Seeking integral community 
in an ecological age . . .


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The “Ecozoic Era” is a time of mutually enhancing relationships
among humans and the larger community of life.

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The “Great Work” is living the promise of the ecozoic.


MY TRIP TO INDIA AND HOW IT Affected MY LIFE

My Trip to India

India . . . as John Cock says, “That never to be forgotten trip.”

I’ve seen people return with slightly glazed eyes. There’s a line in the old Broadway play The Fantastiks where a person comes onto the stage in a daze and is asked “What happened to you?” His response was
“The world happened to me.” I’d heard about them, those “huddled masses,” “those who live on less than a dollar a day,” “the bottom half.” Most people.

But I hadn’t really seen them until I went to India.

For the Children.
For the fish who swim in the sea.

For those who fly in the air.

For those who carry heavy loads.
For the four-legged children.

For those who dance.

For the washer men and their fathers who may have washed here for a thousand years.
For those who worship.

And those who prepare for worship.

For the Lord (Shiva) of the Dance.
For those who bike and trike and walk.

For those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Herman Greene and Fr. Kurian Kachappilly cmi, 7th International Whitehead Conference, Christ University, Bangalore, India.

For those who seek to bring new forms of living into being (Vandana Shiva’s Navdanya-the seed, Dehradun, India. (www.navdanya.org/about/overview.htm)
For those who hunger and thirst “to protect nature and people’s rights to knowledge, biodiversity, food and water.”

For the farmers.

For new models of biodiverse, organic agriculture.
For the dogs.

For beauty anyway . . . nevertheless.

For stonecutters and artists who inlay precious stones in white marble.
How It Affected My Life

I have a different idea now of what is important
I have a different idea now of what is a problem
I have a different idea now of what is enough
I have a totally different understanding of the world in which we live

I have a different understanding of “the least of these”
I have come to a resolution inside that each person is a child of God, even the least of these.
I have come to understand that we humans are different, very different.
We worship differently, we live differently, we have different frames of reference, we differ greatly in our access to material goods, we speak different languages and wear different clothes.
Our families are different, our moods are different, our degrees of acceptance are different.
Our toleration for apparent disorder and disrepair is different.
What we eat is different.
Our social statuses are different, our abilities to control circumstances are different—always partial but much more partial for some.
The colors of our skin are different.
To be white is different.

I have come to understand in a new way that humans are part of nature.
I have come to understand that in the future the world will be hot, flat and crowded . . . but not so flat.
These are circumstances maybe none of us can control.
I have come to understand that diversity in humans is as real and important as biodiversity. It is difference that makes us who we are.
I have come to understand that human diversity is part of biodiversity.

I have been touched by an extraordinary generosity that let’s all—I really mean all—things be.
I have been touched by nonattachment.
I have been touched by those who with equanimity live in the midst of a never-ceasing whirlwind.
I only want to live for what is important.
I don’t want to get caught up in the world again
I want to be generous too, and forgiving and accepting
and attentive.
I want to dance
I want to make a difference.

SOME FACTS ABOUT INDIA

There are 1,147,995,904 people in India (July 2008 est.)*
The size of India is slightly more than 1/3 of the United States*
Every second a child is born in India*
Every seven minutes, a woman dies in childbirth**
78,000 women die from childbirth each year, in Uttar Pradesh 1 in 42 women has a lifetime risk of
maternal death (only 1 in 500 in Kerala).**
Environment - current issues:
deforestation; soil erosion; overgrazing; desertification; air pollution from industrial effluents and
vehicle emissions; water pollution from raw sewage and runoff of agricultural pesticides; tap water
is not potable throughout the country; huge and growing population is overstraining natural
resources.*

Myths:
India never changes. India is characterized by a new rising middle class. The reality is more
complex***

The Indian Poverty Line:
Most international organizations such as UNICEF and the World Bank have a working poverty
line for developing nations as US$1 or below per day ($365 per year). By contrast, the Indian
Government defines poverty as earning less than Rupees 10 (US$0.21) per day (around US$75
per year). The Indian figures give a population of around 300 million people living below the
poverty line (coincidentally around the same number as estimates for the total milled class). If the
international figure is taken then some 70 percent of all Indians (some 790 million people) live
below the poverty line.***

Brief History:
Aryan tribes from the northwest infiltrated onto the Indian subcontinent about 1500 B.C.; their
merger with the earlier Dravidian inhabitants created the classical Indian culture. The Maurya
Empire of the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. - which reached its zenith under ASHOKA - united much
of South Asia. The Golden Age ushered in by the Gupta dynasty (4th to 6th centuries A.D.) saw a
flowering of Indian science, art, and culture. Arab incursions starting in the 8th century and Turkic
in the 12th were followed by those of European traders, beginning in the late 15th century. By the
19th century, Britain had assumed political control of virtually all Indian lands. Indian armed forces
in the British army played a vital role in both World Wars. Nonviolent resistance to British
colonialism led by Mohandas GANDHI and Jawaharlal NEHRU brought independence in 1947.
The subcontinent was divided into the secular state of India and the smaller Muslim state of
Pakistan. A third war between the two countries in 1971 resulted in East Pakistan becoming the
separate nation of Bangladesh. India’s nuclear weapons testing in 1998 caused Pakistan to
conduct its own tests that same year. The dispute between the countries over the state of
Kashmir is ongoing, but discussions and confidence-building measures have led to decreased
tensions since 2002. Despite impressive gains in economic investment and output, India faces
pressing problems such as significant overpopulation, environmental degradation, extensive
poverty, and ethnic and religious strife.

factbook/geos/in.html (accessed January 22, 2009)
** The Times of India, January 17, 2009, 16.


HOW TO MAKE DECISIONS

Ganji’s Talisman

I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test.

Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest person whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him or her. Will he or she gain anything by it? Will it restore him or her to a control over his or her own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?

Then you will find your doubt and your self melting away.

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The mission of CES is to offer a vision of an ecozoic society and contribute to its realization through research, education and the arts.

To become a member of CES, send a letter to CES at 2516 Winningham Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516, USA, with your contact information and dues. Dues for each calendar year are US$30 (individual or family); outside USA, Canada and Mexico, add US$10. Sustaining Member US$130. Contributions are welcome.