

The Mt. Tron Mail

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Mt. Tron University of Peace Foundation

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If the whole world was one village...



Mt. Tron seen from the bridge over the Glåma river at Aukrustsenteret in Alvdal, New Years Eve the 31st of December 2000. It is minus 28 degrees Celcius, and the evening sun is bathing Mt. Tron in gold. Photo: BP.

...the 'sun' would shine only on the 'top'. On the 25th of March this year I received an e-mail from a Danish friend in Denmark, which seemed to be of that 'wandering type' which one frequently receives to forward to one's friends. The mail was only marked "Week of Friendship". In my opinion it was so good and important that I have chosen to share it with the readers of The Mt. Tron Mail:

"If we look at the world as a place where there is only one village with exactly 100 inhabitants, it would look much like this: There would be – 57 Asians; 21 Europeans; 14 from America, both from North and South; and 8 Africans. 52 would be women and 48 would be men. 70 would be non-white, and 30 would be white; 70 would be non-christian, and 30 would be christian. 89 would be heterosexual, and 11 would be homosexual. 6 persons would have 69% of all the riches of the world – and all 6 would be from the USA. 80 would not live in a house; 70 would not be able to read; 1 (yes, only 1) would have an education higher than primary school; 1 would own a computer; 1 would be near death, and 1 would be near birth.

If we look at our world with such a compact view, the need for acceptance, understanding and education is suddenly much clearer. Here is a little more to think about: If you woke up this morning, feeling more healthy than sick, you will be luckier than that million people who will not survive this week. If you have never experienced the danger of war, the fear of torture or the pain of hunger, you are ahead of 500 million people all over the world. If you have food in the fridge, clothes in the cupboard, a roof over your head and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of this world. If you have money in the bank or in your purse, and money for shelter somewhere, you belong to the world's richest 8%. If you can read this message, you are luckier than more than 2 billions in this world – who cannot read at all.

Someone once said: 'What goes around comes around. Work as if you don't need money. Love as if you never was hurt. Dance as if nobody sees you. Sing as if no one can hear you. Live as if this is heaven on earth'."

Sri Ananda and Arne Garborg



Sri Ananda and Arne Garborg outside in the field to the first mentioned's Gaurisankar Math at Tronsvangen in Alvdal, with parts of Mt.Tron in the background, in June 1921, working on the translation of the great Indian national epic 'Ramayana', from original Sanskrit, via English and standard Norwegian to New Norwegian. Sri Ananda is singing in the traditional Indian way from the Sanskrit text and explains, while Garborg is making notes. The photo is arranged to show the collaboration between the two. The assistants Miss Edwards and Einar Beer are not seen in the picture. Garborg is here 70 years old, while Sri Ananda is 40. This 80-year-old, beautiful photo, is a rare document over a forgotten and unique piece of Norwegian cultural history. It was taken by one of the two local photographers at the time: Henrik Stinesen (Tynset), or Alexander Bredstrøm (Alvdal).

Anniversary

As most people already know, this year is a nationally declared "Garborg-year" in Norway, to mark the occasion of the poet Arne Garborg's birth 150 years ago. But only a very few know that at the same time it is 120 years since Swami Sri Ananda Acharya – who lived at Tronsvangen in Alvdal for 27 years – was born in India, and that these two great poets and intellectual leaders, had a collaboration for several years. It is therefore now, in 2001, actually a joint year of anniversary for these two. The contact between Arne Garborg and Sri Ananda lasted practically from early in 1918 to shortly before Garborg's death early in 1924. During this period they collaborated about several of Sri Ananda's books, but mostly about translations into 'New Norwegian' for two of them, namely the collection of poems "Snow-Birds" and the great Indian epic "Ramayana".

West meets East

The meeting and collaboration of Garborg and Sri Ananda was a unique event in the cultural Norway in the previous century.

Never before either Garborg or any other Norwegians, or other Scandinavians for that matter, had seen an Indian sannyasin and such a remarkable man as Sri Ananda. And most probably a collaboration like that is still unparalleled in our history. It was Sri Ananda who first contacted Garborg by sending him a letter. The first letters to Garborg came in two editions: in English in Sri Ananda's handwriting, and in Norwegian in another's handwriting. Garborg didn't speak English, and Sri Ananda not very much Norwegian. So when they first met – on the Gaurisankar Math on the 12th of September 1920 – and also later when Garborg stayed at Tronsvangen with Sri Ananda for several weeks in the summers of 1921 and 1922, they needed an interpreter both for their collaboration and conversations. But this was no problem, as Sri Ananda had several competent friends staying with him. At that first meeting in 1920, also Garborg's wife Hulda and their good friend, the poet-priest Ivar Mortensson-Egnund from Follidal, were present, together with the driver Olav Straalberg from Strålsjøåsen in Alvdal.

