingly simple efforts cannot be estimated.

In the Rotunda of the Râja Yoga College at Point Loma, where many of the Student-gatherings of this body are held, the flags of all nations, brought home by Katherine Tingley from the first Crusade, extend around the entire walls. No celebration ever takes place at Lomaland, whether of some event sacred in the history of one or another of the nations of the world, or of one of the

great days in the history of the Theosophical Movement, but the central feature is some procession or phalanx of representatives of all nations, with the national flags waving over their heads.

As to the children and youth who are receiving their education within these walls — who dares bind Hope or fetter her winged feet in the light of their Promise of a future of international peace?

A volume could be written on this single phase of Katherine Tingley's efforts for the uniting of all nations under the banner of a common love and a mutual trust. Here pictures may be seen almost daily — of young folk teaching their native tongues to each other, of tiny tots singing each other's National Hymns, or planning together all the wonderful things they will do for their own lands and for each other, "when we are grown up." In the presence of such pictures words fail one. How can war continue to be a factor in the world's life, a possibility even, in men's minds, before the swell of this rising tide of knowledge, love, and trust?

General disbelief in war as a solution of international problems, general belief in the ideal of international peace — these factors did not obtain even a very few years ago. Has it no bearing that Katherine Tingley's efforts towards this high ideal have extended over seventeen years, that they have been carried forward in nearly every nation on the globe, that they have been above all educative and constructive — builded as they are upon the basis of character — that these efforts have been put forth uninterruptedly since their beginning, without thought of

pause or rest, without even the break of a day in the whole long chain?

Katherine Tingley declares: "Theosophy, if made practical, would place every nation upon a peace footing with every other. It would make war a hideous memory, and the standing army a blot upon the past, based as Theosophy is upon the eternal truths that man is immortal, that all men are brothers, that the Divine Command to love one another is for all occasions and for all men, that he who lifts the sword shall perish by the sword so long as the Law obtains that whatsoever men sow that shall they reap." The International Theosophical Peace Congress, inaugurated at the very time when Europe is in despair over international discords, thus takes its place as the most important in a sense, as it is the latest, link in a long chain of educational and humanitarian activities all leading towards the same great ideal, the peace ideal declared by H. P. Blavatsky when she brought the message of Theosophy to the world, the ideal of the fraternity of nations, so compassionately touched upon by Tennyson in *Locksley Hall*:

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were
furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

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