

Pacifica Journal

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Mangoes, Monsoons, and Meeting of Peoples: Asia-Pacific Conferences in the Philippines

Van James, Honolulu, Hawai'i

It was mango season in the Philippines and the monsoon had begun earlier in May than usual. The weather was hot and humid but over 300 anthroposophists and Waldorf teachers from all over Asia (20 countries) made their way to Quezon City in greater Manila for two interwoven conferences on the theme of the "Foundations of Human Experience and the Challenges of Modern Life on Children's Development and Education."

The Asia-Pacific Initiative Group Delegates Meeting

The conferences were preceded by a gathering of Asia-Pacific Initiative Group (APIG) delegates from various countries who reported on developments, shared insights and generally reported updates to one another. A study on the "Four characteristics and directions of the Anthroposophical Society," was led by Cornelius Pietzner, member of the Executive Council at the Goetheanum, on the first day of meetings and, on the second day, a discussion of "What does it mean to live in the Age of Michael," was guided by Paul Mackay, also of the Executive Council. There was a rich exchange of ideas on these topics and how they related to the Asian context. With many changes to this delegates group since its first meeting in 1996, the group resolved to continue working toward a more conscious networking of initiatives in the region.





The Asia-Pacific Anthroposophical Conference

The daily rhythms of the Foundation Stone Meditation sounded forth each morning and participants of the two conferences, all 324, moved the sounds in eurythmy with the guidance of Sue Simpson, General Secretary from New Zealand. The three-day Asia-Pacific Anthroposophical Conference and the seven-day Asian Waldorf Teacher's Conference ran simultaneously between May 1-8, 2009, sharing keynote speaker Christof Wiechert and cultural presentations from the host country, and later the participant countries. During the rest of the time the two groups broke into separate workshops and discussion groups dealing with the conference theme, but directed toward an anthroposophic vantage point or a Waldorf educational perspective. Additional talks and conversations on New Ecology, New Economy, and the New Social Order brought both depth and breadth to this three-day conference. Meetings and Lessons of the School of Spiritual Science also took place.

The Asian Waldorf Teacher's Conference

The Waldorf school's morning verse was recited from the fourth morning on, both in English and in different Asian languages. Christof Wiechert masterfully crafted the morning lectures around the first six years of the Waldorf school's development as it unfolded under the direction of Rudolf Steiner. The teachers meetings, the community relations, the government interaction, school management, and student-teacher dynamics all established an archetypal picture of the Waldorf school that somehow still holds true to this day. The kinds of crises that occurred in the first school in Stuttgart repeat themselves even today in 21st century Waldorf schools. Throughout the fascinating history of the first school, Christof Wiechert seamlessly injected examples of recent research that confirms the wisdom of many of Steiner's original suggestions for meeting the challenges in his day. For instance, resilience studies show the importance of children having a caretaker or adult model, imitation as a way of learning, and "authori-

tative" education; all of which support the original Waldorf impulse. It was also rewarding and often quite humorous to hear about the various "Waldorf misunderstandings," such as cutting the corners off of kindergarten painting paper and teaching form drawing as a main lesson block--things never introduced by Rudolf Steiner.

The Teachers Conference included many practical and artistic workshops appropriate to the different subject areas and class levels of the Steiner Schools. All the while, Chinese translators were busy whispering in a soft, constant murmur, interpreting the workshop leaders and speakers—Chinese (45) and Taiwanese (71) made up the largest number of country participants. School reports in the afternoons and cultural presentations in the evenings brought the Philippines and other Asian countries to life in many joyful and colorful ways. The break times too offered important moments for getting to know this friendly and spiritually charged segment of the world-wide Waldorf movement. As Raphael Lasso, leader of the Anthroposophical Group in the Philippines noted about his country, "Filipinos love a party!" And that is what this conference felt like—a warm, friendly, easy-going, yet intense and richly rewarding celebration. There was a kind of geographic medicine and folk soul influence at work behind the sharing of Waldorf pedagogical practices in this place.

A Gathering Storm and a Welcome Clearing

As the Teacher's Conference came to a conclusion a typhoon threatened to flood the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization venue, beautifully decorated by the local anthroposophical group, and participants wondered if homebound flights would be cancelled the next day. Florian Oswald, a Swiss high school science teacher stepped in to give the final lecture for Christof Wiechert who, much to every-



Above left: Morning eurythmy at Asia-Pacific Anthroposophical Conference. Above: East meets West in conference notes taken in western script on Asian formatted paper.



Shadow puppet play presented by Chinese teachers at cultural evening during the Third Asian Waldorf Teacher's Conference.

one's disappointment, had come down with a fever the night before and was unable to leave his bed. But on that final day, the weather broke (and later we heard the fever did too), the sun came out, and a most fitting conclusion to the weeks of delightful work together unfolded. The rewards of the conference will surely be spread far and wide throughout Asia in the months and years to come, until the next Asian Waldorf Teachers Conference in India in 2011.

The Philippine organizers did a fantastic job of hosting this event, to the point of coming in under budget and returning money to each participant (some donated this back to the next conference). Thanks to Mary Joan and Brenda Fajardo who, together with a very capable team, made this conference such a success; and to the on-going work of Hans van Mulder, General Secretary of the Asian Region, and Nana Goebbel, of the Friends of Rudolf Steiner Education, who have overseen its planning—many thanks. Interest in Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education in Asia is much like the spring mangoes of the Philippines —abundant, green on the outside, but nevertheless ripe and ready for harvesting.



Anthroposophical Initiatives and Anthroposophically Inspired Activities in the Philippines

[This is an edited version of the Country Report given at the Asia-Pacific Initiative Group meeting in Manila, May 2009.—PJ Editor]

Anthroposophical Group of the Philippines (AGP)

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Currently, the AGP is revisiting the work it does in the Philippines. This is a result of various changes that group has been undergoing. In 2008, the AGP committed to conducting at least nine public lectures in its continuing effort to bring Anthroposophy to the general public. A total of seven lectures were held covering a wide range of topics from biography to the 12 senses. For 2009, its main focus for the first half of the year is the hosting of the APAC conference in Manila.

The AGP continues to hold monthly meetings although this is currently under review with the idea to ensure the availability of participation from the membership. During the monthly meetings, a study on the Mystery Plays was initiated and continues in every monthly meeting. Additionally, the monthly meetings have also become a venue to discuss the more basic concepts of anthroposophy as a way for each member to revisit their understanding, and more importantly, their questions on the same. The First Class continues to meet on a monthly basis.

Late in 2008, the AGP was also invigorated by the joining of over 30 new members, based primarily in Mindanao, an island in south Philippines. As a result of this, Mindanao now holds about half the membership of the AGP. The AGP Board has recently included two of these members on its board to ensure that our colleagues in Mindanao are properly represented.

Another area that is being tackled is the organization of the AGP library. Books acquired or donated over the years have been stored, not readily accessible to the general public. Now, the books have been organized and may be accessed by the general public during library hours. Library membership is also available.

The AGP continues to celebrate the festivals of the year. In the past, due to the participation of many members in the activities of the Christian Community, joint celebrations were explored. It is the general assessment of both the AGP and the Christian Community in the Philippines that it is good to have separate celebrations, not to ensure the separation of the two groups, but rather to preserve the different perspectives the two groups bring to the festivals. Both the AGP and Christian Community hope to reach a wider audience in this manner.

The AGP will continue to carry the mother substance of anthroposophy in support of the various initiatives in the country.

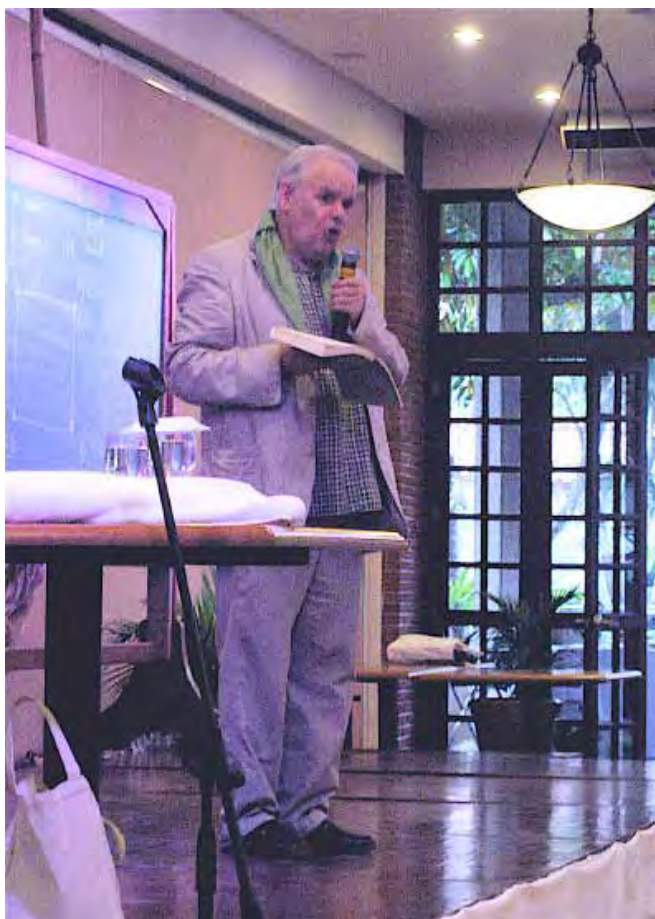
Acacia School

Sta. Rosa, Laguna

The seeds of Acacia School were first sewn nine years ago by a group of parents. It began in a parent's home in a residential subdivision in Alabang, South of Manila. These parents wanted Waldorf Education for their little children and because the Manila Waldorf School was too far for their children to travel to at that time, they decided to start a playgroup at their

home with the support and blessings of some of the founders of the Manila Waldorf School. The playgroup was formally named The Secret Garden.

Many children passed through The Secret Garden and it ran for four years. By the end of the four years there were a total of 17 children and two classes, a kindergarten and a parent toddler class. When many of the children were coming close to the grade school age, the parents decided it was time to make the playgroup an official school and find an official home it, one where it would be possible for a whole school to grow from kinder to class 12. They were very fortunate to have a 1.3-hectare property leased to them for a minimal cost of 1Peso a year. The initial lease was for 10 years. So in 2003, Acacia school was officially born. The school has grown since. The pioneer class is entering class 6 this coming school year 2009-2010. There is a combined class 4 and 5, classes 3, 2 and 1, one kindergarten and one parent toddler class. From a one building site with 3 classrooms, there are now four structures with seven classrooms, an administration office/faculty room, and a parent room that also serves as the school kitchen and library. This summer there is also a plan to build a multipurpose covered area. For now, the lease has been extended for another 10 years.



Christof Wiechert was the keynote speaker at the Asia-Pacific Anthroposophical Conference and the Third Asian Waldorf Teachers's Conference in the Philippines.

The children and community of Acacia have truly been blessed with beautiful, healthy surroundings, beautiful structures and classroom, fresh, clean air and a lot of space to play and explore. We are in an area that is rich with artistic craftsmanship and historical sites. We also have an active and concerned parent-body and hardworking and dedicated teachers and staff.

Basically, our primary need is an increase in enrolment. Our classes are small, between 5 to 9 children per class in the grade school last school year. We need a good marketing strategy to make ourselves more visible and more reachable to the public. We need to do more parent orientations for parent awareness. A second basic need is funding for both teacher training programs in the higher grades as well as funding to build future structures for the school. We also have a need for specialist teachers in mathematics, woodwork, eurythmy and bothmer gymnastics. Because we are gradually leaving the pioneer phase and entering the administrative phase, we need administrative guidance that has an emphasis in working the Waldorf Way.

We are looking forward to entering our 7th school year in Acacia School and our deepest wish is to be able to serve as many children and their families as we can possibly reach

Integrative Community Health and Development Program

Purok 2, Lanao Kidapawan City 9600

Our goal is to participate in creating a healing and nurturing community so that the Filipino can have the space to emerge as a fully conscious individual, responsibly participating in the movement towards the healing and integral development of our society and the earth.

Current Activities:

1. Clinic: Integrative Health Services: Filipino Traditional Medicine, Massage, Herbal Medicine, Acupuncture, Tuina, Moxibustion, Cupping, Anthroposophic Medicines (remedies, external treatments, biography-art, eurythmy with Grace Zozobrado).
2. Training:
 - a. Community Health Trainers Training: Anthroposophic View of the Human Being, Society, Environment & Cosmos and Introduction to BD Farming, Nutrition, Child Care & Child Rearing, Meaning of Illness and Healing, External Treatment, Herbal Medicine Preparation and Indications, Caring for the Sick Creating a Healing Space.
 - b. Orientation on Steiner Education
 - c. Basic Acupuncture Training
 - d. Introductory Seminar on Biography-Art Therapy
 - e. Patient Health Class every last Saturday of

the Month

The fees for our services in the clinic and training/ seminars are socialized.

3. BD Farm for our medical plants, rice, fruit trees
4. Herbal Processing for Clinic Use only
5. Community Health Organizing & Development program in partnership with 5 farming Communities.

