

Pacifica Journal Celebrates Twentieth Anniversary

BY VAN JAMES

The online journal that has fostered and chronicled the development of Waldorf Education, Biodynamic Agriculture, and other practical applications of Anthroposophy throughout East Asia is marking two decades of publication.

In the summer of 1995, the Honolulu Waldorf School and the Anthroposophical Society in Hawai'i joined forces to host an international conference for the Pacific region. Participants came from around the "Ring of Fire." Peru, California, Canada, Japan, the Philippines, China, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, and of course the various islands of Hawai'i were represented. Europe and other parts of the United States also sent participants. This first Pacific Region Conference included lectures and workshops on Waldorf Education, Biodynamic Agriculture, the Threefold Social Order, Anthroposophic Medicine, and on science and the arts from an anthroposophic perspective. The gathering was a unique multinational, multicultural, multiethnic Pacific region event.

Later that year, to carry this impulse forward, the first official Anthroposophic Asia-Pacific Initiative Group meeting (APIG) was held in Manila. There, the need for coordinated efforts on behalf of Anthroposophy and its daughter movements in the Asia-Pacific region was recognized. The APIG members resolved to organize annual

English-speaking international conferences in different Asian countries on themes arising from the practical applications of Anthroposophy. At the same time, it was agreed that the newsletter of the Anthroposophical Society in Hawai'i would broaden its focus and become an organ of communication for the work in the entire Asia-Pacific region. And so, *Pacifica Journal* was born.

India, Thailand, Taiwan, and Nepal were among the countries where the subsequent annual Asia-Pacific Conferences were held. The number of attendees typically grew each year to the hundreds. By 2011, with the growth of Waldorf Education and other anthroposophical movements in eastern and southern Asia, the need for national conferences held in local Asian languages, rather than the international gathering, was clear. The Asia-Pacific Initiative Group disbanded, and since then the international Asia-Pacific Conferences have been replaced by many, more specific, regional and national conferences, trainings, workshops, and mentoring programs conducted in the various countries of the region.

Out of meetings and work at the Asia-Pacific conferences, another all-embracing conference had come into being during this time. That is the Asian Waldorf Teachers Conference (AWTC), organized by the Friends of Rudolf Steiner Education, based in Germany. The conference takes place every two years in English. The first AWTC was held in Thailand in 2007, the most recent in Japan in 2015, and the next in China in 2017. Over 300 participants attended the 2015 gathering.



Teachers watching a puppet performance at the Asian Waldorf Teachers Conference in Seoul, Korea, 2013



Representatives of the Asia-Pacific Initiative Group, the Goetheanum, and the Friends of Rudolf Steiner Education, Cha Am, Thailand, 2007



Chinese Waldorf teachers after doing a skit from their local culture during the Asian Waldorf Teachers Conference in the Philippines, 2009

Today there are Waldorf kindergartens, Waldorf schools, Waldorf teacher trainings, biodynamic farms, and related initiatives in most of the countries in east and south Asia. These countries include South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, China, the

Philippines, Malaysia, Viet Nam, Thailand, Singapore, India, and Nepal.

For the past twenty years, in now fifty consecutive issues, *Pacifica Journal* has followed all of this growth and development closely, reporting on new Waldorf schools in China, describing the joys and sufferings of biodynamic farmers in India, announcing anthroposophical medical trainings in the Philippines, and much more. The journal has played a significant role in this growth, keeping people in this immense and varied region of the world informed about what is going on, inspiring new initiatives, and encouraging cooperation and collaboration.

Originally published four times a year and distributed in hard copy, *Pacifica Journal* is now a biannual publication produced as a PDF file and emailed to its readers. It contains a wide selection of interesting articles along with beautiful photography and illustrations, as well as



Christof Wiechert, former head of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum, giving one of his lively lectures at the AWTC in Tokyo, Japan, 2015

book reviews, reports on conferences that have occurred, and announcements of events to come. Recently the journal has been reprinting current research articles from mainstream periodicals that confirm Waldorf, biodynamic, and anthroposophical medical practices. The

role and importance of the arts has been a consistent emphasis in the magazine.

The significant role of *Pacifica Journal* was recognized early on. The late Fred Paddock, longtime librarian of the Rudolf Steiner Library, wrote in 1997:

This is the journal to watch! The *Pacifica Journal* takes in the whole Pacific Rim, including Australia, the Philippines, Japan and India. It is in this region that Anthroposophy as a world movement (and not just a central European transplant) will meet its test. The task of acculturating Anthroposophy into the Asian setting will demand the best thinking we can come up with. *Pacifica Journal* has clearly taken this challenge seriously. If Anthroposophy is to fulfill its destiny as a world movement, this little unpretentious journal could become a cutting edge.



Sue Simpson of New Zealand leading a group in eurythmy at the AWTC in Tokyo, Japan, 2015

Perhaps *Pacifica Journal* will go the way of APIG and the Asia-Pacific Conferences as more and more local grassroots initiatives take over the task of communicating the inspiring work that is being done in Asia. But for now, *Pacifica Journal* celebrates this milestone in its life as a vehicle of communication for the spirit of the time. ☺

Those wishing to subscribe to *Pacifica Journal* should contact Van James at pacificajournal@gmail.com. Past issues can be downloaded at www.anthrohawaii.org



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