



# The Mt. Tron Mail

September 2006 • Mt. Tron University of Peace Foundation • No. 3 Vol. 9



*The "Peace Plateau" on Mt. Tron in autumn with the Monument to the right and the site of the planned University of Peace in the centre of the picture. View towards North-North-East. Illustration from the project description mentioned below. Photo: BP.*

## The Mt. Tron University of Peace

**A humaniversity for universal harmony**

**Detailed project description**

*(Continuation from no. 1 and 2 earlier this year, in which background, foundation, prerequisites and goal for the project have been described. Here it continues with description of the concrete preliminary project)*

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PRELIMINARY PROJECT

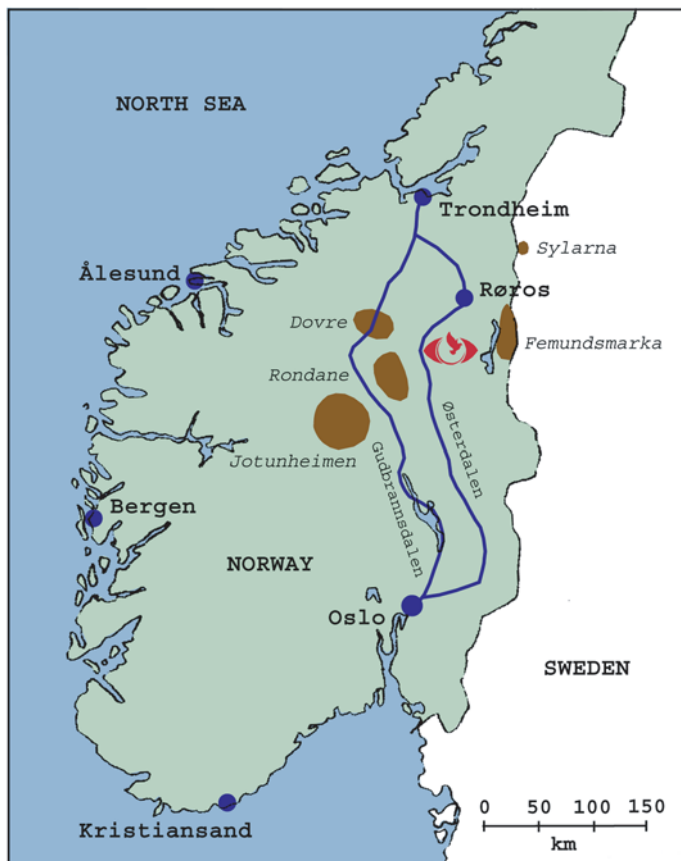
#### **The Country**

Norway is a long, sparsely inhabited, mountainous country facing the North Sea of the Atlantic Ocean. Its, relative to its size, extremely long coastline is in many places very rugged and has deep fjords unparalleled in the world. The mountains reach heights of nearly 2500 metres, some covered by "eternal snow" due to the relative proximity to the Arctic Circle. The warm Gulf Stream hitting the west coast after travelling across the Atlantic keeps the country from being entirely snow-covered. The few larger towns are all located along the sea with harbours for ocean-going vessels. In the interior of the country there are

valleys with small farms and villages. Norway has a long border with Sweden and shorter borders with Finland and Russia in the extreme North.

#### **The Mountain**

One of the main tourist valleys, Gudbrandsdalen, runs north from the capital Oslo in the south and connects with the middle and northern part of the country via the high plateau of Dovre which is bordered by some of the highest peaks in Norway. Running parallel and to its east is Østerdalen (Eastern Valley) ending in the small town of Røros which was founded on rich copper mines in the 17th century. Røros is the source of the river Glomma (the longest river in Norway) which runs through Østerdalen.



Schematic map of the southern part of Norway showing the location of the Mt. Tron University of Peace (logo) in Østerdalen about 300 km north of the capital, Oslo. Illustration from the project description. Drawing: Knud Larsen

Coming from the South, and about 70 km from Røros, the valley broadens out at the village of Alvdal which, at its right side, has the 1665 metre high (above sea level) majestic landmark of Mt. Tron.