Manila Waldorf School

Contact: contact@manilawaldorfschool.edu.ph

Website: www.manilawaldorfschool.edu.ph

- o School initiators Bella Tan and Mary Joan Fajardo have been meeting since 1992. Bella was trained at the Melbourne Waldorf School in Australia and Mary Joan at the Waldorf Institute in New York, USA, which later became Sunbridge College. They began a Kindergarten for Ikapati farmers.' Kathryn Perlas joined them to form a triumvirate. She trained at the Waldorf Institute, then in Detroit, Michigan, USA.
- o Kindergarten (Palaruan) started on July 18, 1994, at the garden pavilion in Mary Joan's home at Rolling Hills, Quezon City. There were 10 children. Bella and Mary Joan co-taught. Kathryn was consultant.
- o Class 1 began in June 1996 in the garage at Rolling Hills with four pupils. The following year it became a combined Class 1/2 with six pupils. The combined class grew in number the maximum of which was 24 at one grade level. This pioneer class stayed as a combined class until Upper School (Kawayan) and graduated eight students.
- o A Toddler-Adult Program (Paslitan) was initiated by Bella in 1997 at Rolling Hills. It was a program for the parents but the toddlers came along to play. There were two other sets of combined classes in the Lower School (Paaralan) thereafter, the children in these classes are now in single classes at Kawayan: Classes 8, 9, 10 and 11.
- o Only single classes were handled thereon and changes in main class teachers.
- o The school venue transferred from Rolling Hills to Heroes Hills, Quezon City, in a 3,000 sq. meter lot with one old building used for the Kindergarten. A new building was constructed to house the Lower School. The transfer was done in November 1999. Upper School (Kawayan) was initiated by the pioneer class parents (Isa and Isaac Belmonte, Cherry and Dondi Mapa, Lormie and Raph Lazo, Dr. Lolet Tan; Dr. Divina Hey-Gonzales; and others – Mary Ann and Mike Antigua, Beth de Castro) and became its teachers. It was a home school situation for a year. In 2005, it merged with the Manila Waldorf School. Its venue is in an old house separate from



Some of the Filipinas from the Manila Waldorf School that performed at the Third Asian Waldorf Teacher's Conference in the Philippines.

Lower School campus, owned by one of the parent-teacher Isa Belmonte.

- o Other teachers and staff presently at the school:
Kindergarten:– Myra Pandalan, Clarissa Jose, Marjorie Acilo, Rosario Salibay, Liela Abulencia; Lower School: -- Nenita Aranas, Joei de la Cruz, Kristin C. Upper School: --Tintin Montes, Jonald Morales, Dr.

Lolet Tan, Meila.

The Manila Waldorf School is a full school from Kindergarten until Upper School. It also has a Toddler-Adult Program for parents who wish to know more about parenting and child-rearing practices the Waldorf way. We hope to resume this program once a week in the coming year.

Our new teachers are being trained through the training given by Gamot-Cogon Institute in Iloilo, Visayas islands.

We request visiting teachers to give workshops on their expertise to all our teachers. We are very glad to have visiting mentors who come and observe classes as well as give feedback to the teachers.

We are happy to have a Pedagogical Eurythmist come to school once a year. We feel fortunate to have a Therapeutic Eurythmist who helps the children and support the class teachers.

The school has a very active Board of Trustees who is making sure that we run efficiently and smoothly. We are also thankful that we are pedagogically on track.



Anthroposophia Wellness Center

Petron Station, T. Morato cor. Timog Ave., Quezon City
Tel. No. 3734807

The Foundation's task and mission was conceived in the Spiritual realm inspired by the task of Archangel Michael that is related to the consciousness soul age. The President came up with the initial concept paper of the Foundation in line with this task.

On the Soul realm which is the seat of desire, sympathy and antipathy, a group of people met in January 2003 and every week thereafter to discuss the initial vision and mission of the Foundation. In June 17, 2003, the mission, vision and objectives of the Foundation were finalized for the purpose of filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC").

The first meeting was attended by the following individuals: Divina Hey-Gonzales, M.D., Angela T. Lopez, Susan Calalay-Yñiguez, Alberto J. Villaraza III, Mimi Abes, Betty F. Merritt, Aurea Lopez, Jennifer Madamba, M.D., Isa Belmonte. Then in the 2nd and succeeding meetings Atty. Christina S. Tioseco, Cecilia O. Lioanag and Bernardita A. Quimpo joined the group.

In March 2003 most of the said individuals participated in the International Post-Graduate Medical Training in Tagaytay and had its own workshop group under Simon Bednarek, M.D. to discuss objective setting and organizational matters for the Foundation.

The members went into the process of log frame development that is both an end and a process in itself. The mission, vision and objectives of the Foundation was discussed, refined and finalized. In undergoing this process the Ether Force of the Foundation was born and concretized. And the mission, vision and objectives were incorporated as the purposes of the Foundation in its Articles of Incorporation.

Finally the Foundation took its physical form in June 20, 2003 when the SEC granted it a registration certificate. The ideal now came down and found its carrier in the Foundation.

We envision spiritually conscious, healthy and free individuals living their life's mission with dignity in a transformed society caring for humanity and nature.

We commit ourselves to actively participate in the realization of consciousness of wellness and being through Anthroposophic Medicine at the individual, family and community level.

Currently the Foundation is busy as the local organizer of the Biography Counseling and Art Therapy Course. The Foundation brings in tutors from Hibernia College, Stroud U.K. to teach this course that will lead to those who finish it to be certified Biography Counselors and Art Therapist. This course has been running for 3 years now and is in its final year. There are a total of 22 aspiring candidates for certification in this course.



Don Bosco Foundation for Sustainable Development

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biocracy_db@bios-dynamis.org

Website: www.bios-dynamis.org

The goals and vision of our organization have to do with community empowerment.

The underlying basis or the backdrop of everything that we do is anthroposophy although we are only barely scratching anthroposophy, we try to apply on the ground, in the field whatever little we understand from it so that it becomes truly wisdom we own. Currently, we are focused on Sustainable Agriculture with biodynamic farming as centerpiece. Our initiative spans from seeds to shelves. Our programs are focused on the Farming Families as producers.

Extension:

- Sustainable Agriculture Productivity Development focused on Surplus Production (SAPD-SP)
- Institutional Development Support Services
- Green Women
 - Micro-industry and Enterprise Development
 - Holistic Alternative Health Systems
 - Population Management (Values Formation, Responsible Parenthood & Fertility Management)
 - Peace-building in Moro Communities through Sustainable Agriculture development
 - Gender Education

Research:

- Community Seed Conservation , Development & Gene Banking
 - Education & Training
 - Research & Development (Participatory/ community-based and Center-based)
 - Institutional Development Support & Sustainable Enterprise Development
 - Policy Advocacy
- Integrated Sustainable Agriculture Research Development & Extension Services
 - Participatory Research & Capability Building of Farmer-Research Teams
 - Publication of Manuals, Technoguides and Research Materials
 - Technical Research on SA and BD agriculture in laboratory farms
 - Technical Research & development on Micro-industries in Support of the Women Initiatives
 - Training/Extension and Technical Advisory Services
 - Development of showcase and instructive models of self-sustaining and financially

viable biodynamic and diversified mentor farms

Alternative Credit Facility:

- Production Loan Credit Line window
- Emergency/Providential Loan window

Processing, Marketing & Distribution:

- Alternative Marketing Services
 - Grain Center (Warehousing, Milling)
 - Trading
 - Retailing through 6 Bios Dynamic Health Foods Centers and institutional buyers

Product Integrity and Quality Control Services:

- Organic Certification Program

Special Projects

- Youth Camp & Training Center

We hope to get the Biodynamic Farmers Association of the Philippines organized in the future. Unwritten on our brochure is the fact that we continue to promote anthroposophy through basic courses we conduct solely on anthroposophy and through integration in the trainings in Anthroposophic Medicine and Biodynamic agriculture.

The Homeopathic Grail Center and Clinic

Contact: *Joaquin G. Tan*

(Producer of quality potentized homeopathic remedies inspired by Anthroposophic pharmacological processes and formulas. An alternative health clinic where natural remedies and processes are used to help people heal themselves)

The Homeopathic Grail Center was founded in 1995 to service the needs of physicians wanting to use Homeopathic/Anthroposophic remedies in their practices and to make the remedies available and affordable to many Filipinos. A number of mother tinctures and low potency medications are imported from Europe. They are then diluted and potentized to potencies most commonly prescribed by doctors. Some local species of plants and small animals are also made into remedies using processes used in the Anthroposophic pharmacopea.

The Homeopathic Grail Clinic began in 1993 to initially help friends and their relatives experience a new perspective in Natural healing. This means, totally without chemical drugs, but an integrative natural approach to healing using the principles and therapeutic practices of Naturopathy, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Filipino Herbal Medicine, Homeopathy, Anthroposophic Medicine and Spiritual Psychology.

Seminars and workshops are also given to organized groups (here and abroad upon request) like people's organizations and civil society organizations to help them (as well as empower them) learn the intricacies of natural healing and (if they wish) make their own homeopathic remedies from local sources. Communities and individuals who have been making their own remedies are joined together in a loose association called "Homeopathic Producers Enterprises" or HOPE.



Traditional dance performance at the cultural evening of the Third Asian Waldorf Teacher's Conference in Manila.

Rudolf Steiner Education in the Philippines (RStEP)

Contact: c/o bellactan@yahoo.com

Website: www.rstep.org.ph

RStEP was formally established in 1994 by the pioneers of Rudolf Steiner Education in the Philippines who began studying Anthroposophy & Waldorf Education since 1987. After introducing the idea of this pedagogy in the country in 1991, the organization founded the first Waldorf Kindergarten and School in 1994 and 1996, respectively. It has been organizing and conducting teacher training courses, seminars and lectures for interested educators, parents and individuals since 1996. The organization continues to support beginning Waldorf and Waldorf-inspired initiatives in various parts of the Philippines.

RStEP aims to initiate, support, organize and coordinate Waldorf- and Waldorf-related initiatives and other activities that would help promote Steiner Education around the country.

Introductory courses in Anthroposophy, Steiner Education, Child-care & Parenting. Teacher Training in Early Childhood & Grade School. Kindergarten visits and support activities. Lectures & Seminar/workshops in other related topics such as Speech, Eurythmy, Crafts, Special Education, and the like.

Mikael Playgarden

Contact: *Marylee Mendoza*

Mikael was founded by a group of people who completed the Foundation Studies in Anthroposophy and introductory course in Steiner Early Childhood Education. It was intended mainly as a co-parenting program for working mothers & fathers who have children age 2 to 5 years. It is a full-day daycare from Monday till Friday, 11 months a year. The Mikael Playgarden aims to care for children from 2 to 5 years of age, following the principles of Rudolf Steiner, and in close coor-

dination with their parents. Parent education is an important component of this program.

Current Activities: Full-day childcare of children from 2 to 5 years. Parents education through lectures and parents-educators private conferences.

Eurythmy Therapy (private clinical practice)

Contact: Grace Zozobrado-Hahn

gracecurativeeurythmy@yahoo.com.ph

Since Grace returned from training in 2003, she has been practising anthroposophic medicine, with focus on eurythmy therapy.

- To provide eurythmy therapy to patients needing this modality, in cooperation with anthroposophic medical colleagues
- To help in the anthroposophic medical trainings
- To help create greater awareness about eurythmy as an art form

The Philippine Association of Anthroposophic Health Practitioners Inc. (PAAHPI)

Contact Person: Dr. Moon Maglana (current president)

rmaglanamd@yahoo.com

In the Philippines, pioneering doctors started attending study groups in anthroposophy as early as the 1990's. Later, these doctors traveled to Dornach, Switzerland to attend the English Course in Anthroposophic Medicine conducted by the Medical Section of the Goetheanum School of Spiritual Science. Eventually, beginning in the year 2003 and every year thereafter, the Medical Section organized the International Postgraduate Medical Training in Anthroposophic Medicine (IPMT) in the Philippines and other countries. The aim of these annual trainings is to prepare the physicians for their certification as anthroposophic doctors. At present, PAAHPI has thirteen members. Twelve of the members are based in Metro Manila and one practices in Mindanao. The specialties represented include Family Medicine/General Practice/Community Medicine (9), Obstetrics-Gynecology (1); Pediatrics (1); Surgery (1); Eurythmy therapy (1).

Kidslife Foundation

Contact: Grace Ferreros

Grace Ferreros has been in the profession of garment manufacturing, productivity consulting and training with small businesses since the late 1970s. In 1997, in her search for a child-friendly and stress-free kindergarten for her son, she discovered Waldorf education through a seminar conducted in Cebu for public school teachers by Horst Hellmann. She was

immediately drawn to and inspired by its goal to "protect the magic and wonder of childhood through a creative and artistic approach that nurtures the child's heart, hands and mind."

In 1998, Grace Ferreros co-founded the Cebu Children's Garden (CCG), a Waldorf-inspired kindergarten, with the help of the Manila Waldorf School. She was the main teacher from 1998 - 2001. She earned a Certificate in Waldorf Early Childhood Education from the International Waldorf Kindergarten Association of Stuttgart, Germany and the Rudolf Steiner Education in the Philippines.

In April 2001, CCG decided to close its kindergarten due to changes in life decisions by its founding members. One member pursued Waldorf teacher training in the US and became a Waldorf teacher there, one transferred to Manila Waldorf School to become a grade school teacher, and another transferred to a school when her son went into Grade One.

After the kindergarten closed, Grace attended the International Whitsun Conference in Hanover, Germany in May 2001 that greatly inspired her to continue her work with children through Waldorf education.

With this burning desire to continue offering Waldorf education in her individual capacity, and after a review of her biography together with advice given by her anthroposophic friends, Grace decided that her path should be towards teacher training due to her experience in training and consulting and also her experience as a Waldorf kindergartener. Kidslife was then born on August 6, 2001.

We organize initiatives and facilitate programs for the early childhood care and education of young children 2 – 6 years old in Cebu and the Visayas. These activities are centered on play and the development of creativity and imagination inspired by the Waldorf approach to education.



Philippines Asian Teachers Conference 2009: In Gratitude

Ben Cherry, *Quezon City, Philippines, May 2009*

[The following was a skit-verse performed on the last night of The Third Asian Waldorf Teacher's Conference in the Philippines with veiled reference to Nana Goebbels, Christof Jafke, Sue Simpson, Michael Burton, Jane Gilmer, Van James, and Christof Wiechert.]

The call goes out through Asia for the gathering of the clan,
From the snowy Himalayas to the Korean River Han,
From the island of Hokkaido to the dusty Indian plain,
Across the Chinese mainland to the South land that longs for rain:
'Come, come, you Waldorf warriors, protectors of the child,
To the land of the Filipinos, on whom beauty and grace have smiled.'

