

**Sister Jayanti's service trip to Berlin and Potsdam, Germany, 2.-3. September 2022,
Conference: Facing the Future: Human Ecology and Higher Education**

Sister Jayanti was invited by Prof. Mark Lawrence and Prof. Ortwin Renn, the directors of the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) in Potsdam, Germany, to participate in the international conference "Facing the Future: Human Ecology and Higher Education" taking place at the IASS in Potsdam. Sister Jayanti was asked to speak live online in a video call at a round table that was looking at "Transdisciplinarity (TD)" on Thursday, 1. Sept. TD is a research field that seeks to produce knowledge that is transformative by understanding, advancing and guiding processes of societal change towards sustainable development. The moderator asked Carolin to moderate the session with him, which gave her the opportunity to introduce Sister Jayanti. Sister Jayanti gave a 15 min. presentation on the topic of *"Transdisciplinarity - Exploring different ways to know and to transform"* and also conducted a meditation. The presentation was very well received.

The next day on 2. Sept. Sister Jayanti joined Carolin at the conference in Potsdam (near Berlin) in person. There was a chance to meet with the co-director Prof. Ortwin Renn and several other researchers of Human Ecology and Higher Education as well as the director of the UNESCO office in Berlin.

There was an opportunity to engage in an interactive workshop with the same moderator of the roundtable the day before on the theme of transformation. This was an opportunity for Sister Jayanti and Carolin to bring in spirituality. Sister Jayanti was asked a couple of questions and there was a good response to everything that was shared.

In the afternoon there were interesting conversations with several individuals. Sister Jayanti was further interviewed and filmed by someone who is working on a documentary about the future. He is someone we have known from attending many conferences for decades. He expressed that he feels very hopeless and disillusioned about the state of the world and it was good to have time to sustain him and others through these personal encounters.

In the evening of the 2nd Sept. there was a dialogue event on the topic *"Turning Point and Transformation - Leadership and Governance for Well-Being"* at the BK center in Berlin, to which a selected audience of scientists and people working in the political field were invited. Johanna Vilhjalmsdottir interviewed Prof. Dieter Gerten from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) and Sister Jayanti. Prof. Gerten's main contribution was about the importance of water as an essential part of life and his qualitative and quantitative research. Sister Jayanti talked about the transformative power of silence and shifting consciousness.

In the second part of the evening the audience was invited to engage by commenting and asking questions. Two invited guests had been asked to bring in their experiences, ideas and questions in particular: Markus who has helped us a great deal with communication with the German government and our renewable projects in Madhuban was meeting Sister Jayanti after a gap of a few years. He was very disillusioned by the state of the world and felt being at Baba's home was like a breath of fresh air that was reviving him. He spoke eloquently and remembered the impact that Dadi Janki had with her spiritual power on the people of the German government who had visited Mt. Abu.

Matthias Fritsch, a Professor of Philosophy at Concordia University, Montréal was invited online and brought in a non-linear concept of time he has developed from his research on indigenous cultures. In this concept the present includes the past and the future. With this, any human being who is yet to be born has a right to be included and considered in the present. There were also participants who came from the conference.. A medical doctor and neuroscientist, who is organizing a conference on science and spirituality and had done a pre-recorded interview with Sister Jayanti the day before, spoke about the importance of spirituality in these changing times. Two journalists had come, too. One from the national newspaper "Die Zeit" and one from a national spiritual magazine. Sis. Almut closed the program by summarizing some main things that had been shared.

Substantial snacks had been served at the later part of the program and people were relaxed and stayed to chat together for at least 90 minutes after the programme finished. They all found the evening very energizing and refreshing. The Berlin family supported the programme very well. The evening was filmed, and a 30 minute video will be created from it.

On Saturday 3. Sept., Carolin and Sister Jayanti attended the final half day of the conference in Potsdam. One of the themes was how the economy and AI (Artificial intelligence) would go through massive changes and would create much upheaval in society. The final keynote speech was by Prof. Johan Rockström, the Co-Director of the PIK. He spoke very eloquently and used slides to illustrate his talk. He demonstrated how the last 50 years had disrupted the stable system of the earth, which has lasted for thousands of years, through carbon emissions, pollution, and other activity and put the whole question of the future of the planet at risk. We have scientific evidence that 1.5 Celsius is a threshold through which human life can be supported comfortably. Beyond that, multimillions of people would be in situations that would be very difficult to manage in terms of the heat and would find life intolerable on the planet. He went on to say that we have a space of just a few years to be able to reverse the situation, if we actually fulfill the agreements made in Paris. If only two percent of the Global GDP would be spent on combating climate change things could be reversed. But it seems that governments are still not willing to do this. He is still hopeful about the future because we now have so much scientific know-how about what needs to be done. In one of his slides he showed that 6 of the 9 tipping points of planetary boundaries have been crossed already. There was an opportunity for people to ask questions at the end. The question put to him by Sister Jayanti was: Since spirituality is the method to bring about change in consciousness so that the people can be motivated to bring about transformation, why is spirituality still not being acknowledged as one of the methods of transformation towards a sustainable society? Prof. Rockström agreed that spirituality and people of faith have an impact on a large proportion of the people on the planet. He said that he recognizes this and his institute is involved with a Laudato Si project (based on Pope Francis' 2nd encyclical on the topic 'On the care for our common home'), but it seems that people are not ready to make changes.

The international conference had many other very interesting speakers from all corners of the world. A couple of them stated that it is important to include and consider spiritual knowledge in Human Ecology, transdisciplinary research and higher education. It was a very useful event to attend.

Photos: 1) with all conference participants (still to come), 2) Jayantibens talk on zoom (below), 3) discussions during the conference



