



Meditation Monthly International

Celebrating White Mountain's 20th Anniversary!

Agni Yoga & Striving II

Understand the soul of thy brother;
Display action, show understanding,
behold the power of My Shield.
There are many wonders in this world,
and a pure and ardent striving leads to victory.
Leaves Of Morya's Garden I, 1924, para. 87

Behold the Celestial Song,
and on the summits of the mountains
pine not for the flowers of the roadside.
I rejoice in thy striving for creation.
Miracles are revealed in life amidst
action and amidst harmony.
Dreams are realized not in fairy
tales but through the happy
communion with the Ways of the Blessed Ones.
The Teacher is near thee at every moment of thy
creative labor.
Realize and teach.
Leaves Of Morya's Garden I, 1924, para. 96

I reveal to thee the vast school of life.
By measuring the ways of men
canst thou gain wisdom.
Falter not in thy pure striving and I will lead thee
on the path of the chosen ones.
Weaken not nor tarry in thy strife.
Leaves Of Morya's Garden I, 1924, para. 164

A miracle is wrought amidst striving to the
future life.
Leaves Of Morya's Garden I, 1924, para. 184

Stretch thy arm across the abyss.
Above the precipice there is no fear.
More abhorrent to the spirit are the confines of
room and rug.

Direct thy spirit toward Us.
Thou perceivest not the clouds as do We.
Striving creates miracles, but let Us be the Judges.
Leaves Of Morya's Garden I, 1924, para. 274

We are dissipating superstition, ignorance and fear.
We are forging courage, will and knowledge.
Every striving toward enlightenment is welcome.
Every prejudice, caused by ignorance, is exposed.
Thou who dost toil, are not alive in thy conscious-
ness the roots of cooperation and community?
If this flame has already illumined thy brain, adopt
the signs of the Teaching of Our mountains.
Thou who dost labor, do not become wearied
puzzling over certain expressions. Every line is the
highest measure of simplicity.
Greeting to workers and seekers!
New Era Community, 1926, preface

continued on page 6



Networkers' Letter

by Joleen D. Du Bois



White Mountain
Education Association
Meditation Monthly International

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Cover picture: *And We Open*
by Nicholas Roerich

Dear Friends,

This issue of *Meditation Monthly International* features the second part of an article written by Matthew Breuer. If you have not yet had the opportunity to read the August/September 2002, Vol. XV, No. 6 issue, you may access the electronic version on the Internet at: <http://www.wmea-world.org/MMI/08-09-02.pdf>, or a copy can be mailed to you upon request.

Nicholas Roerich, along with his wife Helena, were the founders of the Agni Yoga Society. Master artist and statesman, writer and philosopher, a protector of art and culture, Mr. Roerich was born October 9, 1874 in St. Petersburg, Russia. In honor and respect of this legendary man of human spirit who epitomized "striving toward the heights," here are a few of his penned thoughts:

"Of what does the great wisdom of all ages and all nations speak? It speaks of the human spirit."¹

"Let us dedicate sincere thought to the progressive labors of the bearers of light—of those who come anew as well as those who pass on. Let it not be a doubtful shrug of the shoulders. Let it be not a cold obituary. But, as an honor-guard, let us protect these sprouts of light. Liberated from prejudices and superstitions, serving victorious beauty, uplifting knowledge, we shall apply in all measures and for all branches the zealous thought of affirmation of bliss, by thus helping the further branches of research and betterment of life."²

"From all parts of the world people want to know about the Himalayas. The best people are striving in heart towards this jewel of India. They ask to send at least a small sketch, or a snapshot, which they could keep on their desk for inspiration. In all ages, there was this attraction to the Himalayas. People know that when any-



Nicholas Roerich

one seeks spiritual upliftment he has to look towards the Himalayas."³

From a lecture given at the California University on the 19th of September 1921:

"Little knowledge – brings dusk with it; great knowledge – brings light. Spurious art – brings the common place; genuine art – creates joy of spirit and that power on which the building of our future rests."⁴

Shanti,

President

¹ *Adamant*, Nicholas Roerich, p. 14, 1923.

² *Realm Of Light*, Nicholas Roerich, p. 39, 1931.

³ *Himavat, Diary Leaves*, Nicholas Roerich, p. 11, 1946.