Til minne um Arne Garborg

Lat dørene upp, lat upp
 De gullhærde engle-vakter
 og fagne honom som kjem!
 For han tente songdisene vel
 i dei tri sneis åri og tie.
 Norigs morsmål å reise og adle
 det var livsyret hans.
 Og den heimlege bokhagen hennar
 han endå rikare gjorde
 med vokstrar frå solbjarte sørland.
 For ålmannbaten i Norig
 frå ungdomen av hev han streva.
 Landsens born han fram vilde føre
 til høgre hugmål på fridoms vegjer.
 Haugelandet og fjellsjølandet,
 gamlelandet med gjetords-kultar,
 dei bjarte nordljøs-nætter sin heim,
 fregdelandet kransa av fjord og fjell
 det åtte hugen hans.
 Landet med vogga til fridoms-guden
 udøyelegt hev han det gjort
 i songar so fagre og sterke.
 Garborg du er ikkje burte.
 Ved syngjande bekk frå skalde-kjelda
 der leva du skal,
 der i kveldingi alvar trør dans,
 og fregdarmenn samlast til gaman og leik.
 I hagen vår, skald, kvila du njote
 etter møde og strev.
 Kvila du njote med skaldar i lag,
 med dei store avlidne ånder
 i høgheims stjerne-ljose døkkbjarte nætter.

Av **Swami Sri Ananda Acharya.**

*(There has been no attempt to translate this poem
 from the New Norwegian).*

The talks at the Gaurisankar Math

A part of the daily talks and conversations between Sri Ananda and Arne Garborg at the Gaurisankar Math in the summers of 1921 and 1922, during the collaboration with the translation of "Ramayana", were written down by the interpreter and co-collaborator Einar Beer from memory later in the evening or late at night, immediately afterwards. These talks are quite unique and have never before been published. Exclusively for the readers of The Mt.Tron Mail, we hereby present a tiny example of such a conversation from July 1st 1921:

Sri Ananda: "Did Ibsen or Bjørnson ever talk for the benefit of the 'landsmål' (New Norwegian)?"

Garborg: "No, they were both against it and denoted it as a danger for our country. Especially Bjørnson wrote much against it. I cannot remember that Ibsen wrote publicly against it. Ibsen never participated in newspaper controversy."

Sri Ananda: "Did Bjørnson recognize you as a poet?"

Garborg: "Sometimes he praised me, and sometimes he blamed me strongly. But once he went as far as to compare me with Voltaire."

Sri Ananda: "Did Ibsen ever write about your poetry?"



Sri Ananda and Arne Garborg in the first mentioned's library and study at Gaurisankar Math, in the summer of 1921, or perhaps 1922 (because it seems as if Sri Ananda has got hold of more editions of Ramayana than in the previous photo). This photo is also arranged and probably taken by one of the previously mentioned photographers, but the cut (segment) here is not as good as in the previous.

Garborg: "No."

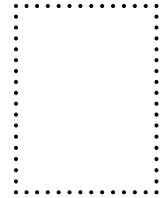
Sri Ananda: Poets never recognize poets, and saints never recognize saints. That is the way it is."

The collaboration about Ramayana

The collaboration about the translation of the great Indian national epic 'Ramayana', from Sanskrit to New Norwegian, lasted for one and a half year and was a great and demanding work. Sri Ananda had spent altogether 20 years of his life studying the Ramayana prior to this work, and he had great ambitions to give out to the Norwegian people an edition which was to be as correct and perfect as possible. And no resources were spared by him in this effort. However, what he didn't know, was that Garborg had his own, hidden plans for the work. It therefore ended in Garborg simply taking the book and publishing it as his own, without Sri Ananda's knowledge or consent. That's why it came to a conflict and a sad end of the fruitful co-operation. But Garborg was forgiven by Sri Ananda.

The Mt.Tron Mail

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News from Mt.Tron

Snow and ice

Still Mt.Tron is covered by snow and ice, both literary and in a figurative sense. So far the municipality of Alvdal has not managed to live up to their promises about the further development of their planning work, where they, among other things, will arrange for a peace university on Mt.Tron, in accordance with the plans of The Mt.Tron University of Peace Foundation. And the prospects are not looking very good either, with the huge economical



The top of Mt.Tron, seen through a telephoto lens from Tronsvanglia, early morning, medio January 2001. Photo: BP.

cuts and possible dismissals which the municipality now is facing. It is appropriate to remind ourselves of the fact that the existing municipal plan is from as far back as 1985, and that, except from the most centred areas of Alvdal, there have not been given any new plans. Perhaps our Foundation now has to take the responsibility to put a motion for a private regulation on Mt.Tron?