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China: A Phoenix from the Ashes

Susan Howard, Amherst, Massachusetts, USA

On May 13th a powerful and devastating earthquake struck in Szechuan Province in the area around Chengdu, home of the first Waldorf School in China. I am writing to you today to ask for your support in the aftermath of the earthquake for the teachers, parents and children of the Chengdu Waldorf School.

I returned from China on the day of the earthquake after teaching in the Waldorf kindergarten training program hosted by the Chengdu Waldorf School. My husband Michael and I taught the nearly 100 kindergarten teachers from all over China - mostly from Chengdu, Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Xi'an - who are enrolled in the part-time Waldorf training. Then after a few days of holiday in the karst mountains near Yangshuo, we flew to Beijing to meet with kindergarten teachers and parents in Waldorf initiative groups and to visit several bio-dynamic farms north of Beijing near the Great Wall.

Waldorf education has awakened tremendous interest in China in the past year or two and things are developing very quickly. We were deeply, deeply impressed by the spirit of the Chengdu Waldorf School - the brotherhood/sisterhood among the teachers and families and children there, and the intrepid efforts to incarnate a Waldorf school

physically, soul-wise and spiritually in a country that is in the process of re-inventing itself in an amazingly intense way.

Now, post-earthquake, we are deeply concerned with the situation in Szechuan Province. Two weeks ago we visited the city of Dujiangyan, 60 km west of Chengdu, en route to hiking among the Taoist temples at Qincheng Mountain. Dujiangyan is one of two epicenters of the earthquake, and we are struggling to bring together two sets of images - one the lovely, pleasant green city at the edge of the mountains close to the Tibet border, away from the pollution of Chengdu, and the other the site of collapsed hospitals, factories and a middle school where many children perished - children who, with the One Child Policy, were their parents' beloved only child and who now are gone. We can hardly bear to think of the grieving taking place now, and the chaos of homelessness that has ensued.

Of course, most of all, we are carrying in our hearts the situation of our friends and colleagues and the families at the



Waldorf School. From what we have heard from Li Zhang there, no one was hurt. However, the buildings where the school is housed – a former tea house/summer retreat that was quite dilapidated when the school moved in – have been damaged.



During our visit, we were deeply touched by how the grounds and buildings had been lovingly ensouled - a small bamboo "forest" garden planted where rubble had been, a pond created over an old debris-filled wetland, and home-made lazured walls painted with love and care, filling the old concrete buildings with life and color. The Waldorf School has become a lovely bustling community, filled with activity, where teachers and parents and children all carry one another and the school's mission as they try to transform the physical environment and to incarnate Waldorf education under less than easy circumstances.

Since the earthquake, teachers, parents and children have been living in tents and under canopies at the school, as the rains pour down. Several kindergartens and the offices have now been declared uninhabitable, and the school will need to either rebuild or relocate. For the moment, the teachers and staff are busy with immediate concerns such as sterilizing contaminated water, offering support and consolation to those most in need, helping with the relief effort- especially with the children in outlying areas devastated by the earthquake, and offering prayers.

We carry in our hearts the question of how we can offer support in this catastrophic situation. Soul-spiritually, we can carry our Chinese friends and colleagues in our hearts, in our thoughts and in our prayers. The teachers have expressed how supported they feel by their friends around the world. Financially, we can also offer much-needed support. We ask you to share with your colleagues and the families at your school the news about the situation, and ask them to join us in sending donations to the Chengdu Waldorf School. Checks made payable to "WECAN" and marked with a note "for Chengdu" can be sent to WECAN (Waldorf Early Childhood Association

of North America), 285 Hungry Hollow Road, Spring Valley, New York. Donations are tax-deductible and will be forwarded to the Chengdu Waldorf School.

The phoenix bird, Fenghuang, is ubiquitous in China, a picture of high power, virtue and grace sent from heaven. We hope that like the phoenix, the life of Waldorf education will arise and fly forth out of the current devastation into the future, in part through support and care sent by others from distant lands who nonetheless feel very close to the Chinese people and to what they are trying to bring to birth.



The Chengdu Waldorf School

By Harry Wong

The school master plan

The school master plan has been layout after a year process. Thank to Mr. Qing, a parent of our school who is an architect for a real estate company. The school authority has given their specification we can go ahead to build our classrooms. It will meet the requirement to grant our full license to operate as an elementary school once the building is completed. The first stage of building is build 12 classrooms. It will start to lay the foundation by the end of March; we hope that the grade school will be able to move to the new building in this fall.

How we will build

The kindergarten room must be over 65 square meter and with a nap room. The ideal is to have the main room build with a big bunk inside for napping. It will save a lot of space and work for the teachers. We have to work it out with the teachers and architect more in detail. We will need six more trained kindergarten teachers next year. We will be able to build although the fund is not yet in the place. We may collect the tuition from those who are in the waiting list and build the kindergarten before they can come.

The Kindergarten

The kindergarten has expanded to five classes. There are 63 children in the kindergarten. We have stopped the enrollment and register for next year for they are a long waiting list. We do not have enough trained teachers and classrooms to take those in the waiting list in. There is a high expectation for our teachers. Most of parents are very happy with their children in our kindergarten though there was two children were pulled out this semester. Teachers are getting more experiences, but they do not get enough support from experienced teachers. We are expecting an experienced kindergarten teacher come from Europe for a year in July.

The grade school

The grade school has a few children moved to abroad after the Chinese new year break. Some of them return. Some of them are not. But, we will have a few more adopted Chinese girls come from the United States join in the grade school in the fall. The population of English speakers is getting bigger in our small school. Some parents start to worry if we still teach in Chinese to their children. The grade school is still in the process to grant the full license in order to be operated as an elementary school. We have got the promise from the government that as long as the classrooms and the sport field are built they will give it to us. So far, we are under some kind of protection. The major work for this semester is to build the classrooms for the grade

school. Of course, we still have a long way to get our teachers training. It is a great that Guoming who had completed her teacher training in Australia now is back in the school. She was the very early founder of the school. We also will get an waldorf trained teachers to teach English from Canada in the fall. There will be six teachers going to attend 9 weeks course in Australia in the summer

The training program

The kindergarten teacher training program is coming to the 4th modual. There are still 56 people coming to the course.

Many of them had set up a home kindergarten to practice Waldorf education. The course really serves the need of them. Susan and Michael Howard will come to conduct the 4th model in May. Marjorie Theyer will come to do the 5th model in August. We will complete the first three years kindergarten teacher training program next May.



The teacher training program

The grade school teacher training is coming to the 3rd model in July. Ben Cherry will lead the course Elizabeth Swisher will teach music and Kristin Ramson will teach Eurythmy. We are getting too many students to manage it. We do not have enough space to host more than 100 people in the school. There is a first grade school in Guangzhou. There are a few mothers are preparing for the first grade in Beijing. We would like the teacher training course to be more independent. We are looking for a new course leader who can commit to overseeing the course for three years since Ben has committed too much somewhere else. Please keep asking and pass the information around.



Digging to China: The Chengdu Waldorf Teacher Training Program

Van James, Honolulu, Hawai'i, USA

We were always told as children here in the West, that if we dug a hole straight down through the earth we would come out in China. Well, arriving in China can be a bit like coming out of a hole into a completely different world.

However, visiting China was not entirely the culture shock I had anticipated. True, cheese, butter and milk were not served at meals or easily found in shops. But, meals were so diverse, delicious and interesting I never missed the dairy—well, maybe a little at breakfast. The traffic and pollution were not as bad as I have experienced in some other Asian countries, perhaps in part because of China's hurried effort to

clean up its act before the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. On the roads Chinese drivers were like New Yorkers that were told, "OK, free-for-all! No more rules!" However, there is nevertheless an underlying order in the chaos of modern China, and a method in its madness.

This order might be attributed to the ancient cultural threads of the Taoist and Confucius philosophies or simply the heavy handed communist, Big Brother government always ready to draw the line. But it has long been said by scholars (and by Steiner) that China never had true religion—only philosophy. But I was struck by just how many people openly profess Christian, Buddhist, and Islamic faiths in China today. Still, the overriding religion of business and commerce is what is truly running wild in China at the moment. With fervent zeal the new rich and the exploding middle classes are transforming the nature and structure of Chinese society, all with the sanction of government. The high-rise buildings under construction in major cities is staggering. And along with all this growth and desire for what is new and what the west has to offer is a burgeoning hunger for Waldorf education.

In Beijing, there are at least three Waldorf pre-school/kindergarten initiatives in their very early beginnings: one in north Beijing, that has been quietly working for a few years now; one just getting ready to start up in the central capital

district, being helped by a strong group of mothers, a famous La Leche activist, and an established Montessori school; and another kindergarten just outside of the city at a BioDynamic farming community (see "The Birth of BioDynamics in China" in this issue). A fourth initiative is hoped for in southern Beijing perhaps in a year or two. Other active groups are in Xi'an, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong. But Chengdu, in Sechuan, is where the largest and most established Waldorf school is located. It is here that Huang Xiao Xing (Harry Wong) and

his wife Li returned with their three children after years of study in England and America to establish the first mainland Chinese Waldorf school. Harry has a masters degree in Waldorf education and has written a book on Steiner education. Li is a Waldorf kindergarten teacher. The Chengdu Waldorf school currently goes to 6th grade and already has future plans for high school if neighbor-



ing land becomes available.

It was here in Chengdu that a Waldorf teacher training program met in July of 2007 for three weeks and again in October for two weeks. This training will continue to meet for three years under the direction of Ben Cherry from Australia and with the co-carrying of Harry, Li, Ly Zewu, and other teachers at the Chengdu school, together with other local and visiting teachers. The program has a hundred enthusiastic participants, professional teachers and parents, coming from all over China, including Taiwan. Lectures, curriculum studies, practical, and artistic work were presented in both English and Chinese.

Supported in part by the German foundation, Friends of Rudolf Steiner Education, the Chengdu Teacher Training Program is establishing a center for Waldorf education in China and aims to have it a self-sustaining program funded eventually, entirely from within China. In the Sechuan Basin of central China one could say that the Chengdu training is the hub of a wheel whose spokes spread out all across the country. In this time of tremendous growth and development in China one can see that Waldorf education is only at its very beginnings. But it is clear that it is digging in for the long term! Only time will tell if the Chinese Waldorf movement can succeed in its own unique cultural setting and perhaps, eventually, dig its way through the world to the West.



The Birth of Biodynamics in China: Nourishing "Tian Zhen" (Innocence and Purity)

Van James and Bonnie Ozaki-James, Honolulu, Hawai'i

Just outside the smoggy capital city of Beijing, beyond the ever-increasing traffic snarls, stretch two-lane highways of blacktop with bright yellow lines neatly painted down their centers. However, there is so little traffic out here that the local farmers spread their corn harvest to dry on the unused pavement, waiting for the occasional vehicle to crush the kernels from the husks, the corn then raked into piles for market. Smaller dirt roads, with haphazard local traffic, lead off of these flailing highways and along one such track a large sign proclaims the China Biodynamics Association Training Center, a biodynamic farming community. This remarkable farm, where 20 workers, 5 administrators, and their families live, farm, and study, was begun in 2003 on 16 acres or 100 mu of land, and has a biography that sounds like a familiar legend: "Once upon a time there was a factory manager who heard the ideas of Rudolf Steiner and started..."

It seems that in the early 1990s, one of Peter Procter's students of biodynamic agriculture in India, Mr. Jake Jayakan (or Jaykes), had met Professor Fu Yuan of China, instructing him in the BD approach. Professor Fu recognized that these methods could be very helpful to the health and well being of Chinese people and with this in mind he began to promote

BD in China in 1994, through lecturing and in trying to start several farming and gardening projects. Despite the failures of his projects over the years, Professor Fu continued to lecture. At last in a lecture at Qinghua University, his words kindled the initiative of two people, Professor Ailing Cui, manager of a large nuts and bolts factory in Tianjin, and her husband Xing Qi Lin, a recognized Tai Chi master. They felt that biodynamic agriculture would be the perfect complement to the discipline of Tai Chi, and began taking steps to bring the farm into being. Professor Cui and Master Xing sold their home in Beijing, procured a lease on land in Tianjin, a former cotton field with chemically depleted soil, and working together with Professor Fu, drew their own plans for the beautiful buildings that have just recently been completed. All this was made possible by the secure management position of Professor Ailing in the factory town outside of Beijing.

Tian Zhen, which this group calls itself, was founded in 2003 and sees the farm as a model for teaching agricultural methods. Its vision combines Waldorf education, biodynamics, and the practice of Tai Chi. Each morning the children join their parents in the fields doing chores, then there is a study for one hour with children and adults learning together in the reading room, studying Chinese classics, such as the writings of Lau Tsu, followed by Tai Chi. Twice a week, seminars are offered to the neighboring farmers, during which Peter Procter's documentary, *How to Save the World*, and Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* have been shown, and biodynamic principles and practices are introduced.

The farm's buildings include guest rooms for visitors wanting a farm-stay experience, dormitories for traveling workers, homes for the permanent families, Waldorf school classrooms for the workers' children, meeting rooms, a reading room, laboratory, and the many usual outbuildings of a farm for livestock and equipment. Huge, healthy sunflowers nod their heads in the sunshine, cucumbers, tomatoes, peanuts and many kinds of squash are grown, as well as *Dioscorea batata*, Chinese yam or cinnamon vine (*Shan yao*), for which there is a growing market. The livestock includes a donkey, two sheep, three cows, chickens, and several cats and dogs. A pond has

been built for fish and ducks. Music is piped into the fields to inspire the workers as well as the plants.

The group has faced many challenges. They receive no government support and the government does not yet understand what BD has to offer. Nevertheless, Tian Zhen works to



show farmers, and eventually the government, what is possible in uniting healthy agricultural practices and modern Waldorf educational methods with traditional Chinese wisdom.

