

JOURNAL

FOR

WALDORF / RUDOLF STEINER EDUCATION

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Dear Readers,

Welcome to our latest edition. It is always heartening for us to hear from readers if articles sometimes become topics for College, Faculty or parent discussions. It would encourage us to hear from you in writing – telling us what particular topics are of most use to you – with any requests or contributions. We thank you in advance for your responses.

This year, in July and August both Australia and New Zealand received a visit from the new co-leader of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum, Florian Osswald. We publish a transcript of Florian's opening lecture that began his Australasian tour at Samford Valley, Brisbane. Our warmest greetings and welcome to you, Florian, in your new role.

We thank Van James (our artistic editor) and the editor of *Renewal* (Ronald Koetzsch) for permission to use the original, expanded version of his in-depth account of water colour painting in the lower grades. The challenge of Steiner to the original Waldorf teachers to introduce children to moral / judgement and discernment at an early age (grades 1 and 2) via the blue/green /yellow juxtaposition exercise is explained clearly, plus many more examples and we hope the article is inspiring for new (and experienced) teachers and parents alike .

Our next article, from Jeremy Board, a teacher at Mt Barker Waldorf School, Australia, is about his Springtime Main Lesson on birds and their nests. Thank you for sharing – especially for including the original drawings from your children. Such a lesson for younger children will leave a lasting deep respect for nature in their soul life.

Two more original articles appear – the first is on Maori Spirituality and Anthroposophy. Simone Hamblett and her partner Uekaha Taane worked together to produce a most thoughtful and moving account – based on ancient knowledge from the Waitaha peoples (centred in Canterbury, our part of New Zealand). Their sharing has been an inspiration to our colleagues in the Christchurch

school this year. Te Reo (Maori language) has been brought even more into kindergartens and classrooms in everyday instructions, greetings, poems and songs. The idea of publishing for others to read was not to present a definitive work – but as a stimulus and encouragement for people in other areas of New Zealand and in other countries to research and find their local and national stories – chants and folklore of the original inhabitants. We do look forward to your responses – whatever area you teach in: primary and/ or high school.

Ineke van Florenstein Mulder traces her journey as she discovered possibilities for teaching history in a Waldorf setting – in this case – on how a curriculum might be transformed for Chinese history. Again – it is not in any way definitive or instructional – it is an open sharing of thoughts – hoping to inspire others to reflect on how they might - or have approached history in their lands. We thank our assistant editor, Dr Robin Bacchus, for researching and finding additional references.

Thank you all other contributors and editors where we have republished – Vee Noble, the editor of *Sphere*, the journal of the New Zealand Anthroposophical Society, for Susan Gay's moving account of art therapy work in Japan following Japan's tragedies of earthquakes, tsunami and nuclear disasters.

This Journal has been made possible by the work of our assistant editor, Robin Bacchus, the continuing support from Diederick Ruarus and Hannelore Henning and ever cheerful encouragement from Karl Grant at Daylight Marketing. We thank those who kindly reviewed articles anonymously for us - in our striving to produce a Journal of high quality for our readers. 600 copies have been distributed, mainly in Australia, NZ, and Asia.

With warm regards,
Neil Carter (Christchurch, New Zealand) and Peter Glasby (Samford Valley, Queensland, Australia)
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The opinions expressed in this Journal are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editors.

We welcome all contributions on the themes pertaining to Waldorf education. Please forward your contributions to waldorf@clear.net.nz, glasby.peter@gmail.com

Painting Problems: Making Aesthetic Sense of Colour

Van James,
Hawai'i, USA

*(This is a longer version of an abridged article that originally appeared in *Renewal – Journal for Waldorf Education*, November, 2010, pages 8-12 with permission.)*



Fig. 1. In kindergarten and pre-school children paint for the sheer enjoyment, without the need of a structured painting "lesson."

Have you ever heard the complaint, "Why do all the children's paintings look the same?" If you've asked yourself this question after having viewed the work of students in the lower grades of a Steiner-Waldorf school (the question rarely arises with regard to the work of the upper grades) you're not alone. Why is it that particularly in grades one through four the artistic work done in painting classes often appears so similar, so uniform? And, is this a problem?

In the early grades of a Steiner-Waldorf school a class of children is asked to copy-down the same stories off the chalkboard, add and subtract the same arithmetic problems, reproduce the same study examples into their main lesson books, recite the same poems, and sing the same songs. Yet painting the same picture somehow goes against our sense of free artistic expression. In painting, perhaps more than any other art, we expect to see the unhampered self-expression of the individual — their unique artistic style.

However, imagine a singing class in which

seven to ten year old children are allowed to sing their own songs at the same time. This would of course be total chaos. Choosing one song for the children to sing together gives them the framework within which they will gradually develop towards creative musical expression and find their own voice. Just as tones are learned by the regular practice of appropriate musical compositions, sung together in a group, so too can children learn the colour tones by repeated simple pictorial compositions. The painting lesson should be a quiet colour-choir where each child's picture sounds forth within the harmony of the whole class.

What at first appears to be a class of all the same pictures reveals very different worlds when looked at more closely. The teacher can learn to see not only the temperament of each individual child but also various emotional conditions and certain learning differences. Imbalances in the child can then be worked on in a gentle, artistic manner by directing the child's attention to simple questions of technique: weakness or strength of pigment, lightness or darkness of tone, warmth or coolness of hue, wetness or dryness of paper, swiftness or slowness of working, mixing or separating of colour, and so on.

Although our passing glance might see the painting lesson as producing hopelessly similar work, the teacher who knows his or her students finds striking visual evidence of the developing individualities and their needs.

If the children aren't having painting lessons to express themselves or to produce unique and individual works of art, then why are they taking painting as a weekly discipline? This question is perhaps best approached by looking at the very first lesson suggested for first grade painting. (Kindergarten painting consists of setting an appropriate mood, instruction in the use of materials by example, and seeing that a picture is not overworked. No formal lesson as to picture

content is given before class one in a Waldorf-Steiner school.)



Fig. 2: Yellow and blue, and yellow and green, is the first painting class in grade one of a Waldorf-Steiner school, done as a group exercise.

In *Practical Advice to Teachers*¹, Rudolf Steiner recommended that the class teacher put up a large sheet of white paper at the front of the classroom. The teacher then paints a small “patch” of yellow on the white surface and invites each child, one after another, to come up to the front of the room and paint a small patch of yellow as well. (Presumably a verse and short story would set the appropriate mood within the class, preparing the children for entering into this lesson.) Once the students have all placed their yellow spots distinctly and with space between each of them, the teacher then paints a swatch of blue next to her yellow. The children come up, one by one, and do the same. When about half of the children have completed this procedure the teacher exchanges the blue paint for green, letting the remaining children place green next to their yellow. The end result is a page full of yellow patches, half of which have a patch of blue next to them, the other half have adjacent patches of green (fig. 2). Steiner then suggested that the teacher says something like the following: “Now I am going to tell you something that you may not yet understand, but one day you will understand perfectly: What we have done up there, where we put blue next to yellow, is more beautiful than what we did down here where we put green next to yellow. Blue next to yellow is more beautiful than green next to yellow.”²

Although Steiner speaks of placing the blue and green “directly next to” the yellow, the experience would be equally effective, if not enhanced, by

surrounding the yellow with the blue and the green. This would also lead more naturally into the next painting lesson where one could have the children do individual paintings of yellow surrounded by blue. Also, in order that every child may experience both combinations the exercise can be arranged with two large sheets of paper and a repeating of each child painting yellow on each sheet and then surrounding one with blue and one with green. This allows each child to fully engage in both colour combinations.

I have known a number of teachers both in England and America who have, in teaching this first painting lesson, been unable to say to their classes that “blue and yellow is more beautiful than green next to yellow.” After all, this is quite a startling thing to say in contemporary western society where it is taken for granted that “beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” Beauty has become a subjective experience when art museums and galleries can display splattered canvases and piles of debris as a new gold-standard in art. It is part of our era to behold beauty even in the ugly. How dare the teacher claim that “blue and yellow is more beautiful than green and yellow!” However, it is not that one is saying green and yellow aren’t beautiful—certainly not. But can we perceive a distinction between one colour combination and another that can be called “more beautiful?”

Supposing we do this first painting exercise for ourselves, as adult students of aesthetics—the science of heightened sense experience. Paint two yellow spots and surround one with blue, the other with green (fig. 3). If we use a cool (lemon) yellow and a cool (cobalt) blue we will notice how brightly the yellow shines within its setting. Look carefully at the same yellow surrounded by green! It doesn’t appear to be quite as radiant (especially if we place it within a very yellow-green surrounding). In fact the lemon yellow not only appears slightly duller in this setting, it also looks a bit flatter and warmer, as though it leans more towards the active colours of the spectrum, toward warm yellow and away from green. It

1. Rudolf Steiner, *Practical Advice to Teachers*, Lecture IV, pp. 59-60. Rudolf Steiner Press, 1976.
2. Ibid, pp. 60-62.

is as though the green sucks the brilliance and shine out of the yellow, and in a very real sense, this is exactly what happens. Simple observation reveals a slightly curdled yellow when surrounded by green, but why?



Fig. 3: Yellow surrounded by blue and yellow surrounded by green can help us experience the aesthetic lesson at the root of this painting exercise.

Green is a secondary colour composed of two primary colours, yellow and blue. Because green has yellow in it already it fails to show as strong a contrast to the pure yellow as blue does. Blue being further away in the spectrum from yellow than green, presents a striking contrast and actually enhances the yellow's individual character, as the yellow likewise enhances the blue's character, both being primary colours. Goethe referred to colours next to each other such as yellow and green as "non-characteristic" combinations and those a step further away, such as yellow and blue as "characteristic" combinations. In a Goethean sense, Steiner is saying that this first grade painting lesson demonstrates how yellow and blue are a more characteristic combination than yellow and green, the latter being a non-characteristic combination.

Colours opposite one another on the colour circle, that is complementary colours, Goethe referred to as "harmonious" combinations, meaning that they embody more of the totality of the entire colour circle (fig. 4). From this we could say that yellow and violet are more harmonious than even yellow and blue, which are simply characteristic in their pairing. In his *Theory of Colours*,³ Goethe also described the principle of polarity as it appears in the colour circle. Besides the polarity of warmth and coolness in red and blue there exists the polarity of light and darkness

exemplified by yellow and blue. Goethe had arrived at his theories from direct observation into the phenomena of colours as we also should do. What concerns us with regard to the first painting exercise is:

- 1) colours adjacent to each other are "non-characteristic," lack lustre, and are one-sided or narrow-range combinations—as seen in yellow and green;
- 2) contrasting colours are more "characteristic" in that they express a fuller range of the colour circle, enhancing and expressing a more individual character of each colour quality—as with yellow and blue;
- 3) additionally, yellow and blue express the polarity of light and darkness within the colour circle, while green and yellow do not.

Steiner was well aware of Goethe's observations



Fig. 4: The colour circle can be divided into three distinct groupings of colour combinations: non-characteristic, characteristic, and harmonious—as described by Goethe.

on the combinations of colours for he edited Goethe's scientific writings over the course of thirteen years. So why does he use the word *beautiful* in connection with colour relationships? After observing the more subdued character of yellow with green, one might be inclined to say that yellow and blue are "truer" to each other because they fulfill each other more than yellow and green do, but why more beautiful? This leads us to the question of 'what is beauty in the art of colour?' Steiner certainly did not intend to say that yellow and blue are prettier or that we should like one pairing more than another. He somehow suggests that beauty is an objective fact, which can presumably be experienced and learned.

Consider the definition of beauty as formulated by the medieval scholar Thomas Aquinas: "For

3 Johann W. von Goethe, *Theory of Colours*. M.I.T. Press, 1970.

beauty there are three requirements:

First, a certain wholeness or perfection, for whatever is incomplete is, so far, ugly;

second, a due proportion or harmony;

and third, clarity, so that brightly coloured things are called beautiful.” We may not exactly agree with such an antiquated characterisation today, but it is interesting to see what Aquinas comes to: wholeness, harmony and clarity. The Greek philosopher Aristotle described beauty in a similar three-part characterization of order, symmetry, and clarity. Don’t these characteristics agree with what can be observed in the example of the first painting exercise? The yellow-blue relationship represents more of a *wholeness* of the colour circle, especially since it is a combination of primary colours (colours that can not be arrived at by mixing any other colours together but are unique in themselves). Yellow and blue also have a *harmony* of both colour tone and light and dark balance. Yellow and blue, through their relationship, reveal a higher level of *clarity* or brightness of colour as well. Certainly Thomas Aquinas would, by definition, agree with Steiner that yellow and blue is more beautiful than yellow and green.

In the end, the question we are left with is, does an objective beauty really exist? Is there an objective occurrence of the beautiful when we relate one phenomenon to another? If the teacher answers no to this, then it is obvious that she would find it difficult to say one combination is more beautiful than another. In this case, the class can enjoy the encounter with colour and the creative process of painting without any conclusion being drawn from the exercise. However, if we can say “yes” to this question because of what we observe to be true in the actual phenomena of colours, then we introduce the first lesson in aesthetics at the same time as giving the first painting class. This plants a seed for a *sense of beauty*, completely within the realm of the feeling life, and prepares the children for true aesthetic judgment to unfold later in adolescence. “This will sink deeply into the child’s soul,” said Steiner of this painting exercise.⁴

What is noteworthy here is that children have

no problem with the statement: “Yellow and blue are more beautiful than yellow and green.” It is only to our adult thinking that this smacks of preference and prejudice. The child will accept what the teacher knows to be true, providing the teacher can see it for herself.

