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Global Research Assembly
Chicago

July 2, 1979
T-601

INTRODUCTION TO THE WAY

In the evenings during the Global Research Assembly there will be a series of short talks that deal with the essential themes of our assembly: awakening, engagement and fulfillment. These themes are reflected in our summer symbol and represent the substance of our work and mission. In addition to these, we will talk about the spirit motifs of the summer and our work. We began that last night with the musicale. Tonight's talk will be the introduction to a number of reflections on "the Way". Our colleagues from the Orient refer to that concept as the Tao. This series of statements on the practical nature of the life of the Way will form a poetic backdrop for our work during the GRA and the coming year.

The summer is about awakening, engagement and fulfillment. Three things comprise that latter category - fulfillment. One is the experience of the illumination of life and the selfhood that follows from illumination. Through this experience an individual becomes his own person, makes his decisions, and lives his own life. Second, fulfillment has to do with the practical methods of life...getting things done, action. We refer to this as wisdom, or being the Wise One. Third, fulfillment has to do with embodying the way life is, becoming one with the with the Way. Sometimes we refer to that as being the Anointed One. This summer we will concentrate on the second: becoming the Wise One, who is practical, gets things done, is action-oriented.

We were introduced to the concept of the Way as the Tao through an ancient general named Sun Tzu, in a translation of his writings entitled The Art of War. We saw this volume was not a military handbook, but rather a collection of 81 poems on profound consciousness. The General, as the main figure in the book, is a man of the Tao. He is a man of spiritual meditation. The profundity of the spirit life and the obedience of the General to the Tao is what attracted our attention.

You will remember that several years ago we drew together insights about sainthood. We discovered that saints are not doers of miracles, in the first instance, nor simply the focus of special adoration. The saints in the history of all cultures are people of profound consciousness. We attempted to state that in terms of the spirit world, or what we called the Other World: that of mystery, profound consciousness, care and fulfillment. It was our work on the Other World that first allowed us to ground the foundational experience of universal concern.

The term "universal care" is another word for "love". Both words have so many meanings that we must strive to restate them. I have come to realize that if I do not actively care for all people...adults and children in Africa, for example...I am not acting in an affirmative and positive relation to the Way. I am now speaking as a westerner. If I care more about one person than another, I am in disrelation to life, I am not working in the Way, I am not an effective part of history. This is also the case if I act out my care more for the children in my country than for the children in Africa or if concern for my family supplants my concern for the families in the Orient: I am in disrelation to "the way it is." This is neither good or bad; it just is. The work of the Assembly today is a good illustration of practical, universal concern. It

provided a fantastic opportunity to hear about the vision, contradictions and trends of other continents so that the universal care present in all of us might be given practical expression in our work. Universal care, or love, is a basic part of being human. Love, or concern for others, near and far, is ongoing. It has always been and always will be. It is like hope, which also is always present as a continuing part of human experience.

There is another word I would like us to look at---credit. Credit (in the non-commercial sense) has to do with the honor or adulation received for doing something. If I seek credit for myself for something accomplished, I separate myself from others. Credit, as honor, is available to everybody, it is not like a restricted bank loan. That is simply the way it is. For one to seek credit for himself is to reveal his failure to understand that honor is bestowed by life itself, and is not a commodity to be gained in competition with others. If honor is the way it is, I am already honored; I don't have to look for it. When I seek my own honor, I reduce the swirl of life as it is given; I try to control it; I put some other value ahead of honor for life itself, which includes honor for my neighbor.

Universal care, love for the neighbor, is one way to describe obedience to the Way. Those on the Way understand that everyone is worthy, everyone is honorable, everyone has credit. When I seek my honor I am being disobedient to the Way it is. Obedience to the Way has to do with living one's life, and is marked by a detachment from concern for one's own life. The person of the Way knows that he does not have to compete against others. Isn't that a glory? He does not resent, nor blame, nor depend upon others, because he understands that the Way shares everything with those who are of the Way. The tensions between people are essential to creativity and all competitiveness is transcended in practical action, tactics, and maneuvers.