⁴ *Adamant*, Nicholas Roerich, p. 108, 1923.

Striving in Agni Yoga: On Becoming a Nobody

Part Two

By M. L. Breuer (May 15, 2002)

But Why Do I Feel This Way ... ?

There are many in the west who have been Christian monks or nuns, or ascetics or sannyasins, Muslim fakirs, Hindu or Buddhist lamas, nuns, yoginis or yogis, in previous lives. (This is often the cause behind the basic attraction to various teachings.) So confusion in self-expression and livelihood is understandable where such individuals, having previously developed a devotional nature and/or an expansive broad-mindedness, are born here and find little or none of the cultural context to interpret those feelings in. As a result, self-expression and self-understanding can become complex. Unconsciously acting out past feelings of freedom from convention ... outside the context of any teaching which provides meaning and guidance in harmonious blending with the world ... can lead to feelings of frustration or futility. This is especially confusing living in a culture that idolizes rugged individualism. In Western cultures individuals often seek an outlet for feelings of freedom by exhibiting erratic, quirky or arbitrary behavior⁷, and the desire for self-actualization is often expressed in being a consumer and by developing commerce. This sort of expansionist individualism, frankly lauded by corporations and the advertising industry, is engineered to motivate people to buy products. Spiritual movements that would reconcile these pressures with spiritual values drive the west to learn the hard lesson that one should not mistake commerce for culture.⁸ But this all-pervasive, business-driven agenda affects just about everything. It fosters ego-identification in sports. It excites feelings of egocentric uniqueness in practitioners of the arts. Even the sciences have been degraded by this trend: awards and profits which initially recognized personal achievement may have, in some cases, degenerated to become at least part of the personal, unspoken motive behind research. It affects the careers of politicians who sometimes forget they are elected to serve rather than promote themselves. It dominates the boardrooms of many national and international corporations. And it has the potential to affect

anyone in a position of responsibility who is prone to think his or her position is somehow special and places him or her above the crowd and therefore above secular and karmic law.

Though the all-pervasive public and even corporate recognition of this sort of rugged individualism may be highly valued, it should be recognized for what it is: a relic left over from eras of acquisitive, immature colonial expansion. The agenda of so-called "manifest destiny" adopted by many nations was, and still is in many cases, nothing more than an excuse for usurpation, genocide and trade domination. This mind-set is diametrically opposed, and outright antagonistic toward, the esoteric Eastern schooling in selflessness. The East stresses that we try to understand our commonality more than our differences. Some may incorrectly interpret this to mean all should be dulled down to the most common level and not allow for individual growth. Or it may be thought this is just some emotional, sentimental desire for reconciliation and acceptance ... until one understands the occult laws regarding harmony as an absolute necessity in any group aspects of spiritual activities. On the other hand, one who might enthusiastically enter the Teaching with the Western frame of mind need take only a step or two more to assume Agni Yoga is the only Teaching of value, and

that all others have little worth.... and then perhaps go about creating an organization to assert this agenda socially. Contrary to this idea however, Agni Yoga wisely recognizes, and is based upon, Hindu, Buddhist and Christian thought, since it issues from the same Source which created those, and so does not allow such narrow fundamentalism. But this is yet another potential defect that needs outliving. Agni Yoga was given without any set practices or organizational structure specifically to defy the tendency to be institutionalized and then misused by those seeking their own self-interests. And, since the breadth of expression of spiritual yearning and striving is as unique and varied as each individual, there are as many teachings contained in Agni Yoga to suit as many natures. As it is said: "By whatever path you approach I shall greet you." It should be kept in mind that, though outwardly seemingly disorganized, inwardly the Teaching is highly organized since it is overseen by the Hierarchy and it is They who bring people together to benefit from each others' help and for doing good works.

Broadly speaking, no matter what the imbalance, no matter how extreme, the driving forces working behind and within these expressions are the fundamental fires of Agni,



painting by Nicholas Roerich

which animate all of nature and the universe as a whole. By refining their expressions, by removing the egoic aspects, one may eventually arrive at a mature understanding, refinement and command of these fires, and therein lie many secrets of Nature. The unbearable fanatic becomes the loving bhakti yogi; the crude boxer becomes the refined sannyasin in full control of not only the physical but also the subtle and fiery bodies; the contentious scholar becomes the illumined jnana yogi able to discriminate through illusion right into the heart of God; and the unfocussed, dreamy, astigmatic mystic becomes the illumined yogi who discriminates in the use of fire as keenly as the chemist who chooses the right elements to combine.