For the lady of Germania has called us all by name,
 As she blazes through the Waldorf world on her chariot of flame,
 Pulled by fiery dragons bold - yet in their hearts there is gold,
 Gold she spreads among the poor,
 The poor old Waldorf teachers, who are always needing more!

Above the busy airport, where the world's winds have flowed,
 Angels and folk souls gather to make a silver road,
 As planeload after planeload disgorge their precious load.

Out jump the brave choleric with energetic stride,
 While sanguines sing around them, 'Oh joy, we have arrived.'
 Behind them, pale and fearful, melancholics drag their feet,
 Wondering what they've left behind and what they're going to meet.
 But lo, who is missing? Let us enter in and peep...
 Ah yes, our dear phlegmatics are still fast asleep.
 They come, these noble temperaments, with hearts fiery and faint,
 Even those who trim the corners of the paper when they paint!

The tall man from Germania, sparkling with words and song,
 Each morning lifts our spirits up: it doesn't take so long.

Then the lady of the sacred dance unites us with the world
 Of angels and of nature sprites, within, around and in the heights,
 A miracle unfurled.

Next come those mighty sounders - and I'll tell you something more,
 One stands upon New Zealand, the other in Singapore,
 And they call across the waters whenever they feel alone,
 To avoid the radiation from the mobile telephone.

At back of hall there sits a man and we all know his name;
 He supports the hall's acoustics, so the speakers can declaim.

The big man from the castle upon the Dornach hill

Is standing there and smiling, until the hall is still.
 He points his index finger and wheels round in a trice:
 'Please turn off that machinery or we'll all be turned to ice!'

A surge of Waldorf feeling takes hold of one and all
 And naked compassion is a life stream in the hall.
 Within each lonely stomach, behind each stomach wall,
 Our breakfast stirs, begins to dance
 Into a lemniscate in a trance,
 Through belly and bosom, biceps and brain,
 Bringing life and coherence, like soft summer rain.

There stands the brave Sir Christof, his Ego firm and clear,
 He pulls up his etheric body and holds his astral near
 (though not so close of course as to let it be imprisoned by the body).
 'You see' says he, 'it's simple. I will tell you all, of course.'
 And he giggles and he hops around and jumps upon his horse.
 'The answer isn't in your fist or knuckle, thigh or bum.
 It is an iron consequence. It is a rule of thumb.'

A buzz runs through the ether and ears pick up the word
 Of a Waldorf misunderstanding, too dreadful to be heard.
 For some amidst that gathering carry a shameful truth
 Of having taught form drawing as a main lesson in their youth!

So karma - and the lady - has drawn us together now,
 With our pink Weleda toothpaste and the lines upon our brow;
 But what we do next is not fixed in either earth or sky,
 For within us we carry the power to change; 'tis the secret of the I.
 And conflicts that we've carried from past lives long forgot...
 We can cook them, as in Thailand, cook them in a pot.

Like rain from heaven gently falling, souls have come again,
 In all these lands of East and West, to fertilize the grain.
 For the world is a temple now, in its regions and as a whole,
 And the stage on which this drama unfolds, it is the human soul.



Ben Cherry delivers his poetic conference summary at the Third Asian Waldorf Teacher's Conference.



The Waldorf Steiner Education Association in Singapore

Anthroposophical teachers and representatives pass through Singapore and are surprised to find a very modern city with the majority of people living in apartments and little of the easy-going "kampung" life that was prevalent as little as 35 years ago. Of course, Singapore with its relative wealth might appear at first to be "less deserving." A deeper search reveals that Singapore more than anywhere, needs Waldorf education just as desperately, if not more so, than other Asian cultures. Singaporeans are losing their cultural history and traditions, to the all-pervasive "globalization" at a very rapid rate.

In 2001, an anthroposophical education initiative was started up in Singapore. During this time we have received support from Dr. Renate Breipohl, Ms. Nila Chambers, Ms. Thanh Cherry, Mr. Peter Patterson, Ms. Abhisiree Javanaphet, Lisa Romero, and Ms. Marjorie Theyer

In 2003, The Waldorf Steiner Education Association was registered in Singapore as a not-for-profit society by its 13 founding members. It aims to promote and develop Waldorf education in Singapore by providing financial support for teacher training, Waldorf early years education programmes and parent education workshops.

Activities

Early Childhood Program

Activities run by the Waldorf Steiner Education Association include a Early Childhood Program – for children aged 3.5 – 6 years old. This program is run by Ms. Saori Kanamaru, a Japanese expatriate who joined the Initiative in August 2007. Ms. Saori received her training in Ireland. Saori is supported in her work by two local teachers: Ms. Yo Ju Ping and Ms. Toh Yeng Yen. Yeng Yen is currently studying for her local early childhood teaching diploma, sponsored by the Association.

We have a number of candidates who have expressed an interest in taking up Steiner early childhood teaching – sadly, at this juncture, we have no facility to train them. Ju Ping will be leaving us at the end of this term to spend some time at a religious retreat, and we have recruited an enthusiastic replacement, Ms Durga Ganesan. Durga holds the Singaporean teaching diploma and has some classroom experience. She is currently studying part-time for a degree in early childhood.

We currently have 14 children in the program which runs 5 mornings per week, from 8:45 to 12:45, with the intention to increase this number to 18 by April. The majority of our students are Singaporeans, long-term residents and expatriates thus reflecting the multicultural society that is modern-day Singapore.

Playgroups

There are currently four morning playgroups run at the Association's premises. These playgroups are run by members of the Association. Each playgroup has space for 8 children accompanied by a parent. These playgroups are currently in English. We are in the process of including a Mandarin-speaking playgroup.

Craft Group

The craft group meets on a weekly basis at a Buddhist Vihara (nunnery) and is also a drop-in venue for all parents to meet together with their children, to talk on parenting issues or, learn craft skills. The group is hosted

by members of the Association who volunteer to teach, and share different crafts, as well as parenting support.

Study Group

Our study group was instigated by Jane Gilmer, the Anthroposophical Delegate for Singapore, and is open to anyone interested in coming together in a group setting to deepen their understanding of Steiner's work. The group is currently reading "Knowledge of Higher Worlds" and is pleased to be supported in this endeavour by regular input from Hans Mulder.

Festival Celebrations

Parents, teachers, members and non-members all come together to collaborate on producing festival celebrations for the whole community. We regularly celebrate Chinese New Year, Easter, Deepavali, Christmas, as well as the smaller local holidays.

Workshops

We are always pleased when we are able to host teachers passing through Singapore who wish to offer their work to the local community. Since the last report was submitted at the Anthroposophical Conference in 2007, we have been able to offer workshops by the following teachers: Lisa Romero (Towards Health & Healing - Australia), Keturah Bryson (Anthroposophical Health – Australia), Louise Coigley (Storytelling – UK), Susan Perrow (Storytelling – Australia), Thanh Cherry (Early Childhood – Australia) Hans Mulder (Developmental Pictures from Anthroposophy – New Zealand), Christina Nielsen (Biography and Psychotherapy – Metavision, Australia) and Cornelius Pietzner (Community building – Switzerland).

Future Plans

Our future plans hinge on having enough teachers to enable us to expand. Fortunately, there are plans afoot to establish a teacher-training in the region (Singapore-Malaysia-Indonesia)



Chinese teachers perform at the Third Asian Waldorf Teacher's Conference.

as there are a number of initiatives now springing up in the region, as the interest in Steiner's approach to education grows.

Following discussions in person with Hans Mulder and Thanh Cherry, plus correspondence with Renate Breipohl, we are now seeking to connect with teachers who might be willing to come to this region in the role of senior mentor, to guide the many initiatives and, to run a regular training course for early childhood.

The successful establishment of such a training programme would be a watershed moment for this region, and undoubtedly see Waldorf Steiner Education expand in the area.

We are also in discussion with Joyce Low at Kg-Senang, with regard to the possible takeover of Kampung Senang's Whole Child Nurture Centre, which is a registered childcare programme, where we could insert our Waldorf/Steiner content into their registered premises.

Objectives

Short term:

We are very fortunate to have found a new long-term mentor - Shirley Bell McLeod. Shirley was referred to us by Ms. Thanh Cherry from Australia. She will be joining us in June to continue the mentoring position.

Set-up a Waldorf teacher training programme in this region to allow more teachers to develop their knowledge and, go on to become Steiner early childhood teacher educators.

Network with the Asia-Pacific Waldorf Community, so we may support each other, share mentoring and, strive together towards growing our initiatives into thriving kindergarten programmes.

Long Term:

Establish a Waldorf Kindergarten and/or Daycare programme in Singapore that is recognised by the Ministry of Education in Singapore (MOE) and by the International Federation for Waldorf Kindergartens.

Work to promote awareness of Waldorf Early Childhood in Singapore through outreach programmes.

Organize workshops based on Anthroposophy for the Waldorf community to enrich our understanding and commitment to Waldorf Education.

Participate in International / Asia Pacific Waldorf Education Conferences to network and support the growth of Steiner education within the region.

Other Initiatives

AECEs

The Association of Early Childhood Educators (Singapore) is an organization with over 800 members which includes teachers and parents. They have been very supportive by working closely with us to help promote a deeper understanding of Steiner Education through workshops and seminars. We also have been building up strong ties with other local groups here in Singapore such as the Asian Storytelling Network and Lapis Lazuli Light. (This local charity is founded by Dr. Lai Chu Nan,

a US-based Chinese doctor who promotes alternative health, environmental awareness and supports Steiner education.)

Kampung Senang

Joyce Low, Founder of the local charity, Kampung Senang, runs many workshops, some of which promote Waldorf-inspired ideas in the local community and provide a Waldorf-inspired day-care programme for children.

Artbeat Education

Linda Hall is an Anthroposophical Psychotherapist and founder of Artbeat. Its educational and artistic courses are all based on Steiner's indications and teachings. These are provided in the local schools for teachers and students. Artbeat is committed to providing quality professional training, development, and support to adults, teenagers, the elderly and children that enable each individual to develop optimal mental health and well-being. Artbeat is currently offering Artistic Counselling programmes from Certificate to Bachelor degree awarded by Irish International University of Europa.

Waldorf and Anthroposophy in China

Harry Wong, Chengdu, China

[This is an edited version of the Country Report given to the Asia-Pacific Initiative Group meeting in Manila, May 2009.—PJ Editor]

Initiatives in China

There are many people who have learned about Waldorf education from the Internet and from books. Some people have attended workshops and training courses in Chengdu and other cities or countries. Many courageous mothers have set up kindergartens in their apartment buildings for their children. Some of the mothers and teachers meet anthroposophy as they educate their children through Waldorf ideals. There is great interest in learning more. Unfortunately, there are too few learning materials in Chinese and most of the people cannot read English or German. As some of their children grow to grade school age, they are thinking of setting up Waldorf schools. People are interested in Waldorf education without knowing much anthroposophy. We do not promote anthroposophy as such for many reasons, but if the teachers and parents want to learn more about it, they can easily find a way.

Beijing: In the capital city in the north, the Waldorf movement was started by Wu Bei, a former college teacher who was trained at Emerson College. She set up a kindergarten room in an apartment in 2005. She worked with a kindergarten that was founded by a group of Chinese Christians. A year later, this initiative split apart. Wu Bei is now supporting two other mother's groups who set up two home kindergarten groups in Beijing. She has done a lot to introduce Waldorf education to Beijing parents. There is a big private kindergarten, which runs half as Montessori and half as Waldorf, under

Tammy Hughes (Waldorf kindergarten teacher who helped the Chengdu Waldorf school in 2004). There are some other groups who also want to set up training courses, kindergartens and schools. There is a great need for skills in working together as new initiatives are sprouting everywhere.

Guangzhou: Three year ago a dynamic mother, Jenney, in this biggest city on the south coast, set up a small home kindergarten in a rental house after attending the Chengdu Waldorf kindergarten teacher training course. Now the kindergarten has grown beyond their space and the children grew to school age. She now has a home school for 8 children from ages 7 to 10. She has also invited some new parents who have grade school age children to become teachers with her. In the mean time, there is a group of parents who have set up a first grade class for their own children. This group of parents is working with Jenney to combine the two groups of children. It will become a grade school with a kindergarten in the autumn.

Shanghai: A group of parents rented a flat in this modern city on the east coast of China and started a little kindergarten three years ago. They are doing very well and there are children on a waiting list. Some of their children are now of grade school age. Some mothers are preparing to set up a grade school within the year. In the mean time, they have organized workshops as well as invited foreign teachers that visit Shanghai to offer help. There was a German retired kindergarten teacher who mentored for a few months in 2008.

Hanzhou: In this beautiful lake city near Shanghai there is an instructor of the teacher training college introducing Waldorf education to the local community. She encouraged two sisters to take the kindergarten training course in Chengdu. After a few courses, they set up a home kindergarten two years ago. There is now great interest in a few cities around Shanghai.

Xian: Famous for its terra cotta soldiers are, this city has a kindergarten that was set up in an apartment three years ago. It has stayed small but it runs well. There are some children of grade school age. The mothers of those children also want to set up a grade school. The preparation is on-going. There is also a big educational company that runs six kindergartens and is interested in setting up one Waldorf kindergarten. The

young lady who runs the kindergarten went to Chengdu Waldorf School to take the training course. There is some doubt about the motivation of the company and why they want to run a Waldorf kindergarten.

Zhuhai: Here in this beautiful city on the south coast next to Macau there was a day-care center with a Waldorf kindergarten class four years ago. And there was some disagreement among the initiators so they closed down the day care center. The lady who started the Waldorf Kindergarten class set up a home kindergarten in an apartment with her teachers, in a new location. In the meantime, there is another couple that also set up a home kindergarten in an apartment. A former Chengdu Waldorf schoolteacher and administrator who

came from Zhuhai returned with her 7 year old daughter. She is now home schooling her daughter. There is some interest in working together to set up a grade school there.