Not unlike the modest beginnings of the Waldorf movement in southern Germany, which were made possible by the initiative of factory manager Emil Molte, perhaps the BD movement in China will have a similar, practical origin? For more information: www.tianzhentaichi.com



Travel Journal of an American Waldorf Teacher on Sabbatical (ch3)

Meg Gorman, San Francisco, California

[Meg wrote with clear observation, wit, and great affection for the people and places she met in Asia. We apologize for meetings and stories that were deleted from her original report for reasons of space availability. — PJJ]

It's hard to know where to begin. The bad luck became evident already at the Nairita airport in Japan as I prepared to fly to China. I realized I had left my computer cords at Chisako's house. Then the flight was delayed, and I sat looking wistfully at the Japanese businessmen who were happily attached to their machines and plugged into special outlets provided by the airport. Finally on board, I slept and wondered if my contacts had checked the flight to find out that I was delayed. Would there be anyone there to meet me? My main contact, Tammy Hughes, had emailed to say she wouldn't be coming to Beijing, so I was anxious.

As the plane neared the city, hundreds of lights were blinking below. "What an interesting city," I thought, "it twinkles." A few minutes later, a garden of exploding flowers was visible. It was the last night of the Chinese New Year, and the whole city was setting off fireworks. It was a wondrous sight and briefly lifted my spirits.

Very late at night, I rolled out of customs and was relieved

to see two new faces, Wu Bei and Albert Lee, waiting for me. I was ushered to an American-sized car with the steering wheel back on the left side. On the way to the parking lot, loud, boisterous talking and a dirty street presented themselves. The temperature was -9°C , way lower than my sweater and trench coat could handle. We were soon speeding through Beijing which was awash in tall, lit skyscrapers and noise. I was like the proverbial deer in the headlights. I had grown used to Japan.

After a long drive, in which I learned that Wu Bei had mistakenly come to the airport in the morning to meet me and had not phoned to check on the status of the flight, we arrived at Albert's apartment building which was housed on the edge of an old Chinese movie set which had seen better days but still had some charm. The apartment building itself was grim. Its walls and halls were gray with age and dirt. Once through the double-locked door, things improved. Inside I found a nice home and a warm, wonderful woman, Helen Lee, who had lived for some years in San Diego, and was the mother of a lively four-year old, Isaac. I fell into bed exhausted.

Perhaps an explanation is in order for names such as Helen, Albert and Isaac. Chinese people choose an English name for themselves which they use with "foreigners" because we are deemed too stupid to get the Chinese names correct, and they may be right. The same word can mean one of five different things depending on the tone and inflection.

The next day, after a flurry of cell phone conversations



as arrangements were confirmed, I went touring with Wu Bei by taxi to the Forbidden City. The sky was a clear, deep blue, but the thermometer was still well below freezing, the wind was gusting vigorously, and very few people were there, which, along with patches of grey ice, gave an eerie feeling to this once bustling center of the emperor. I had moments in which it felt like the Forbidding City. The place is massive with miles of beautiful architecture, sculpture, and model rooms of emperors, consorts, and concubines, all of which were viewed through plate glass from without. It really was astounding with



its dragons, and gold leaf set on brilliant reds and blues.

Happily, there were small cafes here and there, and we took a lovely break in a cafe for foreign guests in which I could imbibe a good coffee. Since we had entered through the back gate, we exited onto Tiananmen Square complete with a massive statue of Chairman Mao that faces his large mausoleum across the huge plaza. Inspiring sculptures of peasant rebellions and the Communist struggle frame the outside of the tomb building. After a long, cold walk, we ended up in a warm tea room outside the Square. Wu Bei, who was a university physics professor at the time of the student rebellion, told me she had witnessed the tanks in 1989 as they rolled into the student protests during an all-night vigil. Today she is seriously devoted to Gandhi.

Finally we took a cab back to “The Lounge,” an East-West business venture in which Helen is invested and which serves very good coffee. Here I waited for Alex Weber, a former student and a recent graduate of Wesleyan University, who is teaching English in Beijing. Alex was very late, and we spent the time discussing Waldorf possibilities, especially since Helen is willing to donate space for a Waldorf classroom in the Lounge.

By this time, I was suffering. I had not been to the bathroom since early in the day because public toilets are porcelain lined pits in the floor. Unlike the old French facilities, China’s bathrooms provide no handles to hang on. My bad knees precluded my using the device. I tried, but, because they are

so odiferous, I was terrified of falling into one, and gave up. Asian people squat often. Men hunker down on street corners for a smoke and an amiable conversation, but this part of my American anatomy is not up to Asian standards. In addition, paper is not provided or allowed in most toilets, even Western ones, because the plumbing is not adequate to the task. Small plastic waste baskets collect used paper and add to the olfactory onslaught. Yes, I missed Japan! The toilets of Japan and China seem to cancel each other out.

While I waited for Alex, Helen and others made many cell phone calls until they located a Western toilet in a nearby apartment. Somehow, Wu Bei didn’t register my special need, for we were headed to the Fifth Ring where Western facilities were few and far between. Here I would have my first experience of toilet karma. Eventually, Alex and I found our way to a decent restaurant and a wonderful catching up. He took me back to Helen’s place by yet another cab, which is a relatively inexpensive form of travel in Beijing.

Chinese cities are arranged in rings marked by major ring roads. The first ring surrounds the center of the city, usually where the old inner city wall once stood. Consecutive ring areas surround the first like rills in a lake form around a thrown stone. The city grows poorer and poorer the farther out one goes. Large new cars yield to smaller older cars and then to motor cycle carts and taxis, which, in turn, yield to bicycle trucks and bicycle taxis, and finally to hand-pulled carts in the last ring. People in the outer ring are really poor.

The bus ride to the Fifth Ring took two hours. Beijing is a huge, sprawling, noisy affair with high-rise buildings everywhere. In China, the exteriors of skyscrapers are thrown up very quickly, and people buy the flat in a raw condition with rough concrete-block walls. Some people live in them that way, and carry water and human waste in and out. As they can afford to do so, they start to build walls and rooms, and add plumbing. In about twenty years, the buildings, having been poorly constructed, begin to fall apart, and the process reverses until the building is razed and a new one takes its place. Perhaps this is part of the legacy left by Genghis Kahn in the thirteenth century. He completely flattened the area, and then



rebuilt Beijing as his capital.

Wu Bei, who spent a year at Emerson College, has written a book about her experience there, and is trying to bring Waldorf education to Beijing, a Herculean task. With the help of visitors, Tammy (an American anthroposophist who did teacher training in New Zealand and once ran a Waldorf home daycare) and Thanh Cherry (a very experienced Waldorf kindergarten teacher and mentor), Wu Bei has spearheaded a kindergarten in the Fifth Ring. It is one room in a larger school that began as “Montessori.” People here will try anything in the realm of education and tack on a name like Montessori to make it bone fide. Montessori here seems to mean complete license, more like Summerhill than anything Maria Montessori would have initiated. I feel her writhing in her grave at what people are doing in her name. However, all this is because there is a strong sense among some here that Chinese public education is not good for children.

Most children in China are in school by the age of two and a half, and the latest fashion is government-sponsored



boarding kindergartens for children five and older who stay all week and go home on weekends. The public education is largely academic and high pressured, and works on a system of rewards and punishment, frequently corporal. In addition there is a woman who is very popular here who is offering an antidote to the public schools that she initially called Montessori. Her recommendations include the following: give the children whatever they want, let them do whatever they want, tell them nothing that is not scientific, tell no fairy tales, teach them to use computers as young as they are able, reward them with candy and give them as much as they want. Once a week, children are encouraged to bring candy to school to share with others. When asked if this would ruin their teeth, she has said that parents don't need to worry because the children will get new teeth. The situation is grim. Never have I felt the need for Waldorf education so much.

The “kindergarten” in Beijing is filled with 18 to 20 tiny

children ranging in age from two and a half to five. The room is large and quite a good space for the children, and it has many good things in it. I saw two teachers, Wong Lei, a young woman, and Song, a young man, who were doing an adequate job of creating a rhythmic, artistic day for these little ones. Both teachers are around twenty years old and have no idea of why they are doing what they are doing. Wu Bei insisted that everyone who works at the kindergarten attend my two evening lectures, and some eyes were rolling. I tried to explain to her that one becomes a Waldorf teacher out of a free choice.

I spent one intense evening discussing what it means to start a Waldorf school and the principles of group working. This was quite foreign to everyone. China is a world of top-down management, and rewards and punishments. The very little pay the teachers are receiving has often been docked if the head of school feels a teacher has done something wrong. There is no discussion. The teachers find out about the pay decrease when they picked up their salaries. In the course of all this, I discovered that most of the workers at the school were new Christians, and I spent three hours discussing Christianity and Steiner with them. They were very anxious to know whether or not Rudolf Steiner had been a good Christian.

I stayed two days in Ring Five on the top floor of the kindergarten where several of the teachers and the assistants live. The site was actually quite lovely with a garden, a large play area, and good, sunny classrooms. However, life on the top floor was near Dickensian. There was no heat and only squat toilets which reeked. The shower area had no drains. One bathed by turning on a hand-held shower nozzle, using it as an inch of water flooded the tile floor, and finally mopping it all up with a provided bucket and wet mop.

In general in China, things break and no one fixes them. During my two days in Ring Five, I experienced a washing machine that didn't rinse or wring out clothes, a kitchen without a drain or running water, front doors wide open in sub-zero weather (even though the school's budget is strained), and garbage dumps adjacent to rice cultivation. The only person I met who was conscious of practical matters was a kind, young German man who was doing his community service at the kindergarten. Every time I needed anything of a practical nature, patient Michael was summoned.

Because of my toilet crisis, I met a fine young man named Tan who was one of the few folks with actual social skills. He is a competent artist, just finishing graduate school, and is interested in Waldorf education. I made a half mile trip several times each day to his Western facility, so toilet karma provided me with a new friend who wants very much to come to America and do the teacher training. I wish I could find a way to help him. He was delightfully gracious and caring of me, and threw a wonderful party the night before I left.

Life was sober in Beijing. The vacuum left by Communism, the Cultural Revolution, and the famine that followed, has been filled with a highly competitive materialism fed by the worst of

the West. Few on the street look up or smile. Many of the people I met were pale and seemed to be without imagination. Although university educated, they know how to memorize, but not how to live. They also know next to nothing about their own history, and, until recently, they were forbidden to celebrate their cultural festivals with the exception of the New Year. Having studied Chinese history at Wesleyan, Alex says he often finds himself teaching it to local youths, hungry to know something outside the current party line.

After waiting on corners and another long ride, I was relieved to drag my heavy suitcase back to Helen's home. I felt as though I had left one of the outer rings of Dante's *Inferno* behind, yet I was inspired by the courage of the many individuals who are interested in Waldorf education. Alex and his roommate, who were taking me to the airport, arrived late after another flurry of cell phone activity because it is difficult for anyone to find any address without a "mobile." After introductions all around and a conversation on how to bring Waldorf education to Beijing, we grabbed a cab and headed for the airport.

I wanted to treat Alex and his roommate to lunch after their efforts on my behalf. When I tried to pay by credit card, which the waitress initially said was possible, I found, at the end of our repast, that the credit-card machine had been broken for several days, so cash only was allowed. Thus is China. The joyful part of it all was listening to Alex communicate in Chinese. I was greatly relieved to board the plane for an uneventful flight to Shanghai.

A big bustling port city, Shanghai, like all I saw of China is full of contrasts. Here Tammy Hughes and Wang Fen (alias Doris) met me at the airport and shepherded me to a good meal and then to Mary's lovely home in a very-well appointed apartment building. I was so happy to be in a space of beauty with a Western toilet, I almost wept. Doris, the lead kindergarten teacher, is a former lawyer, and all four teachers are

high-powered women who have given up excellent professions to start the school. Each made an initial substantial donation to get the kindergarten started.

I gave an enthusiastically received workshop on Waldorf education for parents, and spent time in several eating establishments talking to the core group about the future of education in Shanghai. Tammy likes to hold meetings in restaurants and cafes, but the noise level was really tough on me. I'm not used to the decibel level required for communication in Chinese public places.

As in Beijing, the Shanghai group wants to make a school, but they do not understand what is really needed. Waldorf-like kindergartens are possible and are far better than anything else currently being offered. However, the depth and educated staff required to build a community-based Waldorf school is simply not yet in place in eastern China.

I had a wonderful morning in the Shanghai History Museum, where I discovered how advanced Chinese civilization was way before the West could read and write. (I feel our American Waldorf curriculum needs to reflect this.) I was relieved to see how much of the culture had been preserved in this excellent museum, newly created in the shape of an ancient Chinese pot, the *dong*. I hope every Chinese child gets to spend hours here to see the level of artistry that belongs to them from fabulous old bronzes to beautiful, peaceful Bud-

dhas. When I reached the floor filled with exquisite screens which include poetry in beautiful brush calligraphy, I grew very sad. Here was delicate loveliness in landscapes and scenes of nature. The people of China had lost a lot in the Cultural Revolution. The rooms on the making of porcelain and the hand painted works of the Ming Dynasty were stunning.

In the late afternoon, I walked with my new friends across the center of the city to a computer store that sold Chinese-made IBM Lenova cords. I spent too much on one, but I



needed to plug in to be able to get email and to recharge the batteries. Chisako had mailed the original cord, but it would not arrive before I left for Bangkok. Happily, Wang Fen told me she would meet me in Guangzhou because she had signed up for the workshop I was giving there in two weeks. She would bring the cord in a borrowed suitcase along with the remaining wool from Japan and my winter clothes (I sure wasn't going to need them in the 95 degree heat of Thailand). This lightened my literal load considerably.

In terms of Waldorf education, I had a sense that many of the people whom I met had a destiny to bring Waldorf education to eastern China. However, because of their own educations and the recent history of China, they were simply unable to do so. It felt as though individual destinies had really been thwarted. This tragic element pulses through the entire culture. Because no one here has anything to compare life to, they do not know what they have lost: so much basic human decency, art, music, dance, and, maybe worst of all, common sense. We in America take so much for granted.

I had one more trial before leaving Shanghai. The kind kindergarten dad who drove me to catch my plane to Bangkok took me to the wrong airport. This was serious because I would miss my plane and I had a connecting flight in Guangzhou which I needed to get. I took an hour-long bus ride across Shanghai to the correct airport, found a new flight, and made it to the gate with only minutes to spare. This was complicated by a challenging incident with a teenager in the Guangzhou airport. He tried unsuccessfully to milk me out of a considerable amount of cash as I rushed breathlessly to my connection for Thailand which was boarding at the gate when I arrived. I was ready for a change, and what a wonderful change it would be, but that is another story...

