

*Anand Krishna is one of Indonesia's most popular contemporary writer and publicist. He has published more than 140 books in the past 15 years, many of which are available in English too. We asked this peculiar person who defines himself as a spiritual activist in his ashram in Kuta, Bali about books, scandals, freedom of speech and religion in today's Indonesia and last but not least about mankind's spiritual path.*

The following interview was made by Virag Balogi and Tibor Weiner Sennyey the journeys of whom you can read about on the following blog: <http://amegtalaltkiralsag.blogspot.com>

## The Rebel Spiritual Activist

“...spirituality has nothing to do with religion...”

*- In one of your most admirable books: *The Wisdom of Bali* you summarise the Balinese cultural heritage as in parallel with the Vedic tradition. How relevant are these ancient traditions in today's Balinese and Indonesian everyday lives?*

-Well, first of all I would like to separate tradition from the values: the values are relevant but traditions sometimes undergo changes. And sometimes these changes are painful because you are used to certain traditions throughout generations. Like in Bali, I have been having a lot of feedback from this book, some people find me very critical, because I have been criticising also. I was trying to make relevant and add the values but traditions sometimes have to be changed like for instance the elaborate rituals here. It might be surprising but we have the highest rate of suicide here in the whole of Indonesia and most of the people are committing suicide because they cannot carry out the ceremonies. For instance young people cannot finance cremation ceremonies for their parents as it can cost 50 to 300 million rupiahs. They simply do not have enough money for that, not even if they sell their land and properties. If they don't carry out these rituals people soon start telling them they don't do anything for their fathers and mothers so it becomes a mental burden for them. So either they commit suicide or run away or they convert to Christianity. A lot of Balinese become Christians, we have the highest number of converts here. As far as I am concerned it is absolutely all right to become a

Christian from your own liking but not because of monetary problems. So I have been very critical about certain traditions which I think are not relevant and I think they have to be changed.

*- And what do the Balinese spiritual leaders say to this?*

- Well, we are facing different religions here, there are Hindus, Buddhist, Christians. Whenever one faces such ceremony, one has to face the church. There are certain forward looking priests, who are more open to changes but even they are not courageous enough to state that these traditions are entirely unnecessary. But suicide is not the only problem here, unfortunately. The number of people suffering from HIV is ever increasing; we have the highest number of them in fact. Many of them do not care and there is no government regulation to report such cases of illness for medical check ups. We had a vice governor 3-4 years ago who was very brave and straightforward about this, suggesting that there should be a red light district where prostitution would be available and would be under control. You can imagine how unpopular he was, he was never re elected of course...but I agreed with him absolutely. Of course I am not in favour of prostitution but if you cannot stop it at least you should control it. Had we provided a doctor for them we might have been able to control their health status, checking on them regularly. Now you cannot do anything about it, the disease is spreading.

*- Why do you think they disliked this idea?*

- Well, some of these girls don't even think of what they are doing, they are selling their bodies to get some nice branded clothes, they work in hotels, they want to look pretty and attractive. Their needs are increasing. Some don't even realise that they are prostitutes, they don't know anything about the risks of their deeds.

*- Does your very own clinic ( L' Ayurveda Healing Centre) offer medical care for such HIV patients?*

- Yes, of course, but again it is often problematic as we cannot disclose their names and so we cannot involve their parents. This issue concerns the whole family not only one person. Other illnesses are also threatening them which could easily be avoided if they followed certain hygienic measures for instance. For HIV and other serious cases, of course we also advice them to be under professional medical supervision.

*- So would you say that these poor souls lost the values, and are chased to run away because of the financial burdens of traditionalism?*

-Yes, yes, the influx of materialism but I wouldn't blame it only on that. We need matter, I am not against it, and not against money either, we need that too. Now you might as well have experienced on your journey how Bali is more expensive than Java, where it is easier to find jobs too. There is this certain unbalance in Balinese society as materialism is increasing but living conditions are not increasing that much. My latest campaign for example is against tourism. I am not talking about people like you, who travel on their own and spend good

