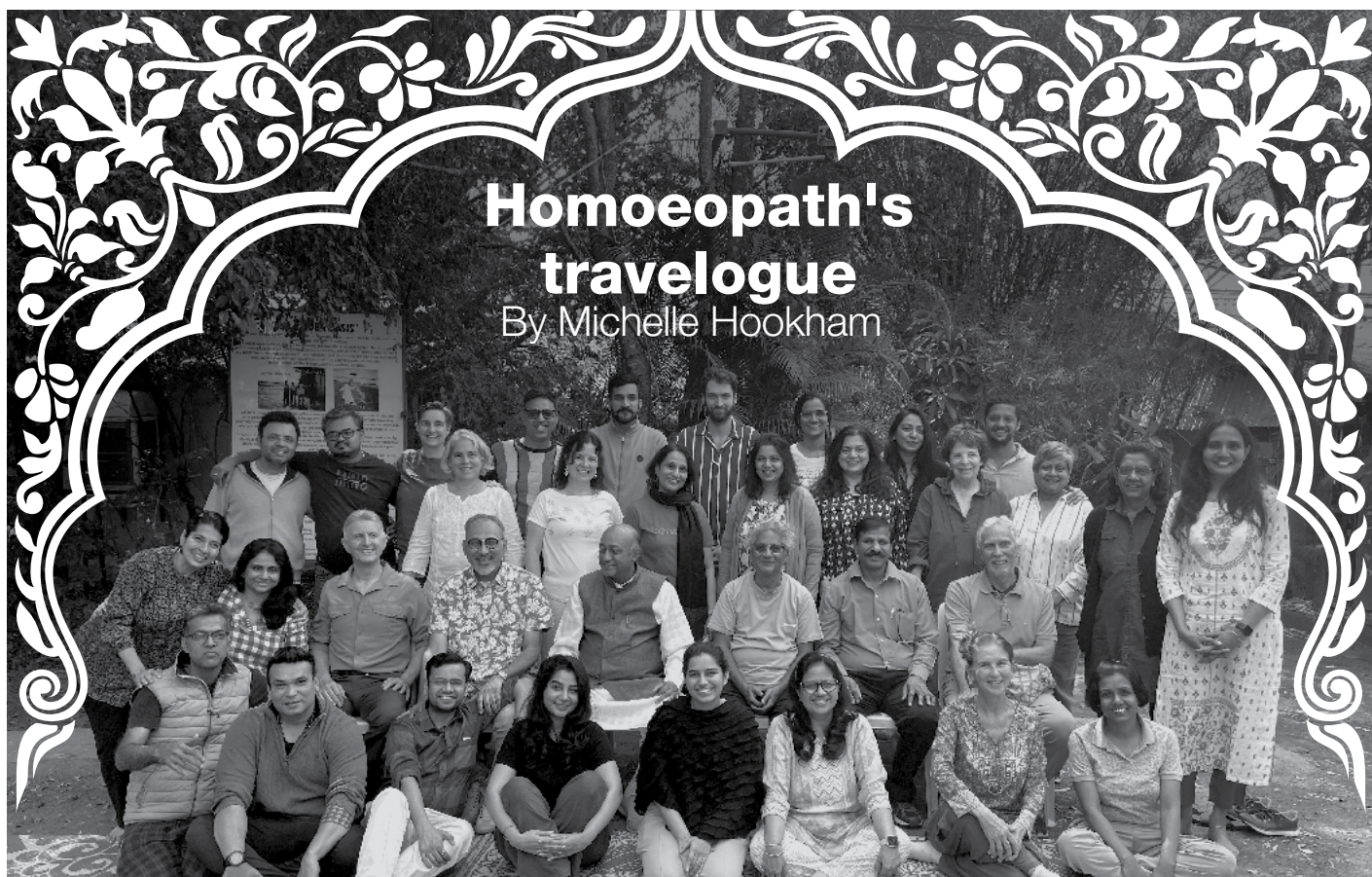




Part 1: 'My Week With Rajan (MWWR)'

For the past five years, I have been studying with Dr Rajan Sankaran through online courses with The Other Song Academy (TOS). TOS has developed a particular way of case-taking and analysis that can be transformative in practice, when used from a place of deep understanding and incorporated with classical homoeopathic methodology. I have been keen to master the method to better help others in their healing journey.

