

Eulogy for Cassandra Schmidt

Our dear friend Cassandra was born August 11, 1953, in the beautiful city of Heidelberg. She was a part of the Fellowship for eighteen years. From her first days as a new student in Germany, she showed her unwavering commitment to the work and the school, serving for many years as a center director – in India, Berlin, and lastly, in Cairo.

On hearing of her death, an Indian student wrote, “Kiran and Cassandra laid the foundation of school in India and taught us for five years the practical application of the ideas. They were responsible for bringing the Teacher’s influence.

She was a gifted and dedicated yoga teacher, and it was through her yoga instruction that many students at Isis came to know and love her. Cassandra saw yoga with a focus on divided attention, and she shared that understanding with us.

Cassandra embodied the spirit of love and unconditional acceptance of other people. Through her deep connection to balance and harmony, she was able to bring a positive attitude to everything she touched. If she spoke about her friction, it was only after she had worked with it and transformed it.

Her work was deeply internalized, and her second line was direct and uncomplicated. A student recalled the first photograph Cassandra gave him, when he was identified with a third-line octae. She simply said, “Darshan, this is what is called identification.”

Her sense of adventure and courage was an inspiration. She moved forward fearlessly, trusting in the direction of the play. While others might make preparations, she would simply launch forward. When something needed to be done, it was her nature to just move ahead and do it. She served and taught through her actions.

She had a strong sense of who she was and what she wanted, and she was not formatory in her relationship to her life. She was vigorous in holding to what she felt would give her life and energy, and ready to make changes when it seemed like the right direction. Her willingness to be herself helped give many of us the courage to be ourselves.

Her strong, active nature was tempered by the events in her play. When she wished to return to Isis after directing the center in Berlin, she was detained and had to remain in Germany for several months. At that time, she wrote to a friend, *I accept my play and trust in C Influence, I’m sure that they will arrange the timing for me. It is the first time that I completely cannot plan anything ahead. I just see what the opportunities are and then I make decisions. And I find in this way I’m so open to anything.*

Memorial Service for Cassandra Schmidt & Daniela Voss

When Robert asked them to begin the center in Cairo, Kiran and Cassandra responded within a few hours that they would go. Cassandra sold possessions, and gave up her job, her office, and her home; she seemed free and resolute. The last time she was at Isis, she was so clear and firm in herself, without pretense, simply looking out.

After a short time in Egypt, she emailed to a friend, *We have arrived in Cairo, and feel we have always been here.*

Many of us have felt helped by her, touched by her, grateful to her. We have been inspired by her strong working relationship with her husband Kiran, by her willingness to be herself, to take risks, and to put her work first in whatever she did.

The warmth and strength of her essence continues to resonate in us. Cassandra presented such a vivid picture of life in the bright orange and yellow colors she loved – she was a brilliant, sunny light among us. Her smile lit the moment with joy and love. Although we can no longer find her physically in our midst, we find her in our moments of presence, because she has become a part of what we are.