This solitary mountain could be taken for an extinct volcano but it consists in fact of some of the oldest rock on Earth (500 million years). Even so it has some special geological features which attract scientists.

It was on the south-western slope of this mountain that Swami Sri Ananda Acharya (see page 10) settled in 1917 and it was on a large, saddle shaped plateau south of, and 365 metres below, its summit that he located the site of the future University of Peace. This plateau has since then been called the "Peace Plateau" and Mt. Tron has been known as the "Mountain of Truth" or the "Mountain of Wisdom".

Recently a television transmitter (1960) and a civil radar installation (2000) have been placed on the very top of the mountain, connected with the valley bottom by the second highest car road in the country which is closed by snow for half of the year. It is the existence of this private road which makes construction of a large building complex on the plateau possible.

### The Neighbourhood

The private part of the road starts at Tronsvangen on the south-western slope of Mt. Tron, a small collection of wooden huts just below the tree line, one of which was the residence of Sri Ananda. A few hundred metres further down in the forest is the former residence of Sri Ananda's principal assistant, Einar Beer, who died in 1982 at the advanced age of 95. It is now the headquarters of the "Mt. Tron University Peace Foundation". On the western slope of Mt. Tron at about 1400 metres and about 3 km from the plateau is situated Sri Ananda's grave. It can be reached by foot along a marked path in about an hour from the Peace Plateau and the view being gorgeous it will be a favourite excursion.

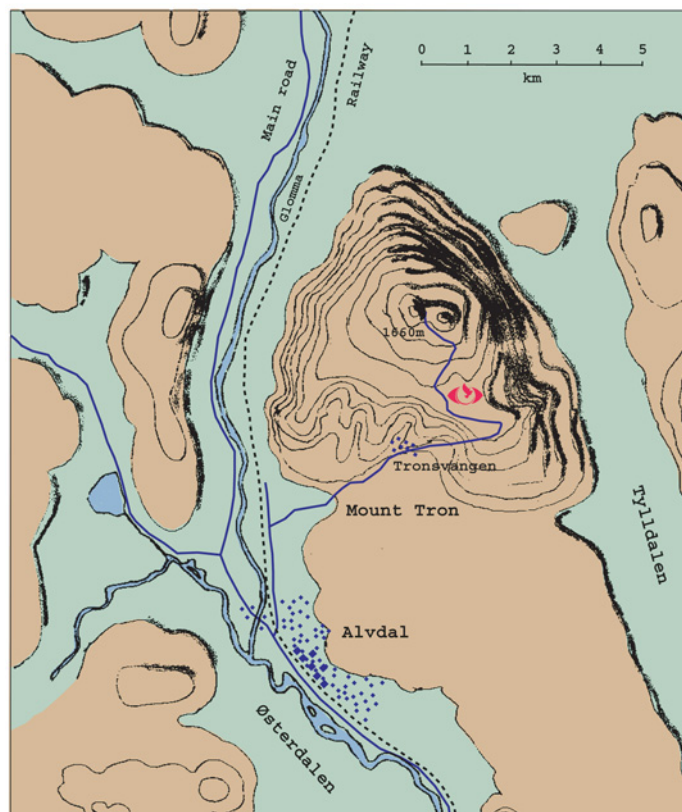
In the valley next to the river Glomma is Alvdal, a small community around a railway station with the administrative headquarters of the municipality of Alvdal, a rather large area primarily consisting of forest and mountains. Near the centre of Alvdal is a modern museum designed by Norway's foremost architect, Sverre Fehn, which houses a collection of drawings, paintings and objects by the famous "son of Alvdal", Kjell Aukrust, and has Mt. Tron as a focal view point. There is regular train- and bus connection to Oslo and Trondheim. Røros, about 75 minutes by car north of Alvdal, has a local airport. From Alvdal by either train or car it takes about four hours to Oslo to the south and three hours to Trondheim to the north. Trondheim is Norway's third largest town with the northernmost medieval, gothic cathedral in the world.

The municipality of Alvdal has, unlike many other similar municipalities, no problem with depopulation and stagnation. However, The Mt. Tron University of Peace will generate new activity in a number of fields, further stimulate the local economy and general regional development, and will "put Alvdal on the map".