Helping Water Support Life with Nature Intelligence Flow Form Technology

Iain Trousdell, Hastings, New Zealand

The quality of water and its availability are now public issues of serious concern. With more than two-billion people lacking easy access to safe drinking and washing water, global thirst is already a reality for one third of humanity. Meanwhile, industrial chemical pollution creates about 400 million tons of processed toxic wastes yearly, of which 70% goes untreated into our fresh water supplies. Worldwide, industry and cities but mostly agriculture, are reducing our groundwater by about 250 cubic kilometers a year more than is being naturally returned.

Yet when one looks at such appalling figures (see bibliography) nowhere is mentioned the concept of "freshness" or the life supporting capacity of water. The quality of freshness is hardly taken into account. Yet it is the basis of "good water," and nature herself has known how to create it since life began.



Meanwhile, humanity accepts water taken from nature's wise quality improvement methods, then pressured, chemically treated, digitally influenced and straitjacketed into pipes for delivery to our plants, animals and selves to drink.

Therefore, while there is gross misuse and chemical pollution of water, we must also learn to recognize "energetic" pollution and abuse of water. Even so-called clean water that passes the chemists' tests can be of little use in supporting life processes if its inner harmonic freshness is destroyed. Much research and practice backs this up. Nature cannot improve water in the industrial and transporting context we place it in, and so this water is torn from nature by humanity's crude technology. No wonder water's quality is greatly reduced.

If there was a nature-harmonic technology that allowed Mother Nature to continue to work her creative wonders by increasing water's capacity to support life, making the effects of fresh water go further with less, would not that technology be seen as most valuable? As water quality and quantity gets poorer and less, this will certainly be so. John Wilkes's 1970 invention of the Flow Form Principle, which gives nature specially designed surfaces to help her intensify her techniques for improving water quality, is just such a technology.

Wilkes's work, which includes the concept of "active life" as a scientific element, has focused on how to help increase life intensity in water through giving it sensitive surfaces to move over, thereby mimicking nature's own methods, even to the extent of adding life-intensifying heart rhythms without any moving machinery. The Flow Form, by streaming the flow from left to right repetitively, can, in a short distance, improve water quality to the extent that a much longer natural stream would require. There are other technologies arising from living thinking, such as the Oloid of Schatz and also Schauburger's Energy Bodies, but the Flow Forms have an incredibly wide range of technical, artistic, and therapeutic uses.

Our international Healing Water work, under the banners of the *Healing Water Institute*, *Nature Intelligence*, and *Design for Life*, advocate a comprehensive, holistic understanding of water even to the extent of suggesting that water has always had the template in it for the threefold human physiology of nervous,



rhythmic and metabolic systems. Our primary aims are to help water support life at a time when water is under such extreme stress; to educate widely about the creative secrets of water; and to develop and share the new paradigm of living thinking as a realistic way of getting to know nature's essential living laws of being. We have small, dedicated research teams working and plans for an active research and education program.

The fresh water you can see (that is all streams, rivers, lakes and clouds) is only 0.1% of the world's water supplies, with a surprising extra seven times that amount of fresh water underground. This means that only 0.8% of the world's water is fresh water on which all land based flora and fauna utterly depend. We hear a lot about global warming but global thirst is just as much a concern, and indeed more so. Weather changes slowly, but a person without water dies in 4 or 5 days. Suffice it to say, the world, for various reasons, is heading towards a wider water emergency, even while those who have water are generally unaware of the central issues.

One of these central issues is that water requires not only a chemical but also an energetic quality to properly support life. Humanity can apply healing technology to improve this, even while we are using water captured from nature. UN figures suggest that in another 30 years, with the growth of population and affluence, we will go from tapping 65% of the world's fresh water sources to using 90% of them.

Nature creates fantastic water quality through enrichment underground, and through sensitive yet powerful movements while flowing. Because the industrial world has forgotten about this, too many folk no longer consider it vital, or even possible,

to look after the fresh water we capture from nature. There is a dangerous lack of education about this at all levels, and much needs to be done to get a comprehensive understanding of water's place in nature accepted into general culture, and especially among those responsible for water management.

The Healing Water Group is extending its reach through multi media entertainment and education, through personal and internet presentations, and with planning a traveling water conference/festival. We are also working on a Water Film with Cloud South Films (NZ), which has won a major prize at the prestigious 2007 Jackson Hole Film Festival in the USA for its revealing documentary about Biodynamic Agriculture in India.

Over 2000 water treatment projects, using over 40 different models of Flowforms, have been completed in 30 countries over 35 years, with exciting results, including efficient transformation of dairy shed effluent into liquid fertilizer for farm paddocks, improved pond ecology, positive fish responses, and better seed germination. This work is really only beginning and is viewed as an inter-generational project, with John Wilkes and his successors collating the last 25 years of research and project installations as a basis for future design and research extension.

We have found that Flowforms, in addition to helping water support life in nature, act therapeutically, relaxing and focusing people who experience them. In particular they have been warmly welcomed in kindergartens where the young children learn about water, feel the healing rhythms and actively use their senses, while playing and socializing together.

We have estimated more than 50 niche markets for Flowforms, in five major industry sectors worldwide. Each is a significant business awaiting development for potential markets. However, suitable methods of mass production must be created to make lightweight, durable, eco-sustainable and beautiful products.

Design for Life, Ltd. in New Zealand has spent seven years trying to solve this major supply problem, in order to develop the commercial power of the Flowform brand to help water that has been cut off from nature, and to educate people about this vitally important substance.

For larger Flowforms, Design for Life, NZ, has invented a new hollow composite-stone system that can produce lightweight, rock-hard casts twice a day from a mould. This method is called Rokisa™ and opens a viable commercial future for the exterior Flowform industry in landscaping and industry. The New Zealand team has also designed new hollow Flowforms that are their own tanks, for simple set up in homes, apartments and offices, making large scale ceramic commercialisation of Flowforms possible for worldwide markets. We have ethical partners with a high quality ceramics factory in Vietnam who can supply product in multiple container loads. This venture, supported by far-seeing private investors, harnesses the power of commerce to create change for good.

In association with the Healing Water Institute's charitable

research and education initiatives especially in the UK and NZ, but also soon in the USA, more will be done to help ensure water's freshness and vitality into the future.

Through ignorance of the concept of top quality water, we damage the water we capture from nature to use on our farms and in our cities. We urgently need to make use of technology that allows natural laws of rejuvenation to act on this water we have separated from nature's improving influence. Poor quality water, now unable to truly support life as it once did, needs help from an understanding humanity.

Information Sources:

1. John Wilkes, *Flowforms: The Rhythmic Power of Water*, 2003, Floris books
2. Theodor Schwenk, *Sensitive Chaos*. Rudolf Steiner Press reprint.
3. Viktor Schauberg, Calum Coates book series.
4. www.peopleandplanet.net
5. www.wateryear2003.org
6. www.unesco.org/water/wwap/
7. www.bbc.co.uk (search for 'water' and drill down!)
8. Cloud South Films. www.howtosavetheplanet.co.nz

co.nz



Classic Tabletop Flowform. (360mm high)

First Prototype made in ceramic from Vietnam. Soothing figure-8 rhythmical flow to fall into its own bowl, recycled by hidden pump.

On the Foundation Stone Meditation

Jannebeth Röell, Portland, Oregon

The Foundation Stone Meditation is the founding impulse for the Anthroposophical Society as it was given at the Christmas Conference of 1923-1924. The meditation, when observed and contemplated in all its details and in its construction, forms a guiding power to understand what Rudolf Steiner tried to achieve with the Christmas Conference. The following article is an attempt to share a certain feeling that has arisen from the regular contemplation on this meditation over the past 42 years.

Imagine a personal dialogue in your heart with a Being who means well with you. A voice calls out: Human Soul! Saying that something important is coming; do pay attention. Try to feel the exclamation mark.

The voice then continues: "You live". The realization that "I am alive" often occurs when you experience a near-death

experience or when someone close to you dies. Without such an experience it is possible to take our life for granted. It is not only our day-to-day earthly life that is addressed here, but also a cosmic spiritual life and its guidance that we are even less aware of.

The voice of the meditation tells us to wake up out of our slumber: "Practice (spirit recalling, spirit meditating, and spirit envisioning). These are activities that only a human being is capable of doing. What is active in you when you practice something? The first thing to notice is that practice leads to the development of a skill or leads you to a place of understanding beyond where you are now, and to get to this place or to achieve this skill level one must continually practice. This is an education of the will through repetition or rhythm. The meditation itself answers after the call to practice that you will experience "your own I", which is more than your lower or ordinary self. You experience "your own I" where it comes into being, with all that is united with it, and all that is granted to it. "Your own I" is in a constant state of becoming. When we are in touch with that "I", we will truly live, truly feel, and truly think.

There is a pause in the meditation where a shift occurs as if a veil is lifted. We listen to the voice saying "For there reigns" and now the spiritual hierarchies are addressed. We are participating in this shift to another world. It is a world in motion: downward, around and then upward again. The elemental world is aware of these activities and it is of great concern that the human being will learn to experience this world.

The three panels of the Foundation Stone Meditation are like a journey from the past through the present and into the future, although all that is experienced is written in the present tense. It is as if in the present we need to be aware of the flow from the past into the future. In that flow we arrive at the fourth panel. It starts like the telling of a story and contains a cascade of light, five different qualities of light that could form together a five-pointed star. We meet this shining light as a sun. In that light the tone of voice changes into a prayer-like request for the "good to become" and the word "we" appears for the first time. The separation from the voice is gone. We merge with the voice, with the hierarchies and with the five lights shining as a sun.

In the Foundation Stone Meditation we find the goal of the Anthroposophical Society as described in the Christmas Conference. Rudolf Steiner said "This Anthroposophical Movement is not an act of service to the earth. This Anthroposophical Movement in its totality and in all its details is a service to the divine beings, a service to God." The spiritual world is waiting for us to act.



The Foundation Stone Meditation

Translation: Ernst Katz 1996

A composite, derived from several variants given by Rudolf Steiner.

Revised and improved relative to previous translations by the same author.

Panel One:

Human soul!
You live in the limbs;
Through the world of space they bear you
Into seas of spirit-being:

Practice spirit-recalling

In depths of soul,
Where in the wielding
World-creator-being
Your own "I"
Comes into being
Within the "I of God;"
And you will truly live
In human cosmic being.

For there reigns the Father-spirit of the heights
In cosmic depths creating existence
Ye Spirits of Strength,
Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones,
Let from the heights ring forth
What in the depths finds its echo;
This speaks thus:
From the divine mankind takes being.

Thus hear it the elementary spirits
In the East, West, North, South:
May human beings hear it!

Panel Two:

Human soul!
You live in the beat of heart and lungs;
Through the rhythm of time it leads you
Into the feeling of your own soul-being:

Practice Spirit-meditating

In equanimity of soul,
Where by the surging
Deeds of world-becoming
Your own "I"
Is united
With the "I of the cosmos"
And you will truly feel
In human weaving of souls.

For there reigns the will of Christ all around us
In cosmic rhythms bestowing grace onto souls.

Ye Spirits of Light,
Kyriotetes, Dynamis, Exusiai,
Let from the East be enkindled
What through the West takes on form;
This speaks thus:
In Christ death becomes life.

Thus hear it the elementary spirits
in the East, West, North, South:
May human beings hear it!

Panel Three:

Human soul!
You live in the resting head;
From eternal grounds it discloses
The thoughts of the cosmos to you:

Practice Spirit-envisioning

In stillness of thought,
Where by the eternal aims of gods
Light of cosmic being
To your own "I"
Is granted
For your free willing;
And you will truly think
In human spirit grounds.

For there reign the cosmic thoughts of the Spirit
In cosmic being light imploring.
Ye Spirits of Soul,
Archai, Archangeloi, Angeloi,
Let from the depths be entreated
What in the heights will be answered;
This speaks thus:
In the Spirit's cosmic thoughts the soul awakens.

Thus hear it the elementary spirits
in the East, West, North, South:
May human beings hear it!

Panel Four:

At the turning point of time
Came the cosmic spirit light
Into the earthly stream of being.

Night darkness
Had reached its power's end;
Light, bright as day,
Rayed forth in human souls;

Light
That gives warmth
To simple hearts of shepherds;

Light

That enlightens
The wise heads of kings;

Light divine,
Christ-Sun,

Give warmth
To our hearts;

Enlighten
Our heads,

That good may become
What from our hearts
We are founding,
What from our heads
We shall guide
With our purposeful willing.

Binary Being, a Symposium on Staying Human in the Computer Age

Dorit Winter, San Rafael, California, USA

Ernst Schubert, Mannheim, Germany

An unusual conference recently took place on the campus of the University of California at Berkeley, July 26-29, 2007. Gathered together were a group of unaffiliated computer engineers, artists, and others to consider the topic, "Staying Human in the Computer Age." The symposium arose as an initiative of half a dozen individuals (affiliated with the Bay Area Center for Waldorf Teacher Training, though mostly not teachers) who, for a number of years now, have been wrestling with the challenges of our technological age while being immersed in technology on a daily basis. Over a period of 18 months, this organizing group met regularly to make the idea of the symposium a reality. The rather ambitious expectations of the organizers had to be reduced over time, as it became evident that enrollment would be small. Thus, in the end, there were 15 registered participants, and an equal number of staff (key note speakers, discussions leaders, artists, organizers). This smaller size proved to be a boon, for participants and presenters quickly melded into a single group.

From the beginning, the arts were planned as integral to the day's events. In addition to daily morning singing for all (led by Christiaan Boele, Germany), each participant got involved twice a day in one of the following arts: form drawing (Van James, Hawai'i), painting (Christopher Guilfoil, Oregon), dramatic speech (Christopher Garvey, England) or additional singing. Through keynote speeches and twice a day discussion groups, the 30 participants grappled with the daunting but essential question of how to master, rather than be mastered by the invasive, gripping technology. Stefan Klocek, representing the generation that grew up on line, offered an evening of humanizing encounter exercises. Setting the bar for the

whole symposium was Christopher Garvey's performance of Shakespeare with which the symposium opened. Proving that even the ugly can be beautiful, he portrayed the heights and depths of human experience in a full-length program of poetry and drama.