One class of first graders, upon completing this first painting lesson and being told that one day they would understand that yellow together with blue is more beautiful than yellow next to green, promptly responded, “Oh, we know that! Yes, we know that. It is like the sun in the blue sky.” After a brief pause, looking at all of the yellow and blues and yellow and greens at the front of the room, one little girl chimed-in, “Yes but yellow and green is beautiful too, like flowers in the grass.” This led to wonderful discussion and was truly a first lesson in aesthetics!

Something that we as adults, as teachers, often have difficulty with is helping children to live into pure colour in the first, second and third grades. In these early years, the children should not be drawing with paint (except in the case of introducing the alphabet, mentioned below), but painting with colours, producing colour forms rather than illustrating things or objects with lines. They should be true abstract expressionists, non-objective, non-figurative colour purists. Painting should be a playful immersion in colour. This playing with colour is difficult for our adult consciousness to consider as substantial enough to be a contribution to actual learning. We like to see the things of the world clearly focused and in all their detail and outline. However, the young child does not necessarily need, nor is he nourished by exacting details of the physical world. If first and second graders practice the painting of simple coloured areas, patches of colour side by side, surrounding and overlapping each other, they will be developing their colour-sense and their aesthetic sensitivity. However, this free-form approach to painting does not mean the children will not arrive at recognisable forms, such as simple plant-like, animal-like shapes, and letter forms.

“Right from the start, we give our young

4 Rudolf Steiner, *Practical Advice to Teachers*, Lecture IV, p. 61.

pupils the opportunity of working artistically with colours, not only with dry crayons but also with watercolours. In this simple way, we give the child something from which the forms of the letters can be developed.”⁵ This description by Steiner of how one arrives at the letters of the alphabet is part of a process that begins with the teacher telling a story—perhaps of a *big, beautiful butterfly*. The children then bring colour to their pages, painting simple changing forms that ultimately arrive at a big, beautiful butterfly shape whose wings suggest the letter B. The letter B is then drawn separately and written as part of the story of the “big, beautiful butterfly.” (fig. 5) Finally, the children read their own written story aloud to complete a cycle that goes from oral story, painting, drawing, writing, to reading. A similar thing can be done with a story of a “silent, slithering serpent,” perhaps in a reversal of the same colours—that is, demonstrating the use of positive and negative shapes. It is important to grow the forms gradually, slowly arriving at the finished form as though magically.



Fig. 5: Painting the various colour combinations, such as the non-characteristic pairing (here yellow and green), can be used to bring forth pictures that will introduce the letters of the alphabet in a living imagination for the class one children.

“When introducing writing to the children we must...” says Steiner, “communicate in the form of pictures. This is possible, however, only when we do not begin by introducing the alphabet directly, nor reading as a subject, but when we

start with painting. As teachers, we ourselves must be able to live in a world of imagery. First a form of drawing with paint (leading the child from colour experience to form), out of which writing is evolved. Only then do we introduce reading... One finds that between the second dentition and puberty one has to approach all teaching pictorially and imaginatively, and this is certainly possible.”⁶

Colours are a living language of nature and the equivalent expression of emotions in sentient beings. The painting lesson is an opportunity to develop the organs of perception that can unfold directly out of the feeling life, the capacity for cognitive feeling and emotional intelligence. It is primarily via the feelings that relationships of colour meeting colour are encountered and savoured. By this means faculties for qualitative measuring, weighing and balancing develop new soul capacities. This is an educating of our feeling life for the moral sphere, for moral imagination. An aesthetic sense for colour is a capacity of the heart for weighing-up, being ethical about what is beautiful. In mathematics an equation that is beautiful is considered more likely to be true. Is it not so that in painting a colour relationship, a colour equation, that is true is more likely to be beautiful?

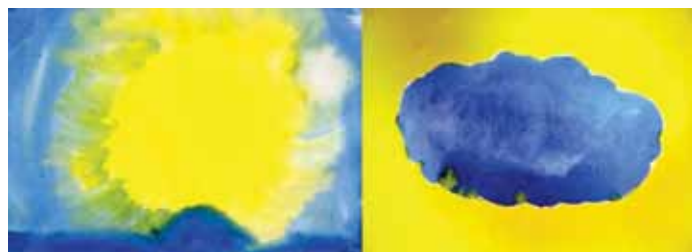


Fig. 6: Another type of colour combination, according to Goethe, is the characteristic, here showing a sunny yellow surrounded by a sky blue, and in reverse a lonely cloud of blue being cheered up by a sunny surround of yellow.

Steiner was very direct in regard to his position on the importance of painting for young children: “It is very damaging for later life if we impart perspective to a child before he has had a kind of intensive colour perspective. The human being is inwardly alienated in a terrible way when he

5 Rudolf Steiner, *What is Waldorf Education*, p. 75. SteinerBooks, 2003.
6 Ibid, p. 111-112.

becomes accustomed to quantitative perspective without first acquiring the intensive, qualitative perspective which lies in colour perspective.”⁷ This “intensive, qualitative colour perspective” must be provided for in the early grades before the children develop a longing to capture three-dimensional space in their pictures, following the nine-year change. Colour dramas, colour conversations, can easily engage the children, without figurative illustrations, if the teacher presents them by way of imaginative story content. This is not to say that children should remain in kindergarten painting of wishy-washy, single colour or unformed pictures—this is the opposite danger, and all-too-often the case in class one and two.

The “reversible exercises” are particularly directed to unfolding the faculties for colour perspective. These are the painting exercises recommended by Steiner where one colour is surrounded by another, and then in the next painting a reversal of the colour placement takes place. In this way one can go through all of the two colour relationships that are possible over the course of first and second grade: non-characteristic combinations (fig. 5), characteristic combinations (fig. 6), and harmonious combinations (fig. 7)—for all are beautiful in their own way.

The arrangement of one colour in the center and the other colour forming the periphery is also significant for this age. It reinforces, reassures, and encourages the gentle experience of “me” and the “world,” “I” and “thou.” It is an expression of point and periphery, head and limbs, and as such is the archetypal composition before up and down, left and right, foreground and background come into play. These reversible, two-colour combination painting exercises should not be missed out in class one and two but ought to form the basis of the colour studies for this period in the child’s education.

Numerical relationships are often referred to as problems and every colour combination should likewise be regarded as a problem in the sense of relationship, ratio, harmonic measurement, and aesthetics. Colour problems are also social

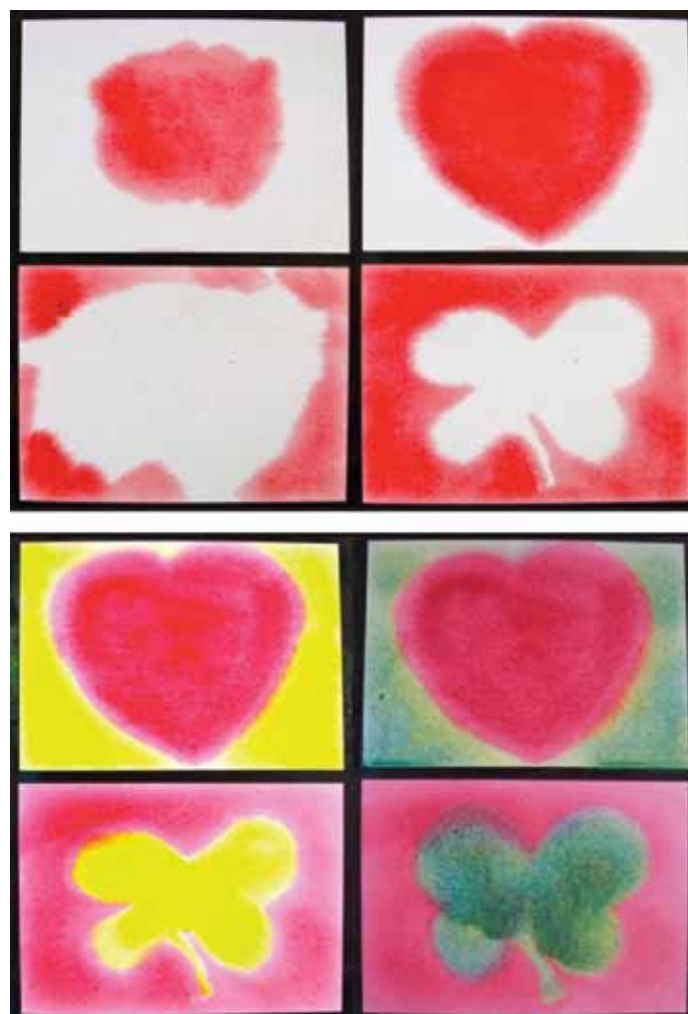


Fig. 7: The “reversible exercises” might be used, as here in this harmonious combination, to bring seasonal themes out of the colour. The harmonious combinations require three colours in order to achieve the two colour combination.

problems for they deal with the interaction of elements, qualities, sensations and ‘beingness’, that act in definite ways upon each other. The painting lesson should be a time for colour problem solving. In this way, it can be a place for learning the speech of nature, the language of the soul, and a time for nurturing the great potential for one’s aesthetic sense of colour.

Colour is the soul of nature and of the entire cosmos, and when we experience colour we participate in this soul.—Rudolf Steiner⁸ ♦

Van James is a teaching artist at the Honolulu Waldorf School and Kula Makua Teacher Training in Hawai’i. He is a guest instructor at Rudolf Steiner College in California, and Taruna College in New Zealand.

7 Rudolf Steiner, Kingdom of Childhood, Rudolf Steiner. Lecture IV, p. 83. Rudolf Steiner Press, 1964.

8 Rudolf Steiner, lecture given on July 26, 1914, cited in The Individuality of Colour, by Gerard Wagner, p. 117. Rudolf Steiner Press, 2009.

Our Feathered Friends

– Amazing Nest Builders

Jeremy Board,
Mount Barker Waldorf School,
South Australia.

(A class two, springtime main lesson)

In Australia we are blessed with an amazing array of colourful bird life and if we observe closely we can discover a fascinating diversity of building materials, building sites and building techniques that birds employ in their nest building.

Why Class Two?

The children's growing consciousness leads them naturally to begin to differentiate between various members of the bird family. The name "small bird" might satisfy a 5/6 year old, but the name "blue-wren" or "fire tail finch" better meets the growing awareness and kindles the imagination of a 7/8 year old explorer.

Nest 'hunting' can also provide a focus and an added dimension to class two studies of the local environment – as well as linking to other nature/ social studies topics in classes three and four. The nest building theme can serve as a prelude to the class three house building activities. The children can discover that, although there is great variety of material and technique for 'house' building within the bird kingdom, there is actually very little variation within each bird type.

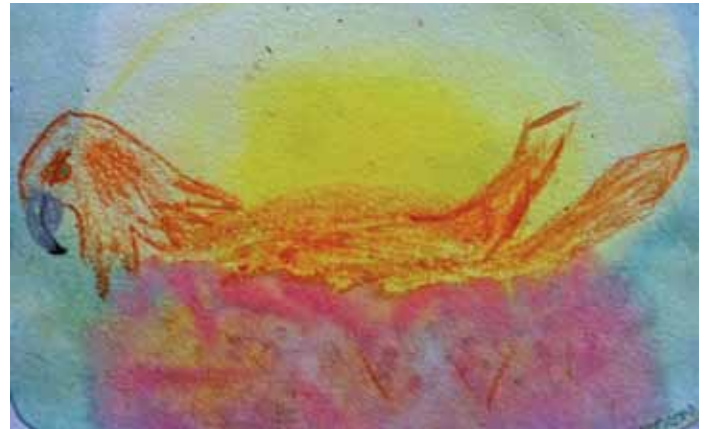
(For example: magpies will always build a nest of similar size and design – made from small sticks.)

For the children this practical knowledge can add potency to ideas of human freedom/choice that arise in the study of human house building (Class 3) and human and animal studies (Class 4/5).

Why spring time?

It's when it's all happening of course!

In Mount Barker, South Australia, the optimum month to discover bird nest 'action' is September. Although many birds have completed building their new nests by early September, I have found that the whole of September offers the added delights of discovering eggs, new hatchlings and fledglings about to leave home.





The children and I, after much fun-filled 'house hunting', drawing and recording, managed to come up with twelve general types of nest (considering design, site and materials).

- 1 – Twig nest (wattle-bird, noisy myna, pigeon, tawny frog-mouth)
- 2 – Stick nest (magpie, raven, currawong, heron, birds of prey)
- 3 – Plant fibres i.e. grass/bark/root – in a cup shape (many small birds)
- 4 – Cobwebs (willie-wag-tail, grey fantail)
- 5 – Roof and walls/side door (fairy-wrens, finches)
- 6 – Hanging baskets (thorn-bills, silver-eyes, some honey-eaters)



- 7 – Mud bricks (magpie, lark, chough, apostle-bird, swallows)
- 8 – Tree hollows (parrot/cockatoo clan, owls, kookaburras, kingfishers, some ducks, most pardalotes)
- 9 – On ground (plovers, quail, some ducks)
- 10 – Floating (swans, water hens, grebes)
- 11 – Underground:
 - a. tunnels (bee-eaters, some pardalotes, some kingfishers)
 - b. burrows (fairy-penguin, shearwaters)
- 12 – Mound-builders (brush-turkey, mallee fowl)

As the last main lesson of term three, these studies added to the joy and gave a particular focus for us within the wider experience of nature renewing itself as we built towards our Spring Festival. Each day had an element of anticipation and each of our four or five 'hunting expeditions' had a quality of treasure hunting.