Shenzhen: Across the border from Hong Kong in this modern, high-rise city there was a mother who set up a kindergarten in an apartment building a few weeks after she attended a Chengdu Waldorf school workshop. Tammy went to Shenzhen to help from Chengdu

Waldorf School. It closed down a year later. After two years there was a new kindergarten set up in a house. This kindergarten has hosted some workshops and spread interest to more parents. There is also a group of teachers running a kindergarten with three kindergarten groups in a large public (regular) kindergarten.

Chongzhou: In this middle size city near Mao's hometown there is a mother who attended the kindergarten training course in Chengdu, and has just rented a villa to start a home kindergarten. She started with 5 children two years ago. Now there is a long waiting list but other trained teachers are needed there.

Maoming: In the west of Guangdong there is a family run kindergarten transforming into Waldorf from a Montessori kindergarten. They have been working very hard to train their teachers and have invited mentors to their kindergarten. They have five kindergarten groups with over 150 children in all.

Chengdu: The Chengdu Waldorf School has grown almost ten times larger in the past three years. The school owns five



buildings and rebuilt the kindergarten after the earthquake damage last year. A new grade school building is to be built in a few months. There are about 30 teachers and assistant teachers, 120 children in the 6 kindergarten groups, and 52 children in the grade school from grade 1 to grade 7 (without a grade 6).

The kindergarten has expanded to five classes and a toddler group. There are 20 children in each of the new kindergarten rooms. There are over one hundred children on the waiting list for the kindergarten. Chengdu Waldorf kindergarten has a good reputation in Chengdu. The grade school is still in the process of building up. The school is still operating without a proper license. The main reason is that the school does not have enough proper buildings to meet the state requirement for schooling. In the meantime, the Waldorf School is so new to the government that they need time to digest its existence before they can approve the school.

The kindergarten and grade school teacher training is moving along. It has become very popular in China. It is surprising to see students coming from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Many participants experience that the training course is more than just education, but it is concerned with personal development as well. Only about half of the participants want to become teachers in the future. We hope that the teacher training course can keep up with the demands of the Waldorf movement in China because there are many former students who have set up kindergartens or are trying to set up schools in their own hometowns to practice Waldorf education and they need assistance.

There is also a practicing biodynamic garden in the school. There is some farmland divided into small patches and rented to parents and friends in school community for farming and gardening. Some of the land is used for farming and gardening lessons. There are two family farms practicing organic farming in the village near Chengdu that is being supported by an organic food co-up. The schoolteachers and parents get organic vegetable baskets once a week.

Challenges to the Waldorf Movement

Anthroposophy has not been able to develop along with Waldorf education at this stage. The “now” culture has been dominating the whole society in China. There is very little patience and little preparation when setting up Waldorf kindergartens. There is a great need for a teacher training in China in order to catch up to the development of schools in China.

All of the home-style kindergartens described in this report do not have legal registration except the Chengdu Waldorf kindergarten. It means that they are operating a business without a proper license. This makes it difficult to grow into a big kindergarten or school. A proper development model has not been found. In the mean time, people pay little attention to the Chinese laws and regulations and this has the potential to create serious problems for the future.

Travel Journal of an American Waldorf Teacher on Sabbatical (ch5)

Meg Gorman, Seattle, Washington

Guangzhou

My flight back to China was uneventful. When I arrived at the Guangzhou airport, the teacher who picked me up handed me a note from Tammy Hughes that told me I would be going directly to the kindergarten to give a lecture to parents on the four-fold human being. “Yipes!” I thought. I prepared my thoughts and notes as we drove. I was soon ushered into a room without a blackboard and with many parents crowded onto very small chairs. Fortunately, a handful of stones, some green plants and a turtle awaited me, so I had something to work with. One of two kindergartens in the Guangzhou area, these initiatives and the parents involved in them are eager for any education that is not like the ones they endured as children.

In the midst of all this my luggage disappeared briefly, but reappeared at the empty apartment in which I stayed with few amenities. After a poor night’s sleep, the next day was spent giving lectures in strange places, like the crowded room of a restaurant, and later a huddle on couches in a café. With no blackboard and little space, I was challenged quite a bit. The interesting part was the participant’s hunger for spiritual content including anthroposophy. I worked with basic things, like the six exercises. Very attentive, the listeners were full of good questions, but every historical reference I made had to be explained because my well-educated audience knew next to nothing about the world wars or China’s history. Translation was a real challenge. In one lecture, I spoke in English, which was translated (with corrections from those who spoke English) into Mandarin, which, in turn, was translated into Cantonese for my Southern Chinese audience. At least I had plenty of time to collect my thoughts. As the translations proceeded, I often wondered how much of what I was trying to say was really understood.

I was feeling a bit lost and confused about my work in Guangzhou, and especially frustrated about the strange venues





I had to work in, when Alice entered my life. Married to a German businessman, Alice is fluent in English, the only language she and her husband can use. With enormous generosity, she opened her home to me. Imaginative, funny and remarkably happy compared to so many other Chinese women, Alice is the mother of a beautiful four-year old, Karen, who is at the suburban Waldorf kindergarten. I soon learned her secret. As a child, Alice was sent to her grandmother where she was raised with many other children deep in the countryside, where the arms of government “reform” did not reach. She is a strong, cheerful, but gentle soul, who has a solid, practical heart as big as Asia. I felt safe and happy in her care.

It was spring in Guangzhou, once Canton, so there was beauty everywhere in this city which has maintained much of its culture. Although the streets were hardly clean, life felt different from my first sojourn into China. The shades of Western colonialism are still everywhere here, and much of the old architecture is still in place. I spent a morning in the kindergarten in the suburbs, where Jenny, the teacher, and her male assistant taught a wonderful classic Waldorf lesson in a beautiful room. Here I finally unloaded the rest of my infamous box of wool and seashells, which I had dragged along for some weeks from Hokkaido, Japan. Jenny was delighted, and I felt good about these small gifts from Japan to China, two nations which do not get on well at the moment.

Tammy had arranged one more strange site for a meeting – this time in Clifford Park, a sort of public garden complete with much flora and fauna including horses, a camel, exotic birds, and a dragon made of living flowers. It smacked of pre-colonial China in its beauty and charm. I sat in the sun with mothers and two grandmothers, and talked about parenting. Later, I rode a horse and spent time getting to know the camel, who no longer gives rides because, as his keeper told us, “He don’t listen!” The beast and I got along fine, and I was treated to a delicious lunch and small organic gardens, one of which a grandfather had begun for the children of Jenny’s kindergarten.

After several days, I left for Central China. By now, I was flying only on domestic airlines which meant I was the only white person in sight and few spoke English, and, if they did, they spoke it very poorly. Hygiene was minimal. Not the least

of offenses in this area was the habit of men spitting on the floors of public places like airports and museums. I nearly went flying when I slipped on one loogy as I hurried to make a connection. Once a ticket is purchased, one is herded into a waiting area where people smoke freely in front of “No Smoking” signs, and the electrified connection announcements are not usually correct. Here I discovered that my flight to Chengdu was delayed, but no one knew for how long. After six hours of waiting, we were rushed onto a bus and then taken out to the tarmac where the planes are lined up. The planes are relatively clean, but the flights are sometimes too thrilling. On my worst flight, not only did the plane bounce so much I thought it was going to break apart, but books were also flying out of laps, and drinks were overturned. When we finally landed with a thud, we bounced once, skidded off and then back on the runway. I made my peace with the Good Spirits during the worst of the heavy lurching. I was overjoyed to be back on terra firma.

Chengdu

Back on my way to Chengdu, I was also worried about arriving at midnight, and I could not reach my contact, Harry Wong, without a cell phone. I absolutely could not manage the pay phones, no matter how I tried. Harry, of course, had no way of knowing when I would arrive because the domestic airlines don’t tell anyone how long flights are delayed. Harry and his wife, Li, had waited for hours. Then he had taken her home and come back to look for me. Once on the ground, I could not find him, and I had an after-midnight-alone-in-a-domestic-airport-in-Chengdu moment of panic. Then Harry sailed up and said, “Oh, it’s you.” We greeted each other warmly.

I had met Harry Wong nine years earlier at a Pacific Rim Conference in Thailand. At the time, he had just finished teacher training and was visiting schools to get the broadest picture of Waldorf education he could. “I am going to bring Waldorf education to China,” he told me. I was incredulous.

“But, it’s a Communist country,” I had said. “Where will you do it, in Shanghai?”

“No,” he had told me, “in Chengdu, in the heart of China.





You must come and help,” he had told me. In the ensuing years, we lost touch with one another and he had forgotten my name. However, we had not forgotten each other.

Harry took me to a business hotel which reeked of cigarettes, and my asthmatic self balked visibly; so, he took me home, and we made up the bed of one of his sons who was away, and I fell into a deep sleep in the wee hours of the morning. The next day, I was on my way to the Chengdu Waldorf School. Harry drives the van which picks up some of the children and teachers along the way.

Driving in China is breathtaking at best. Pedestrians, with cyclists right behind them, are at the greatest risk. Like everything else in China, it’s every man for himself, and the devil take the hind most. Traffic lights are considered general guidelines rather than rules of the road, and running yellow lights turning to red is more common than not. With much honking and squealing, cars and trucks ram their way into traffic and around people in and out of the every kind of vehicle one can imagine. Harry is a leader in the fray. I told him, if he needed a change, he could easily drive a cab in New York City.

After careening artfully through traffic, Harry finally turned down the road to the Waldorf School, proudly marked with a city sign. At the end of a dirt road, on a high terrace above one of the worst slums I have ever seen, their little school is alive and well. Here children get to play on grass and spend time building in the sand with bricks and twigs. Here children garden. One afternoon, the third grade was selling produce from their horticultural efforts to parents. Harry had done it; he had begun a school in Central, China, and it is a good beginning.

It all started years before when Harry met Ben Cherry, an Australian Waldorf teacher, who had stopped at the restaurant Harry was then running. Harry, who credits his abilities to the fact that he “grew up wild in the country,” decided, then and there, to become a Waldorf teacher. After finishing his training at Emerson, his wife, Li, also did so as did one of their best friends, Li Zewu. However, they realized that the ideas of group working and group leadership were not natural to China, so Harry and Li went to Spring Valley and continued

their education in group work at the Fellowship Community there. In the process they managed to have three children: one in England, one in China, and one in America. Today, besides driving the bus, Harry is the development director, administrator, handy man, and the go-to guy for just about everything at the school. Zewu teaches the combined grade 5/6, and Li works in one of the two kindergartens.

Everyone there is living at a subsistence level, and yet, all the young teachers I met told me they loved the school and would not leave. I was soon visiting classes, giving lectures and helping in any way I could, which was almost full time. I gave up my plans to travel west to the high plateau and Urumqi. Everyone else was working so hard, it was impossible not to help with the same intensity. There were challenges. In my public lectures, I did not talk about soul and spirit lest the school lose its tenuous license and lease. Within the faculty I could speak freely and everyone was hungry to learn.

In Bangkok, a beautiful young Chinese woman named Bing Hao had attended my lectures. On my first day at the Chengdu school, I found her looking for me. Very interested in Waldorf education, she is one of the leaders of an environmental non-governmental organization (NGO) which is getting businesses to help send volunteers into schools to educate them about the environment. She has also written some lovely children’s books to accompany her work, and is nothing short of amazing. First of all, NGO’s are few and far between in China because it is very hard to get a license to operate one, and, secondly, independent agencies are simply not part of general life in China.

Fluent in English, Bing Hao is a lovely, thoughtful person who loves nature and cares about the earth. Both of these are anomalies in China. She quietly goes on with her work and hopes to help China recognize the need to protect the environment. Like so many Chinese women, she is making sacrifices to do her work, which take her away from her two-year old during the week. Because she works in the city, the child lives with grandparents and sees his mother on the weekends after she has traveled several hours to be with him. Bing Hao offered to share her very nice hotel room with me for two days.

During this time, we learned each other’s stories and talked about our lives in China and America. It is remarkable how quickly a friendship can form when time is short and the issues, like education and the environment, are urgent. We spent some wonderful hours in the Schezuan University Cultural Museum which displayed and explained many of the tribal customs of the peoples who had originally settled Schezuan Province. I will always treasure our breakfasts on the edge of campus where we went to find coffee for me since my stomach does not easily tolerate tea.

At the school, I also met a couple, two remarkable Austrian Class Teachers, Ulrike Binder and Richard Bointner, who had bicycled from Shanghai. We were soon working as a very good team to help the school, the parents, and the new, untrained teachers in the earlier grades. The materials at the

school are minimal, and the blackboards are so rough it is hard to make a drawing. Yet, so much is going right there. The faculty sings well together, and I had one of the most moving experiences of the trip when Ulrike, Richard and I spoke to the faculty about group work and inner work. The teachers are so open and eager to find a way to heal themselves, their children and China.

In fact, the children are very challenging to teach. With only one child in most families, the parents are over watchful and very concerned about academic learning. Most of the youngsters I saw are media damaged. They are also quite tyrannical in class because they have been spoiled by so many adults in their lives. I was not sure how to help, especially the nervous parents. Perhaps they need to create surrogate families with their friends and let their offspring play together regularly to work off their rough edges. The children are also exhausted because they have no regular bedtime or boundaries. These little ones need to run, to swing in trees, to play, and then to fall into bed before 8 PM. The courageous teachers definitely have their hands full.

The school has crying needs, not the least of which is trained teachers and translations of the basic books from German to Chinese. Bombarded by curious parents, the core faculty has its hands full. This summer [2007] they will start the first of several two and three-week teacher-training modules with teachers from America and Australia.

