

Dag Hammarskjöld

Dag Hammarskjöld was a cosmopolitan who was inspired from within himself in order to be in the world. He was Secretary of the UN from 1953 until his death in 1961 when he was killed in an air craft crash during a mission in Congo. During his time at the UN, he became known as a very efficient and goal orientated international peace negotiator. His engagement was to enable the UN, by looking after the interests of the small countries in relation to the big powers, to have the authority to use peacekeeping forces.

He acquired his insight and the strength to perform his responsible task from the stillness within himself, or from nature, particularly from the world of the mountains where he often hiked.

“The more loyally you listen inwards, the better you can hear what it is sounding around you. And only the one who listens, can speak”, he writes in his book, “Markings”. Conscious of the value of stillness it inspired him to create a room for stillness in the UN building where the delegates could withdraw quietly in order to find strength and the reconciling understanding within themselves which is also the foundation for outer peace. His intention was that nothing in the room would distract their attention or break the silence for those using it.

“Simplicity is to experience reality, not in relation to ourselves but in its holy independence. Simplicity is to see, judge and act from the point where we are resting within ourselves. How much then does not fall away! And how much of the rest does not fall into place?

Resting in the centre of our being we meet a world where everything, in the same way, is resting in it self. Thus the tree is a mystery, the cloud a revelation, the human being a cosmos whose richness we perceive in glimpses. For the simple person, life is simple but it opens up a book in which we never reach the first syllable”.

To understand – through stillness

To act – from stillness

To win – in stillness

Dag Hammarskjöld from “Markings”.

Further readings;

About the room of stillness in the UN building in New York.

A meeting with Dag Hammarskjöld in Sarek.

This is how you create a room of stillness in your school.

The secretary general of the UN, Kofi Annan talk about Dag Hammarskjöld.

With thanks to the foundation of Dag Hammarskjöld.
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