money in Bali. I am in fact talking about all those Korean, Taiwanese, Chinese and Japanese groups who come here through package holidays that are organised by their own countries' agencies, they also have their own tourist guides here, not to mention their own shopping centres. So if a tourist comes from Korea on 100 dollars only 10 dollars remain here, the rest goes to Korean pockets. This is killing our traditional market. There is the case of Sukawati for instance. It used to be a place to buy handicrafts, even wholesalers went there to buy in bulk: woodcarvings, and the like. You had to go there really early in the morning to get the best bargains, as early as 4 o'clock, say. This was in the beginning of the nineties. Now all that is gone, so I am not surprised if you have not heard about Sukawati at all. Many of the big shopping malls and department stores belong to foreigners, who use their local associate's name for investment purpose. The money is not remaining here but the expenditure is going up. The other issue of the campaign is to try and explain that spiritual tourism is not only about coming here on a religious purpose, it also involves the eco system. When you want to build something for tourists and you destroy the eco system it is not right. I am very much against the building of golf courses as well and have always said they belong to Scotland, not to Bali. Ok, they can try building them in Papua or some other place, say, where there are not too many tourists. Develop the undeveloped regions, but do not overburden a place like Bali, please....

*- Do politicians support your ideas?*

- Not many, some of them may have actually been involved in putting me in jail (Laughing bitterly)

*- Yes, we have read about that in Jakarta Post online, we will come back to these delicate questions later...now let us go back a couple of years, when you were 35, there was a big turning point in your life...*

- Yes, I was a business man, I had a garment factory, I worked for about 20 years when one fine morning I fell down and found out that I had leukaemia. For one year I was in and out of hospital, the situation was getting worse and worse. Since I refused chemotherapy I was suggested to go either to Seattle, USA or Leiden, Holland. Back in those days - beginning of the nineties these places had good options for bone marrow transplantation but a strict 3-4 months quarantine should have followed the operation and my doctor said he wouldn't guarantee anything...So I started looking for alternative treatments and went to India instead. There I met a Tibetan monk by chance (laughing) that changed my physical outlook. It did not happen immediately of course... I met him in Bangalore, South India and he invited me to go to Leh, to the Himalayas. I took it easy, knowing I couldn't make it in my condition. Even Delhi was a two hour flight and I needed blood transfusion every week, sometimes twice a week...just to move I needed steroids every day, but he invited me to his monastery called Himis. I was thinking, well, Jesus went there himself, so maybe I should pay a visit myself, before I die (laughing). It was November already, getting cold but I set off anyway, it was a terrible journey...back then a lot of flights were cancelled because of bad weather or something,

and there were only these small planes around. Anyhow, I arrived safe and sound in Leh only to realise that the route to the monastery was going to be another 4 hours by car (today it's only two hours though as the roads are better). When I actually got there I realised I had never asked his name...but as I was trodding down the stairs all of a sudden he was standing there. When he saw me the first thing he said was: 'you have chosen the right place to die'. Of course I was horribly offended. At that time I was so low and sick...I didn't really understand what he was trying to tell me. But then he went on: 'Why are you having this conflict with death? You have lived enough, now you can try something new and interesting.' And then he took me to a room, and told me I couldn't live inside the monastery because of my illness, but he chose me this small room as the toilet is right behind it, and assured me that it was also part of the monastery. Around four he brought me tea and told me I should try doing something I hadn't done before as I was going to die soon anyway. He told me that there was a bar not very far away where they sold very cold beer, and also encouraged me to chose one of the girls who were also available...So I went downstairs and opted for the beer...He assured me he was going to wait up for me till 2 a.m... I didn't stay that long of course, I was back by 9 p.m...So we started talking and it went on like that for most of my stay, we were talking most of the time. And then one day he told me it was time for me to leave, he didn't want me to die there on him, it would have given him a lot of troubles and so on (laughing). So I went back to my country with a clear mind. I sold my factory, well not really, because the bankers were more then happy to take it from me because I was dying anyway...at the end of the day all my belongings had to be sold, the house, the factory, everything was mortgaged. I was left with 50-60 million rupiahs, around 25 thousand dollars. I told my wife, who is a teacher - my children were small at the time, they were studying in India - that we would have to move out from the house and that I would buy her a small apartment. I didn't want to leave her in dept so I sold everything. A few days later I woke up at around 5 o'clock in the morning, which was strange because with the cancer my temperature was going up every night and I could only get to sleep at around that time of the day, when it went down a bit. So I got up and realised that I was sleeping the whole night. Then I looked at my palms and nails and I found them reddish. They used to be whitish earlier due to lack of red blood cells. Well, I went to the doctor soon after that. I needed to get some blood samples done beforehand and there were the results spread out right in front of my haematologist. First of all he asked me where I had been all the time so I told him I was in India (laughing). Next he asked me what I have been taking so I told him nothing but the iron tablets he commended together with the blood transfusions every now and then. Then he told me that my blood counts have gone up to 8 for the first time in a year (it was around 2 before that). Of course I had to go back every week after that for further tests, and my results were nearly always better and better. Eventually after a month or two he claimed that I was clear of

all diseases and if he had not diagnosed leukaemia himself on me he wouldn't believe that I had anything to do with it.