One Friday night, the entire school faculty and staff and some English-speaking ex-patriots headed into the country for a lovely meal by a river. Except for the bathroom facilities, it was a wonderful evening. It was a welcome respite for the teachers who work so hard.

Another day, Harry took Ulrike, Richard and I out into the countryside around Chengdu to a fascinating museum centered around the ancient ruins of the Shu people dating from 12,000 BC. The art is strange indeed. Called the Sanxingdui



Relic, many of the bronze sculptures are stylized heads with huge ears and eyes literally popping out of their sockets at the ends of long eye tubes like those of some kind of cartoon character. They were definitely representative of some other

worldly beings, who were listening and seeing into another dimension. We then had a lovely meal by a mill wheel and listened to a caged mina bird talk in Chinese.

The rest of the time I was in Chengdu, I stayed with Harry, Li and their children in their apartment near the river. In fact, they had moved in not long ago. Previously, they had lived at the school until they could afford a place of their own. Here I grew to love this family as much as the school. When their older boy was due to come home to his room in which I was staying, his mother asked him if he would like to bunk with his sister. He was sullenly resistant. He also refused to sleep in his parents' room. "Do you have a tent?" I whispered to Li. Yes, they did, and it was soon set up in the living room and became a favorite sleep and play area for both the boys while I was there. Li and Harry are simply remarkable. They are my good friends now, and I want to find a way to support their work. Besides, life was not so bad in Chengdu, and both the apartment and the school had a flush toilet.

Chengdu, a city of twelve rivers and very hot food (Schezuan) in the heart of central China, is alive and robust, if not especially clean. The Ming and Tuo Rivers run through the center, and life gathers on their shores. Three thousand kinds of animals and plants live here including protected and endangered species like the red panda, the golden monkey and the gnu. This is also the home of the more familiar great panda, and Chengdu has one of the most successful breeding programs and research institutes on the classic panda. The area is also rich in ores, coal and natural gas.

An old story says that one should not visit Chengdu as a young man, or he will never leave. People often sit outside, drink tea, and, for a small fee, have their ears cleaned with long wires which operate like ten-inch cotton swabs. People sit reading and chatting while the ear cleaners work. Everything else around them may be faded and dirty, but the ears are clean. Caged birds are also popular in Central China, and folks can be seen taking their birds for daily walks in their cages.

Conversation here often felt like machine-guns turned on high volume. What I often thought was an argument between two people turned out to be a simple conversation. In general, the medical scene is a nightmare. Chinese traditional practitioners are widely considered better than any doctor one meets in a hospital. Dental possibilities are worse. China is definitely not a place to get sick.

In midst of all this, I contacted Dilys (Yuan) Sun's mother, who took me to a fine restaurant with two translators for a divine Chinese meal, one of the best I had in China. I wanted to meet her to thank her for her wonderful daughter, who graduated from our high school last year and who is now at Stanford. I had planned to take her out, but she insisted on being the hostess, and even gave me some lovely gifts. I was embarrassed to have nothing to give her in return, but I also felt honored. I hope to return the hospitality the next time she visits San Francisco.

Women in China have many challenges. Communism

supposedly gave them equality, and I met many women in excellent professional positions. Yet, all women feel they must marry even though the relationship between husbands and wives is more contractual than romantic. Several women told me they get married to have a child, and after that the husband is not so important except as a kind of business partner. I'm not sure I fully understood this, for it was a novel idea to me.

Reproductive rights are a different kettle of fish. Couples in China are allowed one child. I met women who had to go every three months for a uterine ultrasound, and, if pregnant, had "to get rid of it" or lose their jobs. If one does have a second child, the family is charged three times their annual income at the time of birth. Exceptions are made for children born outside of China and sometimes in rural areas.

The Chinese women I met were often fervently independent but filled with deep wounds. Many grew up ignored or unloved. I met one woman whose father had never acknowledged her existence or spoken to her in her entire childhood. He only spoke to his son. There is no psychological help available in China. Several others I met had been routinely beaten by their mothers, fathers, or both. The lucky ones are those like Alice who grew up with grandparents in the country, and who still have a sense of culture and a connection to nature. The sense of self in most Chinese women I met oscillated between fierce rebellion and deep insecurity.

Rui Shao, an outspoken young teacher at the school who had spent two years in Australia, was one of my main translators. Along with Harry and Li, I was able to communicate fairly well at the school. After nearly two weeks of hard work, I found myself deeply committed to the school. However, word was out that I was in town, and I was now wanted in Xian to help with a Waldorf initiative there. I left Chengdu reluctantly because the school, like others, had crawled into my heart. I wondered if the trials I had faced getting to Chengdu had been put in place by some malevolent force to prevent our relationship. As I left, I wrote them a poem:

Waldorf School of Chengdu
To Li Zewu, Wong Li and Harry

On the edge of a cliff, a terrace
Of long abandoned holidays
Is coming alive.
The grey scum of slums settles
In the valley,
But on the other side of the rise
Children are rolling down a green,
And the song of a diminished culture
Is merging to a melody of joy,
Wrought from holy days
Of sweat and sorrow,
And a dragon, tamed by love,
Is dancing in the clouds.

Xian

Xian was an entirely new experience. Wan Fen from Shanghai had called ahead and asked her friends in high places in Xian to take good care of me, and indeed they did. After a glorious flight over spectacular green mountains, I arrived for the long drive into the city. Home to 13 emperors, Shaanxi province is an agricultural valley full of natural beauty. When we entered its oldest and most famous city, I was astounded. Here was an urban area with most of its wall intact, its ancient drum and bell towers beautifully maintained, and with several Buddhist pagodas still standing. In addition, the streets were clean and the dim sum was divine. I wondered if the loss of culture in other places in China had caused the dirty discombobulation I experienced so often. The sense of space is so important to a feeling of wholeness, at least for me. I have experienced this intensely as I have traveled.

Wan Fen's friends put me up in the very nice Melody Hotel, where I was joined by Rui Shao, my translator from Chengdu and a native of the Xian area. Our room looked out on the main street and the drum tower, and I received royal treatment while there. However, I do not recommend a Chinese rub down. At my hotel, I saw that massage was an option, and went down to get one. Pain seems to be necessary to the experience, and no amount of crying out and screaming, "No!" seemed to affect the process. I was very glad I only opted for half an hour. I was black and blue, and it took me two days to recover from the encounter. However, that night I was renewed by good food, good company, and getting to view the moon and Saturn through a powerful telescope (about eight feet long and a foot in diameter), one of several attached to bicycles and set up on the street through which the night sky could be seen for a fee.

Heng Pei Juan, my new escort, who spoke almost no English, squired me through a series of wonderful events. On Wan Fen's instructions, Pei Juan was determined that I see the positive sides of China. She took me to the famous Terra Cotta Warriors, first discovered in 1974 by peasants drilling a well. I had seen pictures of these before, but the actual experience of witnessing these 6000 warriors is staggering. Each face is individual and displays unique emotion. Some warriors seem anxious, others determined, still others calm before the storm. Some carried long bows, others crossbows, swords, spears, and so on. Some weapons are still sharp after 1800 years. Thirty-five horse-drawn chariots were also part of the beautifully crafted clay force, as well as saddled horses, all facing east and creating a complete battle formation in front of the tomb of their Qin dynasty emperor, Shihuang (3rd century AD). He is probably among the top ten most paranoid of history's leaders, for he certainly believed he needed to be ready for battle in life after death. His full-sized warriors and horses, all fired and painted in bright colors, seem ready for action.

The archeological challenge alone is astounding, and it will take probably take the rest of this century to excavate

and restore all the figures. The tomb of the emperor remains untouched due in large part to the discovery of a moat of quicksilver (mercury) surrounding the burial site, which makes it a chemical hazard. The whole scene is amazing and puzzling. It presents a much materialized view of life after death. I felt as though the emperor really thought his terracotta figures would come to life and support him on the other side. It gives new meaning to clay feet.

At the museum, there were many white folks with Chinese children, mostly girls. It turned out that they were adoptive parents from America who were on a tour with their children to give them a sense of where they had come from. It was strange, but interesting.

After our drive back and an elegant lunch with linen (oh yes!), we spent the afternoon in the wonderful Shaanxi History Museum, where I experienced still more of the enormously rich world of this fabulous province. The Tang Dynasty figurines were especially fine.

We ended the day at The Big Wild Goose Pagoda, built in the 7th century on the site of the Great Maternal Grace. Part of a Buddhist compound, the Pagoda was erected for the traveling monk, Xuan Zang, who brought 335 volumes of Buddhist scriptures to China and translated them here over twelve years. (We need a similar dude to do this for the 300 something volumes of Rudolf Steiner's works today). The

site is beautiful and the cherry blossoms were in full bloom. I climbed the 210 stairs for a wonderful view of the hazy city before a walk for noodles and an early night to prepare me for the coming excursion.

The next day, Rui, Pei Juan and I drove out into the country side to some fabulous mountains which are a geological wonder. Part of the Qinling Mountain range, Mount Hua's five peaks rise 2,200 meters (7,218 feet) quite abruptly out of the agricultural plain. Many of the mountain faces are like sheer walls of ice with precipitous views down staggering cliffs. We took a gondola three quarters of the way up to the North Peak's "Cloudy Terrace." We hiked the rest of the way to the top which included a climb up a sheer rock face with steps carved into it and iron chains attached on both sides for the ascent. I'm happy to say I managed this with ease. On the top many pairs of padlocks with red ribbons attached are locked together on the guardrail. The ribbons bear the names of young lovers who have climbed the mountain and then padlocked their names along the cliff edge as a kind of promise of true love. This is a spectacular place, and, after a thrilling moment at the highest point, we descended a few hundred feet for very long, broad noodles (a specialty of Shaanxi), hard boiled eggs, and delicious bread cooked over hot pebbles.

Needless to say, I slept on the long drive back to Xian. The Bell and Drum Towers were also amazing, and I spent a



delightful afternoon in the Muslim Quarter behind the Drum Tower in markets sporting everything from frantic caged birds to whole carcasses of lamb. Other shops with trinkets of many kinds usually included framed photos of Chairman Mao. As we walked along, insistent voices lured us in with, “Have a look; just have a look.” It was a delight to watch Pei Juan and company dicker in the market. They are fierce traders, sometimes grabbing the product with one hand, and forcing the proffered amount into the hand of the seller with the other, and then walking away. Life is a lot simpler but less exciting when shopping in an American supermarket. However, it didn’t take me long before I could drive a hard bargain and posture disappointment and surprise with high drama like my new Chinese friends. Afterwards, Rui and I wandered through the town looking for a light-weight blouse for me, but nothing came close to fitting my ample upper self.

Then it was time for my all-day workshop on parenting small children and on Waldorf education. This time the site was an exquisite Buddhist center filled with running water, natural wood structures, plants, and beautiful pen and ink washes done by the “Master,” an artistic and very sensitive fellow of about 40. When the Master heard about me, he let us use his wonderful conference room without a fee. Later, we had an audience, and I thanked him. Speaking with measured care and through a translator, he told me about the crisis in Chinese education and the trials facing China. He knows somehow about Waldorf education, and he is very interested in knowing more. He is committed to finding a way to restore the Chinese to their sacred roots and culture. I was very heartened by this meeting, and I hope Harry and he will meet soon for the sake of the children of China.

At the end of the day, I went to visit the new kindergarten rooms which are on their way to becoming a Waldorf initiative. Again, I was impressed by the striving of all those involved, especially Pei Juan, who is one of the teachers and who made my stay in Xian marvelous.

Guangzhou

After my glorious respite in Xian, I returned to Guangzhou for a bit more work, only this time I asked for a room in which I could actually teach. I was rewarded with a pleasant space at the back of The Cohiba, a topless bar. Perhaps this is the first all-day workshop on the threefold nature of social life in such a facility. It certainly was for me. Afterwards, I was thanked profusely and given a lovely necklace by a beautiful kindergarten mother, Shu Ming, a well-known actress, who had been severely injured in a car accident, yet often drove me about in Guangzhou.

Harry had come down for the week, and we had hurried talks in between work-

shop sessions. We had both noted the melodic strains “Hare Krishna” emerging in various places. I first heard some of the kindergarten children chanting it as they played. After a bit of research, we discovered that several Hare Krishna folks were involved in one of the kindergartens, and some frank conversations followed about freedom in education.

Before I went to China, I thought I understood something about the Cultural Revolution. However, I could not have imagined what it could do to a nation. I understand now why every totalitarian leader first burns the books. Once the culture is stripped away, desperate human beings will latch onto anything that seems to give them a sense of self be it Nazism or Communism. Another phenomenon in China is the rise of cults and Born Again Christianity. The Mormons are also very busy here. So, the worst of Western materialism is creating totalitarian capitalism, and the people are seeking for meaning in emotional religions of all kinds. There is much to ponder in China, and Waldorf education is really needed.

While in Guangzhou, I was happily staying with Alice again. She is a peach. No longer merely a gracious hostess, she is a friend. She is moving to Mobile, Alabama, soon, so I have high hopes of meeting up with her before the year is out. We had a lovely few days together, and she took me shopping for the elusive blouse. When I was about to buy one, she shoed me out of the store. “I can’t get a good price with a big nose along,” she told me. Later she went back and got the blouse for half of what I was going to pay.

After a warm goodbye lunch with Tammy Hughes, who was largely responsible for my sojourn in China, I set out for the airport. I was filled with poetry and affection at last for this enormous and complex country. I was also flooded with gratitude for the courageous souls who are doing such good work here. Now when I think of the pollution which casts a haze over every Chinese city I visited, I will think of Hao Bing and her work; when I worry about Chinese children, I will



Chinese teachers at the Third Asian Waldorf Teacher's Conference in the Philippines.

think of Wan Fen, Harry, Li, Jenny, the Master, and the other many teachers and parents working to bring human connections to education. Richard and Ulrike continue to dance in my heart – especially after an evening in which they taught the Chinese teachers how to waltz, and then how to rock n’ roll using the new Chk! Chk! Chk! CD. The list goes on and on. When I see kites flying, I will see those of Chinese children in Xian, and I will let them give me hope for things that first seemed impossible.

