

The World Mother



The Madonna of the Annunciation - A Study
by Theodora St. John (Sydney, circa 1926)

At the heart of many spiritual traditions there is the reality of the Divine Feminine. She is called Kwan Yin in China ('the One who hears the cries of the world'), Isis in ancient Egypt, Sri Durga in India, and Our Lady in the Christian tradition. She has many names in Tibet, including Palden Lhamo, 'Queen of the Armed Warriors', who is the Protectress of Dharma. The Indian tradition maintains she has a thousand names and equally numerous qualities, and that she brings the universe into existence and returns it to a state of non-being. She is the spouse of Brahman, the Eternal. She is the Soul of every woman and girl.

Although CWL had mentioned the Divine Feminine in his book *The Hidden Side of Christian Festivals*, particularly in regard to the festivals associated with Our Lady, in 1926 he had a moment of profound discovery when he was aware of the presence of the World Mother in Sydney. Around that time, his physician, Dr Mary Rocke, a

distinguished ceremonialist, composed a service entitled 'The Temple of the Motherhood of God', dedicated to the Feminine side of the Divine, and to be performed by women and young girls only. On the altar there were seven candlesticks, dedicated to the Goddesses in the Western tradition: Hestia, Demeter, Virgin Mary, Athena, Aphrodite, and Artemis.

Dr Rocke asked Bishop Leadbeater to see if such a ritual was 'operative' on the higher planes of existence. After examining it he said it was. He personally supervised the initial workings of the ritual in Sydney, without taking part in it. He said he was told that such ritual should not be part of the Liturgy of the Liberal Catholic Church, but that it was meant to be part of a worldwide movement for the upliftment of women and children around the world.

A number of women leaders in the TS were considered to lead such movement, including Rukmini Devi Arundale, Lady Emily Lutyens, and others. After an initial engagement they lost interest in it. After CWL's death in 1934, C. Jinarajadasa tried again to create an interest in the movement but discovered there was very little interest, if at all.

In a remarkable incident several decades later, I was reliably told, the last of the girls trained by CWL in Sydney, now an elderly woman, agreed to pass on that tradition to another woman, younger than her. An altar was set up but, at the least minute, the lady in question decided not to proceed and declined to explain why. The tradition went into abeyance.

CWL's critics regarded these events as another creation of a 'self-deluded man'. They had the same attitude to him when, in 1909, he saw in a malnourished, lice-ridden, squalid young Indian boy at the Adyar beach, a future great orator and great teacher, with the purest aura he had ever seen. The boy's name was J. Krishnamurti.