- *Why do you think this happened to you?*

- Now I can think about this, after all these years. I have always been interested in spirituality, straight from my childhood. My father, who was a businessman too, and an educated man, was very spiritual, and my mother, who was basically illiterate as she could only right her name in her mother tongue, was also very spiritual. We can say that I was brought up in a spiritual environment so no wonder I was having visions when I was a little boy. Then I went to school, and entered business life so all these issues were placed somewhere at the back of my mind. Maybe I would go as far as saying that I rejected my own self. After my illness it all changed.

- *Was that the time when you started building your first ashram?*

- Funnily enough I started building the first ashram in Jakarta almost a year before I got cancer. I thought that upstairs could be a meditation hall and downstairs an office for me, as my factory was outside Jakarta and I had to follow my business issues too. And then I fell ill...it really seems like existence has arranged it like this. I needed to get ready first. Interestingly when I got better all my business partners and the banks too contacted me and wanted to continue doing business with me but I rejected all their offers. I decided to follow another route.

- *Just one more question about your miraculous healing if you don't mind. In one of your books you mention an Indian monk: Atisha, who travels all the way from Bengal to Indonesia and meets Dharmakirti in Sumatra. For 12 years he was learning to master the art of turning negativity into positivity and then he went to Tibet to use it as a healing method and the practice got the name Tong-Len. Do you think that this special healing method was used by your very Tibetan monk friend on you when you visited him?*

- Well it was very interesting really, because later when I went back to India I was looking for this Tibetan monk I met in Bangalore in 1991 but since I didn't know his name, it was very difficult to find him, and the place was always full of monks of all types so it was quite hopeless. And then in 1995 I met the Dalai Lama for the first time. He invited us for an interview, the four of us from Indonesia, it was a small group. He asked me what my interest in Tibet was, so I started talking about Atisha who went to Sumatra to learn from Dharmakirti and so on, but he insisted on something more personal, wanted to know what my own experience in Tibet was like. So I said I was dying in 1991 and I met this man, and so on...and he started laughing and asked me immediately if I met him again. I said no unfortunately I couldn't find him, so then again he started laughing and ooohhhhing...so I figured he knew the story...(laughing)

Yes, I had quite some stories in the Himalayas...I met such people, well, maybe I shouldn't call them people, they are much higher entities than us. I wrote a few books about my encounters

there, of course I made them into fiction otherwise everyone would think that I am crazy or something (laughing).

*- Let's move on to another of your books, maybe the most personal one, the one titled Christ of Kashmir in which you talk about Christ's journey to India after the crucifixion, assuming he didn't die on the cross. How credible do you think this is and why is this so important?*

- Personally I'm a Jesus freak (laughing) so it doesn't matter at all whether he went to India or not...What is important though, and I'm saying this after an awful lot of research on Christ's life and teachings. So the important thing is that the way I see it is that mainstream church has forgotten a lot about his original teachings. I had the chance of meeting a lot of catholic fathers, one of them I really admire, maybe you have heard of him: Anthony de Mello, an Indian priest with whom I talked a lot. So anyhow I strongly feel that the message of Jesus was different from what is broadcasted by the church. First of all he said nothing about building churches or institutions. He encouraged people to pray, but he said don't pray outside, close your door and pray inside, you don't need special places to pray. Or another of his teachings was: love your neighbour just like you love your god, and that's basically it...I think he was a rebellious social reformer who changed the course of history regardless of the fact of being God's son or not...we certainly owe a lot to him. When I was a child I had many visions of him, my parents thought I went crazy so they took me to a medicine man to take off the spell off me...(laughing) Anyway, I think Christ's message couldn't be more relevant nowadays: he was very much against the institutionalization of religion.

*- So would you say that you are following his footsteps in that respect?*

- (laughing) Well, yes, there are some similarities, I am a rebel too. I wrote a book about his concerns about people doing business in the house of God, the shouting money changers and all...I have made a lot of research and yes, nowadays the large corporations are doing something similar, they rule the whole world, it's not the governments but such corporations who take the lead. They can do whatever they want to do.