Because the arts and the artists were actively present in all conversations, the potentially somber topics were lifted and illuminated into the light of individual spiritual activity. There was an unusual wholeness about the entire three and a half days, in spite of the varied backgrounds of the participants. Many different professions were represented. Some came from as far away as Australia and Germany. In spite of the tremendous pressure our souls feel when chained to the computer, the conversations gave us the opportunity for considering the sources in ourselves which must be strengthened so that the dragon in our midst can serve us rather than devour us.



Our conversation groups considered:

- Computer addiction: impacts and implications.
- Artistic creativity with and without the computer.
- Pre-packaged choices versus individual initiative.
- Losing our legs in the digital age: the atrophy of action.
- Human thinking and artificial intelligence: what is the difference?
- Objectivity in the computer: promise or fallacy?
- How does the computer influence our relationship to society at large: medicine, education, art, etc.?

None of the participants at this conference are Luddites (Maschinenstürmer). All of us value the tools of technology. Many of us depend on them for our livelihood. But out of our common conviction that humanity must find a way through the eye of this needle, we felt as a result of our active engagement with one another and our experience of the power of the arts to fructify our thoughts and to enliven us, that human

beings cannot be replaced by machines, and that human beings do have an inner core of strength and creativity which, when nourished and exercised, can meet the powerful and increasingly sticky strands of the technological web surrounding us.

Ernst Schubert, the first keynote speaker (“The Relationship between Human Thinking and IT”) talked about the special qualities of human thinking that can live in the “bow wave of time,” — that can be characterized as the presence of spirit. A computer program contains the judgments of the programmers. They are past. No program is able to determine the validity of its rules in a given environment. Human thinking can judge when we have to look at a given situation out of a different context. It is the spring of human freedom and allows us to deal with reality. Americ Azevedo, the next day’s keynote speaker (“Being Wired, Being Human”) a professor at University of California, Berkeley and new to anthroposophy but having himself arrived at insights entirely compatible with spiritual science, described how we can easily be overwhelmed by technology. We must learn to evaluate real human relations. Switch the computer off at least one day per week and come back to reality. He emphasized the positive possibilities of computer technology today comparing it to a new world nerve system that gives us new chances to be connected with the world and each other. Dorit Winter, speaking on the third day (“Where am I? Language and Art in Cyberspace”) compared the potential of deliberate, conscious use of language with its hollowing out in cyberspace. A new movement of fellow travelers, technology experts feeling their humanity compromised, is finding its voice. Internet Addiction Disorder is a recognized syndrome; cyberpsychology a new discipline. As the cutting edge of apparent progress in our day, virtual reality has attracted artists. Their works blur the borderline between reality and cyber space. Virtual personas take on “real” identities. To offset this confusion, we can take to heart the need for true beauty in the world.

There is a world wide web which is greater than the internet: the real net, which connects one human being to the next. The 30 of us who shared this experience, felt that this symposium was a seed for future work. Plunging back into our daily lives, — many of us spend the better part of our working day in front of a computer monitor, or plugged into video conferences and cell phones, — we will take the encouragement offered by these days, and think about it, mull it over, and see how it inspires us to greater activity and individual freedom. There is every reason to think that a future conference will follow.

For details and photos see: www.binarybeing.org



The Importance of Community Spirit: The Economics and Threefolding Workshop

29 April – 1 May 2007, Thailand

Hans van Willenswaard, Bangkok, Thailand

When Rudolf Steiner met Maria von Sivers in the circle of theosophists in Berlin around 1900 she approached him with the question: “Is it not possible to establish a spiritual teaching as profound as that of the East, but firmly based on European and Christian foundations?”¹

More than 100 years later the question in Asia may now be: “Can a branch of the anthroposophical movement grow in the East that is firmly based on Asian foundations and rooted in the diversity of Eastern spirituality?”

In line with the Anthroposophy-Buddhism dialogue initiated by Ha Vinh Tho and as part of the Asia-Pacific Anthroposophical conference of 2007 a first Economics and Threefolding workshop was held in the hilly landscape near Khao Jai National Park, Thailand, and brought 24 participants from Asia and other regions of the world together for two days.

The workshop was convened by Suan Nguen Mee Ma publishing house, a small-scale social enterprise that also revitalized a 40-year old bookshop in the center of Bangkok, where it has its office in a traditional Thai book distribution company.

The communication in the workshop started from an analysis of the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program co-facilitated from the bookshop in Bangkok. A family farm near the border with Burma, North-West of Bangkok, organizes weekly deliveries of organic vegetables to subscribers in the city. The family coordinates a network of small-scale farmers, belonging to the ethnic group of Karen. The farmers gradually dedicate vegetable production, away from ‘the market’, to the growing membership in Bangkok resulting in a pattern of trust, security and customized production.

The workshop exchanges then continued with mapping in concentric circles ‘alternative’ economic initiatives in South-East Asia and beyond, via the personal stories of the participants. Rural and micro-enterprise development in Burma (Myanmar) by a Christian NGO; government driven organic agriculture practices in China and gardening connected to Waldorf school initiatives; consultancy on marketing and certification according to IFOAM standards in agriculture², and social standards upheld by Fair Trade, undertaken in the South-East Asia region from Penang, Malaysia; organic vegetable production to support health care in Singapore and Australia; and the economic success story of organic agriculture in New Zealand with a pioneering role of the bio-dynamic movement.

Participants from the Eastern shore of the Pacific, USA, described the meaning of organic agriculture in therapeutic Camphill communities; and the need to strengthen the role of

the consumers in changing economic paradigms.

Paul Mackay and Cornelius Pietzner, members of the Executive Board of the Anthroposophical Society, based at the Goetheanum in Switzerland, facilitated in-depth analysis, in the light of spiritual research. A perspective from quite a different angle from organic agriculture was offered by Michel Bauwens, Belgian entrepreneur based in Chiang Mai, the North of Thailand. His career from a Marxist activist to a leading position in the mainstream solar energy business and its disappointments led him to fundamental reflections on the global economic system and consequent penetration into the world of ICT (information and communication technology). We still live in the illusion of a world with infinite material resources while we impose more and more restrictions on the abundant spiritual world and give it a finite character through intellectual property legislation. The answer of the future can be found in peer-to-peer or 'P2P' patterns of economic cooperation as pioneered in open computer networks. Participants in these open networks keep a balance between using the facilities, and adding to / improving them with their specific skills. Individual interest becomes congruent with common interest.

This stream towards merging scopes of interest resonates with the core message of the book *Economics. The World as One Economy* based on lectures given by Rudolf Steiner in 1922³: breakthrough of economic change will not occur because of morality but as result of economic logic, if all factors are to be taken in fully by human

awareness. This new logic can already be recognized in fair trade where markets become subjective to 'peer arbitration'.

Cornelius Pietzner referred to the principle of 'six degrees of separation' which implies that via six layers of personal acquaintance each individual virtually has a relationship with all individuals in the world. Human relationships may not follow exact mathematical patterns. The insight of inter-connectedness among all sentient beings has always been a cornerstone of Buddhist philosophy. However, translated as inter-connectedness, inter-dependence or 'inter-being'⁴, it makes a difference whether the principle is intellectually known from traditional teaching at one hand as well as from contemporary reasoning, or experienced as a spiritual and social fact.

An intriguing element of the workshop was the unexpected contribution of Venerable Samanalakkhano who gave an overview of the Santi Ashoke movement founded in Thailand and branching out to other Asian countries. Members of the movement follow the monastic discipline characteristic for

Theravada Buddhism, but – contrary to traditional practice where monks live solely on donated food – are fully in charge of their own livelihood through organic agriculture and small-scale enterprises. Growing communities of lay people shape themselves around this alternatively styled monkhood. The Santi Ashoke movement practices an outspoken 'engaged' or socially responsible Buddhism, including the mobilization of consumers away from a consumerist life-style. Together with the *sufficiency economy* philosophy as proclaimed by H.M. the King of Thailand, and Thai grass-root movements like the *Assembly of the Poor*, the Santi Ashoke stream represents an important impulse towards economic change in Thailand. Renewed reference is made to 'Buddhist economics' in line with the book *Small is Beautiful. Economics as if People Mattered* by E.F. Schumacher (who himself was not a Buddhist). The often reprinted book (1973) is based on Schumacher's experiences as an economic advisor in Burma.

The broader perspective of a transformed economic system in the future does not immediately release practitioners from taking all the dilemma's to be decided on in daily business life, within the cultural, political, economic realities of today,

including in Asia. Important issues here are: the role of the 'middle man' or trader as the trait d'union between rural producers and urban consumers. Effective responses to the trend of 'economies of scale' which in general always means enlarging the scale of economic operations towards mass production, loss of identity and human



interest. The complex legal and financial mechanisms surrounding certification and standards, whether by self-regulation or government rule, often implying enormous burdens for producers; the need (or not) for 'localization'. The dynamics of 'branding' in conventional terms and opportunities for manifestations of spiritual identity in economic performance, and the danger of abuse. And the forced dumping of chemical fertilizers and pesticides by business without a conscience and military oppressors in 'virgin areas' like in Burma that were not touched by modernization until recently.

Many of these questions were formulated in the closing session moderated by Christopher Houghton Budd, historian of economics, as a long list to be dealt with in future gatherings.

In terms of 'threefolding' one might conclude that a special mission of Asia could be the revitalization of 'community spirit' as a guiding principle for economic activity of the future. Compared to western countries Asia by and large

lags behind in maturity of democratic structures and the appropriate regulation of social and environmental responsibility in the business sector. However, the continued relevance of the extended family; the influence of monastic communities (in Buddhist terms the *Sangha*); persisting traditional indigenous communities though under serious threat, and emerging new 'intentional' communities; decision making by consensus; and eagerness towards modern open sourcing (often perceived as illegal in the west) may ultimately result in an opportunity to 'leapfrog' societies where industrial revolution originated. This may manifest itself as the spirit of *Sangha* in its broadest sense⁵; community spirit in economic life.

A creative factor embedded in Buddhist culture is the experiential concept of freedom transcending the divide between the individual and the collective. In the same time an often puzzling contrast between proclaimed self-denial and simultaneous un-restrained ego-centrism raises questions about cultural integrity.

Reflections after the Economics and Threefolding workshop lead to the formulation of a great diversity of research questions and impulses for change. Several more exploratory meetings will be needed for the questions to further crystallize.

Anthroposophy and Buddhism are similarly growing towards universal streams of awareness that can come to fruition in specific cultural or professional situations.

A small-scale Community Supported Agriculture initiative in Bangkok may be too small to be a significant factor of change. By initiating and nurturing networks that inter-connect economic transformative activity – be it within the mainstream and gradually replacing it, by converting the mainstream, or by realizing alternatives – the spiritual strength of wholeness can manifest itself.

(Endnotes)

¹ As phrased in *Rudolf Steiner. His life, work, inner path and social initiatives* by Rudi Lissau.

² International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements.

³ Lectures given in Dornach, 1922, originally published in German as *Nationaloekonomischer Kurs*.

⁴ Term introduced by Thich Nhat Hanh, leading 'engaged' Buddhist teacher from Vietnam, recently on visit to Thailand.

⁵ As interpreted by Thich Nhat Hanh.

Suggestions for follow-up activities:

- *Occasional network and study gatherings* at various occasions in the Asia-Pacific and South-East Asia regions to be organized by persons who perceive an opportunity to convene a meeting connected to their on-going work.
- *A second Asia-Pacific workshop meeting* during the next Asia-Pacific conference in the Philippines; preferably to be convened by organizers in the Philippines.

- Involvement of persons from Asia in wished-for *open, multi-cultural meetings for business leaders and social entrepreneurs at the Goetheanum, Switzerland*, and related platforms for social transformation.
- Giving profile to a Goetheanum based *leadership role in economic initiative and transformation ('initiative group')* appealing to business leaders and social entrepreneurs in the Asia-Pacific (and globally) who critically explore possible connections with professional aspects of the anthroposophical movement.
- Conceiving and publishing a modest, factual, *brochure stipulating the role of anthroposophical economic and threefolding initiative in the world today*; its historical background; and its future potential.
- *Lecture tours, workshops and consultancy* by professionals and experts from Asia Pacific, USA and Europe. Let us inform each other about travel plans
- Reviewing and re-enforcing the diversity of connections of anthroposophical organizations and persons, with the *Social Venture Network* in USA, Europe and Asia; (and with other similar networks).
- Gathering *information* and establishing more systematically links between economic and threefolding initiatives in the Asia-Pacific and South-East Asia region (research project) [NB in the Thailand workshop there were no persons from e.g. Japan or India]; developing a *data-base*.
- Initiating links with the *Young Entrepreneurs training* initiative started at the Goetheanum and now based at the University of Witten, Germany; possibility of *research projects* in Asia with appropriate coaching
- To explore interconnections between *international development funding* ('Third World aid') managed by anthroposophical organizations e.g. Triodos Bank, the Netherlands and economic and threefolding initiatives inspired by anthroposophy in Asia.
- To anticipate and support *social investment initiatives* in the region and explore relations with persons (preparing to be) involved.
- Establishing a strong link with the annual *Bio-Fach organic agriculture fair in Shanghai, China*, as an opportunity for network- and study- meetings on the role of bio-dynamic agriculture, anthroposophy and threefolding in the organic agriculture and 'green business' movements in Asia
- Continued *dialogue* between contemporary streams of Asian spirituality (related to Tao-ism, Islam, Eastern Christianity, Buddhism, Shinto, indigenous belief systems etc.) and anthroposophy: how can this dialogue be made relevant for new understanding and practice of *economic dynamics, business ethics, threefolding and social transformation*.



A Waldorf Curriculum for Deaf Children in Bangkok, Thailand.

Gerda de Jonge and Gerard Reijngoud, Netherlands

At the beginning of May 2007 the group Asian Teachers' Training (ATT) held a conference in Bangkok for 110 teachers of Waldorf schools, including 65 deaf teachers at Waldorf-inspired schools for deaf children.

This year the conference was different for the staff of ATT: Gerda de Jonge, Gea van Weeren, Paul van Meurs, Benno Nijhuis and Gerard Reijngoud gave a course for the teachers of the Tridhaksa School in Bangkok, but also for a large group of deaf teachers. The latter practice Waldorf pedagogy under the animated guidance of Prof. Jitprapa.