The children carried on their nest hunting outside of school time so many exciting findings were reported each morning at school.

'Spin-offs' for us included the forming of a class bird watching club and also the building of nesting boxes as a class three building project the following year – gifts for our fabulous, flighty, feathered friends. ♦



Note: a great resource is *Birds: Poems* by Judith Wright, ISBN: 9780642107749, National Library of Australia, April 2010, 88pp, pb, 215x160mm

Maori Spirituality and Anthroposophy

Simone Hamblet,
Christchurch, New Zealand

The following article was first given as a talk to the College of the Christchurch Rudolf Steiner School at the beginning of 2011 as inspiration before our students returned to school. We thank both Simone and Uekaha Taane for their contribution, and also the Christchurch Steiner School for their support. – NC

1. Beginnings

When I arrived in Christchurch, New Zealand, 16 years ago, I did not meet any Maori people personally and it seemed to me that there was a world I had no access to. Somehow I accepted this as a fact.

However, I enrolled in my first Te Reo (Maori language) class at our school and also attended a talk by Barry Brailsford¹ which made me aware of the Waitaha people, and their tradition of living in peace long before the time of warfare. Some years later, I met Uekaha Taane – now my partner- who, like me, also taught at the Rudolf Steiner School in Christchurch. We began to work together on Maori legends and he began to write songs for my eurythmy class productions of Maori legends.

I attended Uekaha's Kapa Haka (=Maori language and performance) classes and when he spoke of certain concepts, like: "Te Kore" (nothingness, void), or "Ihi, Wehi..." (integral Maori concepts of the inner source of wisdom and connectedness; I = inner and hi = shining light), I was inspired to integrate my own teaching and knowledge of Anthroposophy with the wisdom present in Maori spiritual knowledge. Having trained as an eurythmist (graduating in 1987) in the 'art of the word' and its spiritual implications, I strongly connected with these concepts: they spoke to me.

And thus my journey began... All I have written here is only an attempt, a beginning. My hope is that interest and understanding can take place with respect to both Maori culture and Anthroposophy - or Anthroposophia – the Being

of wisdom of the human being.

2. Mysteries and middle Europe

The anthroposophical view of human evolution and history strongly emphasises the changing consciousness of the human being over time.

Rudolf Steiner² indicates two "Mystery streams" leading towards Anthroposophy: There are possibly more but for this purpose I focus only on two.

The so called 'southern mystery stream' stems from ancient 'Atlantis' people's migration – forming the 'old Indian culture', followed by the 'Egyptian', 'Greek' and the 'Latin-Roman' culture.

On the other side was the 'northern stream'²- the Germanic and Celtic mysteries related in the 'Edda' in mighty images – concerning the downfall of 'Atlantis'.

Both streams have led humanity from the light filled realm of spirit participation into a time of separation and materialistic thinking. Gradually humans became equipped with an 'Ego consciousness' bound to a physical body. (This happened in a more gradual fashion in the 'southern stream', and more dramatically in the 'northern stream').

Our middle European culture carried the traces of both mysteries from the past, e.g. in the "School of Chartres", built on an ancient sacred site of the Druids and teaching the "seven free arts" of ancient Greece. Eventually the school declined³.

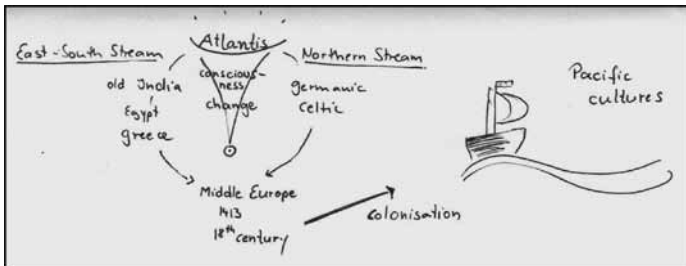
The 15th Century saw the gradual emergence of a new consciousness and in the 19th century humanity arrived deeply within materialism. The spiritual light was extinguished. During this time from 1413 into the 18th, 19th century, new horizons opened up, European discoveries of new territories were made, which - as a result of "ignorance and deeply materialistic thinking" - caused immense suffering to indigenous peoples in the world (and is still ongoing!).

1 Brailsford, Barry (1989) Song of Waitaha: The Histories of a Nation. Christchurch: Ngatapuwa Trust. ISBN 0958337802

2 Steiner, R Karma of untruthfulness, vol 1 (CW 173) lecture 1 , vol 2 (CW 174), lecture 8, Rudolf Steiner Press

3 Querido, Rene Golden Age of Chartres. Floris Books 2008. ISBN 978-086315672 (also Landau, Otto: Die Schule von Chartres).

Diagram 1:



3. Creation myth and Pacific culture

The following ancient chant, was sung by Uekaha and myself when I first presented the ideas in this article:

- "Ko te po-----** = realm of night
Ko te po nui----- = great night
Ko te po roa----- = long
Ko te po uriuri----- = dense
Ko te po kerekere----- = deep
Ko te po tiwha----- = expanding
Ko te po te kitea----- = unseen
Ko te po tangotango----- = intensely dark
Ko te po whawha----- = night of holding
Ko te po namunamu ki tai ao----- = narrow
passage of night
Ko te po tahuri atu----- = turning
Ko te po tahuri mai ki tai ao"----- = night
turning to light

I interpret the above chant as describing a culture which does not seem to contain in its mythologies images which speak of 'separation and spiritual darkness', or of losing the capacity of spiritual 'seeing'.

In contrast, their myths tell us about the journey from the 'Night realms' into the 'World of Light', (into 'Te Ao Marama').

This is one of many chants and the complexities of the 'Night realms', 'Te po' are endless. (Reed, A. W. *Book of Maori Mythology* see Creation, chapter 1)

In the 'Song of Waitaha' Brailsford¹, we read in chapter 1: "In the Beginning, IO Mata Ngaro, God of the Gods...Creator of all called the Universe into being"...(p 15)

IO is seen as the supreme entity at the beginning of creation within 'Te Kore' (meaning absolute Nothingness, yet everything').

The name of IO appears in innumerable variations within creation chants. These words being chanted evoke the process of creation from the beginning through aeons of time.

The following excerpt of a chant called "Te Whanautaka o te Aoraki" is taught to students (including myself) in a Wananga here in Otautahi/ Christchurch. It is a shortened version and would take more than a day to recite in it's full form. It begins with the following words:

"Ko IO whatata, Ko IO whatamai (*these words refer to the ceaseless movements of IO upon the face of the waters*)

Ko hekeheke i nuku – The form of Raki was raised on high

Ko hekeheke i papa – The form of Papatuanuku emerged from the depth

Ko IO taketake, ka ahu mai – IO the source of all, begat

Ko te Kore te Kore..." – the absolute Nothingness

IO stays continuously present in the ever unfolding process of creation, indicated by his changeable names and thus lives in each aspect of creation.

The chant 'passes through' the 'Night genealogies' over aeons of time before the beginning of time (see above chant Ko te Po ...).

References are also made to stages of plant development:

"Na te kowhao, ko te pu – from the abyss came the tap root

Na te pu, ko te weu – from the tap root came the secondaries

Na te weu, ko te more – from the secondaries came the hair roots

Na te more, ko te rito – from the hair roots came the shoots

Na te rito, ko te aka..." – from the shoots came the vine...

The image of a mighty cosmic tree appears as the universe is being 'built'. Later it is the God "Taane", one of the offspring of Papa and Rangi who established the heavens using the 'Breaths of IO'.

Reference to the 'Creation story' as we generally know it (the embrace of Ranginui and Papatuanuku) is made – as we progress through the chant – through the words: "... Na te pupuke, ko te hihiri..."- from the swelling came the pure elemental energy..."

The children or offspring within the darkness of the womb of Papatuanuku represent the 'pure elemental energy', stirring and longing for light.

“Among all of this energy and activity... IO was present in the living atua (offspring, Maori Gods). The atua became the many extensions of IO.”(Samuel Robinson⁷ ‘Tohunga’ p 24. The same Maori scholar believes that a time has come to welcome a return of greater spiritual awareness of the atua Maori and to establish a new spiritual connection to those forces.

4. Concepts of Maori Spirituality

From the concept of the presence of IO in every aspect of creation it becomes understandable that Spirituality in Maoridom is interwoven into the physical realm; there is nothing ‘only physical’ and all ‘spiritual is concrete!

Meditative Verse, given by Rudolf Steiner:

“Seek the truly practical material life, but seek it so that it does not numb you to the spirit which is active in it.

Seek the spirit, but seek it not in passion for the supersensible, out of supersensible egoism, but seek it so that you may apply it selflessly in the practical life in the practical world.

Turn to the ancient principle,

Matter is never without spirit and Spirit is never without matter,

in such a way that we say we will to do all material things in the light of the spirit and we will so to seek the light of the spirit, so that it evokes warmth for us in our practical activities.”

Rudolf Steiner

The Maori world view is a world system where all things are connected, where everything is part of everything, springing forth from the same source. “It is holistic and cyclic, one in which every person is linked to every living thing and to the Atua ⁴.”

In the book; “Tohunga⁵” by Paul Moon we read about a Tohunga’s way of thinking: His name was Hohepa Kereopa, one of the last practising Tohunga’s. “After hours of conversations, it was evident that Hohepa’s world-view – that of a traditional tohunga- was complete and absolute. There was practically no event or circumstance that he was not able to position within his framework of understanding....” “As he (Hohepa)

observed, Western knowledge was like digging a hole in the garden: the deeper you wanted to go, the narrower the hole would become.” and “Hohepa’s knowledge and understanding was above the ground and spread endlessly into the atmosphere...” (p.33)

This system which links everything together is called ‘**Whakapapa**’- Genealogy’. If we look at the word itself so it is made of two words:

“Whaka”: a ‘prefix’ meaning to do, act (process)

“Papa”: meaning ‘Ground’, ‘Layer’

Through ‘Whakapapa’ one can express one’s kinship with the world, describe the relationship between human beings and the rest of nature and explain the origins of animals, plants and landscapes. Whakapapa also means that one is given a place within the world.

In fact, all great wisdom traditions in the world hold as their central thought that humans and cosmos are inseparable, that everything is forever connected with its source⁶. This idea became one of Steiner’s guiding thoughts for founding Anthroposophy.

As ‘Whakapapa’ describes the spiritual threads within the ‘World web’, so is the concept of the ‘**Te Atua**’ (**Maori Gods**) very closely linked here. They are the spiritual forces weaving through the natural world. These are realities constantly referred to and addressed through ‘Karakia’, incantations, ‘haka’ and ‘waiata’. Their guidance was constantly sought in order to survive in the bush, in the ocean, on the battle field....

‘**Atua**’ are powerful energies, creative forces embedded within the natural world. They are closely linked to the ‘elements’ in nature, which are spiritual concepts, but here they are personified and concrete. ‘Te Atua’ are the children of ‘Ranginui’ and ‘Papatuanuku’, and all forms of existence are their manifestations. ‘Reading’ nature precisely meant understanding the language of the Atua as they spoke through the natural phenomena.

Here is an excerpt of a possible whakapapa link:

	Ranginui	Papatuanuku	
Tangaroa	Taane Mahuta	Rongomataane	Ruaumoko
Fish	Birds, trees	Peace	Volcanoes, Earthquakes

4 Reilly, M. P. J. and Thomson, J. (eds.) (1999): *Ki te Whaiao: An Introduction to Māori Culture and Society*. Auckland: Pearson Education, 276pp.

5 Moon, Paul (2003): *Tohunga: Hohepa Kereopa*. David Ling Pub. ISBN: 97809089909177

6 Best, Elsdon (1956): *Spiritual Concepts of the Maori*. (Dominion Museum Monologues) For a view prevalent in the Canadian and North American indigenous people see Peat, D., *Blackfoot Physics*, 1994, Fourth Estate, London, ISBN 1-85702-331-5

Closely related to this concept of 'Tapu' is the 'Mana' of the spiritual powers. "Ko te tapu te mana o nga atua". ('Mana': prestige, power).

As each of the spiritual powers identifies with or is responsible for a particular section of creation, so is each of those inherent tapu, e.g. the Kumara has its own 'Tapu' because of the source it has in the 'Mana' of the Atua 'Rongomataane'; Tane is God of the forest and so the birds have their tapu in the mana of Taane. Tapu is there in order to preserve the 'Mana' (Power) of the Atua⁷ (p 100).

There is simply 'sacredness' or 'Tapu' in each aspect of being, and as Robinson⁷ (ibid) expresses: "Tapu is a reality, not just for Maori but for the world at large. For if the tapu of the tiger were not violated then it would not be an endangered species. We have broken the tapu of its restriction and so its mana or the power of the beast has been destroyed. The laws of tapu are in accordance with the natural cycle of the world and universe."