The fact that you showed up here tonight is an example that this world cares for you. This world has impartially decided to allow you to live and breathe and participate to this point. However you have lived, you are allowed to continue to live. Sometimes we find ourselves thinking that other people deserve to be here more than we do. But that is not the case. We are here because of the impartial care, impartial love that has brought us to this point. The Way of life cares for us and, as long as we breathe, it will be impartially available. The Way is objective; it is a fact that exists; it is universal; it is cold; it is impartial; and it cares for you. This realization is a profound awareness. This universal concern which you come to know but can never possess is final love.

Once you have been to a Town Meeting and have witnessed individuals awakening, participating and deciding about their destiny, then your life becomes profoundly altered. When you step into the presence of that event, you get lured, enticed. You get a taste of so much life in one place at one time that you are driven, from then on, to be a part of that much life. I do not mean to apply a quantitative analysis here. I just mean to communicate you are hooked. You are hooked by the Way of humanness itself. If you have ever been to a Consult, you realize that now you could allow nothing you will ever do be less than that Consult.

Universal care requires that you be obedient to the Way. This is the connection. Whatever we mean by justing love or seeking justice or caring for the neighbor, is directly related to being obedient to the Way. If we are to express love, we have to be on the Way. Love and obedience to the Way are two sides of the same coin. Furthermore, when we are love to our neighbor, near or far, we are winners. It is just that simple. Being a winner and expressing love are also two sides of the same coin. Those on the Way can see this. The spirit of the Way does not float around in space; it is present in the mundane things and actions of our lives. Yet not every person grasps the spirit of the Way. It is only grasped in action, in the midst of doing something. One who acts participates in this spirit reality. One who does not act, does not know the Way, though he may be very well educated, very sensitive, or very powerful. The spirit of the Way is manifest only in the unlimited engagement which places no bounds on concern and love. It is expressed when local people, like you and me, take on the task of building the earth. We have been about this job this year in social demonstration projects, in awakening whole nations, and in consulting with major organizations. This engagement is going to change the historical process.

The spirit of the Way includes social pioneering. It recognizes one world and, therefore, demands pioneering on behalf of all continents, all peoples, all families. Furthermore, winning and loving go together. Winners do not enact love in isolation or seclusion. This is the pitfall of hermits. To sit around and be loving in a cave is hardly a challenge, just as to sit around and love the world charismatically is almost anathema to the Way. To manipulate someone else's feelings with your feelings is a violation of the other. I am neither pointing to charisma nor isolation, but rather getting things done. When you assume the role of social pioneer, you understand that the Wise One is the practical one of the Way who strives only for the effective resurgence of all society and defends only the rise of local man. The only question of accountability is "what did we accomplish with respect to that responsibility?" We are not, in the first instance, interested in why we did not accomplish something last year. We are interested only in what was released through what we did. Now, we might reflect on why we did not get something we intended done, so we might be more effective in the future; but our accountability is in relation to what we did to deliver the awareness of possibility to local man. This is not some kind of "works" philosophy or activism. This is the awakening of the people of the planet for the strategic resurgence of society.

There is no such thing as being the Wise One and not being a winner and strategist. Who ever heard of a Wise One losing? Our question in this GRA is not whether we are going to win, but how we are going to win. What is the strategy for winning? That is the focus of research work, strategy.

We have learned a great deal from our Buddhist and Hindu colleagues in whose traditions there is an understanding that a wise person is one who has learned to control desires of the flesh and of pride. The strongest desire I see blocking people today from being on the Way is the desire to be someone. To grasp the Way is to decide to be a nobody, who never

requires honor for himself. A person of the Way is the lord and leader of no one, in the first instance. He is a strategist. The Wise One never has to be in charge of anything. Whether in charge or not, the one on the Way sees the future as open in every circumstance. And this takes courage. I may or may not be sitting at the front of the table, but I no longer have the luxury of wishing that someone had made another decision. As one on the Way, I now see the future as open, in terms of the present reality and not some other. The openness of the future doesn't change for the strategist. *he said "the future is just as open as if I had made some other decision."*

The decision to be on the Way is an invisible decision. It allows one to stand open to take any job, to work with anyone, and to lead or follow at any time. That is the style and action of the Way which is winning strategy. Winning for the one on the Way is always on behalf of the neighbor. This is yin/yang principle applied to the claim to love the neighbor. Without the neighbor you do not exist fully. You are not you without love for the neighbor. Your love for the neighbor is not possible without you. The self does not disappear; rather it is invested or expended, in love. The Way is the way of strategy.