This year the course was not held at the Tridhaksa School, but at the Ratchasuda College of the Mahidol University, Bangkok. The Ratchasuda College, a section of the Mahidol University, specializes in the education of deaf children. The patroness of this institute is one of the Thai princesses.

The quality of the Waldorf curriculum for deaf people did not go unnoticed by the management of the Ratchasuda College and for several years now teaching has been going on according to this curriculum. The institute has 5 classes from kindergarten up to class 2.

Last year their existence was acknowledged by a visit from Dr. Michaela Glöckner from Dornach. Through the work done by ATT, official recognition by the Thai government will come within reach. This acknowledgement could be of great importance for all the Waldorf schools in Thailand.

Getting acquainted with the Ratchasuda College and the classes and teachers was impressive. The decoration of the classes, the materials, the love with which the teachers showed

off their classes was very impressive for us Europeans. We had not expected this intimacy of kindergarten-classes on a campus of an university. But it was there to feel and see and there was more.

The team had arranged an exhibition where the visitor met the principles, quality, curriculum and much more. DVD's were available. Everything realized with a small, too small budget. The salaries of the workers are lower than elsewhere. But all the people love to work in such an inspiring place: that was obvious.

Continuity, development and progression

It was the sixth time in succession that ATT was active in Bangkok. Comparing to the start in 2001 the content and organisation of the course have improved significantly. During the previous ATT courses the organisation taking

care of everything was put on the shoulders of the Tridhaksa School teachers. Now this was taken over by the University staff, which was a relief for the school people.

For the Kindergarten section Mrs. Abhisiree Charanjavanaphet and Maria Domning (mostly living in Thailand) were practicing with a big group of young kindergarten teachers.

Eurythmy was in professional hands of Hermann Wesels, a German eurythmist, working at Ratchasuda College for several years already and speaking the Thai language. Daily singing with all participants was conducted by the music teacher Napat.

Compared to the early years of ATT the morning lectures reached a higher level. The subjects were chosen from Study of Man, by Rudolf Steiner. The interpreters were all day long occupied to translate the English into Thai and into Sign language.

The number of participants is increasing steadily. Like last year the ATT enrolled over 100 participants, but actually there were some 350, because during the preparations with "Die Freunde der Erziehungskunst" division of work was arranged. A pedagogical week for the Asian teachers was organised in Bangkok during the same week. This was connected to the Asia-Pacific Anthroposophical Conference held now every two years in a different Asian country. After deliberation it was decided they would work with the international teachers including those from Thailand, at least with those who had sufficient experience as Waldorf teachers. There were over 230 participants. ATT was supposed to work with the younger teachers of the Tridhaksa school, the students of the Pedagogical faculty of Professor Boosbong, the deaf teachers of Ratchasuda College and teachers of mainstream schools.

Both "Die Freunde der Erziehungskunst" and ATT group can look back to a successful week.

The ATT-team attended the opening ceremony of the Waldorf Asian Teachers training week. On behalf of ATT, Gerda de Jonge emphasised the importance of co-operation of all those who are now part of the world wide Waldorf movement. Nana Göbel, Christof Wiechert, Hans van Florenstein Mulder and Christof Jafke later visited the Tridhaksa School. By this visit the official recognition to become a registered Waldorf school was much closer.

Experiences

The first day was a day filled with ceremonies. First a welcoming speech, then honor was paid to the King and to Rudolf Steiner. Rudolf Steiner's name was pronounced, anthroposophy and the Waldorf school received the honor they deserve. Candles were lighted and garlands of flowers were put down near a photo of the King, a statue of Buddha, and a photo of Rudolf Steiner. It was a good experience to see how the people made clear a deep respect for those who preceded them and that without embarrassment.

Then came singing with the deaf people, a real experience. They sing with their hands, mimicry and rhythmic moving their upper bodies. You know that tones are freed from the earthly heaviness, but deaf people are able to give language and rhythm an extra value by their hands and face and shoulder movements. The untrained observer enters a world in which the 'earth-boundness' disappears and everything that comes up is approached by the 'not earthly.' It seems as if the immaterial is nearer to them than to the other people.

The ATT faculty was very glad it had put the theme of the twelve senses on the program of the five morning lectures. When one sense is inactive the remaining ones are more activated.

You could observe that very well while the participants were participating in the artistic activities such as moving games, modeling, painting, eurythmy or pantomime. The visual perception of colors, the feeling for movement, the observation of the smallest detail, the preference to communicate with images were all a quite different experience for the deaf. In sign-language you can make something clear in two ways: you can designate the concept 'tree' with one characteristic gesture, or you can also spell the word letter by letter. It is more musical and quicker when done in the first way. The last system is only used when everything else fails and necessarily makes the conversation slower. The course members gave

all the teachers a characteristic gesture as soon as possible in order to communicate as quickly as possible. The imaginative character of their daily behavior became visible and was felt. For outsiders in this area, as the people of ATT were, this was a more than exceptional experience.

At the end of the week all groups showed what they had been practicing. There was eurythmy, singing, paintings, and clay modeling. There were moving games and pantomime. Various aspects of the curriculum were demonstrated.

Everybody was very much impressed by a play about the Tsunami disaster, that happened two years ago. Among others it was the Waldorf schools of the Mahidol University that welcomed the orphans of the Tsunami disaster. A play was performed in which the whole process of the catastrophe was passed through. It was a lively almost dancing impression. The players used long, blue silk cloths to suggest the waves. The end was a scene of resurrection: processing the trauma through art. At last a song was sung because of the 60-year term of office of the King.

The Future

If next year a similar ATT course can be given there will be a chance of acknowledgement the state of the Ratschuda College, the advances in teaching according to the Waldorf-method. That means the number of schools will increase by at least 5 and at the most 20 schools. An unprecedented step forward!

Further information about the goals, fund-raising, and organization one may contact: Gerda.deJonge@hetnet.nl or ga.reijngoud@hetnet.nl



Art Therapy Project for Juvenile Delinquents in Thailand

Sabine de Raaf, The Netherlands

From October 15 through 25, 2007 I had the honour to give Art Therapy at the Juvenile Court of Pratumthani province, Thailand. I worked with 10 students and about 30 observers came to watch and also participated in many exercises.

The first day we were welcomed with an opening ceremony. Flowers everywhere and after a speech by the chief judge of the court the President of the Juvenile and Family Court held a speech and officially opened the course.



We started with singing exercises and the students, even though some were very shy, participated with a lot of joy.

After a short break it was time to start with the artwork. We did some exercises in colouring and then it was time to work in couples on one paper. Asking the students how they felt they all answered that they liked it, some elaborated by telling that it gave them a chance to express their feelings. Time went by very fast and before we knew it it was time for lunch. A wonderful lunch was served, all the time we were at the court we were very well taken care of and had a lot of nice meals, snacks, drinks and fruit.

After break first they did movement with bamboo sticks outside, waking them up, letting the energy flow. Then it was time for modelling, making a ball then an exercise: passing the ball and feeling others. Some heavy or light, some small, some big, some smooth and some dry – each ball was very individual and when the circle was complete the students and observers who participated recognized their own ball. Now it was time to make a hole in the ball and put a smaller ball inside. It symbolizes taking something in (into yourself).

While the students continued doing eurythmy with Peter Patterson, the observers had the chance to ask questions from me, Sabine de Raaf, the art therapist.

In the afternoons, between 2.45 and 4.30, the students did music and movement exercises with Peter Patterson, a Steiner

teacher from New Zealand. In the music they used a double bass and drums, which were employed by the young people with considerable energy and enthusiasm. It was great fun. In the movement we did concentration exercises (stepping and counting, also rod-throwing exercises), a beanbag game for quick thinking and response, and some simple art eurythmy – expressing the sounds of poems in movement. The students were very cooperative and fun to work with, They expressed their gratitude after the final session in very sincere ways.

Tuesday there was more time for Art work. The students made small wish-cards, one with what they would like to receive, and one with what they would like to give. They wrote it in a spiral and then they had to give the 'giving' card to me, I hustled them up and then each could take a card – it was a gift. Words they used to give: happiness, health, love, helping others. Words they used for what they want: go home, forgiveness, mommy and daddy.

The students also had to draw trees and then make a big drawing with house, tree, and a person. They worked very hard and sometimes they had not enough time to finish their work.

The modelling of this day was making a column, and then with closed eyes they opened it up, let something happen with the form. Only a few students closed their eyes the whole time, later they said that they really liked it just to feel and then to be surprised with the outcome. Most of the students were very shy with closing their eyes, they liked it better if they could see their work. Some started over and over again. It was very interesting to observe.



In the discussion we talked about the observations, I had asked the observers to each choose a student to observe and now they could tell what they had seen. The observers were very enthusiastic and had a lot to tell.

Wednesday also started with a lot of drawing exercises. As the days before the students participated with a lot of enthusiasm even though some still found it difficult to draw. They have to think long before they start and draw slowly and with precision. After a lot of exercises they got the chance

to choose what they wanted to do next: finish their work, do modelling or draw in the notebook they got as a present from Tridhaksa School. A lot wanted the book but when they heard that each will get the book they chose to do different things. Some finished their work, some did modelling and some made their own art in the notebooks.

Then the chief judge, chair lady of associate judge and director of the court came to thank the course leaders. We all got beautiful gifts and feel very blessed to have contributed to the community in this way.



The last discussion meeting was part about how to read a house-tree-person drawing and also some time for questions. There were a lot of questions and it is apparent that all the observers are very enthusiastic to work with art therapy. They asked questions about exercises to do themselves and it is very rewarding to meet such enthusiasm.

The overall feeling I had with working with the students is that they really liked the activities, normally drawing or modelling is not something they will often do. But it proves to be a good way to channel feelings and stimulates creative thinking. In their evaluation some students said that all others like them in Thailand should be able to have the chance of working with art in this way.

Working with the observers was very good, there were a lot of them, all very enthusiastic and ready to learn more about Art therapy so that they can implement it in their work with the juveniles.



Working with all the wonderful people of the court was also very special, I felt very welcomed, valued and appreciated all the time. It is a wonderful initiative they took and I would like to thank all for this opportunity of growth for all involved.

Creating Culture, Freeing Minds: Waldorf-Rudolf Steiner Education in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Aban Bana, Mumbai, India

Our cycle-rickshaw winds its way at full speed down narrow lanes, past tiny shops and houses. We see women wrapped in black burkhas, with only an open slit for their eyes, men in white caps and long beards, bakers kneading dough for fragrant round bread, kebabs being roasted on open fires, carpenters carving elaborate designs on wooden furniture, scenes reminiscent of 1,001 nights! This is the old town of Dhaka, capital city of Bangladesh, a country of 140 million people, 98% of them Muslims. Green mosques with mighty domes dominate the area, a muezzin calls loudly from the highest minaret and the believers file in to offer their mid-day namaaz.

At the end of a narrow lane, our cycle rickshaw comes to a sudden halt. We are outside a beautiful white mansion, two stories high, with ornate balconies, surrounded by a high wall. Above the gate hangs a sign, “TRIBENI WALDORF SCHOOL, DHAKA”. This is the house of the first Waldorf School in Bangladesh! How did this country come into being and what is its past? Let us look into its recent history.

When India became independent from British rule in 1947, it was divided into two nations: the secular republic of India and the Islamic republic of East and West Pakistan. Then in the year 1971, at the end of the nine-month long War of Liberation, East Pakistan became the autonomous nation of Bangladesh under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who took charge as the first prime minister. Sadly, the turbulent nature of Bangladeshi politics did not end there and in the year 1975 there was a military coup. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and almost his entire family were murdered in their own residence by his opponents. Only two of his daughters escaped the attack and one of them, Sheikh Hasina, later became the leader of the Awami League party.

After the coup, the dictator Zia ur Rahman remained in power until he was killed in a Coup in 1982. In the aftermath, his widow Khalida Zia took over the leadership of the Bangladesh National Party. Yet another dictator, General Ershad, came to power in 1982, but he was ousted by a mass uprising in 1990. Once again, democracy returned to Bangladesh!

In recent years, Bangladesh has had two female leaders alternating in the seats of power: when one heads the government, the other heads the opposition, probably the only country in the world to have this situation. Unfortunately, decades of turmoil and mismanagement have created a great deal of poverty and illiteracy in this once peaceful and prosperous land.

Earlier this year, emergency was declared in Bangladesh by the President Dr. Iyazuddin and since the 12th of January 2007 the country is ruled by a Caretaker Government, headed by Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, a former governor of the Bangladesh Central Bank. Within this relatively short period, Dr. Ahmed has succeeded in winning the trust of the people of Bangladesh by fighting corruption, punishing the offenders, combating terrorism and introducing many reforms, which will benefit the common man/woman in the long run. The caretaker government will ensure free and fair elections in the country.

Another significant and positive move in the political scenario is that of Prof. Muhammad Yunus, who recently won the Nobel Peace Prize for his contribution to society by developing the Grameen Bank, which provides micro credit to the country's poorest of the poor and enables them to live a life of dignity and financial independence. Prof. Yunus is all set to float his political party “Nagarik Shakti” (Citizens' Power), which is bound to improve the conditions of the common man/woman of Bangladesh.

Could these new and positive developments in Bangladesh

have something to do with the fact that after almost four years of steady preparation, there is now a Waldorf Kindergarten in the capital city of Dhaka? Who can tell how these diverse events of progress and prosperity are interconnected? How did the Waldorf impulse in Dhaka take hold?

It all began with Mr. Kazi Mamun ur Rashid, a free-minded Bangladeshi intellectual, and his German wife Marlis Sander, living in Dhaka with their two children. They were acquainted with Waldorf education and it was their ardent wish to bring this new idea to Bangladesh. In April 2003, Marlis and Mamun organized an educational conference in Dhaka, in collaboration with the local Goethe Institute and Friends of Waldorf Education. Entitled “Creating Culture, Freeing Minds”, this conference was an attempt to highlight the significant contributions made to child education by Dr. Rudolf Steiner in the West and Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore in the East, with both great personalities having been born in the year 1861. For this occasion, the Waldorf book by Torin Finser “School as a Journey” was translated into Bengali, because Bengali is the language of Tagore's Bengal (India) as well as the national language of Bangladesh. The translation was supervised by Marlis. This first education conference was a great success, and generated a lot of interest among the participants. A detailed report of that conference appeared in the Newsletter “Das Goetheanum” in 2003.