5. Knowledge of nature in ancient Greece

The Greek conception of nature based its understanding on the 'four elements' to which Aristotle added a fifth – the 'Ether'. Aristotle says about it that it is the one which "eternally encircles and encircles..."⁸

In the ancient world system everything in the universe was arranged and related with each other, i.e. Planets, Metals, Organs, Gods... and became part of a "cosmos". (Greek: Cosmos means 'order'; whereas Chaos is 'disorder').

Frank Meyer⁹ suggests in his article that these old spiritual systems have used 'concrete' concepts bearing within them images and pictures in order to describe and grasp cyclic processes in the 'life realm'.

From the beginning of the 15th century the 'elements' disappeared from scientific thinking. Ernst Marti⁸ writes: "...When the blue heavenly bow was no longer border of the world, which like an etheric skin comprised the universe into a totality where each and everything had it's given place, but was replaced with a thinking about the world consisting out of particulars disconnected from each other, the knowledge of the elements disappeared."

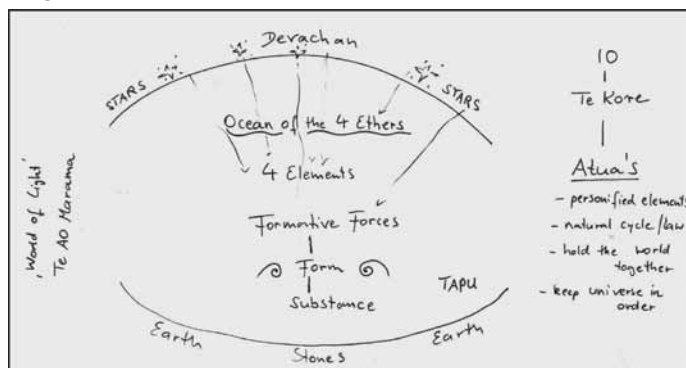
6. Anthroposophy

Steiner, with the foundation of Anthroposophy, brought the knowledge of the elements back into his natural science, including a new understanding of the 'four ethers'.

'Element' and 'Ether' work together as 'siblings', born from the warmth of 'old Saturn' and penetrating each other in the realm of the living. Both are spiritual concepts, not appearing as such, as pure principles, however they underly all of nature. In order to create a certain 'substance' or 'form' the forces of the starry realms are needed (i.e. the planet Mars being originator of the substance of Iron. Dr Frank Meyer⁹ refers to this fact in his articles).

Steiner describes in his last Pentecostal lecture that the blue heavenly bow is the border of the world ether, the 'ocean of the four ethers'. They bear within them the four elements. On the other side of the blue sky are the stars through which spiritual forces penetrate through the elements and ethers, creating substance and form.

Diagram 2:



On the right hand side of the diagram I have attempted to add some Maori concepts which may suggest that there is a similar understanding within both world views. They however do not exactly overlap or mean the same. These concepts must be taken in a 'fluid' manner and in no way to be seen as fixed.

Steiner calls the totality of those forces 'The world word' which resounds in and through the stars.

7. Speech in ancient times

In ancient times the human being was able to manifest the divine spiritual forces living within

⁷ Robinson, Samuel Timoti (2005): *Tohunga: The Revival Ancient Knowledge for the modern Era*. Reed Books. ISBN: 978-0790010021.

⁸ Marti, Ernst (1984): *The Four Ethers: Contributions to Rudolf Steiner's Science of the Ethers, Elements-Ethers-Formative Forces*. Schaumburg Publications, Incorporated, ISBN 9780935690026.

⁹ Meyer, Frank (2010): *The Healing Power of Metals: as Anthroposophic medicine – our connection to the metals and the planets*. Info 3 September 2010. <http://www.info3.de/c5-style/index.php/magazin/info3/archiv/2010/september/metalle-planeten-mensch/>

him. In passing from the Greek to the Latin-Roman culture, something 'living' in speech, something eminently concrete changed into abstraction, the element of inspiration disappeared from speech. In order to express how man has his roots in the Universe the names of the 'Alphabet' were spoken consecutively. A living awareness of spiritual forces was expressed through speaking sounds. Possibly only the initiated priests would have had conscious knowledge of this. "Alpha": The human being who experiences his own breathing"... (p 2) instead of being just an abstract 'A'.

The same is expressed when we learn from the Nordic-Germanic mysteries through Steiner¹⁰ that the 'Runes' are the archetypal image of the 'world word' which was perceived and initiated. The runes expressed in the physical form what are in reality images of etheric creative forces.

8. Te reo

In the following I want to suggest how spiritual inspiration lives in the Maori language, in Te reo Maori, 'Te reo Rangatira'. (Rangatira: Chiefly, noble 'ranga': to weave)

Already in the first pages of the "Song of Waitaha"¹¹ (p 12) we read how each word was part of the intricate web of life, where each word was tapu. This was said only about the purest stream of knowledge which needed to be kept free of errors in order to not disturb the pattern. Only the 'Tohunga', skilled in reading the patterns of life, were entrusted with this knowledge which tied the life of the people to the movement of the stars and seasons.

If an indigenous language dies (as so many have) then a particular connection with the world disappears. Therefore knowledge of the natural environment and universe and how to live in harmony within it – which is encoded in the language – will also disappear.

At a universal level 'reo' represents the voices of the elements. For example manu, rakau and other forms of mauri have their own reo and vibration. "Te reo is the key to unveiling the ancient mauri." A human definition of 'te reo' is language. (p 1 of Pounamu Kahuraki¹¹).

A recollection of great personal significance to me is the following example of 'non mainstream

teaching' that I once received from Tameaho, a teacher, trained from very early age on to become a master in the use of Maori weapons and therefore the language.

It seemed that my listening opened up his speaking and a conversation unfolded, flowing into the theme of 'te reo'. I was given no answers as to what a particular word meant, rather I had to find the answers myself, manoeuvring through his questions put to me. I will explain this: For example we looked at the word "Wairua": meaning 'spirit' as we know. However this was not the answer. What is "Wa"? - endless time or space. The letter 'A' was contemplated with the question whether it came from within or without? 'I' meaning: inside, within and 'Ai' being 'stillness'. 'Rua': the 'shaking of creation', when the two opposite forces moved, and there we have before us the word 'Wai rua'. All these are images contained within the one word. That means that in order to grasp the totality of the meaning one would need to be aware of each of those aspects at the same time! Another dimension of awareness is asked for here in order to grasp a totality like this.

I learnt from Tameaho that, "Each word, each syllable, each sound in te reo is spiritual". From the spiritual concept came the 'naming of a thing' when it expressed its meaning most adequately on the physical plane.

For example the word 'Mahi': 'Work', however—: 'ma': pure and 'hi': shining light. This can throw a shining light on our word 'Work' and what it truly means in its essence.

The word 'Mahara' means 'Memory'. However if we take a look at the root meanings of the syllables we find: 'Ma': pure, 'Ha': the breath and 'Ra': sun energy or pathway to the universe. Such an approach, to find meaning in these three words, will help explain the word 'Memory' on a much deeper level.

Much wisdom is contained in Proverbs or 'Whakatauki', i.e.: "Kua mau to iro"? - meaning: "Have you found your 'enlightenment'? 'Iro' means: 'Maggot'. "What has a maggot to do with enlightenment?" one could ask! A word "Whakairo" may be helpful here, meaning the act of 'carving'. It is the act of 'revealing', bringing

¹⁰ Steiner, Rudolf (1921-12-18): *The Alphabet* <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/19211218p01.html>

¹¹ Kahuraki, Pounamu (2000): *Wanaka Handout for Maori in Public Service* Copyright 2000- 00 Jade Associates.

out the essence, just as a maggot is working itself through the wood. Our looking is directed not so much on the 'thing' itself, but rather on the surrounding of what is created and revealed there.

'Aroha': - meaning 'Love', on a human level, however the words 'aro' (being present), and 'ha' (the 'breath of God') indicate the following: "Being in the presence of the breath of God".

I hope to have been able to convey to the reader, through just these few examples how the use of this language is not only truly beautiful but also non-judgmental. The language is still used today in this pure, 'uncontaminated' form (ie. in 'Karanga', Incantations) and thus allows access to the 'Tipuna' (ancestors), into the spiritual realm.

All conduct of 'being', surviving and living in harmony with nature is encoded within the language and handed down orally over many generations in the past. In my opinion a new respect for the language needs to be present and I hope this article can contribute to this.

'Te reo Maori' is an inclusive and holistic language; it embraces and contains many layers and dimensions beyond just one specific meaning.

Another well known 'whakatauki' which expresses the deep relationship between humans and nature:

"Hutia te rito o te harakeke

Kei hea te komako, e ko?

Ki mai ki ahau

He aha te mea nui o te ao katoa

Maku e ki atu ki a koe -

He tangata

He tangata

He tangata"

If the centre shoot of the flax were plucked

Where will the bellbird fly?

You tell me

What is the most important thing in this world?

I will tell you -

It is people, people, people

John Patterson (1992) writes that the Maori language is the embodiment of a spiritual dimension of life: "Therefore, the taonga, our Maori language, as far as our people are concerned, is the very soul of the Maori people."¹²

8. Conclusion and future outlook

Language is only one example of how knowledge has come forth again, injected back into the culture. Maori have undergone an arduous journey: from being punished speaking their own language to being assimilated into mainstream 'Pakeha' society. The results are clearly before us today!

While this essay is focused mainly on a philosophical-spiritual aspect I would like to emphasise that it could be seen as a foundation for anyone's further research with indications of where to go from here. Many concrete suggestions are outlined also in the thesis of Bridie McLoughlin¹³.

On a personal note: through having entered this world and some of the deeper aspects of Maoridom I found it resonating within myself like a reminder of my own past, evoking distant memories. Anthroposophy has revealed itself as a support and providing a compatible way for meeting and hopefully understanding some of this culture's treasures a bit more.

I am deeply grateful to have met some important people in my life who have been generous enough to give me a little insight into their world. He mihi aroha.

I finish with a whakatauki:

Kia hora te marino

Kia whakapapa pounamu te moana

Kia tere te karohirohi

I mua i to huarahi

Ara nei a ake tonu ahi"

May the calm be widespread;

May the sea glisten like greenstone

Shining on your path

Now and always.

No reira, tena koutou katoa ♦

¹² Patterson, J (1992) Te Taiao, (Waikarepuru and Nga Kaiwhakapumau, p 202).

¹³ McLoughlin, Bridie (2007): Rethinking Maori Empowerment within Steiner Education. Masters thesis, University of Wellington.

Glossary: Tapu: sacredness. Mauri: Life forms, Life energy. Pakeha: Pa: touched by, Ke: different from, Ha: Breath. Rerenga Wairua: Cape Reinga, rere: fly, wairua: spirit.

Thoughts on the History Curriculum of a Waldorf School in Asia – in particular, China

Ineke van Florenstein Mulder,
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When I was the History tutor in Taruna College (Hawke's Bay, NZ) for the Diploma in Rudolf Steiner Education in the late 90s, the first students from Asia started to come to Taruna to do their teacher preparation, I began to ask myself how history might be taught in Pacifica and Asian Waldorf Schools? Until then, my teaching had been mainly Euro-centred. How could I do justice to the history of Asia? Students came from many different Asian countries: Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Philippines, Thailand and Japan.

The next impulse came when I was asked to help with the history curriculum of the Foundation Stone High School in Yi-Lan, the first high school based on the Waldorf principles in Taiwan. For me there began, a journey into the history of the Asian continent. I have only travelled a short way on this journey, but what I have found I would like to share with readers in the hope a dialogue can start with other teachers. This topic is as relevant for us here in New Zealand and Australia, as it is in Asia. I welcome your responses.

Dr. Steiner gave a new way of looking at history. "...from the standpoint of spiritual science what is usually called history must be seen as a complex of symptoms."¹ "...turn our attention especially to the real and fundamental changes in human evolution, to those decisive turning-points in history when the life of the soul passes from one stage of development to another stage."² What we see in history is a change in consciousness out of which a new impulse arises in mankind. This impulse can be seen everywhere in the world but is at its strongest in that part that carries the



The great wall of China

name of the cultural Age.

First of all how do we get to the dates of the Ages?

Every culture has its own moment or point in time when it starts counting time. A point before and after which all other events were related. In the western world it is the birth of the Christ [1CE]. In the Muslim world it is the Hagira of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina [in 622CE], in Roman times the founding of the city [in 747BCE³], in the Greek world the first Olympic Games [in 786BCE].