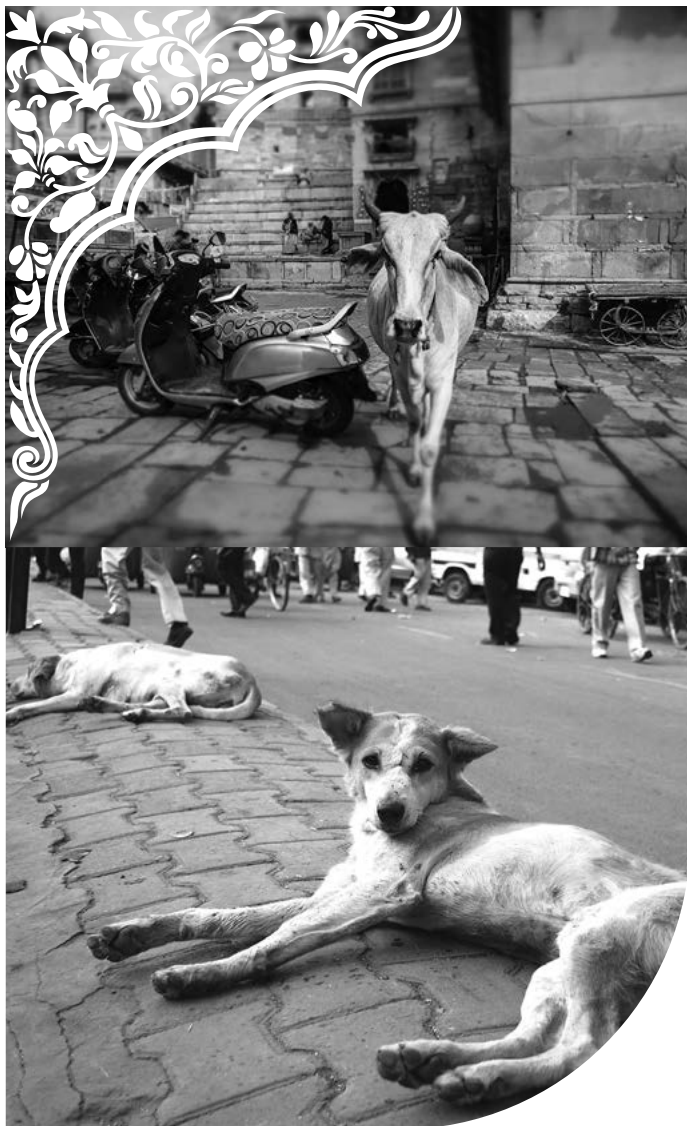
With this in mind, I took the plunge to travel to India and join my international colleagues in a 10-day immersive training experience in Mumbai in January 2024. In preparation, I joined the pre-course online intensive training in November and applied myself to reading his latest books relevant to the program. I was as prepared as I could be and left for India with both excitement and trepidation.

I had a few days in Nasik with a colleague's family, which was a truly incredible cultural experience, before heading to Mumbai to start the course. I must admit that my first afternoon getting my bearings around Mumbai was quite overwhelming and a real culture shock – such a mix of wealth and poverty, chaos and calm, colour, vibrancy, amazing food and service amidst it all.

I walked to Juhu Beach to orient myself and made sure I knew where to find The Other Song clinic for the following morning. I was sure to utilise my recently acquired knowledge in crossing the road in India.

Yes, my colleague's son gave me great instructions here:

... you don't wait for a gap to cross the road, you make the gap; you commit, and you don't hesitate. Drivers will find their way around you. Oh, and by the way, traffic lights are really just a suggestion. Drivers don't tend to take any notice. And be sure to protect your bag/valuables in busy places.



Forewarned and forearmed, I ventured out, noticing the activation of all senses – sight, sound, smell, touch. I was curious to see the array of curb-side stalls, chai/street food stands on every corner and the occasional stray goat, cows and many dogs.

I woke on the first day of the course feeling unwell and thought I'd take a precautionary Covid-19 test. Could you believe it? Yes, positive! After my initial moment of overwhelming disappointment, I soon moved into an enriching cocoon of solo experience, watching the cases online, listening and discussing the analysis online, and resting in the breaks. It wasn't the same, but I think I had a bigger lesson to learn in India – the art of letting go, surrender and trusting the process. Once I got this lesson, well, acceptance got a whole lot easier.

The course included many live cases over the ten days, with people of diverse ages, backgrounds and pathologies. Each case was intuitively taken and comprehensively analysed, according to the framework of Kingdom, superclass (basic pattern of reaction), Miasm, characteristic symptoms (as per traditional homoeopathy) and 'source' words. When combined with classical homoeopathic philosophy, it is another major connector for understanding the internal pattern of dis-ease to guide us to the similimum.



A highlight of the course was presenting one of my clients, who had agreed to have her case taken by Dr Sankaran.

I provided a brief introduction to the group and then the client engaged in a fascinating journey to the core of her 'inner song experience', as Dr Sankaran calls it. It was so informative to witness someone else take the case of a client I had worked with over many years and to glean fresh insights about treatment options for them. She did an incredible job of bringing her state to life, which made the remedy picture of *Vipera* really clear.



PART 2: *WISE* retreat at the hidden oasis

The next part of the journey was a five-day retreat in Pune, on a biodynamic farm, by which time I had made a full recovery and was able to attend this part of the program. Whilst the accommodation was basic (very hard bed, bucket shower, room share), I had mastered acceptance by this stage and took it all in my stride. The food was truly incredible – vegan, gluten free and no oil used in cooking. It was a centre where many people go to cure their diabetes, and I was impressed by the number of people who had reported significant improvement just through following diet and lifestyle recommendations at the centre. In fact, one of the older gentlemen on the retreat reported that his blood sugar level had halved after just four days on the centre's program.

