

*Message
from the
President*

Integralism Today

Robert McDermott

Understanding begets love, and love releases the creative energies of the soul. It is the purpose of California Institute of Asian Studies to explore deeper avenues of inter-cultural understanding between East and West in general, and Asia and America in particular. Out of such an inter-cultural and inter-hemispheric understanding is likely to emerge that global perspective which is essential for the fulfillment of man's destiny as the vanguard of evolution.

*Founding Message,
Haridas Chaudhuri*

This institution was founded on a vision and a discipline for the transformation of body, mind, and spirit. In response to a request from Dr. Frederic Spiegelberg, Sri Aurobindo sent his young disciple, Haridas Chaudhuri, who had written a doctoral dissertation on Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, to found an institution devoted to Asian and Western spiritual teachings. The Institute's mission has evolved in relation to this original karmic event.

In 1981 "Asian" was changed to "Integral" because East/West had become only one of the several polarities the school sought to reconcile. By selecting "integral" as the key term in its name, the Institute signaled its commitment to overcoming some of the fragmentation characteristic of contemporary thought and culture. The Institute took this concept from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and Haridas Chaudhuri, for both of whom integral refers to the ideal blending of three disciplines—knowledge, action, and love. In the integral philosophy and yoga of Sri Aurobindo, these three spiritual disciplines are intended to be practiced in such a way as to advance the progressive manifestation of the divine in body, mind, and spirit. No mountain-top yoga, this spiritual impulse is aimed at the radical transformation of history and institutions. The myriad multicultural applications of these three yogas

continue to inspire the Institute's vision and ideals.

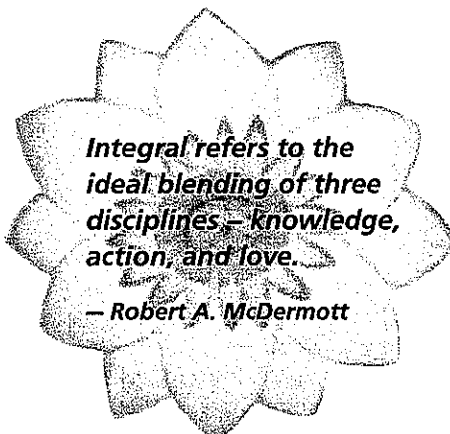
The Institute's mission originally focused on philosophy and religion. Dr. Chaudhuri himself worked on the implications of integral philosophy and yoga for psychology, and the psychological, conceived as a variety of body-mind therapies, soon emerged as the second major focus. The third and current effort on behalf of integralism is focusing on the institutional, systemic, and community modes of learning.

Throughout all three of these successive efforts there are at least three major concerns: the feminine (expressed in our Women's Spirituality program); the ecological (manifest in many new courses, an emerging ecology program, and in the Center



for the Story of the Universe); and the multi-cultural and indigenous peoples (at the core of the Anthropology program and the newly-formed Center for Traditional Knowledge).

Throughout its 25 year history, the Institute has focused primarily on the yoga, or spiritual discipline, of knowledge. It will remain a fully accredited graduate school with a serious mission in higher education. Its ideal of knowledge, however, is highly distinctive in that it includes affect and service. This is the kind of knowing prized and practiced by the great spiritual teachings of Asia and the West-- from the Vedas to



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Sri Aurobindo, from Buddha to the Dalai Lama, from Plato and Augustine to Jung and Teilhard—as well as by shamanic and mystical teachers of all cultures. It is the same kind of knowing to which the Institute's most pioneering disciplines, and each of its three schools, also aspire: the programs in the Foundation School show that when they are approached by spiritual methods, the liberal arts really do liberate us from ordinary perspectives; the programs in the School for Healing Arts demonstrate the depth of understanding and extent of healing possible when therapies include a spiritual and transformative dimension; the programs in the School for Transformative Learning provide methods for linking individual initiative with group learning. The entire Institute is committed to showing that theoretical, healing and learning arts are not only inseparable, but when pursued integrally, are essentially the same.

If the Institute's ideal of knowledge is ambitious, its ideal of governance is radical. Its attempt to formulate and implement essentially feminist ideals of governance is of course a work in progress—but we have begun. The Institute community is committed to high ideals and to developing the spiritual, psychological, and practical

resources needed to reach these ideals. As the Institute community cannot but feel the influence of the larger culture, which is increasingly characterized by conformity and complaint, it understands that integration of the spiritual and the intellectual, the transformational and the practical, the individual and institutional—must aim simultaneously at the spiritual awakening of individual members and the eventual awakening of American thought and culture.

These deep commitments warrant support by all who recognize that our culture needs nothing less than a revolution in values—and therefore a revolution in thinking, ways of learning, and commitment to service. In its organization and community ideals, as well as in its curriculum, this institution cultivates thinking informed by rare experiences and deep mysteries, permeated by compassion, in service of humanity and the Earth. It aims to reintegrate truth-telling and evaluation, administration and imagination, as well as meditation and psychology, arts and health, economics and ecology. Wherever there is fragmentation this Institute strives for understanding and skillful means in the service of integral solutions. ■



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