That was my first visit to Bangladesh. At the invitation of Marlis and Mamun, I returned to that land twice, in 2004 and 2005, with my sister Dilnawaz Bana in order to give additional workshops on Anthroposophy, Waldorf Education and Eurythmy. In 2006 many of the participants, who had attended our workshops in Dhaka, came to India to attend the Khandala Waldorf Seminar and to visit the Tridha Rudolf Steiner School and Teachers Training in Mumbai, and the Waldorf Schools Sloka, Diksha and Abhaya in Hyderabad. A special mention needs to be made here of the organizations Iona Stichting, Holland, and Friends of Waldorf Education, Germany, who have kindly funded the Tribeni Waldorf initiative.

This year in January 2007, the Tribeni (three streams) Waldorf School of Dhaka opened its doors to the first Kindergarten group, with Sultana as their main kindergarten teacher, an extremely competent person indeed. Dilnawaz and I had the pleasure of observing her class in progress. Shrabana continues to help diligently with the administration. Marlis and Mamun's son Lalon has created the website and the logo for Tribeni, which is also the name given by him. A recent Tribeni workshop by Thanh Cherry, Kindergarten teacher from Australia, together with Dilnawaz and me, was very well received by the large group of participants and on March 6, 2007 there is an official inauguration of the Tribeni Waldorf School of Dhaka. The long wait is over and the dream of Marlis and Mamun has become a reality. We wish the new initiative all the very best for a bright and successful future.

Working in Early Childhood in Asia

Marjorie Theyer, Hawkes Bay, New Zealand

Ten years ago, I was invited to help a large kindergarten in Taiwan transform itself into a Waldorf / Rudolf Steiner school, and thus began my ongoing, eventful working in Asia. Since that time, I have helped in similar situations in Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, Hong Kong and Nepal.



Following my attendance at each of the Asia-Pacific Anthroposophical conferences held in Thailand (1998), Taiwan (1999), Japan (2000), Nepal (2002), India (2004) and Thailand (2007), I also participated in a short conference of The Round Table where the educational 'needs' of each country were discussed. It was out of these discussions and the recognition of the various countries' 'needs', that two conferences for practising teachers in Asia were organised. The first took place in Taiwan in April 2005 and had 120 participants, and the second venue was in Thailand in 2007 where there were 220 participants (the extra hundred mostly coming from China !)

The next of these two conferences will be held in the Philippines from May 1st to 9th 2009 (these dates include travel days).

During the late 1990s, I worked in two to four countries each year, but gradually I have managed to increase the length of my visits and reduce the number of visits to two countries a year, with a gap of either two, three or four years between each visit. In 2006, I visited Thailand, Taiwan and the Philippines, and this year, I have been in Thailand and Nepal. Apart from working with individual kindergartens and schools in

each country, I have assisted with input into their individual internal training courses with lectures and workshops. I have also worked in two part time early childhood teacher training programmes, each of three years. These have been supported by the International Association of Waldorf/Steiner Early Childhood Education and in conjunction with my Australian colleague, Dr. Renate Long-Breipohl.

The first of these trainings was held in Manila, in the Philippines, from 2000 to 2002 and 15 students graduated; and the second was in Bangkok, Thailand, between 2004 and 2006 where there were 33 graduates. At the present time, a third course began this year (2007) in Chengdu, China with 80 students. Thanh Cherry (another Australian colleague) is leading this course. We had hoped that these courses would have participants from many Asian countries but, so far, only the Bangkok course has had a few students from Hong Kong, Singapore, Nepal and Japan.

In the past two years, it has also been my task to revisit our ex-students in the Philippines, Nepal, Taiwan and Thailand who are at present working in Waldorf activities as part of their professional development and also to appraise their work. Last year, following the graduation of the 33 students in Bangkok who I had helped to train, I returned to Taiwan, after a two year absence, and spent three weeks dividing my time between four centres where there were kindergartens and schools, namely, Ilan, Taichung, Kaoushung and Taipei. These centres vary from extremely well established kindergartens and schools with trained practitioners, to the newest initiative which is full of enthusiasm, but lacking knowledge,



training and experiences in Waldorf methods.

For the whole of Advent in 2006, I worked with ex-students of the course in the Philippines. This not only included the schools in Manila but also visits to the islands of Cebu, Buhol and Iololo. Iololo's visit included an overnight flooding of the kindergarten building and a resulting holiday for the children, whilst the adults had a big clean up, but also an encounter with a four to five foot poisonous snake whilst walking across a field of 25 cattle between the school and my abode – a task carried out four times each day!

In Thailand, the Philippines and Nepal, I have often been accommodated where there is a swimming pool which is both a luxury and a relief for me from the often intense heat in these countries.

The progress of Rudolf Steiner/Waldorf education in the parts of Asia where I have been privileged to work and learn more of their cultures and religions, has been very rapid - in some instances too rapid, creating the difficulties that all pioneering situations seem to create. However, from my perspective, the overall impression is of steady development in early childhood, primary and upper school areas. There are now five schools that have begun in Manila, Bangkok, Taiwan, India and Japan in the past two years.

Here in New Zealand, during this same period of time, we have had many students who have attended the teaching and BD agriculture courses at Taruna College who have come from the Philippines, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, Taiwan, Korea, India and China. All have gone back to their home countries to enrich the work progressing there.

The Early Childhood sector here in New Zealand, together with the Australian Early Childhood Association, is planning to hold the first Australasian Early Childhood Waldorf/ Rudolf Steiner Conference in 2009. It is hoped that many people from Asia will come and join us here in the South Pacific.

I feel very honoured to have been part of the pioneering and consolidating phases in these various countries in Asia and I look forward to continuing my work with the many friends I have made. I would publicly like to thank all my hosts for the wonderful care and attention I have received throughout all my visits.

Should anyone wish to communicate with or visit any community, please contact me for names and contact details at one of the following; Email: marjorie.theyer@ihug.co.nz

Children of Nepal

Winter News from Tashi Waldorf School

Rachel Amtzis, Kathmandu, Nepal

As Christmastime comes to Kathmandu once more and Tashi Waldorf School prepares to conclude the third quarter of its eighth school year, there is a great deal to report. Numerous fall festivals have been celebrated, several teacher training events have been held and so many fascinating activities have



been going on in the classes!

DASHAIN, Nepal's biggest holiday, was celebrated in October. The teachers presented a puppetshow of the story of Dashain. The students danced, played and sung songs in Nepali, English and Tibetan. The children spent the afternoon flying kites that they constructed.

TIHAR, the beautiful festival of lights, was commemorated in November. A mandala was drawn in front of the children's playhouse and in the hall. Students harvested and threshed rice, and made candles and paper lanterns.

Plenty of teacher training has taken place in the last several months. Hans and Ineke Mulder of the New Zealand Federation of Waldorf Schools gave a lecture series in September. Angela Nietzsche and Martina Vogels, Waldorf teachers from Germany, started giving classes to the teachers then as well. Angela and Martina are training the faculty at Shanti Sewa Griha School, and we are grateful that they and Shanti Sewa Griha have so kindly shared their time.





In May 2006, ten girls from Humla, a remote district of West Nepal, enrolled in class 1. The girls live in the ISIS Foundation's children's home on the school property and are currently attending class 2. Their progress over one and a half school years has been remarkable. At first the girls could not speak any Nepali, as their native Humli is a language similar to Tibetan. Their classmates and teacher Lobsang Dolma initially tried to communicate with them mainly through gestures; the difficulties encountered trying to express themselves to non-Humli speakers was visible on their faces.

But after several weeks of Nepali lessons in and after school, the Humla Home girls began speaking to and understanding their classmates and teachers. Lobsang comments: *"At the beginning they couldn't speak Nepali, and in class while telling stories I had to use puppets and pictures, but now they can understand stories themselves and read books themselves, and they can make simple sentences from stories."* They are now a joyful and confident group, actively participating in each day's lessons. A big thank you to ISIS for bringing these wonderful children into the TWS community.

From October 8th to 19th, class teacher Nima Sherpa participated in the 5th session of a 3 year part time Steiner Primary Teacher Training program at Tridhaksa School, Bangkok. Nima had a fabulous and productive experience, and remarked, *"I have learned the truths of life, the human body, the soul and the spirit. I have gone through a deep experience. My notions and views on the different stages of human life – birth, childhood, adulthood and old age - have been changed."*

In September, class 3 took a People and Occupations themed field trip to the neighboring towns of Patan and Timi. The students visited a ceramics factory, a carpentry workshop, a textile factory, statue makers and Thanka painters. They sang songs for the artisans, learned about their trades, made

artwork and were given souvenirs from the workshops. A parent meeting was also held that month, where the faculty showed the parents various elements of their lessons firsthand, such as Morning Circle and Form Drawing. They did puppet shows and storytelling, explaining how each affects the child, and distributed and discussed a section of *Fire in the Heart* by Meyrav Mor.

Hans and Ineke Mulder gave a 3 day lecture series on Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education in September. Teachers from TWS, Shanti Sewa Griha, Bal Mandir Kindergarten and other visitors attended. The Dalai Lama's birthday was observed in July, with each class holding a small ceremony and listening to their teacher describe his life story. *Krishna Astami*, the festival marking the birth of Krishna, an important Hindu deity, was celebrated in September. The kindergartens and classes gathered for a *puja* (ceremony), song and storytelling session.

In Monsoon and Autumn, class 3 planted and harvested rice and vegetables. A perfor-



mance of a puppet show and music and dancing was held at the end of the first term in late July. September saw

class 3 visiting a nearby construction site in Narayanthan and building a doghouse for the school dogs Lucky and Tommy out of wooden planks, ceramic tiles and a plastic awning. Class 3 students also molded scale model houses out of clay as part of their main lesson unit on housebuilding.

Dental checkups were administered to the primary class students in October by Himalayan Dental Relief. Vision checkups were given to all students in September by the Seva Foundation. In summer and fall, lectures and demonstrations on Health & Hygiene and First Aid were held at TWS. Employees of the Shechen Clinic talked to the class students

about Health & Hygiene and showed the faculty and staff how to administer first aid.

As of December, 22 children need sponsors out of a student body of 120. We are extremely grateful to have found sponsors for many of our new students. We would like to thank all child sponsors, and welcome new sponsors to the community. We also express our gratitude to all sponsors who renewed their sponsorship after their sponsored child left or graduated from TWS. Thank you so much for your kindness, patience and generosity. The TWS community also thanks the many generous people who helped supply TWS with Waldorf educational materials. If you are traveling to Kathmandu and planning to visit the school, please contact us if you're able to bring along any Waldorf classroom materials and we will let you know what is most needed. Keeping these supplies on hand for TWS is a challenge, since most of them are not locally available. Very special thanks to Dominic Wundke, Sue Collins and the Mt. Barker Waldorf School community in Australia for their fundraising efforts. Dominic organized a successful fundraising event this spring that included a raffle and a concert by folk musician Eric Bogle. We also extend our strong gratitude to our volunteer pashmina sellers, Angela Werner, Renate Wolfrum, Simone Hamblett, Jane Ayres and Barbara Maclaren for their time and generosity. Please let us know if you would like to become a volunteer pashmina seller.

WWW.CHILDRENOFNEPAL.ORG has been updated, specifically *News and Events*, *School Community* and *Curriculum and Seminars*. A DVD about TWS entitled *A Look Inside Tashi Waldorf School* has been produced this year and is now available.



Please get in touch if you would like to order it. *Baby Dancing*, by Diana Suskind and William Gray, and illustrated by Susan Wadsworth, is also available. Published in Nepal, it contains drawings of young children and photos of Nepali infants. Copies have been generously donated by Diana Suskind.

We thank all of you for your continued support of Tashi Waldorf School. Without your help, TWS would not be able to remain in operation. In order to complete its growth into a full-fledged kindergarten and primary school, TWS plans to add class 4 in May 2008, and class 5 in 2009. We are currently in need of funds to construct these two classrooms, so if you know of any funding opportunities for this project, please pass them on. The class teachers, with lots of help from Meyrav Mor, are developing and learning the curriculum for class 4 and 5. We are also in need of funding to purchase the school's land. The TWS community wishes its dear friends around the world a hearty, healthy and happy New Year.

Children of Nepal

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Shanghai Waldorf Children's Garden: The Dream of Six Mothers

Guo Wei Wen, Wang Fen, Pan Jing, Luo Ning, Xue Hong Ying, Zhu Yu Mei, Pudong, Shanghai, P.R. China

Shanghai Waldorf Children's Garden was founded in Feb.2006, which was initiated and donated by six mothers. It is committed to the education based on Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner.

At beginning, we had only three children and two teachers. Through one year practice, Children's Garden expanded to having thirteen children with age 3 to 6, and five teachers. All the teachers join the 3 year Waldorf kindergarten teacher course that held at Chengdu Waldorf School.

Children's Garden has got lots of self-giving supports from Waldorf world since its beginning. Many teachers had come to visit and help in succession. We like to appreciate a long list of Allegra Alessandri Pfeifer, Ronald E.Koetzsch Ph.D, Kathleen Young, Tammy Hughes, Margaret Gorman, Hannelore Henzel, Nadja Vormann, Elizabeth Henderson etc.. With their helping, we had held seven Waldorf workshops. Specially, Kathleen Young, Tammy Hughes and Margaret Gorman had given several management trainings to the board members of Children's Garden. And now a 12 times eurythmy course given by Andrea von Wurmb to our parents is in progress, who is an eurythmy teacher from Hamburg Germany.

We have 3 objectives for 2007 includes: to spread Waldorf education influence in Shanghai and nearby; to extend members of teachers to 6, and continue growth of teachers; to extend children in Children's garden to 20-25, and start attempt of playground for pre-kindergarten children.

However, our Children's garden is still on the way to Waldorf Education. We are expecting your attention and supports! And we do appreciate to all the people who had helped or will help us.

Teacher committee: Wang Fen, Pan Jing, Shao Sutiao, Li Hui

Website www.waldorfsh.org in Chinese, English page is in preparation.

Contact us: waldorfsh@gmail.com



Yokohama Steiner School, Japan

Overview

Our school started in April 2005 in the suburb of Yokohama, the country's second biggest city. We are the only Steiner School located in metropolitan environment in Japan. We are a registered Non Profit Organization, yet to be an accredited private school in the country at this point.