Mornings at the retreat started with yoga or a sunrise meditation in a beautiful location, with Indian raga music (sung by Dr Sankaran) and philosophical perspectives. After an hour or so for our own quiet time and reflection, we began the day's groups. These were deeply immersive experiences, where we were guided through a range of *WISE* processes (see below and in the corresponding article in this issue, *The homoeopathic counsellor*). As an experiential learner, this not only gave me an evolved understanding of the processes, but I also came to witness my own 'inner song experience' and go through some deep healing.

The end of each day was equally poignant, involving a mystery location to watch the sunset. Group members shared stories, music, dancing and songs from around the world. Two of the group were musicians, and to watch the sun drop behind the mountains whilst listening to traditional Indian flute, guitar and song, was absolutely rapturous.

Witnessing the Inner Song Experience (WISE)

I would like to share a few of Dr Sankaran's *WISE* retreat's key concepts with you below, for your own reflection and journey.

WISE is an acronym for *Witnessing the Inner Song Experience*. Developed by Dr Sankaran and colleagues, *WISE* processes offer powerful tools to help clients externalise their 'inner song' (or pattern), through the use of images, postures and other media. They are an adjunct to comprehensive case-taking, case-analysis and classical homoeopathic methodology and should only be used by experienced practitioners who have a deep understanding of the processes.



According to Dr Sankaran, we all have an inner pattern, or 'song'. These patterns are thought to have come from our own epigenetics – experiences of past generations passed on through inheritance, and from our own earlier life experiences. It is considered that these inner patterns influence how we perceive and react to situations.

In homoeopathic practice, we look for this inner pattern and match it with the most similar remedy. However, even without a remedy, if we become more aware of our own inner pattern, it can help us to better enjoy our relationships and life, and to heal if needed.

Many readers will know that I am also a mental health practitioner, and I am aware of the congruence of the *WISE* process and other psychodynamic practices.

In the psychology world, one aspect of this 'inner pattern' is known as a 'negative core belief', stemming from adverse life experiences which can cause us to hold a belief about ourselves that may or may not be true. For example, 'I am stupid; I am not loveable; I am worthless; I'm not supported; I'm not good enough' etc. The paradoxical psychology is that we may then view the world through this belief pattern and

continually look for the proof that our belief is true, which just reinforces it. Complicated, right? Anyway, back to the *WISE* retreat.

As we progressed through the *WISE* processes, we learned to witness our own inner pattern and then how to become an observer of the experience. We were guided to notice the pattern that comes and goes and to become aware of the space through which the experience comes and goes (which is ourselves). Through awareness, we can come to realise that the cause of stress isn't from the outside but our reaction to situations because of our own inner pattern. To see it and become clear of the pattern is a potential healing process in itself.

Following the philosophical reflections of this work, we are the space in which experiences appear and disappear. When we come to notice this, they no longer have power over us, they no longer possess or consume us. Through these processes, we learn to locate the pattern, witness or observe it and feel more ease; to look inside and see what's happening, acknowledge it and not be driven by it.



Instead, we can learn to witness our responses, to see where they are coming from and the intention behind them. Is our response the pragmatic reality? Or has something been triggered, in which case it may be unhealthy for us and others around us.

Challenges we encounter bring opportunities to work with ourselves. For example, when we notice ourselves responding in a way that is out of context to a situation, we can ask ourselves, 'what kind of pattern is being triggered in me?' It's not necessarily the other person that is affecting us, but our own pattern reacting to them or the situation.

In other words, we see our own experience reflected back to us from others. What we see in others is our sensitivity because of our own inner pattern. Once we become more aware, we react less. We can learn to observe ourselves reacting in situations and then remind ourselves 'oh, that's just my pattern'. We can better observe our responses and not attempt to analyse or try to change it.



Dr Sankaran shared many pearls of wisdom during the retreat. In relation to the *WISE* process, he articulated that at the deepest level, our pattern isn't

a feeling: it's a survival response; a primal, instinctive response; a fundamental adaptation response and it is dynamic. This is where homoeopathy comes in. Remedies are dynamic and if they resonate with this inner pattern and are attuned with the expression of this pattern through the totality of characteristic and peculiar symptoms, deep healing can occur.



Michelle Hookham

Credentialed mental health nurse and homoeopath, with experience spanning 30 years in healthcare across a diverse range of settings. She has an established private practice in Windsor, and clinical experience across both professions enhances the practice of the other, with the evolution of a unique skill set that is both flexible and holistic. Michelle is a past chairperson to the International Council for Homeopathy (ICH) and past national president of the Australian Homoeopathic Association (AHA). She is currently undertaking a PhD in psychosocial wellbeing and disaster recovery.

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