The Platonic or Cosmic Year

Dr. Steiner showed how we can see time in terms of cosmic rhythms. For that the key is the sun's vernal equinox. This is the point in the zodiacal circle where the sun rises at the 21st of March, the Northern spring [or Southern autumn] equinox. Each day through the year the sun moves about 1 degree against the background of

1 Steiner, Rudolf From Symptom to Reality in Modern History – History as Symptomatology. London: Rudolf Steiner Press 1976 ISBN 978-0854402984 GA185 (1918, Oct.18 to Nov.3, Dornach) http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA185/English/RSP1976/SymRea_index.html

2 ibid

3 The calculation of the founding [date is] given by Rome's first native historical writer Quintus Fabius Pictor, who wrote that Rome was founded in the first year of the eighth Olympiad, 747 BCE (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Book 1, ch. 74,2). [from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Founding_of_Rome]

the zodiac returning to virtually the same point a year later. In our time the vernal equinox occurs in the constellation Pisces. But this point also moves ever so slightly every year – totalling about 1 degree in a human lifetime [72 years] and so it takes 25,920 years to go completely around the zodiac of 360 degrees. This duration has been called a Platonic or Cosmic Year. The zodiac is made up of 12 constellations, it therefore ‘takes’ the sun 2160 (=25 920/12) years to pass through one constellation of the zodiac (or: 1 zodiacal sign). This time of 2160 years, a Cosmic Month, equates to a cultural period or Age. It is interesting to note that when one calculates the number of times we breathe in a day it is about 25,920 [=18 breaths/minute]. This number is also approximately the number of days in a human lifetime of “three score years and ten” [=70 years].

The civilisations associated with each Post-Atlantean Age described by Steiner are:

Age	Vernal Equinox	Region/Civilisation	Dates range	Focus of Human Development
1 st PA.	Cancer	India	7230 to 5070 BCE	Etheric Body
2 nd PA.	Gemini	Persia	5070 to 2907 BCE	Astral Body
3 rd PA.	Taurus	Egypt-Babylon-Chaldea	2907 to 747 BCE	Sentient Soul
4 th PA.	Aries	Greece-Rome	747 BCE to 1413AD	Comprehension Soul
5 th PA.	Pisces	England-Germany	1413 to 3573 AD	Consciousness Soul

In contrast, in China the cycles are counted in sixty years x 5 elements [Earth, Metal, Water,

Wood, Fire] x 12 animals of the Shēngxiào [Chinese zodiac]⁴. Then a new cycle is started.

This could be connected to a smaller approximately 7 century rhythm in history [12 x 60 years = 720 years - a third of a cultural Age].

When we look at history we can see that there is a renewed interest in the history of 720 years ago. At the end of the last century there was a great renewed interest in Cathars⁵ and Templars⁶, which now seems to have sunk away again. If we deduct 720 years from our time [2011] we come to the year 1291. This was the end of the time of the crusades. Are we seeing this again in a metamorphosed form? The memory of the crusades has stayed in the collective memory of the Middle Eastern world. Could this be playing a role in the current troubled conditions of the region?

The Atlantean Epoch

Our present Age, Rudolf Steiner calls the 5th Post-Atlantean Age, which implies that there was once an Atlantean Epoch.

Dr. Steiner describes for us that there were also 7 Ages of development in the Atlantean Epoch⁷ as there will be for us in Post-Atlantean times. We are today in the 5th Age, the ancient Indian Age being the first with two more to come.

The culture of Atlantis had 7 mystery centres: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Venus, Sun and Vulcan each led by the priests of that centre. When they foresaw the sinking of Atlantis they sent out from each mystery centre leading priests who took the knowledge of that mystery centre to a

4 *“In Chinese astrology the animal signs assigned by year represent what others perceive you as being or how you present yourself. It is a common misconception that the animals assigned by year are the only signs, and many western descriptions of Chinese astrology draw solely on this system. In fact, there are also animal signs assigned by month (called inner animals) and hours of the day (called secret animals).*

To sum it up, while a person might appear to be a Dragon because they were born in the year of the Dragon, they might also be a Snake internally and an Ox secretly. In total, this makes for 8,640 possible combinations (60 year cycle (5 elements x 12 animals) x 12 months x 12 times of the day) that a person might be. These are all considered critical for the proper use of Chinese astrology.” From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_zodiac#Four_Pillars

5 **The Cathars** of the Languedoc were dualist heretics who probably presented the greatest doctrinal challenge faced by the Catholic Church in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The word Cathar comes from the Greek katharos, meaning pure. They Cathars professed a neo-Manichaeism dualism - that there are two principles, one good and one evil, and that this world, the material world, is evil. [Dr Karen Ralls]

6 **The Knights Templar** are one of the best-known military Crusading orders of the Middle Ages. The Order of the Temple was founded in 1118 with the initial aim of protecting pilgrims going to and from Jerusalem. They developed into one of the richest and most powerful organizations in the medieval world – bankers to kings who originated our modern-day concept of a letter of credit. Their suppression was sudden and brutal - in the early hours of Friday, 13th October 1307, the French Templars were arrested tortured, charged with serious heresies, and brought to trial by the officials of King Philip IV in the name of the Inquisition and their property was confiscated. [Dr Karen Ralls]

7 Rudolf Steiner: “The Apocalypse of St. John”

new place on earth where they eventually settled.

The Saturn mysteries went to America; the Mars mysteries to Mongolia, the Venus mysteries to SE Asia, the Jupiter mysteries to Europe, the Mercury mysteries to Africa. Can we find traces of this in our oldest stories? We read in the Vedas of Manu about his influence on the ancient Indian Age – it speaks of an inward dreaming consciousness as it was on Atlantis. The story of Manu is connected with a flood from which he and seven Holy Rishis and all the seeds of plants were saved. Interesting is this mention of all the plants. In Atlantean times the people had a great capacity to work with the etheric life forces of the plant kingdom. Is this somehow connected? Not only do we have the flood story of Manu, there are also the stories in the bible, in the Gilgamesh epic, among the Hopi Indians⁸.

As well as the initiates of the mystery centres leaving Atlantis, we also hear of Manu leaving Atlantis. Where did he go? He went to the Gobi desert where he lived for a long time before going to India.

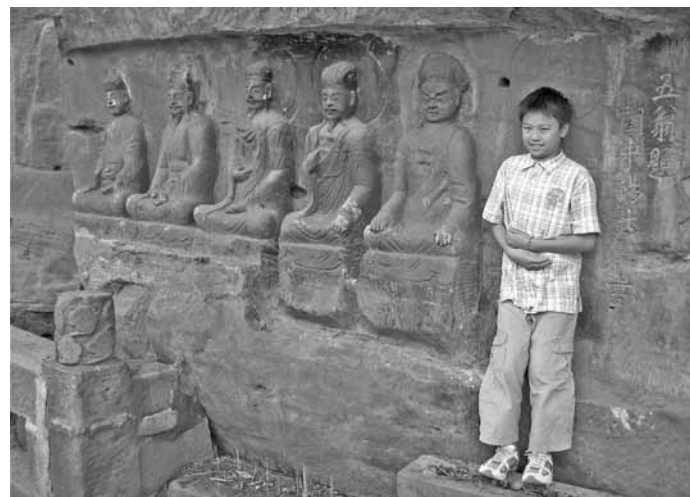
The Gobi desert is one of the mysterious places on earth to this day and it is not far from China. Did his influence also radiate into what is now China?

Steiner indicates that this leaving of Atlantis by groups of people took place many times, not just once.⁹

In the fourth Atlantean Age those who would later become what we now call the Chinese left Atlantis. [Those who inspired the European stream of history left in a later Age.] They took with them what had been developed in Atlantis until then, and a very strong memory, ancestor worship and the ability to work with life forces. The sound that sounded through nature in Atlantis was called the Tao. Tao sounded out of the depths, Tao sounded out of the heights, and Tao sounded in their own being¹⁰.

Dr. Steiner speaks of Tao as having “both a deeply hidden basis of the soul and an exalted future”¹¹.

We have here different beginnings; at least two streams [Europe and the Orient] with their own characteristics at their birth.



A pupil from Chengdu Waldorf School by the local statues of 1000 Buddhas

Symptoms of Historical Ages

How can we work with these thoughts? For that I would like to look at the characteristics or symptoms of each Age.

Consider the change of consciousness with each new Post-Atlantean Cultural Age (as described by Steiner (1990). Each Age receives influences from the cosmos – the spiritual hierarchies. We can then ask ourselves the question: ‘How does this influence manifest in those parts of the world that do not carry the name of the Age?’ To give an example: We are now in the 5th post-Atlantean or European (Anglo-German) Age beginning with the Renaissance.

From 1413 AD we can recognise the first indications of a new consciousness in Europe. But when did similar changes come to Asia - or to New Zealand or Australia?

As a personal example, some years ago, when discussing the question of the Ages in an Asia

⁸ According to the Hopi, the earth has been wiped clean 3 times already: first by FIRE, next by ICE, most recently by the FLOOD. ... Approximately 11,000-12,000 years ago. [www.crystalinks.com/hopi2.html]

⁹ Steiner, R (1990) Cosmic Memory – Prehistory of Earth and Man. Steiner Books, 1990. ISBN: 0893452270; GA011 (written 1904): also http://wn.rsarchive.org/Books/GA011/English/HR1981/GA011_index.html

¹⁰ ibid

¹¹ ibid

Pacific conference, a participant, Ha Vinh Tho, a Buddhist monk from Vietnam, remarked that in his view, the ‘consciousness soul’ awareness¹² came to Vietnam with the American war - a comment on the fact that Buddhist monks and other Buddhists are now taking on social tasks whereas in the past they never did that - now called “Socially-engaged Buddhism” - a representative of this is Thich Nhat Hanh who resettled families left homeless during the Vietnam War (and later, in exile, founded Plum village in France.)

I offer the following thoughts – ways of connecting Steiner’s Cultural Ages with events in Chinese pre-history and recorded historical events.

Waldorf History Curriculum

Class Five (11 year olds) and Ancient History: India to Greece

The ancient Indian or 1st Post-Atlantean Age.

Ancient India is so far removed in history that we would not know anything about it if the Vedas had not been written and this wisdom preserved for later generations. Incorporating Manu’s stay in the Gobi in history studies could connect this Age for Chinese students.

The ancient Persian or 2nd Post-Atlantean Age.

What are the characteristics of that time? Many of the aspects of the Persian Age flow into the Egypto-Chaldean times: the battle between light and dark; the battle between the Turanians

and Iranians; the coming of agriculture and the domestication of animals; the search for immortality (Gilgamesh seeking his dead friend Enkidu); city building.

In the teachings of Zarathustra the battle between light [Ahura Mazda] and dark [Ahriman] in the spiritual world has on earth its echo in the battle between the Turanians and the Iranians, between the settled farmers and the nomads. This is a theme that can be seen in many periods in China and leads eventually to the building of the Chinese great wall

For example:

The coming of agriculture

The Sage Emperor Shennong¹³ brought agriculture and herbal medicine. The Yellow Emperor Huang Di fought a monster and fixed the sun, moon and stars in their place in the heavens. Huang Di is a supremely powerful deity. He had sent down to the great plain of China a dark bird. The bird laid an egg that was eaten by a lady and she gave birth to the first ancestor of the Shang dynasty.

The domestication of plants and animals

In China we hear of Yangshao culture¹⁴ where the plough was used and pigs, fowl, cattle, sheep and goats were domesticated. Cultivation of the silk worm began around 2600BC. Whereas in Persia we see the knowledge of irrigation develop, in China we hear the story of the wise Emperors Yao and Shun (around 2300BC), in a golden age

12 Editor: ‘Consciousness Soul’ awareness = spectator/onlooker consciousness – the ability to detach from events and see them as from outside. “The kernel of human consciousness, that is, the soul within the soul, is what is here meant by consciousness soul. The consciousness soul is thus distinguished as a member of the soul distinct from the comprehension soul, which is still entangled in the sensations, impulses and passions. Everyone knows how a man at first counts as true what he prefers in his feelings and desires. Only that truth is permanent, however, that has freed itself from all flavour of such sympathy and antipathy of feeling. The truth is true even if all personal feelings revolt against it. That part of the soul in which this truth lives will be called consciousness soul.” Steiner ‘Theosophy’ Chap 1.4.

13 **The Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors** (Chinese:三皇五帝; pinyin: Sānhuáng wǔdì) were mythological rulers of China during the period from c. 2852 B.C.E. to 2205 B.C.E., which is the time preceding the Xia Dynasty.

The Three Sovereigns, sometimes known as the Three August Ones, were said to be god-kings or demigods who introduced important aspects of Chinese culture, such as agriculture, fishing, herbal medicine, writing, and the drinking of tea, and in some cases created men and animals. They were known variously as The Heavenly Sovereign, The Earthly Sovereign, and The Human Sovereign; or Fuxi, Nüwa, and Shennong. Because of their lofty virtue they lived to a great age and ruled over a period of great peace.

The Five Emperors were legendary, morally perfect sage-kings. According to the Records of the Grand Historian they were: The Yellow Emperor (黄帝), Zhuangxi (顓頊), Emperor Ku (帝嚳), Emperor Yao (堯), and Emperor Shun (舜). Yao and Shun are also known as the “Two Emperors,” and, along with Yu the Great (禹), founder of the Xia dynasty, were considered to be model rulers and moral exemplars by Confucians in later Chinese history. From: <http://history.cultural-china.com/en/46History5031.html>

14 The Yangshao culture (Chinese: 仰韶文化; pinyin: Yǎngsháo wénhuà) was a Neolithic culture that existed extensively along the central Yellow River in China. The culture flourished mainly in the provinces of Henan, Shaanxi and Shanxi.

of peace and prosperity, taming the wild floods by building canals and draining marshes.

The battle between light and dark



The contrasts implicit in duality or polarity. In China, could this be seen as the coming of yin and yang¹⁵?