*- You also talk a lot about religious freedom, how do you see this in Indonesia and the world today?*

-You are very lucky to be born in the Western world. You don't have so many dogmas, yes maybe there are a few European countries where it is not true, but generally speaking it is the case. They don't force the children to take up a religion anywhere in Europe as far as I know. Here on the other hand, once a child is born, they have to follow a religion. And here there are only 6 religions to choose from, in fact it is six now, thanks to the government but nevertheless we still do not have the same religious freedom you have in Europe. This is building up a lot of

problems in the country...When I was a kid, I was brought up in Solo for a while, and as children we didn't know whether the other is a Hindu, a Muslim, or a Buddhist, we were just playing. Whenever a festival came, Christmas for example, we followed our own celebrations - I went to a catholic school so I went to mass also, and there was no problem. Now the situation is different: children have to follow a certain religion straight from their birth, they are divided, separated in school to Hindu, Muslim, or Christian classes. From the age of 6 they are basically conditioned as being a Muslim, a Hindu or whatever instead of being a human being. This can be triggered by anything any time, it only depends on your environment. If you are in a good company, fine but should you end up in bad company, there are a lot of dangerous influences that might even lead to radicalism.

- *Would you define yourself as a spiritual leader?*

- I'd rather say that I am a spiritual activist, not a leader, no (laughing). Once I had the chance to give a speech at UCLA, the USA. I was given full protection, and everybody encouraged me to be clear and critical, so I had an open mouth, you can imagine. After the talk my host suggested I should be a spiritual activist and I liked that. In fact I was even questioned about this at the court. They asked me what I was: a spiritual leader or a guru? I said none of those but I cannot help it if some people call me guru, I just cannot go and shut their mouth. I am no guru or leader, our community does not even have a membership fee. Nevertheless, the judges keep on questioning what I mean by spiritual activist, and what religion's activist I would be then. So I tell them spirituality has nothing to do with religion...

- *You published a great number of books with the aim of introducing Indonesian readers with the different spiritual paths. Would you say that there were no similar publications available prior to yours in that matter?*

- Back in the nineteen forties and fifties there were some translations about Krishnamurti for example. After the sixties though most people became more involved with materialistic issues so these books were not selling. In 1997 when I wrote my first book I took it to the best publisher, I was very confident. The editors first question was who on earth would read such books? He asked me for some further ideas too, three more scripts, which I had of course: I had some 15-20 manuscripts of books, I was constantly giving lectures and people were transcribing it, I was editing it, so I had plenty on my plate... So finally he agreed on publishing my first book. It didn't sell but I was pushing the editor who became a good friend of mine to have another go with my other writings, on zero royalty. Finally they agreed because they didn't have much local materials. In 1997 our rupiah was extremely devalued because of the political situation so they simply did not have the money to pay royalty for the translations of foreign books, so they published my books, and they sold. From 1998 to 2000 37 titles were published almost more than one title a month. In 2000 the radicals criticised me. They brought out articles about me for a full month. I was terrorised, people called me with lethal threats to burn my house and all that. Luckily I had the support of quite a few Muslim scholars who read

and gave forward my books. Especially my books on Islam appealed to them, they were happy and agreed that I did not criticise their religion but my criticism went out for those who practiced. There was one person who supported me entirely, the ex president of Indonesia: Gus Dur, he was a very good man. In 2000 some people tried to set our ashram in Jakarta on fire and Gus Dur sent his nephew to protect us. He was militant and brought 40-50 of his members with him. He promised to stay until I felt safe and they only asked for some coffee to keep them awake while looking after us. In the meantime all Gramedia's bookstores were threatened too with burning down if they kept on selling my books. The books had to go obviously. Luckily a week later most of them could go back on the shelves, except for those 7 or 8 titles on Islam. Five years later the same group charged me with embezzlement of 150 million rupiah. Nobody believed them of course, we proved the police this was all a fraud and the case was withdrawn. It seems like every 5 years there must be some turbulence, since in 2010 there was the next case. Now it is quite clear that behind all these actions are the same people.