On Truly Becoming a Nobody

From the above we understand things are not as simple or easy as they might initially appear. This is one of the reasons behind the warning to not entice others into the Teaching. The path of Agni Yoga must be entered upon with every bit of common sense the individual can muster. And we should discriminate well in our choice of tools for growth.

A western psychotherapy, ignorant of the laws of karma or any understanding of a spiritual higher nature, banishes the individual to be trapped inside the charmed circle of a personality that can, in some cases, be examined in excruciating detail for several years without any practical hope for release. Truly, this is the Sisyphus of Greek mythology, condemned by Zeus to roll his stone back and forth for eternity in Hades. Transcendence of this situation only occurs when the spiritual nature is recognized so that the vacuum created by the sequence of little deaths during discarding of dysfunctional pieces of the small self (the personality) is gradually filled by a newly recognized higher self. This is expressly the process practiced by Psychosynthesis, a system developed by Roberto Assagioli, in Italy, and who, it is said, studied Agni Yoga. Psychosynthesis counseling is now available at various locations around the United States. And this is exactly part of what Agni Yoga accomplishes by encouraging the individual to develop one's higher

nature while outliving and discarding lower aspects.

The Seven Year Clause

The cyclic flows in existence pervade everything: our circulatory systems, our eating and breathing, the evaporation-condensation cycle of water in weather, annual seasons, the sunspot cycle of the sun, and human birth, death then rebirth, to name only a few. As we are told, every



from *Flute Player* by Nicholas Roerich

seven years we have a completely new body: all new tissue, bone, sinew, brain cells, nerves, skin... everything. Whereas many multiple-step, self-help groups do very good work in helping people identify the sources of addiction, whether mental, physiological, chemical or emotional, there could be a further step taken by incorporating the understanding that we are changing beings. This means incorporating the idea that, although we are the product of our pasts, that is not the potential of our futures. But, further, we could establish the esoteric basis of the idea so that it does not lapse into only the cliché "Our past is not our potential." Since we do exchange all the matter making up our forms every seven years, if one holds to a particular mode of striving for a period of seven years,

then the new matter that gathers into the body during that time is deposited under the influence of that striving ("As the twig is bent, so grows the tree"). This means that, with conscious effort, we have the potential to literally outgrow the patterning from our past that has been imprinted on the body. In short: *by literally changing our thinking, we can change our karma.* Further, this effect also applies to the subtle matter composing the subtle body, and that which gathers around the seed of the spirit to form the basis of a future fiery body. In short, we can rightly and literally say "You become what you think," or "You become what you hold in your consciousness." For our experience here in physical bodies, this means that the bodies we were karmically attracted to incarnate into, which viscerally and chemically support the feeling and emphasis of certain emotions (so we receive the brunt of the karma), can be consciously altered. And, again, through a *sustained* shift in thinking. It also means the emotional imprinting upon the body, if changed, will in turn result in a shift in the body. Over a period of time, the feelings a particular body has been conditioned to support will change. So both the physical and the psychological change. In short, the author is suggesting that self-help groups not hold to the idea "once a _____, always a _____," (whatever the group specialty is). This, in combination with a use of spiritualized psychology of the Psychosynthesis type, genuinely helps the individual liberate him or herself from the charmed circle of ego and holds the potential to free one from the occasional desperate notion sometimes felt after some emotional or spiritual setback: "I will always be this way and I will never change." Here the author strongly begs to disagree!

Why Agni Yoga, and Is Resolution Through Striving Possible?

Most often people approach the Teaching through hearing about it from a friend who is already studying it. The reasons people are attracted to study Agni Yoga and wind up making it their home are as varied as the individuals themselves. Some-

times the breadth and depth of the Teaching, with its wide vistas leading to infinity are found to be a breath of fresh air. Other times a person might be attracted to someone who studies it. Or the attraction could be to the freedom from a set method of approach, the absence of any kind of overall, official organizational structure which ambitious persons could abuse toward their own ends. Or maybe it's the absence of any commercial aspect.