The local administrators therefore view the Mt. Tron project positively. Some of the local activities that will benefit from it are ecological farming, lodging of guests, transport and other service activities. The "Peace Plateau" can be seen from Alvdal, but the buildings themselves, situated over the edge of the saddle, will not be visible from the valley.

### The Site

The plateau is high over the tree line and has only sparse vegetation between the scattered, small rocks covering the ground. The plateau is about one third of a square kilometre in area with a monument in the middle consisting of a granite monolith and a low stonewall inscribed with Sri Ananda's poems considered to be the "first stone" of the "Peace University". The actual building site is about 200 metres north of the monument on the largest flat area of the plateau and "facing" east. The elevation over sea level of the site is exactly 1300 metres.



Schematic map of Mt. Tron with surroundings. The location of Mt. Tron University of Peace is marked by the logo. Illustration from the project description. Drawing: Knud Larsen



View of the «Peace Plateau» seen from the top of Mt.Tron towards South. Below the plateau is seen to the left the valley of Tyllaldalen and to the right the valley of Alvdal. Illustration from the project description. Photo: BP.

The existing driveway crosses the plateau more or less from southeast to northwest on its way to the top. Where it crosses the edge of the “saddle” a car parking area will mark the point where a new driveway takes off to the right connecting the existing driveway with the main entrance of the building complex. Cars and busses will be expected to park here out of sight from the buildings but within walking distance (400 m). Passengers will be driven to the sidewalk directly below the main entrance. The new driveway is horizontal, following the natural contours of the terrain, and only when nearing the roundabout does it rise slightly towards the entrance. The byroad leading to the service uses a natural depression in the terrain to scale about 7 metres rising from the driveway.

The building site is on top of the gently eastward sloping terrain with flat areas towards south and west. To the north the top of Mt.Tron is rising steeply. To the east there is an uninterrupted view of the mountain ranges stretching into Sweden. To the west, the mountains comprising Jotunheimen, Rondane and Dovre with the peak Snøhetta, are all parts of the most impressive ranges in Norway. Directly to the south the view is somewhat restricted by Sør-kletten, the southern edge of the plateau. It is from this edge that hang gliders jump to soar over the southern slopes of Mt.Tron. Very often a cold wind blows from the south-west, necessitating artificial shelter of outdoor relaxing areas. Snowfall is not excessive, but the dry, constantly drifting snow in the open landscape blocks the upper part of the driveway for about five kilometres.

## The Buildings

### Arrival

The driveway can be kept free of snow from approximately the beginning April to the end of November. In those months guests will arrive either by bus or private car or even by foot via a direct path from Tronsvangen. From December to March communication will be by snowmobile or snow scooter, or by ski for those who are the most sporty. Helicopters can land on the roundabout if necessary.

The sidewalk where guests will alight is at a level 5 metres under the terrace leading to the main entrance. The broad stairs are flanked by granite bastions on top of which are sitting places for the enjoyment of the rising sun shielded from the western winds. A long ramp for the disabled and for luggage cars bypasses the stairs. The drop of level has the

effect that cars and buses will not block the view from the entrance terrace. Shortly before arriving at the roundabout a byroad to the left gives access to a service yard for service cars and arrival of goods. After dropping passengers at the sidewalk the driver will take the car/bus to the parking area and walk the 400m back along the driveway. Normally the driver will not need the car again for several days.

### Layout

The Peace University consists of a number of rather differently shaped buildings interconnected around a square courtyard. They range in height from one to five floors. The general layout takes as its point of departure the traditional cloister-type courtyard bordered by a covered gallery. This gallery is extended in the corners to form the main arteries of communication. The different buildings are “hung” on the galleries which can be extended further in case buildings are added in future. Each building is formed in such a way as to express its function and the buildings are put together in a play of volumes and shapes that both fit into the landscape and make stimulating variations over themes primarily guided by a few materials and their implicit laws. The multiplicity of forms also has three practical reasons: The complex may not be built in one step. One or more buildings can be built later without the first step looking mutilated. The complex can be extended in the future by adding one or more independently shaped buildings to the extended galleries without disturbing the impression of the whole. There is economy in “wrapping” each function as tightly as possible in a building form that is not forced to follow a set of general, formal standards.

