

Dorothy Maclean
Obituary
January 7 1920 - March 12 2020

Dorothy Maclean, a writer and educator on spirituality, was one of the three founders of the Findhorn Foundation spiritual community in northeast Scotland. She was best known for her contacts with the consciousnesses of nature she called *devas*, embodiments of creative intelligence. Guidance from these beings and their effect on the Findhorn garden was a major element in the fame and growth of the Findhorn community.

She was born in 1920 in the small town of Guelph, Ontario, Canada, to a middle class family. Growing from a nature-loving child and avid reader to an awkward and unhappy adolescent, she later likened this feeling of separation to the fall from Eden. At 17 she took a BA degree in Business at the University of Western Ontario, where she also excelled at badminton. Even at this questioning age she believed truth was ‘no respecter of creeds’. At 20 she was employed as a secretary by the British Security Coordination in New York, later transferring to the Panama office. Here she met John Wood, an officer who introduced her to Sufism and the teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan. She married John in 1941 and they travelled extensively, arriving in London where Dorothy worked at the Counter-Espionage Section of British Intelligence throughout World War II.

Dorothy had met the mystic Sheena Govan in 1940 on a train ride to New York and reconnected with her in London. Having divorced John in 1951, she became involved in Govan’s spiritual practices with fellow seekers Peter and Eileen Caddy. In London in 1954 Dorothy had her first experience of the God within, a “vast unity”. She began a regular practice of meditation to connect with this voice within, which led her to the sacred essence of things and the belief that love must be practical. “Only I can clear away the barriers that cover up and imprison that central core of one’s being,” the voice told her. Govan’s group fell afoul of an invented controversy in the British tabloids which, unable to discern a specific belief system to vilify, labelled them ‘the Nameless Ones’. After working various jobs, Dorothy joined Peter and Eileen Caddy in the management of Cluny Hill Hotel in Scotland, working as secretary and receptionist for six years. The hotel became a success on the strength of inner guidance from Eileen and herself. She and the Caddys were later dismissed by the hotel company on short notice when they were unable to reproduce the same success at another hotel known in the industry as ‘the graveyard of managers’. Dorothy moved with the Caddys, and the three Caddy children, into a cramped caravan near the Scottish village of Findhorn, which was to be the starting point of the Findhorn Foundation and community.

Peter Caddy began a rudimentary garden in the sandy ground of the trailer park. During meditation in 1963 Dorothy’s inner guidance suggested that she begin to contact the consciousness of nature and cooperate with the unseen spirits of the garden. Probably her most well-known contact with non-physical consciousness was with *devas*. She chose this term to describe angelic beings that oversee the pattern and growth of all forms. “To hold each little atom in its pattern,” one being told her, “is to hold it in joy.” Co-creation with the devas led to the abundance of the Findhorn garden, including the much-publicised giant cabbages and winter-flowering roses. Dorothy also communicated with devas of animals such as moles, asking them to romp in designated areas rather than under the gardens. Interest in the duneland garden and the spiritual principles behind its vitality led many to join the new community.

Dorothy collected her messages from devas and angels in several books, beginning with *The Findhorn Garden* which was printed on-site and distributed widely. “Humans generally don’t seem to know where they are going, or why,” the pea deva told her. “If they did, what powerhouses they would be! If they were on a straight course, how could we cooperate with them!” A different group of devas asked: “Why go around like zombies, following this or that external guide when all the time your only guide is within you?” In 1967 she contacted the overlighting Angel of Findhorn, who told her: “Do not form a set concept of me and so keep me in limitation... I have many parts to play and much to do.”

Dorothy left Findhorn in 1973 and was involved in the founding of the Lorian Association, a spiritual education community in North America, with mystical philosopher David Spangler. Her life became a process of building the new human consciousness. She began travelling the world teaching and lecturing, helping others to contact their divinity within and connect with the intelligence of nature. She believed that humans have unique potential. Referring to the role of our free will, she called humans the “growing tip of Earth”. She expanded her non-physical explorations, contacting the overlighting angels of different nations, and developed a concern for the environment, relating the words of the Cypress tree deva: “We are the skin of this world; take us away and the complete planet, no longer able to function, dries up and dies.” Her theme of inner contact with God came more to the fore in later books and talks, but she remained a practical person. “You can choose to be with Me at any time,” her inner voice told her. “If it is difficult to be with Me when you are with others, remember they too are God.”

Dorothy wrote that she sought to help shape a future where humans are active agents in co-creating the life of Earth, stating: “It is from our wholeness, our divinity, that we can then relate to anyone else and to our world.” One angel message reads: “Let your dominion be over yourself, and let your expanding consciousness see God’s life in all things.” Spiritual teacher and one-time Findhorn Foundation focaliser David Spangler called Dorothy Maclean a forerunner of planetary wholeness: “Down-to-earth, practical, not given to glamour, nevertheless she has learned to expand her spirit and step beyond the purely human points of view without abandoning them either. Knowing her has been a great privilege in my life.”

The Findhorn Foundation community is now the largest ecovillage in the UK and more than 30,000 visitors have attended its workshops and conferences, some of which continue Dorothy’s themes of inner listening and co-creation with nature. Dorothy moved back to Findhorn in 2009, retiring from public life the following year. Her quiet presence was felt in the community she helped to build. Her experiences are recounted in several bestselling books, which include *Wisdoms* (1970), *To Hear the Angels Sing* (1980), *To Honor the Earth* (1991), *Choices of Love* (1998), *Seeds of Inspiration* (2004), *Call of the Trees* (2006), *Come Closer* (2007) and *Memoirs of an Ordinary Mystic* (2010).

Dorothy celebrated her 100th birthday in January this year. She received an abundance of cards and messages from all over the world. The Findhorn Community celebrated with her with a wonderful series of events including a birthday celebration in the Hall and a whole community meditation

She is survived by her beloved community which she helped to co found in 1962

Dorothy Maclean, spiritual teacher and author, born January 7, 1920; died March 12, 2020

- Please note in lieu of flowers, donations can be sent to either :

- **The Findhorn Foundation via this link**

<https://www.findhorn.org/support/>

Please also email accountsfinance@findhorn.org

with the details of the amount and the reference 'Dorothy'

- or **The Park Ecovillage Trust Community Care Circle at**

<https://parkecovillagetrust.co.uk/2019/10/13/we-support-dorothy/>

The fund will now be used to support other older people in the Findhorn Community.

Janet Limb
13 March 2020