City building

One could look at the ancient city of Anyang, one of the 8 ancient capitals¹⁶. In 2,000BC the Sage King Zhanxu and Emperor Ku had built mausoleums, 7 palaces and 15 temples. There had been 12 kings and it stood strong for 8 generations. In the 14th century BC King Pangeng (Shan dynasty) built his capital on the banks of the Huan River. He named his city Yin. It was the first stable capital in China. Much of this information comes from the 150,000 oracle bones¹⁷ found there.

The Egypto-Chaldean or 3rd Post-Atlantean Age.

For the study of early agricultural societies one could look at the SanXingDui culture in west China (5000-3000BC). It was also a river culture like Egypt around the Nile, Mohenjo-Daro around the Indus, and Mesopotamia around the Euphrates. Here archaeologists found gold masks and many jade ornaments. The masks portray the human being with very big ears and protruding eyes. The main sacred object found was a golden tree with many birds on its branches. Birds were thought to be the messengers between the earth and the heavens – as are Angels in the west.

There are many similarities between the Chinese King/Emperors and the Egyptian Pharaohs. Both were considered to be the connection between heaven and earth. The Egyptian Pharaoh was a God, the Chinese King/Emperor had the mandate of heaven and through the right rituals and sacrifices he had to maintain the right balance between the two. In Egypt the Pharaoh had to sustain *ma'at* (harmony, balance). In both civilizations there were elaborate burial customs. Society was shaped like a pyramid with the Pharaoh/Emperor at the top. The importance of the river: while the Nile was a life giving river and revered as a God, the Yellow river was a river of sorrow, with its wild floods causing great destruction. In Egypt all administration was done by the scribes – the priests of Ptah, in China by the Confucian scholars who had passed the state examinations – the mandarins.

The Greco-Roman or 4th Post-Atlantean Age.

Ancient Greece is the time of the great philosophers. When we look on a global scale we see in this same Age the Buddha [563-483BC] in India and Confucius [551-479BC] and Lao Tzu [570-490BC] in China. It is the time called by Karl Jaspers: the axial age¹⁸. Never before or after was there such a change in the consciousness of the people. While Socrates [470-399BC] brought the thinking and the Buddha the feeling and compassion, Confucius brought how we can have the right relationship to our fellow human beings. Karl Jaspers says of the axial age: "The axial age can be called an interregnum between two ages of great empire, a pause for liberty, a deep breath, bringing the most lucid consciousness."¹⁹

¹⁵ Yin and yang are complementary opposites that interact within a greater whole, as part of a dynamic system. Everything has both yin and yang aspects, but either of these aspects may manifest more strongly in particular objects, and may ebb or flow over time. Many natural dualities—e.g. dark and light, female and male, low and high, cold and hot— are thought of as manifestations of yin and yang (respectively).

¹⁶ Beijing, Xi'an, Luoyang, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Kaifeng, Anyang. Zhengzhou

¹⁷ Oracle Bones is an ancient script carved on tortoise shells or animal bones. Having emerged during the Shang Dynasty (1600B.C.-1000B.C.), Oracle Script is considered the oldest script in China. During the Shang Dynasty, the ancients reckoned the natural elements as the exertion of some mystical power. When there were floods, drought, lightning and thunder, or some big events, like royal hunts, journeys and military campaigns, through divination, ancients would predict the future by "reading" the messages of nature. The divination performer first drilled holes on tortoise shell or a piece of bull scapula then put it over fire. Since the shell or bone would crack irregularly under heat, the diviner could supposedly interpret these cracks as good or bad omen. All the dates and results of the divination were written down on the shells or animal bones, which became the earliest historical document with writing symbols. <http://history.cultural-china.com/en/51History2941.html>

¹⁸ Jaspers distinguished four ages: the Neolithic age, the age of the earliest civilizations, the age of the emergence of great empires, and the modern age. www.religioustolerance.org/tomek26.htm

¹⁹ Jaspers, 1953, p.51 quoted in Armstrong, p. 367

So how can we place the axial age between two great empires? In China: it was after the collapse of the Zhou Empire but before Qin unified the warring states. In India: after the Harappa civilization but before the Mauryan empire and in Greece between the Mycenaean kingdom and the Macedonian empire.

Looking at Chinese history, we may consider the first Confucian empire during the Han times. And just as Greece influences the western world to this day, so it is with the Han in China. So the Han gives more the cultural aspect of this Age whereas the Qin more the military, legal and construction aspects. Like Greece and Rome for European civilisation.

At the same time: in the west was the Roman Empire while in the east the first emperor of China. He unified the warring states and standardized Chinese characters, currency, and units of measurement; built great buildings, the great wall, and had terra cotta soldiers guarding his mausoleum.

Both the Roman and the first Chinese Emperor waged war against the invading nomadic Mongol tribes coming from central Asia.

Some comparative statistics: the first emperor had 600,000 men under arms; Hannibal 6,000, Alexander the Great 40,000 and Napoleon 100,000.

Was there any contact between Rome and China? It is known that the ladies of the Roman high society wore silk garments which met with disapproval by the more conservative Romans as they (the garments) were translucent!

There are legends that a Roman legion of the army of Crassus, after the battle of Carrhae against the Parthians, was taken prisoner and founded a city on the border of Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. According to the Chinese historian Bau Gau, a Chinese war leader defeated a group of soldiers drawn up in Roman fashion. These soldiers were then moved to the eastern region of Gansu to help with the defences. Here they

founded the city of Liquian.

In Rome the 12 tablets of the law were central; they made everybody a Roman citizen with rights. The first Emperor also was interested in law, but the stream of the legalists drew up laws that were very repressive and harsh. Under the first Emperor there was a big burning of all the books of the earlier philosophers, especially Confucius. Luckily some were saved.

The Han times (206BCE to 220CE) reflect another aspect of the Class 6 curriculum. In Europe it was the age of faith, in China it was the age of the coming of Buddhism. *"The Journey to the West"*²⁰ is a wonderful picture of this.

It is also the time of the opening of the Silk Road out of the travels of Zhang Qian who travelled for 12 years and came as far as Bactria to find horses. In all Chinese history the supply of horses is very important. They could not breed their own as the soil lacks selenium, so they were dependant on import. The most famous horses were the Fergana horses. The biography of the Silk Road could be taken in this context.

Waldorf History curriculum

Class 6 (12 year olds) Roman Empire and Middle Ages

The Tang Dynasty (618 to 907), the golden age of China rounds off this period. They had vast territories under their rule, the arts flourished. The most famous emperor in Chinese history lived in this time: emperor, Tai Zong (ruled from 626 to 649), a wise and compassionate politician. He brought stability to the country.

As Greece influenced Rome so the Tang period influences Japan.

The three mirrors of emperor Tai Zong:

"Look into a copper mirror and you will check your dress and hat;

"Look into the mirror of antiquity and you will know the ups and downs of an empire;

"With the people as a mirror, you will know right from wrong."

²⁰ is a household legend and myth throughout East Asia. It is based on the real life monk Tang San Zang's pilgrimage to India, to fetch back some Buddhist scriptures

Waldorf History Curriculum

Class 7 (13 year olds) and Renaissance and world exploration

The next Age and the content of class 7 curriculum covers the start of the ‘consciousness soul’ in Europe, including the Renaissance and voyages of discovery.

In China before the 15th century: the Yuan dynasty [1271-1368] ruled, well-known for fabled Kublai Khan, the grandson of Genghis Khan – a Mongolian dynasty that soon took on all the characteristics of the previous Chinese dynasties. Here we see the incredible ability of the Chinese to make ‘Chinese’ whatever comes in from the outside. Kublai Khan did bring new aspects; he promoted agriculture, communication and transport and also fostered the sciences. Printing was refined in his reign and gunpowder used for cannons. Also the study of astronomy was seen to be important and many connections to the world outside China were made. It was to his court that Marco Polo came.

In the following dynasty, the Ming [1368-1644], we see their long sea voyages. Their ships were huge, much larger than any of the European ships ever were. The knowledge of astronomy had led to good navigational skills. The leading admiral Zheng He, a Muslim led his fleet of 63 ships on 7 voyages to demand tribute from the countries he visited: Vietnam, Java, Sumatra, Ceylon, India, Ormuz, Somalia, Aden, Jeddah and even Mecca. He also collected rare spices, plants and animals.

Yet, when he came back from his last voyage, he discovered that the Ming emperor Zheng Hong had stopped all contacts with the world outside China. And not only did China close itself off but also Korea and Japan. Why? If we look on a world wide scale we see periods of opening up and contracting everywhere. In the European Middle Ages Europe was closed, no interest outside Europe apart from Jerusalem. In that time China reaches out to the world under Kublai

Khan. Then Europe opens up and China closes. As if a worldwide breathing is taking place, in and out.

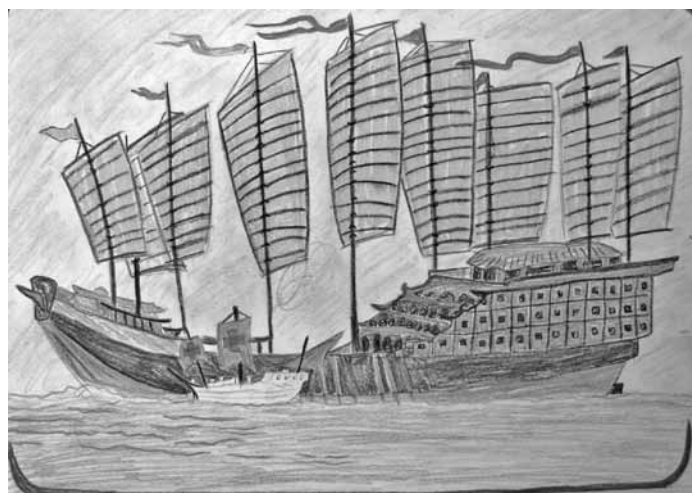
Looking at this time one can then ask the question: how did the voyages of discovery influence China or Japan or New Zealand and Australia?

The voyages of discovery were followed by trade and the main trade with China was tea. The Chinese demanded payment in silver, but there was not enough silver to pay for the huge quantities of tea Europe demanded. So the English started to bring in opium from India to pay for the tea. This led to the opium war that China lost. To protect their trade the western nations demanded Treaty Ports after the opium war and this led to the Boxer rebellion and the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911.

Did China influence Europe in those days?

There were Jesuit priests at the court of the Emperor. When they were expelled, they brought back to Europe their knowledge of China. Could it be that the absolute monarchs, like the French Louis 14th “the sun king” had modelled himself on a Chinese Emperor? Or that Rococo art²¹ echoes the ornate Chinese way of embellishment?

And most importantly, our civil service is directly shaped on the Chinese system to appoint



Admiral Zheng He exploration – grade 7 pupil.

²¹ Also referred to as “Late Baroque”, is an 18th-century style which developed as Baroque artists gave up their symmetry and became increasingly ornate, florid, and playful. Rococo rooms were designed as total works of art with elegant and ornate furniture, small sculptures, ornamental mirrors, and tapestry complementing architecture, reliefs, and wall paintings. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rococo>

to administrative positions only those who had studied the Confucian classics for many years and had passed the state examinations. Everybody could sit these examinations, not dependant on birth but on capacity – namely ‘meritocracy’.

Waldorf History Curriculum

Class 8 (14 year olds) and the Industrial Revolution.

Here the question can be asked: when did the industrial revolution come to China? Or Japan? Nowadays most everything is made in China. When did that begin? In Europe there is first an agricultural revolution, which brings the workers to the cities, then the industrial revolution.

In China we see first the change from small, family run farms to communal farming; followed by the “Great Leap Forward” to industrialize China. This failed but was followed by a very rapid industrialisation of China in the late 20th Century.

Some suggested biographies and stories through the classes in a Waldorf School.

In class 5 (11 year olds):

The stories connected with the “Yellow Emperor” and his wife who started the silkworm rearing. The three august ones and the five lords. The mythical cultural heroes. The yin and the yang. The coming of agriculture and the San Xing Dui civilization. The importance of the horse in China; the domestication of animals (the Yangshao civilization).

In Class 6 (12 year olds):

In the Han time: the journey to the west, the coming of Buddhism to China. The life of Confucius. In the Tang time: Emperor Tai Zong,

the most famous emperor in Chinese history.

In Class 7 (13 year olds):

Marco Polo and Kublai Khan. The Silk Road, admiral Zheng He, emperor Zheng Hong (Yong Le) who built the Forbidden City and the Temple of Heaven – a born ruler, vigorous and energetic, excellent military and scholarly education. Beijing was his capital to defend the empire against the Mongols. The Forbidden City burnt down soon after it was finished. This could have had an influence on the decision to withdraw from contact with the world outside China. In his time the Yong Le encyclopaedia of 11,095 volumes was created.

In Class 8 (14 year olds):

The Empress Dowager Ci Xi and the last emperor Pu Yi, the longest reigning emperor of the Qing dynasty, KangXi. He sent for western teachers to learn mathematics, geography, astronomy and Latin.

The agricultural change in China and the “Great Leap Forward” with Mao Zedong (also Mao Tze-tung).

This is as far as I have been able to develop these thoughts on the curriculum. It is by no means complete as it has only just started. The journey has been fascinating and I hope to come to a greater understanding in the time to come.