During the first two years, the school has made steady progress. We have fifty five students from grade one to four, nine teachers including three class teachers (two teachers double as handwork and art teacher as well), two eurythmy teachers, two English teachers, a Chinese teacher and a handwork teacher now. We have been remodeling the school building and gardening of the yard with the help of many volunteers including parents.

Although the space of the school building and yard is limited due to the suburban location and financial reasons, we make good use of a public park and woods nearby for physical education and class outings. Additionally, we are thrilled to accept offers from the landlord of the school building and our Chinese teacher; they both offered plots of their land to us for the class of third and fourth graders to experience farming (vegetables and rice) and building of a hut!

Selecting of the Second Foreign Language

It took more than two years for us to select the second foreign language to be taught in the school. Following many discussions among teachers, one with parents and suggestions from Professor Christoph Jaffke, we invited applications this past winter for a teacher of Chinese, Korean and Germany language, and fortunately met the most wonderful Chinese teacher.

Kinder Garden

The small group of parents with infants and a kinder garden teacher shared a classroom of the school building during the first year. Now they run a place of their own a few minutes away from the school.

History

Our school initiative group was formed in April 2002, with the goal of opening a new Waldorf school in Yokohama in April 2005. The group consisted of teachers who had been committed to Waldorf education for a long time, parents and supporters from various groups such as Waldorf kindergartens, classes for elementary-aged children, painting and eurythmy classes and adult study groups. Having such diverse activities well-rooted in Waldorf education, we felt we had a good foundation upon which to begin our effort.

Our community had more supporters who wished to benefit children of the next generation rather than enthusiastic

parents who wished to benefit their own children. We don't have a strong person who leads the way and we decide the direction of the school by having a number of meetings.

Becoming an accredited private school in Japan is not an easy task. In order to make our activity legal and eligible for social benefits, we became a NPO in December 2003. By making use of Prime Minister Koizumi's structural reforms, we hope to become an accredited school in the future. However, we realize it will be a long, tough process.

In April 2004 we found a site for the school. Donations from supporters and citizen's groups allowed us to sign a contract in June 2004. These donations also paid the rent and building repair fee without any public subsidy. This showed that even though our school is not yet financially stable, we have many people willing to contribute and support it.

Activities for admission began in the autumn of 2004, with no clear vision of the number of applications we would receive. We invited interested parents to our unfinished school building almost weekly and explained about our school. Articles in local newspapers helped our advertisement, and about 20 families applied for admission. After interviews and some meetings, we decided to start with a combined class of first and second grade.

One of the reasons we decided on the school site at Kirigaoka, Yokohama, was that the building was big enough to have at least 6 classes and a eurythmy hall. The size meant that we wouldn't have to worry about moving in 2 or 3 years. However, that meant we would have empty classrooms for some time, which was why we thought of using them for cultivating events of Waldorf education.

It was also true that we had to use them for supporting the school economy. Therefore, we are now preparing for open lectures and workshops by trained teachers of our school or from outside, or Saturday classes for children who are going to public schools. We hope that these outreaching efforts will contribute toward the upgrading and enhancement of the area.

Challenges

The young school is struggling with many difficulties:

Finding a new site / additional building etc. to accommodate classes from seven to ninth grade and activities of special subjects such as music and gymnastics.

Stabilizing the number of applications for admission

Finding more trained teachers.

Working on legal problems caused by non-accreditation of the school such as school register etc.

Taking care of financial problems

- Organizing structural differences between a Waldorf School and a NPO

While we cannot solve these problems all at once, we are making efforts to overcome them, resolving never to give up hope.

A Brief History of Waldorf/Steiner Initiatives in the Philippines

The following summary is from the Philippines Country Report given at the Second International Asian Waldorf Teachers Conference held in Thailand, April 30-May 4, 2007.

Historical Overview and Update

1987- Early beginnings: study of Anthroposophy and Steiner Education/Waldorf

1989 -Teacher Training overseas by two Filipino teachers, in Australia and United States

1991 -Preparations for the first Waldorf kindergarten begin by the two trained teachers

1992 -First public orientation on Steiner/Waldorf Education

1994 -First Waldorf Kindergarten opened (now Manila Waldorf School)

Formation of advocacy organization called Rudolf Steiner Education in the Philippines (RStEP)

1996 -Summer intensive course organized by RStEP, in preparation for Grade School, conducted by a German resource person.

June 1996 Manila Waldorf School – Grade School opened

1997 -First Toddlers-Parents' Program began in the Manila Waldorf School

1998 -Opening of a home-based Waldorf-inspired kindergarten in southern island of

Cebu, initiated by a group of parents and individuals undergoing studies in

Anthroposophy (closed in 2001)

1999 - 3-Year part time Training in Early Childhood Education by RStEP in

cooperation with the International Association of Waldorf Kindergartens (Stuttgart), with foreign mentors from Australia and New Zealand

1999 - Opening of home-based Waldorf-inspired kindergarten in southern Metro Manila, initiated by a participant of the 3-year training (eventually became the Acacia Kindergarten, Sta. Rosa Laguna in 2003, & then the Acacia School in 2004)

1999 -RStEP influenced the philosophy, policies & management of a home for abused children now servicing around 120 children from infancy to adolescence

2000 -Shift from mainstream kindergarten to a Waldorf-inspired kindergarten (John-Paul Kindergarten in Isabela, northern Philippines, initiated by a participant of the 3-year training (discontinued in 2004)

2001 - Two-year part time Training in Waldorf Grade School Teaching coordinated by RStEP with foreign mentors from Germany & Australia

2002 -Beginnings of Training in Pedagogical Eurythmy

conducted by Leonard Orta &

Christoph Graf (discontinued in 2005)

Beginning of study for Waldorf High School initiated by group of parents in Manila Waldorf School

Beginning of small Waldorf-inspired playgroup in Iloilo (now Gamot Cogon Waldorf School, with Kindergarten & Grades 1-4 w/ around 30 children)

2003 -Beginning of Local Training in Early Childhood Education by RStEP along with other related courses such as Conception, Pregnancy, Childbirth, Child Health & Nutrition, & Mindful Parenting (on-going)

Sept 2003 -Opening of Acacia School, Sta. Rosa Laguna (now with Playgroup,

Toddlers-Parents' Program, Grades 1-4 w/ more than 30 children)

April 2004 -Manila Waldorf School held its first Graduation ceremony for 21 pupils who completed the Grade School level.

June 2004 -The Kawayan Upper School opened with 11 pupils in Class 9. It is now part of the Manila Waldorf School and up to Gr 11. Grade 12 starts in June 2007

July 2004 -A small home-based Waldorf Playgroup with 10 children, was initiated by parent-participants of the local training in Early Childhood. It was operational till March 2005

Jan 2005 - RStEP began the program Steiner Education for the economically-poor communities. Series of lectures & seminars in 14 different provinces/cities all over the Philippines, have been conducted to provide orientation on Steiner Education, in order to generate interest in having community-based/supported Waldorf kindergartens and primary Grades (i.e. Grades 1 to 4). This is an on-going program.

2005 -Beginning of 1-year part-time teacher training for kindergarten till Grade 4 in Iloilo, the Gamot Cogon Initiative. The second batch finishes April 2007. This is an on-going program.

August 2006 -Opening of Mikael Playgarden, Makati, Metro Manila - a full-day childcare program (8:30am to 4:30pm) for children ages 2-5 years old. It is a co-parenting program to service working parents seeking quality care for their young children. It started with 4 kids and now has 10.

Jan-Feb 2007 - 15-Day Intensive Beginner's Course in Steiner Early Childhood Education. It includes basic Anthroposophical studies, Child Development from conception to age 21 focusing on early childhood, an overview of Steiner playgroup & kindergarten, self-development, & different artistic activities. This is a yearly course from late Jan to Feb every year.

April 10-19, 2007 - 3-unit course in Steiner Early Childhood offered in a State College in Talisay, Negros Occidental – an island south of Manila, conducted by RStEP

2007 -Planned Masteral Course in Steiner Education hosted by St. Scholastica's,

Metro Manila, initiated by a medical doctor and offshoot of the 2006 Kolisko Conference held in the same University
2008 -Planned RStEP part time Teacher Training in Steiner Education from Grades 1-4

2009 -May 1-10: Asia-Pacific Anthroposophical Conference and Third Asian Waldorf Teachers Conference. Details to be available in next issue of Pacifica Journal.

Book Reviews

New!

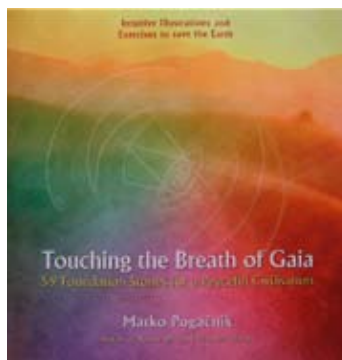
Touching the Breath of Gaia: 59 Foundation Stones for a Peaceful Civilisation

by Marko Pogacnik

Findhorn Press, 2007

175 pages, b/w line drawings

ISBN 978-1-84409-097-6



The author of *Nature Spirits & Elemental Beings*, *Turned Upside Down*, and numerous other books on geomancy has now come out with a workbook focused around 59 practical exercises toward building a “peaceful civilization.” Illustrated with his intuitive linear, form drawings, Marko Pogacnik takes the reader on a journey around

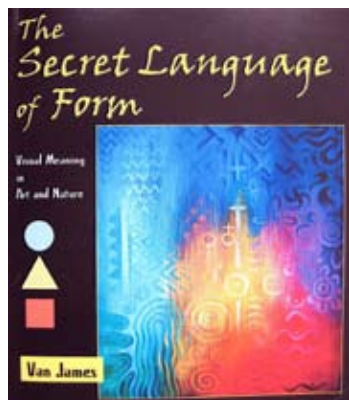
the world to various places where he has done earth healing, including: New York, England, Switzerland, Slovenia, Israel, Kazakhstan, the Philippines, Hawai'i, Ecuador and Brazil (to mention a few). He describes a “girdle of love and reverence that is laid around the earth” and sacred-movement exercises that are meant to tune and harmonize the earth's energy. Although Pogacnik often takes one into very unfamiliar territory it is clear that he is working in an artistic, spiritual scientific direction that is in great need of exploration and research. His findings, though very personal on one level, nevertheless have a very universal character on another level. In our time of brutal wars and terrorism, aggressive corporate greed, environmental degradation, and rampant dead, materialistic thinking, the work of Marko Pogacnik represents a refreshingly different and important relationship for humanity toward Nature and civilization in general.

--Pacifica Journal

New!

The Secret

Language of Form: Visual Meaning in Art and Nature



by Van James

Rudolf Steiner College Press, 2007

187 pages, over 300 b/w and color illustrations
ISBN 978-945803-88-1

Richly illustrated, and thoroughly documented, *The Secret Language of Form* is a highly rewarding book. It is at once a sweeping reference work

for historians full of scholarly insight and an artistic banquet for visual artists wishing to become more adept in using symbols. This is to say nothing of the profound esoteric underpinnings of Van James' thesis that at the root of artistic form is a spiritual content which intrinsically points beyond the whole sensory sphere into a higher sphere of activity that supports ritual practice, esoteric instruction, and the whole process of initiation. In this absorbing and beautiful work Van James brilliantly weaves a most stunning tapestry from the most ancient times up to today.

The initial part of the book explores the uses of the artistic elements such as curved and straight lines, points, dots, circles, spirals, zigzags, ladder forms, symmetry, crosses, swastikas and other fundamentals of the visual language. These elements are then lifted into expositions on fundamental motifs such as the mandala, the labyrinth, the thread and the knot in both eastern religious and western alchemical art. Throughout this section Van James reveals his superb mastery of and devotion to the spiritual foundations of art as revealed through art history and the spiritual traditions of indigenous peoples.

However, all of this richness is just the appetizer, for in part two the book begins to soar into an invisible world of spirit found in the formative art of nature. This happens while we are continually being held and grounded by the scholarly pacing and depth of the author. In the lead off chapter on the essential gesture the artistic and the scientific are delicately blended into expositions of sensitive crystallizations, water drop picture methods, Chladni plates, and the work of Hans Jenny, Lawrence Edwards, and Wolfgang Schad. These considerations explore the boundary between art, morphology, fluid dynamics and the inherent hidden geometries at work behind natural forms. These studies segue into an economical and thought provoking section on how these kinds of natural forces inform the work of architects, artists, and scul-

tors who are following the lead of Rudolf Steiner in their creations.

In the brief epilogue Van James dives more deeply into the esoteric streams that support his thesis. He quotes Rudolf Steiner in saying that today we must create a world of art in which the form reveals more than nature expresses. This is then followed by a jewel-of-an-appendix on the renewal of the mandala in western esotericism. As a lifelong devotee of the power of mandalic thinking I could only jubilate that something so elegant, spare, and potent as this chapter has made its way into print. For me, this chapter is the ideal elegant keystone of this most enjoyable, profound and highly engaging work. Another appendix, this on the practice of form drawing once again brings us down to earth, and points away from the past into the future as the author brings his considerable knowledge and expertise into the realm of pedagogy. We could say that this final section ties an elegant bow on a marvelous journey into the potentials of artistic form to bring healing forces to an ailing humanity. And a final appendix is a visual blast not to be missed.

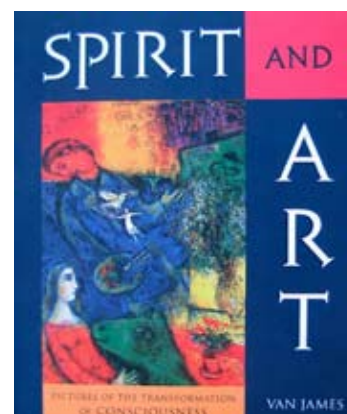
--Dennis Kloczek, author of *Seeking Spirit Vision* and *The Seer's Handbook*

Back in print!

Spirit and Art: Pictures of the Transformation of Consciousness by Van James

Anthroposophic Press,
2001, 2007

300 pages, over 300 b/w
and color illustrations
ISBN 0-88010-497-X



A moving initiation into the sources of the spiritual in art. Van James explores for the reader a visual account of consciousness in the images, symbols and sacred sites from pre-historic times to the present. The book opens our perception to spiritual truths, provides glimpses into primal awareness, and will surely ignite the creative imagination of the artist in all of us.