To be circumspect, the initial attraction *is* often the result of having been involved in something similar in past lives. The particular events leading up to this are usually rather mundane, but occasionally one hears a story where the circumstances are quite out of the ordinary. Of all these, however, one thing is fairly certain: it is the individual's karma which brings she or he to the doorstep of the Teaching. And, in general, this karma is a good one since it yields benefit. Sometimes someone has done some good work to help others, perhaps sacrificing much, whether in this lifetime or in the past, and it is this which earns her the opportunity to be exposed to the Teaching. If she is in no other way prepared to be exposed to it and/or feels no connection with the people in it due to no past karmic relations with them, she very well might not stay, but she has nevertheless earned the right to approach. But whatever the reason, one thing is clear: the Teaching is meant for the benefit of all; and everyone has the right to approach, to ask and to *try*. And another clear thing is that the Members of Hierarchy notice, appreciate and respect those who are willing to undertake an honest and sincere effort at self-renovation and an effort to strive toward a life of selfless service. It is this very path that each and every one of Them has trod, and continues to do so. Often it is this very acceptance itself, coupled with the environment of an understanding and wisdom that has grown out of centuries of experience, which makes the Teaching a home for the seeking one. Since they are generally prompted by one's higher nature, these are some of the authentic reasons one takes to the Teaching.

Ultimately, resolution to personal challenges, in striving, comes partly through a

realization that the urges and yearnings to grow come from this higher nature, and validate and justify one's life in the Teaching. If one truly listens past the whispering desires, insecurities or ambitions of the personality and nurtures these yearnings, in the face of any contradictions or restrictions the less enlightened aspects of one's culture might try to impose, it is in these that one may grow to find a sense of self-worth that begs no external permission and requires no external display. This is the escape clause from the contract with the personality that has served its purpose of bringing us earthly experience and wisdom but certain parts of which may very well have outlived their usefulness. Though this lessening of, and eventual transcendence from, the grip of the personality is one of the most natural and evolutionary events, it is approached only after years of genuine self-honesty, study of esoteric law and selflessness.

Conclusion

In this article we've examined the genesis of the roots of individuality at the beginning of a great age of existence. This concept was tied into an understanding of the relationship between the fires of Agni and the growth of the Chalice. The development of individuality through the maturation and transformation of the personality was related to esoteric processes of cyclic regeneration and evolutionary development of higher forms and levels of existence. Including a profile of some common but understandable misconceptions that lead to obstacles in striving provides a sense of discrimination and orientation for one's efforts at self-renovation within the Western culture. Understanding what it means to be a "nobody" in the spiritual sense, and suggesting a method of counseling for transforming major emotional issues are intended to provide some ideas on directions to take in individual work. And relating this to Agni Yoga and the Members of Hierarchy places our efforts in the context of study and striving, and of our future as a more spiritual people.

Someday, we are told, humanity in general will have evolved the subtle

senses and therefore the capacity to spontaneously recognize those among us who are genuinely lion-hearted, loving and illumined. At that time the re-emergence of a Hierarchical order, wherein something we've known all along in our hearts may be openly realized: that there is no difference between church and state, and that the right to lead is won through spiritual travail and transcendence while walking an earthly path.... but is *not* the result of a well-funded election. For those who aspire to a life committed to service, let it not be confused with a position of leadership, for leadership is sometimes—but not always—just its natural by-product. In the meantime, part of the task of living requires a healthy discrimination regarding one's motives and desire nature, and a healthy and forthright, though courteous, discrimination in the company one keeps. It is better to spend countless lifetimes in obscurity, crushing out the petty, internal Napoleons of one's daily life than to have one life spent in false glory interfering in the lives of others. The struggle between the desire to serve and the desire to rule epitomizes one of the key aspects of consciousness to be reconciled by the spiritual self hidden within the animal self.

“When the lion lies down with the lamb...”

⁷ Which, in some spiritual schools is, again, often used to excuse dysfunctional or unethical behavior.