- *We read about your last imprisonment in Jakarta Post online.*

- Oh, actually I am a bit disappointed with the Jakarta Post (laughing). I have been publishing there regularly, and they knew very well who was accusing me and why, nevertheless, when the court case came they withdrew all their support from me. Maybe they were threatened too, I don't really know. A lot of my articles were criticising radical groups. I have nothing against the Islam, I have a lot of Muslim friends, Muslim people are coming to our ashram. I am only against the radicals, and the radicals in all religions. In 2008 about 80 people were beaten by radicals. Since nothing happened in Indonesia I started writing e-mails to the USA. One day after sending out about 2000 letters I received an answer from one of the senators that he will discuss the issue with an Indonesian politician and two days later the man who organised the beating was arrested. Of course he very well knew that nobody would go against him at court. So out of the 80 victims only 10 agreed to stand as witnesses against them. 8 out of those 10 people belonged to our community (Anand Ashram), 2 were outsiders, whose little children were hurt in the bully. After one and a half years the organiser was released from prison, and Gus Dur died as well so in 2010 another massive campaign started targeting me. Rumour started spreading that I have been molesting women from the ashram, 42 women, no names given. They went to the media, which we know very well is hungry for such stories. One of the national television channels took the opportunity immediately, perhaps because I was criticizing some of their owners for ecologically incorrect development on the isle of Bali. About one week after the massive media campaign, they went to the police. I was imprisoned while the trial was still on, charged with molestation. That was before I could bring my witness, and before even I was questioned. Earlier in the police I was never given the dossier, which should be given to any suspect. First time, the police questioned me from the morning till the evening and finally they let me go. A month later it started all over again: I was questioned this time about my books - they had all my publications there, somebody went through them with a highlighter. So I asked again what I was being charged with - if it were my books I would be more than happy to defend myself, talk about them. The molestation issue kept expanding. They kept telling me the name of a 19 year old girl, whose father had a problem with her visiting our ashram. So finally they charged me with molesting this girl. In the meantime I developed a heart problem - my heart started beating very fast, once I collapsed in the police station and they let me lie there for an hour or two till I was taken to the police



hospital where it turned out that I have a certain heart disease which is in fact fatal. They put me on painkillers and sleeping pills for three days. Eventually they got scared because my friends made a lot of noise as they didn't know what was going on with me, the police did not communicate anything. Of course I had very good lawyers, but people warned me that I was fighting not only one parent but a big establishment. Anyhow, after the police got scared of my heart problems they let me out, and in the heart hospital it turned out that my illness was so serious I could have died. After three months I started getting better and the district attorney, the prosecutor wanted to put me under city arrest again. Still they wouldn't tell me the names of the 42 molested women or give me the dossier of the case. So, I told my lawyer to organise a press conference where I would announce that I was going to go on a hunger strike till death unless they told me what I was charged with. After all, I always cooperated and appeared at the police station as well prosecutor's office when I was asked to, so let the court decide if I was guilty and if I was, they can arrest me, fine. So, finally the District Attorney did not arrest me also. Finally, at the court the so called witnesses could only say that they had heard that this and that happened, so it was no more than hearsay...what kind of court case is that I wonder? Anyway it should have lasted 3-4 sessions, no more but in fact it took us from August 2010 to April 2011. The judges and prosecution were asking me about my books and the meditations in our ashram, why we were using incense sticks, crystals, and such stupid questions. Week after week we were dragged in court, their witnesses would turn up in their own sweet time. The story of 42 accusers was just to bully the media and create public opinion against me. The sole and single accuser was a 19 years old girl about whom we had very good reason to assume that she underwent some false memory implantations. According to psychiatrists and other experts 45 sessions of hypnosis in 3 months she underwent was not for therapy but for false memory implantation. She must have been told to go to such therapy to forget the past but in fact that was when she had these false memories implanted in her brain. We had all the experts' views on this. Even if she needed psycho therapy, 4-5 sessions should have been enough, no reason for 45 sessions really. It was only in the court room that we were given the dossier and the charge sheet, by chance we also got the police documents, among which it was stated on black and white from a government hospital that the girl was a virgin and that there was no sign of violence. The girl was saying that I had been molesting her for three months every day. Of course I was not even in Jakarta every day - I was travelling here and there, I was in Jakarta maximum 2 or 3 weeks in those three months. I had strong alibi - and also she mentioned a date: 21. March 2009 on which day I was giving a lecture to about 80 people in Jakarta, nevertheless she claimed to have been molested by me on that day.