Finally at the airport, I found Kenya Airways, and began my sixteen-hour trip to Nairobi. I would be entering another very new world on my around-the-world journey.

Report on the IV Pan-American Anthroposophy Congress

Alberto Loya, Ann Arbor, Michigan

The IV Pan-American Anthroposophy Congress, titled “The Spiritual Foundation of the American Continent and its Relation to the East and the West”, took place from July 4 to 9, 2008 in the beautiful Isolda Echavarria Waldorf School in Medellin, Colombia. The setting, high up in the mountains overlooking the city of Medellin, was inspiring as well as a reflection of the realities faced by most Latin Americans: extreme contrasts co-existing in sometimes surreal ways. The city of Medellin has made a willful return from being one of the most violent and dangerous cities in the world, fueled by drug traffic and political unrest, into a much safer and industrious city of more than 2 million residents. The school itself, located just up the hill from the safe working-class neighborhood of La Estrella, has beautiful, Anthroposophically-inspired architecture and is surrounded by tropical vegetation and crossed by a stream that makes wonderful “music” as it drops through the rocks down towards the valley. Across the valley, up on the mountains in the distance, is the upper-class neighborhood of El Poblado, full of posh high-rise condominiums, shopping centers, and five-star hotels.

The purpose of the conference was to strengthen and renew ideas, feelings and practices in the various Anthroposophical initiatives throughout the Americas and to delve into the role that America has to play in the history and evolution of humanity. The conference, which used Spanish as the primary language, was attended by 330 participants from 14 countries: Colombia (269), Mexico (16), Argentina (11), Germany (11), Ecuador (5), Chile (4), Peru (3), Costa Rica (2), USA (3), Austria (2), Uruguay (1), Spain (1), Brazil (1) and Japan (1). Two of the speakers, Octavio Reyes (Mexico) and Enrique Castro (Colombia), delivered the inaugural address in Spanish and set the tone of the conference by highlighting Native-American aspects, from an Anthroposophical perspective, of this ethnically and culturally diverse continent. Their key message was

that Anthroposophy gives us an impulse to try to understand and transform the socioeconomic problems experienced in the continent. The other speakers, Michaela Glöckler (Switzerland), Georg Glöckler (Germany) and Yuji Agematsu (Japan), delivered their various addresses in the German language with simultaneous translation into Spanish. Their topics ranged from the evolution of the mysteries, the spiritual foundations of the American continent as seen from the east and the west, American-specific healing forces, to Anthroposophy in the Orient, using America’s spiritual destiny as the central theme.

There was much art throughout the six days of the conference, each day starting with singing and a eurythmy performance and some evenings ending with a musical performance. There were nine different artistic workshops to choose from, including singing, watercolor painting, eurythmy, traditional dancing, clay modeling, handcrafts, wood carving and pastel painting.

There were also working groups dealing with a diversity of topics such as healing forces in the American continent, bio-dynamic agriculture, spiritual geography of America, architecture in the east and the west, Anthroposophically-oriented psycho-therapy, Anthroposophy in Latin America, R. Steiner’s esoteric exercises and fraternal economics.

The final plenary session consisted of a representative from each country presenting a brief report about the state of Anthroposophy in his/her country. Robert and Jann Gates, who reside in New Mexico, spoke for the USA. At the end of this plenary session, it was decided that the next conference will take place in Cordoba, Argentina in 2011 (these conferences take place every three years).

My deepest gratitude goes out to the members of the Micael Branch in Medellin, who did an excellent job in organizing the conference, as well as to all the wonderful speakers and leaders of the working and artistic groups. This is the first conference of this series that I have had the opportunity to attend, and I was most impressed by the enthusiasm and camaraderie demonstrated by all participants. I will be carrying with me for a long time the fertile thinking, feeling and willing that were inspired during the conference. (Contact: aloyavaca@peoplepc.com)





Participants at the IV Pan-American Anthroposophical Congress in Colombia.

Think OutWord

Winslow Eliot, New England, USA

“Whether I can help, I know not; an individual helps not, but one who combines with many at the proper hour. We will postpone the evil and keep hoping. Hold thy circle fast.”

Goethe, “The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily”

In an effort to try to shape society in a way that they hope will be healing, Seth Jordan and a group of friends recently founded an inspiring new organization called Think OutWord. Loosely based around Rudolf Steiner’s ideas on the threefold social order, Think OutWord is a peer-led training in social threefolding.

Until he went to college, Seth believed that education was a search for Truth. He’d graduated from the Green Meadow Waldorf School with high ideals, and was hoping to create a life that in some way implemented at least some of these. In college he took some courses on Marxism and the history of political thought, but most of what he read concerning the structure of society seemed threadbare.

“I’ve never been to a rally or protested anything,” he explains. “So in that way I’m not an activist. I was a philosophy major and I stayed with the humanities. I didn’t see a way of getting engaged in business or government. I had no idea what healthy social forms looked like and whether they were even possible. After going through Waldorf education I had strong pictures of Michael and the dragon and all those stories of the

hero’s journey, but they were never really directed at society and transforming the world in concrete ways. In college I was looking for Truth with a capital but quickly found the educational system dead and oppressive. Afterwards, like many of my peers, I decided to go into manual labor. I wanted to do ‘honest work,’ meet real needs, and knew I wanted to stay from what I saw as “dishonest work”: business and government. I feel like this is the plight of a number of my anthroposophically-inspired peers, we don’t think about engaging the world at the societal level because we don’t have many examples of people working in this realm in meaningful and really healthy ways.”

Seth might have spent the rest of his life in manual labor, but his continued interest in social change led him to attend a workshop at the Rudolf Steiner Institute led by Nicanor Perlas. Nicanor introduced him to some of Rudolf Steiner’s social thinking, and this revealed to him entirely new possibilities of both making a living and living a purposeful life.

“I think of Nicanor Perlas as ‘the little Buddha of anthroposophy,’” says Seth. “I read his book, and he opened my mind to Civil Society, and the developments of the last twenty years. Activism is not really what it’s about. It’s more about working with social forms that strive to integrate economic, political, and cultural elements in a healthy way.”

The premise of the growing civil society is that it is a third cultural sector of society, distinct from government and business. It refers essentially to professional associations, religious groups, labor unions, citizen advocacy organizations, education, and the arts. The Institute for Social Renewal is another organization that has inspired Seth and his friends and made

them wonder whether they could create a place to train people in social entrepreneurship.

“Are we doing what we came here to do?” Seth asks. Even for him, it’s a difficult question to answer. He explains: “Working with the thought that ‘what we need is here,’ and that what we are meant to do in the world can be understood as what is in need of doing, then we can begin to get an answer. And right now that answer is no: we’re not really doing what we came here to do.”

Simply put, for Seth that means working to change society so that it is premised on the ideal of human goodness.

“My understanding is that young people bring with them the spiritual impulses that are needed on the earth today, and everyone needs to live their destiny, to draw that out of them. I imagine that means working for good. There’s a lot of powerful and innovative ideas out there, but not enough people know about them.”

Initially, Think OutWord was formed as a way to meet like-minded people who still have a bit of youthful idealism and want to bring that as fully as possible through their vocation. “It’s opening the door for necessary social networking. Our group is studying Rudolf Steiner’s social thinking, and we give each other support; bring some ideas to each other, encourage, and learn from each other. It’s really for people like me, who weren’t given much of an education in social thinking. We’re trying to figure out how to positively engage society in meaningful ways.”

Geared towards younger (at least at heart) people, the organization offers training in social entrepreneurship. It is loosely situated in the northeastern United States, and is grounded in, though not limited to, an understanding of the threefold nature of the human being and of society, primarily as it was articulated by Rudolf Steiner.

Seth explains: “We start with self-education, or ‘co-education’ – the group designs a curriculum for itself, gets together, individuals give peer-presentations, go home, create independent projects and small focus groups, find mentors, write papers, etc. Somewhere along the way all this mastering of ideas, all this thinking, melds into doing. That happens pretty quickly. They’re heady ideas but young people feel a sense of urgency (which these times demand), so if they can’t be applied in practice, if they don’t fructify our work, then we need different ones.”

The group’s leaders hope that through the training, participants will gain deeper insight into contemporary social phenomena and explore different methods by which they can become increasingly engaged in socially transformative work.

Think OutWord offers a public introductory training session at the beginning of every year. There is one longer session for full-time participants during the summer. The in-between time is filled with independent projects with partners and mentors, as well as small group work and small intensive weekends. “The sessions are about going deeply into the study and mastery of ideas and then how to bring these ideas into



Nicanor Perlas with his workshop participants at the Rudolf Steiner Institute in Vermont, USA

our work and action. It's geared toward young people, but it's open to anyone with the longing to learn about and work out of a new view of social entrepreneurship."

In twenty-five years, how does this group hope our society might be different?

"What we're looking to see happen is not to spread anthropology but to strengthen people," explains Seth. "Richard Dancy once said, at one of our conferences, that he wasn't asking people to become Christian Community priests, but that whatever we feel called to do, that we do it radically."

"By 'radically' he means getting to the roots of what you're doing and really doing what you're called to do. We'd like to create a sort of organic revolution; no coercion; we're just trying to get people to be more socially and economically aware. We're trying to figure out ways of living and working in society that are penetrated with consciousness."

"I look around in my community of striving and well-intentioned people and I see a lot of educators, artists, and farmers. That work is essential and it's the destiny of many of our peers to do it. But what I'm wondering is, where are all the politicians, social activists, and CEOs? I do see some isolated individuals outside our communities who are fighting valiantly on their lonely fronts. But how are we, as the young generation of a socially and spiritually striving movement, in a concerted way, helping resolve national and international troubles – helping to meet global needs today? When we open a newspaper, we shouldn't be content to witness the world's problems and not do anything about them. Those are our problems."

You can learn more about the programs and activities of Think OutWord by going to www.ThinkOutword.org.

Drama as a Source of Wellness

Robyn Hewetson, Hawkes Bay, New Zealand

"Now, Katherine, what do you mean by 'health' and what do you want it for?"

Answer: By 'health' I mean the power to live a full adult living breathing life in close contact with what I love – the earth and all the wonders thereof – the sea – the sun – all that we mean when we speak of the external world. I want to enter into it, to be a part of it, to live in it, to learn from it, to lose all that is superficial and acquired in me and to become a conscious direct human being. I want, by understanding myself to understand others. I want to become all that I am capable of becoming so that I may be (and here I have stopped and waited and waited and it's no good, there is only one phrase that will do) a child of the sun. About helping others, about carrying a light and so on it seems false to say a single word. Let it be at that: A Child of the Sun. Then I want to work! At what? I want so to live that I work with my hands and my feeling and my brain. I want a garden, a small house, grass, animals, books, pictures, music. And out of this, the expression of this, I want to be writing, (though I may write about cabmen, that's no matter.)

But warm, eager living life: to be rooted in life; to learn, to desire to know, to feel, to think, to act. That is what I want, and nothing less. That is what I must try for. And when I say I fear, do not let it disturb you dearest heart. We all fear when we are in waiting rooms. Yet we must pass beyond them, and if the other can keep calm, it is all the help we can give each other. And all this sounds very serious and strenuous. But now that I have wrestled with it, it is no longer so. I feel happy, deep down. All is well."

--The beginning of Katherine Mansfield's last journal entry, October 10th 1922, three months before her death on January 9th 1923.

I found this excerpt when I was nine years old, copied it out and carried it with me over the years. I found a connection when I discovered my work with the speech and drama training inspired by Rudolf Steiner. Even at nine years of age I was struck by Katherine Mansfield finding "wellness" just as she was dying.

The I Ching is over 5000 years old and has long been a source of "wellness" or wisdom in the Chinese culture. It has 64 hexagrams only two of which represent physical objects; The Cauldron (# 50) and The Well (# 48). These are two images of spiritual realities; the Cauldron is an image of a vessel that contains, and bears food or drink. So this image also represents nourishment. The cauldron was the vessel that held the cooked offerings in the temple and at banquets. The head of the family served the food from the cauldron into the bowls of the guests. The Well is an image of the social foundation of life. And this foundation is likened to the water that serves to nourish -- *'The well from which water is drawn conveys the further idea of an inexhaustible dispensing of nourishment.'*

Many times as I teach Speech and Drama I am re-amazed at the hidden wisdom in our language; that in English we use the word 'Well' to mean:

- A stone lined structure dug deep into the earth in order to reach fresh, clean water
- A state of being which indicates full health
- A pause in the flow of speech to indicate one is going back to the source, to create the space to think, as in "Well . . . let me think, that is an interesting question. . . ."
- We often use it to mean fullness or something done in the right way; as in "Well-done" or "Well-used."
- You have worked 'well' (in a good way)
- You did well to tell me. (in the right way)
- You treated me well. (in a kind way)
- You polished it well. (thoroughly)
- The book was well reviewed. (approval)
- He was well over forty. (considerably)
- It turned out well. (fortunately)
- Well met. (luckily)
- We were well rid of them. (without disaster)

- They did well for themselves. (profitably)
- We live well here. (comfortably)
- She was not a well person. (in good health)
- It would be well to enquire. (advisable)
- Just as well! (with equal reason)
- Let well alone. (needless disturbance)
- Well-acquainted. (familiar)
- Well and truly. (decisively and completely)
- Well-balanced (sensible)
- Well-behaved (good conduct)
- Well-aware. (certainly aware)
- Well-being. (state of wellness)
- Well informed (good information)
- Well found (good appointment)
- Well mannered (pleasing manners)
- Well meaning (having good intentions)

Students who come to my classes on the healing art of speaking are always invited to go through the same orientation exercises, the purpose of which is to stand up in a more conscious way. I encourage them to try opening their awareness to the vastness of the earth beneath their feet and to lift their heads up and imagine the sky above and around them. Rudolf Steiner indicates that we get the power to speak from beneath our feet. This capacity comes from a stream deep within the earth and we need to find connection to it in order to speak from the source and in ‘wellness.’