--Astrid Fitzgerald, author of *The Artist's Book of Inspiration*

This coffee-table book on sacred art, *Spirit and Art: Pictures of the Transformation of Consciousness*, by Van James (Anthroposophic Press), has a rather unique twist: it concentrates on art that reveals "the transformation of consciousness,"

narrowing in particularly on images from ancient mystery cults and cave drawings from Paleolithic times. James has selected art from ancient Greece, Egypt, Africa and parts of Asia, explicating what he sees as its spiritual themes. This is in some ways a personal book, as its selections are eclectic and highly individual, but the text is also rigorous, informed by theorists such as Mircea Eliade, Karl Jung, Joseph Campbell and especially Rudolf Steiner. One wishes that the 300-plus illustrations were larger and in color, but an eight-page color tip-in helps to stimulate visual interest.

--Publishers Weekly

Van James's *Spirit and Art* is a treasury of wisdom that excavates the world history of art and interprets the cultural marrow of our ancestors as evidence of humanity's evolving consciousness, thereby encouraging the spiritual potential latent in the arts today.

-- Alex Grey, artist and author of *The Mission of Art, Sacred Mirrors, and Transfigurations*

Spirit and Art breaks new ground in the study of art history; it is more than a survey of art. Like someone who sees through the outer countenance of a person to their inner spirit, Van James demonstrates how we can observe the outer phenomena of art in such a manner that our eyes open to the creative spirit behind the outer work. Through Van James the history of art becomes a clear mirror that reflects the spiritual countenance of humanity as it has evolved through the diverse cultures and artists of the past up to the present. In a time when outer reality is so powerful that the spiritual reality of the world and our very selves is all but eclipsed, *Spirit and Art* is a vital and timely contribution towards a spiritual renewal of human culture into the future.

--Michael Howard, artist and author of *Art as Spiritual Activity and Educating the Will*

According to Van James, art is something like a midwife, helping to bring into the world of sense perception "our experience of the invisible." *Spirit and Art* is a detailed, richly illustrated examination of art's power to symbolize unseen spiritual processes and to reveal the evolution of human consciousness.

--Paul Wine, *Quest Magazine*.

[*Spirit and Art*] is a well-researched, amply illustrated study of art history. The book is enriched by a few color plates and by numerous black and white text illustrations, many drawn by the artist/author himself.

--Alexandra B. Gunther, *Anthroposophical Society in Canada Library Bulletin*.

This book fills a niche in several areas: it is compelling and informative for the lay-reader, it provides a fresh look at familiar images for the already informed art historian

News & Views

The Spiritual Impulse of Anthroposophy and The Foundation Stone

Michael Park Rudolf Steiner School, 55 Amy Street, Ellerslie, Auckland

Friday 4th July to Monday 7th July 2008

Anthroposophical Society in

New Zealand

Annual General Meeting

The theme of this conference allows for a deepening of the esoteric significance of the Christmas Conference of 1923 when Rudolf Steiner refounded the General Anthroposophical Society.

Sergei Prokofieff, a member of the Executive Council at the Goetheanum, will deliver a lecture each morning: *The Esoteric Significance of the Anthroposophical Work in the Groups, The Mystery of Golgotha and the Spiritual Communion, and Why Do We Become Members of the School of spiritual Science.*

Further enquiries to Vee Noble

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Phone: (09) 627 2044

IV PanAmerican Anthroposophical Congress

"The Spiritual Foundations of the American Continent and its Relation to the East and West"

July 4th-9th, 2008

Isolda Echavarria Waldorf School, La Estrella, Columbia

Contact: sofiamaria3@gmail.com

A New Approach to Medicine

July 12-18, 2008

Avondale College

Cooranbong, NSW Australia

International Postgraduate Medical Training

For Doctors, Medical Students

and Allied Health Professionals

"Thus, when we explore the wonderful internal structure of the human organism, we discover not only a generative and regenerative process in each individual organ, an activity that serves the organ's growth and continued development, but also a degenerative process that reverses physical development but makes it possible for the soul-spiritual element to find its place within the human being." --Rudolf Steiner

The International Postgraduate Medical Training (IPMT), given in 10 different countries, offers a developmental path for the medical practitioner to enable him/her to bring new

insights to the patient's needs. The overall philosophy of this training is Anthroposophic medicine, as introduced and developed by Dr (phil.) Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) and Dr (med.) Ita Maria Wegman (1876-1943). The practice of Anthroposophic medicine is complementary to allopathic medicine, and therefore trainings are available only to those practitioners who have either qualified in a registered field of practice, or are on a specific path of training.

Australian Anthroposophic Medicine Association

Sue Scott: sue@AAMAanthro.com

GEOMANCY AS A WAY OF LIFE

to be held in Lendava, Slovenia from July 23rd to July 27th 2008

The Slovenian LifeNet (Lebensnetz) Association VITAAA and its president Marko Pogacnik invite all friends creative within our network and those who share with us the holistic approach to the Earth Cosmos to come to Slovenia to our congress that we would like to manifest as a creative gathering.

Purpose of the gathering

We live in a time when humanity starts to be conscious of the Earth transformation process. Scientists and politicians try to dam the planet's destruction. Yet those who understands the geomantic approach, and develop loving relationships to the Earth soul, know that any development in this direction is impossible without a basic change of the human way of life. It means that we should work on further development of our network, (called in subtitle "Geomancy and Transformation") to have a platform upon which it is possible autonomously to realise our responsibility towards life within and around ourselves.

How do we want to formulate our contribution to the planetary transformation, how we want to live it and to bring it into the public awareness, are the central questions to be addresses by the LifeNet Creative Gathering 2008. Secondly, we would like to hear about projects on which different groups and individuals are working, discuss our common future projects and forge new friendships.

Information

If there are more questions, we are ready to answer:

Vitaaa, Streliska 12, SI - 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

E-Mail: vitaaa@email.si www.vitaaa-drustvo.si

In Memorium

Marjorie Spock 1903-2008

Marjorie Spock crossed the threshold at her home in Sullivan, Maine on January 23. Marjorie was 104 years old and

the oldest living anthroposophist to have known Dr. Steiner. She and Polly Richards, of the Honolulu Richards family, were compatriots for many years. Together they brought suit against the US Government in Long Island NY to stop DDT spraying in 1954. They were friends with Rachel Carson who was inspired by them to write Silent Spring. This ultimately led to the banning of DDT and the establishment of the environmental movement in America.

She was present the evening that the Goetheanum burnt down and was at the Christmas Foundation Conference. Marjorie worked with Marie Steiner as a eurythmist, and even in her 100's she worked with young people on the task of enlivening eurythmy. She worked that others may know the spirit as alive, not lost in abstraction.

Her biodynamic work on her seaside farm was a marvel. She held her weekly study group on the Thursday before she died. She will be cremated in a red robe, honoring Rosicrucian tradition in the same way as Rudolf Steiner. Marjorie often spoke about Steiner and how his lectures were filled with his light hearted comments that brought laughter to the audience. Her passing marks the 100th anniversary of Rudolf Steiner's most active initiatives.

Noel Bell 1917-2008

by Tara Bell

Noel Edgar Jonathan Bell was born May 27, 1917 in South-end-on-sea, England. His father was a minister and his mother a young, beautiful parishioner, twelve years his junior. Noel was the eldest child, followed by 3 sisters. His parents later ran an orphanage called Farningham Home for Boys, where he grew up. At the age of 9, as is the custom in England, Noel was sent off to boarding school, an experience that he hated and longed to be home with his family. Eventually his parents became interested in the teachings of Rudolf Steiner and sent Noel's youngest sister to the Michael Hall School. In her class was Diana Patterson, who Noel met at a school dance in 1938. They dated briefly before Diana's mother, concerned about the possibility of war, took her family back to Canada. At this time Noel, struggling with the family choice that he become a lawyer, joined the British army, where he became an officer and was sent to India.

Throughout the war, Noel and Diana maintained contact through letters, and in 1945, after the end of the War, she returned to England and shortly after that they were married. Noel traveled to Singapore with his new wife, and lived there for a few years, and then moved to New Zealand. Eventually they moved to Canada in the early 50's and started a family. They had a daughter and later adopted a son. When their children were ready for school they tried to start a Waldorf kindergarten. It was not meant to be, so the decision was made to travel to Southern California to enroll them there. This was 1959 and Highland Hall School had a teacher training course that Noel and Diana were invited to join.



A year later Noel and Diana became Waldorf teachers. They remained at Highland Hall for the next seven years, when they decided to return to England to be closer to Noel's family and to give their children a new experience.

Noel and Diana continued to teach, first at The New School in Kings Langley, and then at Elmfield, in Stourbridge, Noel focusing more on the older children, while Diana taught the younger ones.

After seven years in England, in the early 70's they returned to Canada to teach at the Waldorf School in North Vancouver. By this time their children had graduated, left home, and remained behind in England to complete their studies.

Noel and Diana taught at the Vancouver Waldorf School for seven years. During this time their daughter and later their son joined them in Vancouver. Also, during this time Noel and Diana had a grandson, the son of their daughter, Tara.

In 1980, Diana took a temporary teaching position at the Honolulu Waldorf School, while Noel remained behind in Vancouver to finish his class. In 1981 he joined Diana in Honolulu where they became the founders of Kula Makua--Adult Waldorf Education. All the loved ones that they survived, their mothers, sisters, son and grandson all passed away during this time.

During his many years at the Honolulu Waldorf School, Noel taught a variety of subjects, including sciences in grades 7-8, woodworking, folk dancing, May Pole dances, Ancient Greek, Bothmar gymnastics, and coached teachers in presenting science lessons.

Both Noel and Diana were active in the Anthroposophical Society and he served as chair for a brief time. Noel always insisted that the Medieval Christmas plays should be done every year, and directed or acted in many of them.

Camphill Eurythmy School



**Applications are now being taken for
September 2008**

We offer the opportunity to train in the art of eurythmy within the social-therapeutic setting of Botton Village (Camphill Village Trust)

Enquiries to:

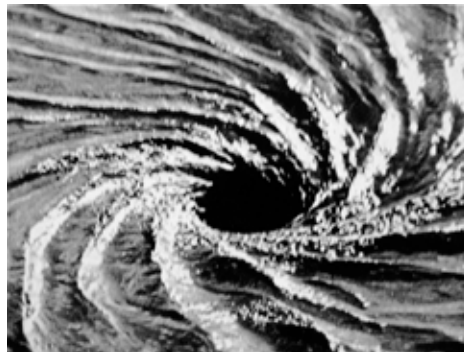
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North Yorks, YO21 2NJ. U.K.

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E-mail: camphill.eurythmy@virgin.net

www.camphilleurythmy.org.uk



Mahalo!

Many thanks to Phyl Dwyer, otherwise known in Hawai'i as Farmer Phyl, for 10 years of producing Pacifica Journal. Multitalented and many-skilled, Phyl has managed to do all the desktop publishing of PJ in addition to running a biodynamic farm and raising a family. He has recently moved to Honolulu from the Big Island and will teach blacksmithing, among other things, at the Honolulu Waldorf School.

Welcome to Julian Sydow, who has taken up the task of producing Pacifica Journal, beginning with this issue! Julian is a HWS graduate, architectural designer, and computer consultant.

Mahalo nui loa, to both Phyl and Julian!

Workshop on biodynamic agriculture in Shanti Sewa Griha community

Kathmandu, Nepal ,2, 3 ,and 4 April 2008

“The Shanti Sewa Griha” community had asked me last year to give an introduction in biodynamic agriculture for their farmers.

Shanti Sewa Griha is a very vibrant community which started in 1992, taking care of the medical needs of 13 leprosy patients. From a small beginning the community has grown into a place where 1200 people live and work. For those patients who had been cured, workshops were founded, to name a few: weaving, paper printing, sewing, felt-making and even from the waste paper collected in the city, the making of paper bricks to fuel the cooking fires.

To provide the community with food, gardens were established, first around the eco village at Budhanilkantha, outside Kathmandu, where many ex- patients live and where their children attend a Waldorf kindergarten and school.

Lately more land has been acquired at Sundarijal and families settled on two separate farms. From the beginning the farmers have been growing organically, also using their own traditional practices.

Between 2 and 4 April about 30 farmers in Sundarijal outside Kathmandu came together for a workshop. Also many farmers from the surroundings had been invited to attend. During three days I discussed with them and demonstrated in a practical way the principles of biodynamic farming. It was possible to apply the preparation, thanks to the generosity of the gardeners of the Goetheanum

We stirred and applied the cow horn manure preparation 500 and made a large compost heap in which the compost preparations were inserted. As the farm has several cows there was a good supply of manure.

It was wonderful to see how engaged the farmers were and how they connected to this for them new way of caring for the fertility of the soil.

After this workshop we visited the second farm at Sundarijal.

Very impressive is Shanti Sewa's initiative to get permission from the government to use waste land in the city of Kathmandu. When this permission is given, a small house is built where the farmer and his family will live and the land is then transformed

into a flourishing vegetable garden. And they need a lot of vegetables as they have to provide food not only for the 1200 people in the community but also daily for the 600 meals they provide for whoever is in need of food.

After the workshop we were approached by other organizations, some having quite some land, also wanting to learn more about the biodynamic way of farming. I hope to respond to that request and to a further deepening of the biodynamic principles next year.

At the end of our stay Krishna Gurung the manager of Shanti Sewa and 2 German volunteers, Angela Nitsche and Ursula Signer and I visited the National Botanical Gardens near Lalitpur, to investigate whether the biodynamic compost preparations plants are growing in Nepal. This is indeed the case apart from *Valeriana officinalis*. There is however an other valerian indigenous to Nepal. So it is possible to grow the preparation plants and to make the compost preparations in Nepal.

The greatest challenge however will be to collect enough cow horns to make the cow horn manure preparation.

We also learnt about the first biodynamic initiative in Nepal “One World”, a 9 ha herb growing farm in the West of Nepal. One World also works with 2 cooperatives, one a wild plant collectors co-op, the other a 122 families co-op farming about 70 hectares of arable land organically.

This article is not meant to be a complete report of the activities of Shanti Sewa . I have focused my article on the biodynamic workshop and the land use.

Hans van Florenstein Mulder





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