Still I was arrested, trialled, the judge saying there was a chance that I would repeat the same thing again, so I was dangerous to society. That is when the number one lawyer of Indonesia came to my rescue saying that in his 50 years of practice he had never seen a judge like him. I was on a hunger strike in the jail and the police hospital which lasted for 49 days when my son got a phone call that somebody who saw the judge who imprisoned me having an affair with one of the female witnesses. So my son and co followed this judge on three occasions and it turned out that he really had a relationship with a woman who accused me of molestation. My son took photos of them in a car in a dark side street one night. It seemed to be good proof so my bail was arranged, we reported the misbehavior of the judge to the supreme court and also informed the press. We had 250 photos and 5 witnesses who had caught him red handed. So we got a new judge, a lady, who according to the entire nation and media is the no 1 most honest and professional judge. So last November I was acquitted, free of all charges. Nothing proven.

And the court ordered the prosecution to return my dignity and social stature. For two years people were demoralised and our ashram nearly had to be closed down, they wanted our friends to have doubts about us. In spite of that the prosecutor still applied to the supreme court. I really pity her insensitivity.

- *Why do you think they did this to you?*

- Because of my writings in Jakarta Post, other medias, my books, my activities. Especially Jakarta Post articles were available to an international audience and that may have been considered very harmful. My other publications were only available to Indonesians and that is less dangerous. I was criticising top people, I had to be punished. Freedom of speech here is still in the making. Our first President Sukarno introduced a motto for Indonesia, the independent country, which goes like: Unity in Diversity. Now, the problem is that people misunderstand the whole concept. I truly love this concept and this in fact is what I am writing about in my book 'One Earth One Sky One Humankind' in which there is equal emphasis on both unity and diversity because it is actually one. Mpu Tantular, the author of Sutasoma, an ancient kawi epic coined the phrase, which later became our national motto. Recognizing the One Essential Uniting Factor beyond the Apparent Different and Diverse Manifestations - this is a great philosophy, maybe the end of all philosophies. Maybe Albert Einstein would have come to the same conclusion if he had lived a few more years. He was already hinting at the Unified Field of Energy theory.

- *So there is no freedom of speech in Indonesia, is that why you turn to the ancient kawi literature instead, like the Sutasoma, for example and write books with explanations on them?*

- For me it is more than literature, it is philosophy. My only criticism of kawi literature is that we Javanese are not open, we are afraid of being not accepted. We like to enforce harmony at any cost, which makes it not natural. This is my problem with us Javanese. Enforcing harmony at any cost entails violence. Harmony is something that should come from within, you cannot enforce it. Children should be given freedom, of course give them the culture and values, the wisdom of the country but let them grow, you cannot force them to follow your way. So my criticism about Mpu Tantular is that he is not straightforward. In my book, which unfortunately is only available in Indonesian I am not very much in favour of Gajah Mada who is held in high esteem by many but not by me, I think he was bad news... As soon as he died, the whole Majapahit Kingdom fell down too, because he didn't build up a foundation. He believed in militarism more than in wisdom. He wanted to unite the whole continent with military force and that caused his fall...

- *Hm, very symbolic...speaking of which, there are a lot of symbols on the wall of your ashram, all of them are powerful, aren't you afraid to mix these?*

- Well I am going against the mainstream really. You can't find any other place in Indonesia like this, at least not a place where you could find the Jewish symbol. We have a law in

Indonesia against mixing religions. I am not mixing religions but I am trying to project that all religions are paths that lead you to God, whatever name you call it. Let us not misidentify the path with the destination, as destination is the same for all, should you call it God or goodness within you, it is the same thing.

*- Finally, what is your message to the people of the Kali Yuga?*

- About our age I can tell you, that information technology and internet is a blessing. I am against the excessive use of technology though, so sitting all day in front of the internet is not agreeable of course. You have to know how to make use of all that information. A lot of books are available through the internet. I personally think that there are more enlightened beings in the world today than ever. At a certain age there was only one Jesus, Buddha, Lao-Tse, so on, nowadays there are plenty. My guru used to say that it is like digging a well, whenever you do that you get water but there is a new lump of earth too. If you see the positive side the negative will show itself too. Like yin-yang: if we have more Jesuses, there must be more Judases also (laughing). This is quite natural of course, it is up to each individual to decide which side to take.

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### **Tibor Weiner Sennyey**

(1981) is a poet, writer, editor and an orientalist. Author of 3 poetry books, a collection of short stories and a collection of essays on Javanese and Balinese culture, art and ancient literature. He is a member of PEN Club and has attended several PEN conferences. One of the basic aims of his writings is to connect East and West. At the moment he is staying in Java on a bursary to complete his new book. He lives in Budapest, Hungary.



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