### Universal rules of orientation

The location of the different activities relative to each other follow, as closely as possible, prescriptions from ancient Indian literature (concerning the best built living environment for humans in this part of the world according to weather and climate) as interpreted by Swami Paramananda (see page 10) in direct communication with the architects: General orientation exactly North-South and East-West. Main entrance from the East (with the morning sun), secondary entrance from the South. An open courtyard with a pool and surrounded by low walls towards the East and the South to allow the morning sun, with its fresh supply of charged ions, to enter. Kitchen (fire) in the south-eastern corner, and diagonally opposite washing/bathrooms (water) in the north-western corner.



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### **The Mt.Tron Mail** - the newsletter for those interested in the establishing of the Mt.Tron University of Peace

|                   |   |                          |                                 |
|-------------------|---|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Publisher:</i> | Mt.Tron University of Peace Foundation  | <i>Address:</i>          | “Shantibu”, 2560 Alvdal, Norway |
| <i>Editor:</i>    | Bjørn Pettersen<br>(Chairman of the Foundation)   | <i>Telephone:</i>        | +47 62 11 36 91                 |
| <i>Issues:</i>    | Quarterly (4 times a year)  | <i>E-mail:</i>           | shanti@tronuni.org              |
| <i>Languages:</i> | Norwegian and English   | <i>WEB:</i>              | www.tronuni.org                 |
| <i>Prices:</i>    | Subscription of support NOK 300,-/year<br>(US\$ 43,- UK£ 30,- € 43,-)<br>Single copies NOK 30,-/piece | <i>Organization no.:</i> | 990 106 118                     |
|                   |   | <i>IBAN:</i>             | NO94 1895 2650 935              |
|                   |   | <i>BIC-address:</i>      | SHEDNO22                        |
|                   |   | <i>Bank name:</i>        | Sparebanken Hedmark             |

(Continuation from the previous page)

Storage (storm fencing) in the south-western corner, and diagonally opposite assembly (peaceful place) in the north-eastern corner. Sleeping rooms towards west. Buildings to be lowest in south-east and spiralling counter clockwise upwards to reach the highest point towards south-west. A few prescriptions concern interior space: Beds to be located with headrest towards either East or South. Circular silence room to seat 108 people in the outer row facing the centre. Circular (here octagonal) assembly hall.

#### **Functions and Space**

##### *Entry*

From the entrance terrace one enters the complex by passing



Aerial view of the Eastern side of the «Peace Plateau» on Mt. Tron, view towards West. The Mt. Tron Road crossing the plateau can be seen. Illustration from the project description mention below. Photo: BP.

between two massive granite “towers” into a 6 metre wide entry hall from which there is a view into the northern gallery and beyond to the open courtyard.

##### *Galleries*

The gallery framing the courtyard comes in two widths: 6 metres and 3 metres according to the amount of traffic and secondary functions. It is one storey high and has a slanted ceiling with articulated supports. An exception is the gallery in the western wing which is the lower of three alike galleries one above the other and therefore with a flat ceiling.

The gallery which continues the entry hall is 6 metres wide and has a couple of sitting groups along the floor to ceiling windows towards the courtyard. Sliding doors give access to the courtyard and opposite doors lead into the large sitting room. Next to the western wing a large, glass covered opening down to the basement floor with open stairs leads to the silence room.

A row of sliding doors in the gallery along the eastern wing gives access to the dining hall. In the gallery itself are placed cafeteria tables to serve day guests, for example members of the hang gliding club. In the northern end of the east gallery an area next to the foyer is reserved for temporary exhibitions. The western gallery serves two stairs, elevator, meeting rooms, health clinic and offices and rooms in the four piers. The southern gallery serves the goods entrance, kitchen, garages and caretaker’s rooms in the tower. A large sliding door opposite the garages give access to the courtyard for the removing of snow.

(Continuation in the December issue)