⁸ Failure to understand this results in one of the worst possible expressions, wherein some try to sell the Teaching in the marketplace as another means to make a living. No wonder Christ drove the moneychangers from the temple.



from *Philosopher of Silence* by Nicholas Roerich

continued from page 1

The essence of striving to the far-off worlds is contained in the assimilation of a consciousness of our life in them. The possibility of life on them becomes for our consciousness, as it were, a channel of approach. Indeed, this consciousness must be dug through as a channel. People are able to swim, yet a considerable portion of them do not swim. Such an obvious fact as the far-off worlds completely fails to attract humanity. It is time to cast this seed into the human brain.

Those who are unfortunate and without kin may more easily accept this thought. Earthly fetters are not so lasting for them. In the worst position of all are people provided with comforts. Easily enough can the blind accept this thought, but it will be most difficult for the cross-eyed, because a false crossing of currents will always distort the distance of the striving. Try rifling a cannon with different spirals; the result will be a poor one. True, what has been said refers only to a certain state of cross-eyedness which involves the nerve centers.

New Era Community, 1926, para. 44

Striving is the boat of the Arhat. Striving is the manifested unicorn. Striving is the key to all caves. Striving is the wing of the eagle. Striving is the ray of the sun. Striving is the armor of the heart. Striving is the lotus blossom. Striving is the book of the future. Striving is the world manifest. Striving is the multitude of stars.

New Era Community, 1926, para. 55

Where, then, is the best ferment with which to steady the wavering of the aura? The best ferment is striving. It is impossible to sting or to smash an impetuously directed body. Striving in motion attains validity, and becoming lawful it becomes irresistible, for it enters into the rhythm of the Cosmos.

Thus proceed in the small and in the great, and your texture will be unmatched, crystal, cosmic; in brief—beautiful.

Striving, nothing else, results in mastery over the elements, for the basic quality of the elements is striving. In this state you

coordinate the elements with the higher creativeness of the spirit and become the keepers of the lightning. Man shall become keeper of the lightning. Believe it, by striving only will you conquer.

New Era Community 1926, para. 56

The Teacher bids you rejoice at each attainment of the spirit. The path between planets is no more complicated than is the cognition of the boundary between the physical and astral bodies; no more complicated than the realization of thought and striving to the stars. Only in striving for the interplanetary can we be assured of the evolution of humanity.

Agni Yoga 1929, para. 6

Striving, during the growth of consciousness, is focused precisely in the center of the solar plexus. Should striving trespass its proper limits, then the so-called fiery death is unpreventable. An uncultivated consciousness can bear the effects of striving, but further ascent demands that the treasure be placed temporarily within a guarded casket.

Each thought precipitates its sediments upon the walls of the channels of the nervous system. The more perfect the striving the more phosphorous the sediments. Then the only place sufficiently guarded for that fuel is the solar plexus, which gradually imbibes the sediments from the auxiliary channels. Sometimes such an absorption can be so vigorous as to cause starlike painful sensations. Then the Teacher must apply a cooling ray, which aids in drawing the sediments from the extremities to the center. All this is a process of the growth of consciousness. By triennial steps one can trace the sharpening of receptivity. This stage demands preservation of the casket for the next fortunate expenditure.

Let us guard the law of life that leads along the ladder of beauty and happiness.

Agni Yoga, 1929, para. 34

It is indeed impossible to build with faint-heartedness, for it brings dissolution everywhere. An intensified constructiveness requires an act of highest striving—there is either brimful victory or worthless faint-

heartedness. If it could be made clear to the human mind how harmful are half-way measures and compromises, the process of construction would proceed differently. But humanity is ailing with these horrible ulcers and We are obliged to exude bloody sweat in corrective measures. This is the state of tension in which the Hierarchy of Light works. Verily, bloody sweat covers Our brow.

Fiery World III, 1935, para. 412

Any benevolent unity is desirable. But it is not unity when upheld by a rotten thread. If a cricket can disturb a structure it means that the striving has not been great. Amid the fiery battle an inviolable unity is imperative; only thus is an unassailable monolith set up. Such monoliths are needed.

Fiery World III, 1935, para. 458

Man himself is fully aware when he does something unworthy. He must learn from the smallest daily examples and develop within himself a persistent striving toward the highest.

Likewise, anyone who knows about the Great Service will remember that any unworthy action will cause pain to someone. Old governesses used to say to children who had done something wrong, "Your angel will weep." and this warning reached to the very depths of the children's hearts. Truly, each unkind action causes someone to suffer. What Higher Communion can there be when natural laws are violated? People may think that everything is admissible, even robbery and murder! But who are They who will approach the place of crime?