So what decision was made in the school in Taiwan after having looked at a possible history curriculum? They decided to take the European-centred curriculum as given by Dr. Steiner in a shortened form and then look at the same theme in the Chinese and Taiwanese history.

I welcome readers’ responses, further thoughts and correspondence. Please address via the editors. ♦

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Emergency Pedagogy in Japan

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Earlier this year, Susie Gay joined an emergency relief team of Steiner teachers, therapists and a doctor, organised by Karlsruhe-based The Friends of Waldorf Education, to offer support to the post-earthquake and tsunami devastated Japan. Here Susie shares some impressions and experiences working with 'emergency pedagogy' with both children and adults.

I joined the team of relief workers in Tokyo and we began our intensive two-weeks' work with both children and adults, many of whom had lost family as well as all of their possessions through the extensive earthquake and tsunami damage in March.

It was our task to go to the vicinity of the north-east region of Japan located near the epicentre of one of the world's largest earthquakes. This had sent a devastating tsunami down three hundred kilometres of the coastline which in some places had reached up to forty metres above sea-level as well as reaching up to forty kilometres inland. The prefectures of Sendai, Miyagi, Iwate and Fukushima were particularly hard hit.

We immediately set off on a long bus journey, along with our emergency helmets, boots, masks and a Geiger-counter to measure the vagrant radiation leaking from the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant. The bus views on this northern route gave little away of the enormity of the recent disaster. Everything seemed normal. It was when we came into the vicinity of Fukushima that quietness descended on the bus. However, our Geiger-counter revealed no significant changes but, when we stopped for a rest, it was noticeable – the air had an acrid smell; it was not a welcoming place to rest any longer than necessary and we were still eighty kilometres away from the stricken power plant at Fukushima.

Our accommodation was a large communal guesthouse in Osato, situated in peaceful rolling hills, out of tsunami reach, near the town of Shichigahama. On the second day, we were



How do we help ourselves to overcome devastation?

greeted with a good shaking of yet another aftershock – a reminder that the aftershocks would continue at the behest of the power behind nature and no place was immune. We shared our accommodation with local farm workers and were joined by a team of fellow Japanese teachers, therapists and eurythmists, as well as some psychologists, doctors and a logistics person, who worked with us as a support group. They acted as translators, conducted meetings with the local authorities and health officials and, along with this extensive preparation, they provided and prepared our food and drove the mini buses. What a wonderful team they were – they worked with full dedication and brought optimism and warmth to all. They even instructed us in Japanese daily cultural traditions of ceremony in 'greeting' and in the evening 'hot-bath' ritual. We gradually accustomed ourselves to eating the daily diet of rice and accompanying accoutrements. The group also introduced us to Shinto and Buddhist temples; these peaceful, still places were a relief to experience after a hard day's work. Many of our companions also had a great sense of humour, which was necessary on occasions!

Each day began in a large circle and Rudolf Steiner's verse 'The Motto of the Social Ethic'

was spoken in both German and Japanese. How wonderful that was to experience! Then we acknowledged each other further with 'Hallelujah' in eurythmy and each group of people we were to work with experienced 'Hallelujah' as well as a reverential and moving Japanese verse giving us strength for the daily tasks ahead.

The first group we worked with was the Steiner 'Saturday' Niji no Mori school group of children and parents. This group were very still and showed signs of shock. The team's approach was to work with activities as experienced in the 'morning circle'; where movement is paramount. The group soon warmed and gradually, as we passed each other in a winding spiral, eyes met and acknowledgement arose. When the games began, so did the smiles. We completed this 'meeting' with a beautiful and reverential verse in eurythmy in Japanese. Afterwards, therapy workshops took place. I found myself working with about 30 adults and children of all ages in a painting workshop. The time was too short. But how deeply involved everyone was – silent, living into a deep out-breathing through watercolour.

We had many further group meetings with circle work; where rhythm and movement helped stimulate people again to re-find an inner harmony. This was considered a necessary step for each person to go through after the initial shock. The Team Leader, Bernd Ruf, took this direction due to his extensive research and experience with post-traumatic shock experience in Lebanon (2007), China (2008), Gaza (2009), Indonesia (2009), Haiti (2010), Gaza (2010), Kyrgyzstan (2010). Bernd Ruf was an inspiring and well-informed leader of this expedition who gave many in-depth talks about working with the different stages psychological trauma experienced by both children and adults. He is the author of *When the World Collapses – Emergency pedagogical interventions for psychologically traumatised children in crisis regions*¹ and has proposed setting up trainings for 'emergency pedagogical interventions', including other therapeutic interventions.



We can work with each other.

The therapy took the form of pedagogical–therapeutic activity as an initial step in allowing the rhythmical system to be stimulated to enliven self-healing. Different groups of people in various locations gained a new-found freedom in being able to move together; and this helped them to gradually lift out from the paralysing, stultifying effects of shock. Artistic workshops followed as activities, whereby expression through painting or form-drawing work could help to release paralysed feelings. Both adults and children could experience the same 'morning circle', games and artistic activities. After one of our therapeutic interventions and towards the end of a deep session in art therapy, one of the participants rose up with tears in her eyes; I had to wait to behold the moment. She then spoke out: that she had not ventured out of her house since that disastrous day and now she knew why it had to be now. "Before today, I only experienced grey but now for the first time since after the tsunami I can see and experience colour again" she said. This was a moving moment.

Prior to seeing the physical devastation of the earthquake and tsunami damage, we experienced its effects through the initial meeting of the people who came to us. It was, however, a chilling experience to drive through the remains of the trail the 'monster' had left behind in the tsunami-ravaged landscapes. We undertook a few bus jounies, which drove home the calamity that had struck Japan. But it was when we went

¹ http://www.freunde-waldorf.de/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/Notfallpaedagogik/Hintergrund/Konzeption/Nothilfe_Konzeption_Englisch.pdf

to Onagawa that we saw how the tsunami had ripped out 90 percent of the once peaceful, coastal fishing port. We drove along a newly hewn-out road, which wound through rubble, hollowed out four-storey buildings; where we saw boats and cars crushed and crumpled together like grotesque sculptures marking the way the wave struck. There were cars on top of high buildings and trains on hillsides lodged in strange positions, as well as the tattered remains of the households strewn across the countryside.

We slowly climbed the hill to where the hospital had stood and then further up to where the junior school and present 'refuge' camp were located. I was surprised to see crumpled cars high up on the hillside road. It was only when I heard that the tsunami had wiped out the first floor of the hospital taking away patients and staff that I realised exactly how high it had reached. It had even lapped outside the entrance area of the school. This wave had been forty metres high! Luckily, most of the children and their teachers had been in school when it came. But not so lucky were many parents who had not been able to reach safety in time. When we climbed out of the bus, I could once again smell the acrid smell, which reminded me of Fukushima. Nearly everyone wore masks. We then saw the huge emergency operation taking place in and around the school. Here there were loads of goods arriving – emergency packaging, everyday necessities, with bottled water being of prime importance. We heard how the teachers and children had been marooned on their island for three days, with only water to drink, in very cold weather with snow on the surrounding hills. They all had to wait to be rescued.

The teachers and therapists there had worked hard to bring back warmth, comfort and hope to the children. Many of the children were based in the large building day and night and many of the teachers still slept there to be of support. They were warm and gracious to us and we soon felt the supportive atmosphere they had built around the classes as they carefully guided the children through their post-trauma experiences. There were also active educational psychologists there.

I worked with classes one and three as a teacher and art therapist, providing pedagogical-



Movement and rhythm helps bring back the colour in our lives.

therapeutic interventions. I found most of the children able to participate in listening to the Japanese fairy stories I told, which were in turn translated into Japanese, also in the 'morning circle' and in the following art lesson. The children were very responsive and enjoyed working with the New Zealand honey wax (beeswax?) crayons which I had brought as a gift, but there were some, however, who showed signs of deep inner disturbance. Their teachers were warmly encouraging but I found I had to observe very carefully those who needed to be given singular careful intervention. Many of the children showed signs of slight exorcism and a kind of transparency unusual to see in young children. They were all very sensitive to how the content of the lessons were given.

Out of twenty-five class one children, about five drew pictures of the tsunami rather than the well-known fairy story of Momotaro, which I had told. For these five children, it was important that they could express their, still living, tsunami experience through colour as a way to help purge the event still in them. The others could take the hero of the fairy story and live into the imagination, which reflected the courage of a little fellow who

had to go and fight the wicked trolls over the sea and bring back the treasure. The powerful healing effect of the 'old' fairytales, which hold great wisdom, could be seen directly through the shining faces of the rest of the children. They also received a first form-drawing lesson, in order to experience the value of the upright and the curve.

Working with class three revealed a similar picture with about five children showing signs of trauma, the numbing and over-whelming post-tsunami soul-paralysis experience. Group circle activities showed how movement, spatial dynamics and rhythm helped to bring a new kind of soul state into activity. The search for balance and harmony in a following form drawing lesson showed like efficacy. However, this had to be carefully undertaken so as not to bring too much dynamic into the process. This class also experienced one of their folk tales; 'Kasakojizou – 'bamboo hats for Jizo, the grateful statues'. This wise story holds the value of upholding a sense of compassion, regardless of the dire situation of the hero of the story – and there is an unexpected reward for his good deed.



Darkness finds itself in balance with the light.

Nearly all the teachers and many of the children of this class three had heard about the recent devastation of Christchurch and they responded with deep interest and concern when they heard that I had come from New Zealand. It was important to them that I had come over to help them in Japan. This was most moving to experience. I still remember many of the light-filled faces of the children and the teachers who welcomed us in the Onagawa Junior School.

In the two weeks I was in Japan, the beautiful cherry blossoms were flowering and this felt like a new hope - that new life and thereby renewal is always possible. We left the region to drive back to Tokyo to give a one-day workshop in 'emergency Waldorf pedagogy' to a large group of Steiner teachers, doctors and therapists. Committed people came from all over Japan to see how they could work together to give further support to the people in the post-earthquake, post-tsunami Japan. This was a time when I realised that the Pacific nations now had a greater link than ever before – maybe 'the Pacific rim of fire' can bring another kind of fire – one which helps to link humanity. ♦

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A Curriculum Journey – from an individual to a national perspective

Tracey Puckeridge

Chief Executive Officer
Steiner Education Australia

How do Steiner/Waldorf teachers in Australia work with curriculum? They strive to understand the deeper meaning in Steiner's indications and how it relates to the developmental level of the children/young adults in their class/es. Teachers share experiences with colleagues, they reflect on the success or failure of a particular lesson, and how their students received a lesson. Was it with joy? Energy? Enthusiasm? Engagement? Did the students deepen and share their understandings? Teachers not only prepare their lessons with creativity, movement, art and imaginative pictures in mind, they must truly understand and know the content and how it relates to the developmental needs of the child. How the teacher works with the curriculum is individual, collegial and school based. It must be brought with the needs of both class and individual students in mind. Careful observation of students, meditative practice and critical reflection on the part of the teacher, are essential. The teacher must be a life long learner.

As a new teacher 15 years ago, I had an amazing learning journey in front of me. At times the learning curve seemed almost vertical! Not only did I have to prepare 3-week main lesson blocks with a story that I had to create out of myself, that was to leave the children breathless for more, that had to be imbued with the content I needed to teach, but I also had to write my own songs, morning circles, movement and poems. I remember writing out my first story, then the night before my first day with my first class being up until midnight trying to memorise the story I had written (and rewritten!). My husband asked me incredulously, "are you really going to do this every night for seven years?". But even more than that, the middle lessons were also 3-week blocks that were like mini main lessons, again with story, song and poetry. I was full of fear and trepidation when I read that Rudolf Steiner said the first lesson with your new Class One was the most important lesson of all. No pressure!

My learning curve continued to always be steep but always exciting. I loved teaching. I loved learning more about Steiner education. I knew that what I was doing was deeply engaging the children in my class. They loved to learn. I could feel in my heart that it was right and true. My mid-north coast school's curriculum was slightly different from the more "traditional stream". There were similarities and differences between the two streams, both grounded in an understanding of child development and Steiner's indications, yet interpreted at times differently. After a few years, the teachers in the school changed and with that brought new discussions about the school's curriculum. It was important that we developed our own school curriculum out of our understandings of Steiner's indications and maybe we somehow ended up with a blend of both curriculum streams. Recognising and valuing individual school approaches is imperative as teachers strive to work with Steiner's indications in their own school, with their own class needs.

An important moment occurred in 2009 when delegates of the national Steiner association, Rudolf Steiner Schools of Australia (now Steiner Education Australia), passed a motion supporting the writing of an ideal Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework to be submitted to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) for national recognition of our different approach. The government, in driving forward the Australian Curriculum agenda, did not want to be seen to be eliminating diversity in education.

However, we did not just want to meet ACARA's requirements. The delegates at this association meeting wanted a framework that would define the core educational perspectives that inform Steiner education; to develop a curriculum framework that supported new teachers; facilitated reflection for the experienced; a framework that provided clarity, inspiration and insight for parents and the wider community; that supported potential growth and development for Steiner education in Australia.