One of the places we can confirm this is by noticing the normal progress of children. At about nine months of age the young child pulls herself up on furniture or the hands of others and stands for the first time. Prior to this momentous occasion the child has made lots of noise; some airy and sweet and clear, some burbling and moist, some loud and strong and lusty such as “ngaaaaa ngaaaaa ngaaaaa” (the ones mothers do not ignore!) But, if you watch carefully, it is only after those little feet touch the floor, push up and manage to hold themselves upright in balance that words begin to form in the young child. Only after this uprightness is achieved do we hear the clear combination of a consonant and a vowel such as “Mama” or “See” or, in the case of my first child; “Cow!” Watch carefully and you will notice that the development of speech and language is in direct relation to the articulation of the feet. What does that mean? It means that the child who nimbly walks and moves, who runs lightly and steers direction easily will also speak lightly, quickly and facilely. The slower child who only gradually lifts their feet and walks clumsily will speak slower and with less clarity. A child with a deformity which does not allow them to stand, carry their own weight and navigate will either not speak at all or at least have delayed and blurry speech.!

The greatest stage of this threefold development is also only noticed if you pay careful attention; that only after speaking does thinking arise in the child. This can be seen

as the child begins to put words together into clear thoughts. The human being needs words to think with! I often joke with my students that my husband was always directing me to “think before you speak!” But I know that we have to speak before we think! Children who grow in a bi-lingual environment do not mix up the two languages, but speak in either one or the other. How do they do that?

Few of us stop to consider what an enormous mystery it is that we speak at all, nor to consider where speech comes from or how on earth we physically do it. With the onset of technical skills in today’s world the spoken arts are barely considered. And yet, in Greek times when it was generally known that there were seven great arts; the first three of these were the spoken arts; ‘Rhetorica,’ ‘Grammatica,’ ‘Dramatica.’

In the founding of Waldorf Education much emphasis was laid on the spoken arts. Nearly all of the speaking exercises which comprise Rudolf Steiner’s ‘Speech and Drama Course’ were given first to teachers. It is one of the challenging situations in Waldorf Education today to give more attention to this life-renewing, refreshing and enormously creative work; the healing art of speaking.

In 1919 when Steiner launched Waldorf Education he also trained Heinz Mueller in teaching speech to students and educators alike. All the teachers who were part of the first school took speech lessons every week. Speech formation was considered one of the primary sources of “wellness” for them and for their teaching. These exercises, despite the way they sound, have nothing to do with elocution. They were primarily to do with developing this first stage of standing up and making contact with the stream of speech beneath our feet. Then it was about learning to recognise that the sounds of speech are sent from the starry realms above our heads. When we ‘create speech’ on our own instrument of lips, teeth, hard and soft palate and tongue combining the tone sent up from the larynx and the breath from heart and lungs we are engaged in a most creative activity. The second task of the exercises was to incorporate the warmth and life of the breath into all speaking. Much of our modern speaking is cramped, tight, high and sharp. Many people hold their breath whilst speaking and the result is a very intellectual and clipped or lifeless sound. What Rudolf Steiner wanted his teachers to realise is that speaking has everything to do with the air! It is the breath inside of our own lungs which carries the sounds we create in our mouths out into the room and into the world. Without air there would be no sound. The speech work was to lead teachers into recognition of one of a human being’s most creative impulses – to speak!

In fact, in the Therapeutic Speech work Steiner goes so far as to say that the quality of the air on earth in the far future will depend entirely on the way we speak! Yes, air quality over all the earth will depend on how we speak to each other! It puts a whole different spin on the idea of air

pollution and air quality doesn't it!

All the speech work leads one to the experience of the 'brinks-man-ship' of speaking. When we speak we are making the imperceptible world of our thoughts, feelings and intentions into sounds which are directly perceptible and sometimes comprehensible by our companions. Noticing that when we open our mouths and send our thoughts out into the world on the warm air of our breath filled with the voice from our larynx is to notice that we are always on the 'threshold' when we speak. Speaking in this way is not only about being artistic or creative, but about uniting our own voice with the cosmic forces which helped create us, so when we speak in this way we are healing ourselves and, often our listeners too!

Rudolf Steiner was most hopeful that Waldorf teachers and all their students could be lead into a greater awareness of this enormously creative activity. All the arts lead us into greater development of latent human faculties. The faculty which speaking leads us most into is 'Inspiration.' Notice the relation of the word "inspire" to 'inhalation' or the 'in-breath.'

"The 'inspiration' of the teacher is in direct relation to the extent he or she has formed the exhaled breath." This is one of the sayings most used by Rudolf Steiner in the preparation of teachers. In other words; paying attention to the way you form the sounds as you breathe out, can lead you to a place where you are more available for direct inspiration from the starry realms. This happens when you are finally free to take a full in-breath. And it only happens, Rudolf Steiner says, when we have given every last bit of our breath away. Only by completely emptying the lungs of breath is a clear space left for an entirely fresh breath. With the inrush of this fresh breath added to our conscious seeking of 'wellness,' inspiration can be given to the teacher from the greatest beings available to us. It is enough to make you want to take speech lessons, now isn't it? It is not for nothing that there is a stance and an activity which creates the possibility for these beings to inspire us. We have to be grounded, upright, open, enthusiastic, active and reaching for divine help.

And yet, too little is done in our schools or in our training programs to develop the art of speaking. Why is this? Why is this work, so vital to the renewal and wellness of our schools so under-recognised? Is it because it is a 'listening faculty' which recognizes the importance of this work? Is it only when there are enough people with developed hearing that this vital work will find its rightful place in our schools and in our training courses?

Where and how are the listening arts developed? We learn as children; by listening to songs and poems and stories told by heart and from the heart. As young adults and as communities we learn by listening to powerful orators, actors, priests, politicians and comedians. Our listening skills develop if we have the chance to listen to

true conversation, or to live music, or by attending plays which speak of the secrets of human life and reveal our follies and our courage. How many cultures are lucky enough to still preserve these arts in their midst? In today's world much of spoken or musical art is listened to as an electronic recording. Live performances can be loudly amplified, thwarting this need to develop sensitive listening skills. Therefore too often it is only the shell of these arts which is left. Much of the performing arts is produced merely for 'entertainment' and lacks the depth needed to summon spiritual sources.

It is this poverty of theatre which makes redemption of drama so important to the rich life of the Waldorf Schools. Plays are performed in all our schools. But it is clear that there needs to be a renewal of this impulse which incorporates a consciousness of the art to "speak ourselves well." Do you remember in a time not so far in our past when it was high praise to say that someone was "well-spoken"? This is a language memory of the faculty of speaking in a way that stayed connected both to the deep forces which lie beneath our feet and being able to maintain our uprightness so that we also connected to the starry realms under which we stand. Have you ever thought what it is that we stand under when we 'understand'? I believe it is the starry realm which imperceptibly inspires us. Rudolf Steiner wrote a verse about this:

The Stars once spoke to us.
It is world destiny that they are silent now.
To be aware of the silence,
Can become pain for earthly humanity.

But, in the deepening silence,
There grows and ripens
What we speak to the Stars.
To become aware of the speaking,
Can become strength for Spirit Humanity.

In my Speech and Drama training with Maisie Jones (London School of Speech Formation, London, UK) she would refer to this same principle in the words of T. S. Eliot as "A condition of complete simplicity – costing not less than everything." This, she would tell us repeatedly, is a description of the task of the speaker. We need to get to a place of such simplicity that we can release our own individual voice into the world in freedom and in love. This task would require, as in the words of Katherine Mansfield, the giving up of all that was 'superficial and acquired' in us, leaving us to become conscious direct human beings.

In 1924 starting on the 5th of September and finishing on the 23rd of September Rudolf Steiner gave 19 lectures on the Arts of Speaking and of Drama. Although no-one knew at the time, it was to be the last lecture cycle of this great modern initiate. Shortly after the completion of the drama



lectures he fell ill and died on March 30th 1925.

It is said that after these lectures during his final illness many people still came to consult with him. As he neared death, it is reported, when people asked him questions on any subject, his answer became more often the same; he said, “You must learn to let the sounds become your teachers.”

Now, which of you when you are doing a play with your students consider the importance of developing a greater awareness of the sounds? When I am working with a group of children or students on a play we make it an absolute purpose to enable the audience to “hear every word.” By this I do not mean that they are to be loud. Rather, they will take the time to release the form and activity of the consonants onto the breath. Done in such a way that the sounds are freed into the surrounding air, the listeners can grasp them and feel them with their own hearing. Rudolf Steiner spoke a great deal of the urgent need to develop the quality of “feeling hearing.”

Remember the definition of the “Well” given in the I Ching: “The idea of an inexhaustible dispensing of nourishment.” What if we were to direct our plays in the deep knowledge that language, spoken richly and full of breath, with an ear to the enormous creative powers contained in the sounds was a source of ‘wellness’? What a difference this would make to our plays! What a difference it would make to the students who were led into speaking in this way! What a difference it would make in the relationships of the group of people who worked together and listened to each other in this way! What an enormous difference it would make to the audience!

Do you notice that we call the group of people that attend our plays an audience? We do not call them ‘spectators.’ We call them an audience. That is because, even in our language, we remember it is hearing that is important. When we go to a play, many of our senses are invited to participate. But it is hearing that is most needed, if we are to participate fully. In today’s world and even in our Waldorf Schools where we have the chance to know better, the eye is over-fed and over stimulated; spectacles are created everywhere. (Maybe

the more spectacles we watch, the more we need to wear spectacles!) Even one of the greatest stories of our time, the greatest feast for the ear; “The Lord of the Rings” was turned into a spectacle for the eye! Did you notice in the first film the verse which encapsulates the whole story?

The road goes ever on and on
Down from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the Road has gone,
And I must follow if I can,
Pursuing it with eager feet,
Until it joins some larger way
Where many paths and errands meet.
And whither then? I cannot say.

Gandalf mumbled it as the scene veered off to an end, and there was so much background noise, you had to really know the poem and be listening for it to notice. None of the wonderful poems and songs Tolkien included in the story was included in the film. Why? I think it is because film is often made primarily for the eye, not the ear. However, when a film has an excellent script and is well-spoken, there is probably no greater medium. It is drama – the art of the stage which most needs to nourish the ear.

In the last four lectures of the Speech and Drama course Rudolf Steiner describes the three reasons why we need to include drama in the lives of our students. There are many reasons to put on a play: to increase memory, to develop social skills in the acting ensemble experience, to deepen the understanding of a main lesson, to increase public speaking skills, to show the class to their families and friends in a new light. Rudolf Steiner, however, gives three much larger reasons:

The first reason to put on a play with a group of students, he says, is to increase their zest, their vigor and enthusiasm for life itself. He was always admonishing the members of the Society that they were not enthusiastic enough. Maybe we should be putting on more plays instead of having conferences! Putting on a play in a class with lots of enthusiasm for the story, the characters and the performance therefore is a direct route to increasing love of life!

The second reason for putting on a play is to gain an ever deeper knowledge and experience of the world soul. When I, with my own soul, take on the role of Juliet, I have the possibility of investigating her soul with my own, and through her soul I can investigate all the souls of the other characters in the drama. This activity vastly increases my direct experience of the world soul. What is the faculty which is most developed by this work? RESPONSE-ABILITY: a phrase used by Van James at an Arts Conference held in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2005. Van spoke of the task all the arts have to develop our ability to respond to the widest possible experiences in human life (aesthetic=enlivened experience). Of all the arts none has the possibility for us

to practise our responses more than the performing arts of acting, singing, making music, dancing. Helping our students to be able to respond creatively in the moment is a mighty motivation for doing drama! This work is all an investigation of the world soul.

The third reason for putting on a play is to develop a faculty to recognise our own destiny. Steiner assures us that by being fully engaged in the creative deed of revealing a character on stage, in the presence of an audience, under the lights and yet also maintaining an equally conscious awareness of the audience and their responses develops an even finer human faculty. It is this faculty which Steiner indicates will strengthen in us the ability to find our own destiny. He even tells us that actors have an advantage over other people in this respect. This is hard to grasp. It means that if we can maintain our full daily consciousness of the world around us and simultaneously create a character – a character which arouses the empathy of our own soul – that a particular faculty is developed. This faculty is one, that in the midst of life, will enable us to recognise the people, the places, the tasks of our destiny and enable us to respond appropriately to them.

Imagine if, as teachers of a class putting on a play, we were to open our awareness to the possibility that the students, working on memorising their lines, learning how to move on stage and to dialogue together before an audience, were simultaneously being prepared to meet their own destiny with enthusiasm, response-ability, and the courage and wisdom to recognise their own tasks and friends in life?

What if we were to recognise that drama is a way to connect with the inexhaustible dispensing of nourishment? We would have found our way towards the redemption of drama. We would be contributing to the retrieval of drama as empty entertainment and a diversion from life and brought it back to its own source. Drama began in the mighty amphitheatres of the Greeks and was there for all who lived in the community. The original purpose of the Greek Plays was to reunite the people with both the earthly and the spiritual realms.

What if teachers were to recognise that one of the greatest antidotes to “burn-out” is learning to speak in class to their students in such a way they stay in touch with their own higher selves? Having found that connection to the stronger part of themselves they are more available for true and refreshing inspiration, the ‘inexhaustible source of nourishment’!

Steiner also reminds us that every modern play must include two things: the love between human beings and humour! Remember his mighty figure of humanity – the representation of the human being standing between the two polar diversions of materialism and illusion. Who does he also include in the statue as the representative of our greatest helper? The being of Humour! So, while you are preparing your class plays, make sure it is fun! Make sure that when

your class finishes their play that each of them can say; “I feel happy, deep down. All is well.”