The Thinker called upon people to try to find invisible Helpers.

Letters Of Helena Roerich, Vol. 1.



Oct. / Nov. 2002 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Florida (Sarasota)
WMEA Study Group meets at 9:30 a.m., on alternate Wednesday mornings in Sarasota. Please call **Ginette Parisi** at (941) 925-0549 for complete information.

The Ohio (Ashville) WMEA Study Group meets twice a month for meditation gatherings. For upcoming meeting dates and times, please call **Kate Studebaker** at (740) 983-2225.

The NEW Puerto Rico WMEA Study Group meets at 7:00 p.m., every Saturday night. Please call **Saskia Frau** at (787) 780-6276 or 939-389-1149 for complete information.

The Oregon (Lebanon) WMEA Study Group meets once a month for a meditation gathering. For upcoming meeting dates and times, please call **Vickie Stevens** at (541) 258-6142.

The Colorado (Denver) WMEA Study Group meets each month for New & Full Moon meditations. Please call **Beverly Phillips** at (303) 757-7228 for complete information.

October 2002

- Tue. 1** Class: *Journey of the Soul*, 7–8:15 p.m., WMEA Center (Registration required)
- Wed. 2** Class: *Basic Meditation Class*, 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center
- Sun. 6** Sunday Service: “*Agni Yoga Series: Solemnity*” with Rev. Joleen D. Du Bois, 10:00 a.m., Yavapai Hills Clubhouse
- Tue. 8** Class: *Journey of the Soul*, 7–8:15 p.m., WMEA Center (Registration required)
- Wed. 9** Class: *Basic Meditation Class* (Final class), 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center
- Sun. 13** Sunday Service: “*Agni Yoga Series: Heart*” with Rev. Joleen D. Du Bois, 10:00 a.m., Yavapai Hills Clubhouse
- Tues. 15** Class: *Journey of the Soul*, 7–8:15 p.m., WMEA Center (Registration required)
- Fri. 18** **Membership meeting, details TBA**
- Sat. 19** **WMEA 20th Anniversary, seminar and dinner, Antelope Hills Resort, reservations required**
- Sun. 20** Group Meditation and Lecture on “*Libra*” with Rev. Joleen D. Du Bois, 10:00 a.m., Yavapai Hills Clubhouse
- Tues. 22** Class: *Journey of the Soul*, 7–8:15 p.m., WMEA Center (Registration required)
- Sun. 27** Sunday Service: “*Agni Yoga Series: Aspiration & Devotion*” with Rev. Joleen D. Du Bois, 10:00 a.m., Yavapai Hills Clubhouse
- Tues. 29** Class: *Journey of the Soul*, 7–8:15 p.m., WMEA Center (Registration required)

November 2002

- Sun. 3** Sunday Service: “*Creativity Series: Holistic Thinking and Creativity*” with Rev. Joleen D. Du Bois, 10:00 a.m., Yavapai Hills Clubhouse
- Tue. 5** Class: *Journey of the Soul*, 7–8:15 p.m., WMEA Center (Registration required)
- Wed. 6** **New Class** – Group Study: *Agni Yoga*, 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center
- Sun. 10** Sunday Service: “*Creativity Series: Creative Thinking*” with Shary Singer, 10:00 a.m., **WMEA Center**
- Tue. 12** Class: *Journey of the Soul*, 7–8:15 p.m., WMEA Center (Registration required)
- Wed. 13** Group Study: *Agni Yoga*, 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center
- Sun. 17** Group Meditation and Lecture on “*Scorpio*” with Rev. Joleen D. Du Bois, 10:00 a.m., **WMEA Center**
- Tue. 19** Class: *Journey of the Soul*, 7–8:15 p.m., WMEA Center (Registration required)
- Wed. 20** Group Study: *Agni Yoga*, 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center
- Sun. 24** Sunday Service: “*Thanksgiving Service: The Spirit of Gratitude*” with Rev. Joleen D. Du Bois, 10:00 a.m., Yavapai Hills Clubhouse
- Tues. 26** Class: *Journey of the Soul*, 7–8:15 p.m., WMEA Center (Registration required)
- Wed. 27** **No Class**

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are being considered.
See our website
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