Most importantly we wanted a national curriculum framework that integrated the rationale of the curriculum with Steiner pedagogy and methodology - that is, how educational goals are met. And so Steiner Education Australia's huge task began, to develop a curriculum framework that would be flexible enough to honour the variety of curriculum approaches across Australia, to allow individuality of a variety of school approaches in the curriculum, as well as be true to Steiner's indications. So far the first four subjects, English, Maths, Science and History have been written, as well as a host of supporting documents on child development, graduate outcomes, an important Education Foundations paper and ICT paper. The writers have great depth of experience and knowledge, and worked hard to consult nationally with valued input from Steiner schools across Australia.

Steiner Education Australia (SEA) currently has 35 school members and 8 associate members. Delegates meet biannually to discuss current issues affecting Steiner education, to share ideas and experiences and work collaboratively. The curriculum experience has certainly provided a unique opportunity for dialogue between schools across this vast country, about the essential aspects of Steiner education.

Following on from the retirement of Rosemary Gentle OAM, in January this year I took on the role as CEO of Steiner Education Australia at our new Chatswood office in Sydney. Another steep learning curve in process! I feel honoured to be working for Steiner Education Australia, at a time of great educational change and political intervention; a time when Steiner schools must stand strongly, united in all our diversity, to protect and uphold Steiner education in as many ways as we can creatively and collaboratively imagine. ♦

Inner Development of the Teacher

– How it may allow the Light of the Subjects to Shine

Florian Osswald,

Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum,
Dornach, edited version from Neil Carter – with
permission.

(This article is my reported version of Florian's opening lecture at Samford Valley Waldorf School, Queensland on the 16th July, 2011. The seminar was attended by 82 teachers from Australia and New Zealand – and organised by the Pedagogical Section in Australia with support from the Anthroposophical Society in Australia) Any errors made are my own – with apologies. NC

My students sometimes ask, what gives you the right to be our teacher?

It is not my degree I have from University, nor is it my contract with the school which says I am allowed to teach here. I think the only thing which allows me to be a teacher is that:

I am ready to develop myself. I am prepared to change and respond to the challenge of the students: Nothing else.

Three soul forces: thinking, willing and feeling

I have my students in front of me and I ask myself, "What is the challenge we have today? What is the real challenge?" I would like to pick out one aspect: the reality that we all have in ourselves – that our different soul forces of thinking, feeling and willing nowadays have a tendency to separate.

Take the little child. A little child is not able to separate his soul forces. A child feels something, thinks about it and does it. It's just one unit. Thinking, feeling and willing are one unit. But as you grow up, you can separate them—you can think something, you can feel something completely different about it and you are able to do something else. They are not a unit, they have fallen apart. Our task in education is to try to integrate these again. Integrity!

We do not have much consciousness about this separation because the normal feeling I have is that thinking and feeling just go with each other. I am not aware so much of the influences the two have to each other. So, if I see a snake here in Australia, the feeling comes out immediately. Our feeling is influenced by the mood you have at the moment. If I have seen a movie by Hitchcock or I see a white shark in a movie and I go swimming in the sea and something is touching me, I am

almost scared to death because I have the feeling that everything which touches me is now a shark!

If you look at your class sitting before you, each individual carries their mood within their own selves. This mood will influence very much what you will do. If you want to teach, really, then you have to get yourself into the mood in your classroom in order to bring anything to the heart of the students.



If you don't take care of the atmosphere you create in your classroom, then you are lost. You can do what you want but it's always influenced by what the student is feeling.

So, we teachers are somehow artists. Our art is to create a certain atmosphere, which is far more important than what we say.

So: What is interesting in your lesson?

The problem is that we are all always looking at the content we teach — we want the students to know what we are saying to them. That is so important for us. My (often mistaken) belief is that my students in front of me are very much involved in what I am trying to teach.

However, the reality is something different. For example, a student was sitting in front of me and looking at me in a most concentrated way. I asked at the end of the lesson, "Now what did you get out of my maths lesson today?" and she said, "Nothing". "So what was interesting in this lesson?" and she said, "Your socks are not matching the colour of your trousers and I think you should change your haircut!" She had a feeling about Waldorf teachers, that they are not dressed properly! She continued to enlighten me: "You know, you told us to be interested, develop interest in things, so I do it in your maths lessons because, although I'm not interested in maths, I do something else. For example, I'm looking at your clothes and I'm very interested in your clothes." So she was very engaged in my lessons

but not in maths. After that encounter, I had to change my lessons to make it more interesting. I used more colour in the diagrams plus in my dress so that she might become more interested in maths as well!

To the question of this separation of soul forces, I think we have to deal in ourselves with this question. How do we bring them together? How can we develop a clear thinking strength of will and have balanced feelings between thinking and willing? Feelings, lying in between will and thought are influenced by both.

Example: Chemistry Lesson on Alcohol

I would like to give you example of a chemistry lesson, where, as a math teacher, I was suddenly asked to relieve the Chemistry teacher in our school. I had to teach about alcohol. Class 9 (15 year olds) are very interested in this theme and students of this age battle with the effects of alcohol over the weekends (many students in Switzerland have to go to hospital because they are drinking so much—used currently more than Marijuana).

I began the lesson by taking a small sample of alcohol, a very strong alcohol, and said to a student who had never drunken any, “You don’t have to drink it, just take it in your mouth and spit it out afterwards”. She did this, and what happened? Her first reaction was “Yuk!!” There was no thinking—that interjection just came out, a weird noise like you make when you jump into cold water. Interjections are first—they pop out without thinking. So that’s the beginning.

When you cool down a little bit, you can say the first sensible word, maybe, “It burns!” or “It burns terribly!” So we have this wonderful word that separates us from the world: ‘it’ (in German: ‘es’ which is just a great word).

So the sequence so far: “Yuk!!”, then “It burns!”, and then, “The alcohol burns.”

Maybe you could leave it at that, you wouldn’t go further. But with older students you can come to a chemical formula: C_2H_6O , plus pollution at $14^\circ C$.

If you read the formula do you still feel the interjection “Yuk!!”? No, it’s dead. So you experience something but have to kill the experience to gain knowledge. Now you know everything about it. It’s just perfect. It’s a chemical structure. You recognise the pollution which is in the alcohol, but it is there is no

experience left. You killed the new experience but you know everything. As a student you must go to the death point, you must go down and kill everything to have your knowledge.

What I want to emphasise in Waldorf teaching is that it is important where we start. We start with the experience—the “Yuk!” and end up with the dead chemical formula. However, if you start at the chemical formula, then you have killed everything to start with and you won’t get to the human experience so easily.

As a further approach to alcohol you can start with starch—something you need as food. That’s important. But there is a transformation. In a chemical transformation, starch changes into sugar. As you know, sugar is not just food, it’s something for your pleasure, something to enjoy. Pure sugar is something you don’t need actually in this world. You have sugar in your food but if you use it as a pure substance (chocolate), it is something for pleasure.

So we have food and then we have pleasure.

Thinking of alcohol, what does it do? It is a substance which brings you a little bit out of yourself. But if you go on the next step from alcohol—to the ethers, then you have something which is anaesthetic which brings you completely out of yourself. Alcohol is not an anaesthetic but it still has such a tendency. So if you go this journey with your students, you can transform all this long process. It has something in it which has very much to do with students themselves. It is something which belongs to everyday life and of course this part is very interesting to the teenagers. To do all the experiments which you need takes a whole week to develop this and you get this feeling of the transformation: from food to anaesthetics.

This transformation is the principle of teaching. It is a very good principle of teaching.

You have to know your subject perfectly—you study it and out of your joy you can do this. You can take in everything and it becomes alive—you connect your subject of the whole world. The subject becomes bigger and bigger and bigger, and then I have the problem that there is no more time that night. It is so interesting.

Now step two: You have connected with the world but the most important part in teaching is to connect to the human being. What is the connection of your subject to teaching? - to

yourself? - to the children? It's not just something which is separated from them—it is something that has to do with their own life. The subject connects to their own life because it has to do with pleasure; it has to do with the special situation of anaesthetics.

What is alcohol doing to you if you take it to this extreme and it acts as an anaesthetic and you lose your consciousness? A lot of questions arise in the class discussion. You are connected very much into this process and if you do this then you lift up your teaching and to bring it into a connection with the human being. It's not just knowledge and I think that's one of the central keys to teaching. How do you connect your knowledge, the thing you teach to the whole human being, so it answers the students' inner question, "What has it to do with me?"

A meditation to assist with managing time

We, as teachers are time artists—how can we bring this subject into the right time management? Each student has his/her own time and you have your time and you have a school time table!

Some students are starting to sleep and other ones are very excited—how can we bring this all into balance? That's our job – to balance all this in time.

So what do you do in meeting your students and how do you manage this time?

It is the teacher's own behaviour, soul forces and presence of mind that are important.

I cannot be free unless I am present.

The 'ship's wake' you leave is the resonance of the path of your lessons.

How can the teachers really be present and have presence of mind?

I end with a suggested meditation for teachers:

- Ten minutes after you wake up in the morning, try and remember the last thought you had before going to sleep. Do this each day for several days.
- What happens is that gradually you get a different feeling for time—the time between the wakefulness and consciousness.
- The experience lightens up what happens in the night time.
- Knowledge is not teaching.
- Pure knowledge deadens the students.
- Our task is to transform knowledge with heart forces.
- Ask yourselves who your best teacher was and who was it who worked out of their heart?♦

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Brian Keats hails from Mullumbimby NSW Australia and has been compiling and publishing the **Astro Calendars** (Biodynamic planting and naked eye astronomy guides) annually since 1987. He is author of the annual **Moon Planting Primer, Betwixt Heaven and Earth** and co-author of **Biodynamic Growing Guide**. Brian has lectured and conducted workshops around Australia, USA, Canada, UK, Switzerland and Japan. He is practiced in biodynamic farming and was a founding member of the Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association of Australia.

Brian's websites are: astro-calendar.com and northernstarcalendar.com



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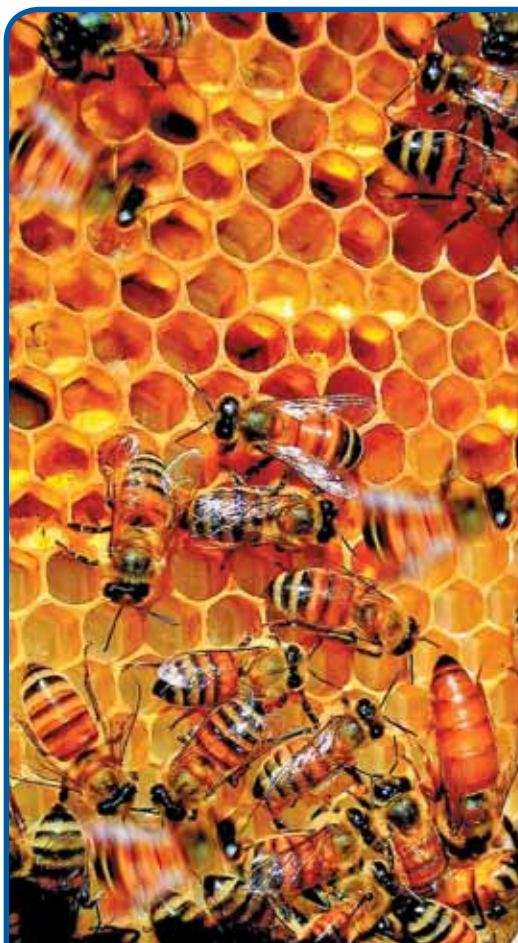
STAR WEAVINGS

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Contact: peggyd@glenaeon.nsw.edu.au

January 20 - 24

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Contact Brian Tracey or Korina: brian.t@taruna.ac.nz ; info@taruna.ac.nz

February 18 -20

Hawaii-Pacific Region Conference. The Art of Imagination, with Dennis Klocek. Honolulu Waldorf School, Hawaii. Contact: www.honouluwaldorf.org

March 9-11

Learning Support Conference. Mt Barker Waldorf School, S. Australia.

Contact: office@mtbarkerwaldorf.sa.edu.au

March 26 – 30 March (classes 1-5) and April 2- 5 (classes 6-8)

Van James – Art (combined with Diploma students). Taruna, Havelock North, NZ.

Contact: info@taruna.ac.nz

April 1 – 5

World Waldorf/ Steiner Kindergarten Conference. Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland.

Contact: paed.sektion@goetheanum.ch

April 9 – 14

World Waldorf/Steiner Teachers' Conference. Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland.

Contact: paed.sektion@goetheanum.ch Homepage: www.paedagogik-goetheanum.ch

April 12 – 14

Techno Conference – 'Emerging Technologies in Steiner Education'. Lorien Novalis Steiner School, Sydney, NSW. Contact Stuart Rushton: stuartr@lorien.nsw.edu.au

April 23 - 27

Mary Willow - 'The Young Child' (combined with Diploma students). Taruna, Havelock North, NZ

Contact Korina: info@taruna.ac.nz

April 30 – May 4

Marjorie Theyer - 'The Young Child' (with Diploma students). Taruna, Havelock North, NZ.

Contact Korina: info@taruna.ac.nz

June 8 – 9

SEA Governance Leadership and Management Conference Australia.

Contact Tracey Puckeridge: sea@steinerroz.com

June 29 – July 3

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Michael Park School, Auckland, NZ Contact: deew@michaelpark.school.nz

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