Dag Hammarskjöld was born into a Swedish noble family in 1905. As his family had a long tradition of civil service, a political career was set for him. It culminated in 1953 in the election of Hammarskjöld as second Secretary General of the United Nations. In this capacity, he was able to resolve many conflicts and gained respect beyond the borders of the Cold War power blocs. In 1961, his plane crashed over the Congo when
he was on a mission to mediate disputes. The cause of the accident was never cleared up, although there is evidence of a shooting down of the machine.

Since 1925 Dag Hammarskjöld kept a diary. From the beginning, the notes have a transpersonal habitus. The author only wrote down experiences when he had understood and accepted their teachings. In his introspection he was honest and self-critical, and the more so the higher he went on his political career.

*Your position never gives you the right to command. It only imposes on you the duty of so living your life that others can receive your orders without being humiliated.*

(1955)

He also saw his appointment as secretary general of the UN as a spiritual task, about which he wrote in 1953: *It did come - the day when the grief became small. For what had befallen me and seemed so hard to bear became insignificant in the light of the demands which God was now making. But how difficult it is to feel that this was also, and for that very reason, the day when the joy became great.*

And in 1954: *Let me finish what I have been permitted to begin. Let me give all without any assurance of increase.* Hammarskjöld went his own way in an intense solitude, but also wrote: *Now you know. When the worries over your work loosen their grip, then this experience of light, warmth, and power. From without - a sustaining element, like air to the glider or water to the swimmer. An intellectual hesitation which demands proofs and logical demonstration prevents me from “believing” – in this, too. Prevents me from expressing and interpreting this reality in intellectual terms. Yet, through me there flashes this vision of a magnetic field in the soul, created in a timeless present by unknown multitudes, living in holy obedience, whose words and actions are a timeless prayer. - “The Community of the Saints” – and – within it – an eternal life.*

In the last years, there are increasing numbers of entries that show Hammarskjöld dealing with his death which he felt was approaching. He seems like a samurai to live in the moment without looking behind him. His last diary entry (of August 24, 1961) closes with the words:

*The seasons have changed*

*And the light*
And the weather

And the hour.

But it is the same land.

And I begin to know the map

And to get my bearings.

In English language the diary is published under the title: *Markings*.

Note:

The quotes are taken from: Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, New York, 2006