These words of Katherine Mansfield contain a picture of health. “I feel happy” surely recognizes that I am in touch with my feeling self and have the capacity to be – living in the moment – fully awake and aware. “Deep down” could mean being in touch with the well of inspiration and renewal, in touch with the forces beneath our feet, those living forces of great power which enable us to speak.

“All is well.” This could be describing what happens when I get in touch with the powers of speech themselves, release the sounds into the world in love and in freedom so that others can hear and feel them. Done well, they and I, and indeed the earth itself, can be healed in the same creative deed.

What exciting work there is to be done in drama! What play! What health! What Well-th! By developing plays and recitations and story-telling events we are working on the development of listening. In the deepening silence may we grow and ripen the listening which may enable us to hear again the sounds from the stars. May our listening grow and ripen which enables us to hear human speaking in love and in truth.

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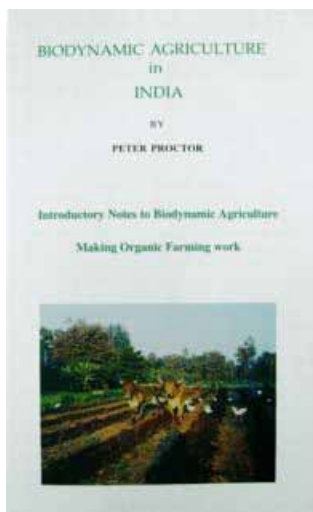
Book Review

BioDynamic Agriculture in India:

Introductory Notes to BioDynamic Agriculture—Making Organic Farming Work

Peter Proctor

Eco Agri Research Foundation, India



This is a handy and informative booklet not just because it cites the work of BioDynamic farming in India but because it is also a practical manual on farming and gardening with BD preparations in the tropics. There are chapters on compost making, the cow pat pit, preparations 500, 501, 502, 507, growing vanilla, sugar, coffee, tea, vegetables, mango, grapes, and cotton, planting with the moon, solar, planetary and constellation rhythms. Many other topics are covered in this valuable guidebook to redeeming the soil and produce of the earth.

For copies, contact Peter Proctor at:

pproctornz@yahoo.co.nz

or David Hogg at bdai@sancharnet.in



News

Kathmandu's Tashi Waldorf School and Children of Nepal's Winter Newsletter for 2008 may be viewed and downloaded from their website at: http://www.childrenofnepal.org/newsandevents/newsletter_xmas2008.html

Rachel Amtzis, Children of Nepal

www.childrenofnepal.org

A Rite of Passage

Van James, Honolulu, Hawai'i

In response to the U.S. Department of Defense's denial of an appeal to award the Congressional Medal of Honor to Sergeant Rafael Peralta, *Catcher Cuts The Rope*, a Native American living in Hawai'i, protested the decision by offering-up his own military metals. Peralta, a Hawaii-based Marine died in a firefight in Iraq in 2004, and was recommended for the nation's top award for valor by his fellow Marines who said he used his body to shield them from a grenade blast. It had been widely acknowledged that Peralta, a Mexican immigrant who earned his citizenship while in uniform, deserved the nation's highest military honor. But a five-member panel



rejected the Marine Corps recommendation that Peralta receive the award saying that Peralta was wounded by friendly fire and therefore unlikely to be able to carry out the heroic act. Instead, he was awarded the Navy Cross, the second highest honor—but his mother refused to accept it.

Catcher Cuts The Rope was one of the fellow Marines with Sergeant Peralta in Fallujah, Iraq, and was, himself, wounded two days later. Now doing the Waldorf Kindergarten Training at the Honolulu Waldorf School in Hawai'i, *Catcher*, supported on shore by his pregnant wife and son, *Rainbow After The Storm*, swam out into the Pacific Ocean on the anniversary of his wounding and gave over to the deep his nine metals (including his prized Purple Heart) to honor Peralta, acknowledge the Great Spirit, and signal his own "moving-on" in a journey as a warrior to that of a healer and teacher.

With no animosity what so ever *Catcher* says, "There's got to be a better way for countries to settle their differences." He is making steps to find that way.

Thoughts about Earth Changes

Marko Pogacnik, Slovenia

Ten years have now passed since I began observing the ongoing Earth Changes from the geomantic and personal point of view. What an interesting journey! During this time I tried hard to discover and understand the thread along which the process is evolving. However, my attitude has changed over the course of the last year. I now no longer feel any pressure to interact with the Changes. Rather, I believe that there is a need to communicate to the wider public the changes that are going on within the Earth Cosmos. We need to transform the negative view that climate change will destroy life upon the planet so that the positive aspects of this unique process can be perceived. We are all aware that a worldwide ecological (and financial) breakdown may be at hand. However, our great challenge is to explain to our culture that a collapse of our ecological and social systems is not inevitable, but on the contrary, that this crisis is an opportunity to participate in a positive transformation of consciousness. This transition involves (indeed, it requires) a change in focus from an exclusively rational and material perspective to recognition of the subtle and spiritual levels of existence that embrace and unify all dimensions of our life on Earth. Holding on to a negative concept of the current Earth Changes does not allow us to take part in the positive aspect of the transition from one level of existence to another.

[Marko's recent books published in 2008 are: *Venice: Discovering a Hidden Pathway*, an earlier book that has been reprinted by Lindisfarne with hundreds of Photos by Bojan Breclj; *Sacred Geography – Co-creating the Earth Cosmos*, a complete manual on Geomancy written together with his daughters Ana and Ajra. The book contains not only over a hundred examples of different geomantic phenomena from all over the world, but also many practical exercises in multi-dimensional perception. He also contributed a chapter to the volume *The Inner Life of the Earth – Exploring the Mysteries of Nature, Subnature and Supranature*, published by Steiner Books.]



Waldorf Gaza crisis intervention team forced to leave – urgent appeal for aid:

EL ARISH, Egypt (NNA) – A crisis intervention team sent to Gaza by the international Waldorf organisation Friends of Waldorf Education to help traumatised children has been forced to leave the territory again on the urgent advice of the UN and the German foreign office.

The advice to foreign delegations to leave Gaza was issued because Egypt said it would close the Rafah crossing point into the territory on Thursday and that thereafter they would no longer be allowed to cross back into Egypt.

Friends of Waldorf Education said the 15-member team, consisting of anthroposophical physicians, therapists and health and education professionals with experience in crisis intervention work, left Gaza on Wednesday and is now waiting in the Egyptian town of El Arish to return.

Given the fragile situation in the region it is unclear when the crossing will be opened again and foreign workers will be allowed to return, but the Friends of Waldorf Education team hopes that it can resume its work in the near future.

The organisation is also urgently appealing for funds to cover the currently estimated 43,000 euro (£37,000, US\$55,000) costs of the deployment.

Because of its decades-long experience in helping children in war zones or in the wake of natural disasters – most recently in Lebanon in 2006/2007 and the earthquake in China last year – Friends of Waldorf Education decided to send the intervention team to Gaza to provide acute assistance to children and their families traumatised by the recent fighting.

According to UN figures from the end of January, some 1,300 Palestinians were killed and more than 5,300 were injured, 34 per cent of them children. Israel's three-week military offensive also caused widespread damage and destruction.

Numerous children who came under fire have been psychologically traumatised and require urgent help to prevent or reduce the psychological after-effects such as post-traumatic stress, Friends of Waldorf Education says.

Waldorf education and the various anthroposophical forms of therapy were particularly suited for this purpose, the organization adds. Teachers would also be supported to prepare them for dealing with the children in school.

The organization stresses that the current crisis intervention is motivated purely on humanitarian grounds and was coordinated with the Israeli Waldorf school movement. The action was organized with the assistance of the German foreign office which contacted the Egyptian and Israeli authorities.

Until Wednesday, one part of the team was working in southern Gaza and the other in the northern part of the territory. Friends of Waldorf Education said the deployment was organised with "our cooperation partner", the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP), a large

Palestinian umbrella organization which works both with Physicians for Human Rights in Israel and the World Health Organization (WHO).

If the emergency team is not allowed to return to Gaza, it will seek to get permission to work with the children in the refugee camps situated in Egypt on the border with the Palestinian territory.

Link: <http://www.freunde-waldorf.de/en/>.

The Art of Colour: A Painting Conference

Sydney, Australia, July 14-19, 2009

We warmly invite you to the 2nd International Painting conference to be held in Sydney, Australia, during the southern winter from 14 – 19 July 2009. The conference venue has views to the east of the magnificent Sydney Harbour and the city skyline, and will be host to participants from UK/Europe, U.S.A., S.E. Asia and the Pacific area, New Zealand, and, of course, from all parts of Australia.

Three international speakers and three Australian speakers will be joined by two Sydney workshop leaders to bring lectures and painting workshops on various themes. All equipment for the twice-daily painting workshops will be included in the registration fee. It will also be possible to buy your own easel when the conference ends.

An exciting evening program has been arranged with music, eurythmy and other artistic events, plus two tours, one to Lorien Novalis Steiner School in its bush setting, and the other to Warrah Village for Curative Education, their farm and school with murals. There will be “Art of Colour” painting exhibitions at the conference venue, at Sydney’s Rudolf Steiner House, and at other Sydney locations, and these will run in conjunction with the Conference.

The conference continues the work begun at the 1st International Conference at the Goetheanum, Switzerland, which hosted 158 participants in July, 2006.

“Colours and sound are windows through which we can ascend spiritually to the spiritual world, and life also brings to us windows through which the spiritual world enters our physical world... Human beings will make important discoveries in the future in this respect. They will unite their spiritual / moral nature with the results of sense perception. An infinite deepening of the human soul can be foreseen in this domain.”--
Rudolf Steiner

Further information:

www.artofcolourconference.org

www.paintingschool-goetheanum.ch

Registration: Charlotte Rogers
195 North Bank Road
Bellingen NSW 2450, Australia
crogers3@mail2world.com

Fire and Water by Van James



New Speech Education in the Pacific Region

Michael Burton, School of Transformative Speech

The beginnings of what is hoped will become a four year course in Transformative Speech have been made in Manila. In March and April of this year ten participants took part in a one-week introduction course that is a prerequisite for further study leading to a four-year speech diploma.

Transformative Speech (sometimes called Speech Formation or Creative Speech) is a new art, given to the world by Rudolf Steiner and developed especially by his wife, Marie Steiner von Sivers. It harnesses the formative gestures and creative power of the individual speech sounds. It is founded upon the connection that exists between speech and the whole physiology of the human body. Transformative Speech is a potent form of therapy and self-development, as well as a vehicle for communication and artistic expression.

The teacher at the first introductory course was Michael Burton, a former student of Virginia Brett. The third and fourth years of his study took place with her in Kahumana Community in Oahu, Hawaii. Already, Michael is planning three further introductory courses - one in Manila, one in Taiwan and one in Bangkok, and negotiations are also underway to bring the week to Taruna in New Zealand.

Other introductory courses are planned by Dr Jane Gilmer in Singapore and Penang, Malaysia. Jane trained in Creative Speech and Drama with Mechtild Harkness in Sydney and is now head of theatre studies at the National Institute of Education in Singapore.

Introductory courses can be given wherever the required number of participants (12-25) can be found. The introductory course is an intense period of lectures, speech, drama, eurythmy, chiophonetics and clay modeling. Those who will benefit from such a course will include teachers, business-people, healing practitioners, actors, human resource managers, counselors, parents and anyone interested in the art and business of spoken communication.

Some participants will do only the one week course, but it is hoped that there will be some who make a deeper commitment to this new art. At the end of the first Manila course every participant declared his or her intention to take a second course. Future work will be offered in the form of block courses and weekend work – the forms are flexible, based on four weeks tuition per year plus consistent, ongoing study, and various ways will be found that fit the participants' needs.

Here are the places and dates for courses in the Pacific region. Note the people to contact if you are interested in further information:

Manila

June 13 & 14, 20 & 21, 27 & 28, 2009

No. 4 Biak na Bato, Ayala Heights, QC

Contact : Ms. Marion R. Salazar

Landline No (632) 434-0019

Mobile No 0917-847-1999

email: marion_salazar1999@yahoo.com

Taiwan

July 6 -11, 2009

Taichung Lei-Chuan Waldorf School

Contact: Shy-Tyng, Kai

Landline No. 886 4 2435 0110

Mobile: 886 916 040 133

email: baykai@pchome.com.tw

Bangkok

August 8-13, 2009 (Details to be confirmed)

Contact : Chinrinee

Landline No. 001-6681-834-4432

email: chinrinee.w@the3worldscreator.com

New Zealand

Possibly October 2009 (Details to be confirmed)

Contact: Roy Boonen, Taruna, Hawkes Bay

Landline No. (64) 6 8777 174

Email roy.b@taruna.ac.nz

Singapore and Malaysia

Contact: Dr Jane Gilmer

Email: jane.gilmer@gmail.com



Circle and Cross #27 by Van James

Meeting the Needs of Children Today!

International Kolisko Conference
February 14-18, 2010
Honolulu, Hawai'i USA

**Dr. Michaela Gloeckler, leader of the Goetheanum
Medical Section, Switzerland,
will keynote a conference on
"Reading the Needs of Children and Understanding the
Stages of Human Development--Birth to Age 21."**

Other international presenters will also join this exciting
conference for Teachers, Educators, Doctors, Nurses,
Therapists, and Parents.

More information to come

Sponsored by:

Honolulu Waldorf School

Anthroposophical Society in Hawai'i

Medical Section of the Goetheanum

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Painting workshop at the Third Asian Waldorf Teachers Conference in Manila, Philippines.



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“Only what is chaotic can be made beautiful. When we transform the chaos in the cosmos, beauty arises. Chaos and cosmos are thus interchangeable concepts.”

--RUDOLF STEINER