

Pacifica Journal

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The First Asian Waldorf Teachers' Conference, Taiwan, 2005

Chris Bennett, Honolulu, Hawai'i

The first Asian Waldorf Teachers' Conference took place from 29th April to 5th May this year, hosted by the Ci Xing Waldorf School in I-Lan, Taiwan. Attending were around 100 Waldorf teachers and kindergarten teachers from all over Asia, plus 15 participants from Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Hawai'i. The oldest Waldorf school in Asia is in Japan, just 12 years old, so this was a gathering of young, enthusiastic and energetic teachers, with a sprinkling of equally enthusiastic and perhaps slightly less energetic older ones! Indeed, this energy and enthusiasm permeated the whole conference, which lasted seven days, and there was a great deal of intense networking and socializing going on between the participants during the generous breaks. Most of this was carried out in English, the main language of the conference, which was spoken with varying degrees of proficiency by most people, or Chinese. But of course each group spoke among themselves in their own language, so we were always surrounded by conversations in many different languages, a real treat for a language teacher like me! Apart from a large Taiwanese contingent – around 36 people—there were also large groups from Japan and the Philippines, and smaller groups from Hong Kong, India, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal (1), Singapore (1) and Thailand. No one was able to represent the Peoples' Republic of China, since travel to Taiwan is not permitted for citizens of that country.

The program was intense, with almost 12-hour days on the campus of the Ci Xing School, a large three-story building set in newly landscaped grounds. We began with singing, followed by the morning lectures on the Study of Man, given by Christoph Wiechert, Hans Mulder, Florian Osswald and Ben Cherry. After one of our generous tea and coffee breaks we met for curriculum workshops, which were divided into groups for Kindergarten, Grades 1 & 2; 3 & 4; 5 & 6; 7 & 8 and High School. After lunch there were artistic activities, more tea, then a time for reports and presentations from each country from 5:00 to 6:00.p.m. These were very interesting and often surprising. We learned, for example, that Waldorf Schools (except one) are not



Lion guardian figure at threshold of Confucian temple in Taiwan, Republic of China.

legal in Japan, so students have to be registered at a “friendly” state school in order to attend their local Waldorf School! There was also a very moving report on the difficulties faced by our colleagues in Nepal, working in the midst of what is virtually a civil war in that country. In the evening there were cultural

presentations from each country, a quite varied and colorful mix of song, dance, drama and puppetry. The conference ended with an exhibition of the work from the painting and form drawing classes, and contributions from



Taiwanese teachers at conference in I-Lan, Taiwan.

each of the morning workshops. It ended in a joyful mood, all of us filled with new thoughts and impressions, and with hope for the future of Waldorf Education on this vast continent. We came away with contact addresses of new friends all over Asia, whom we hope to see again in two years' time in Bangkok, where it is planned to hold the next such conference.

Thanks are of course due to the teachers and staff of the Ci Xing Waldorf School, who were excellent hosts and looked after us all very well indeed, and especially to Nana Göbel of the Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners, who was the main inspirer and mover behind this very successful event. It was most heartening to see how Waldorf Education has begun to find a home in Asia, and how schools there are adapting the Waldorf Curriculum to reflect their own diverse cultures and histories. This is of course a formidable task and an ongoing research project, and a wonderful start has been made by our colleagues all over Asia. If you are travelling to their part of the world, please visit them and see for yourselves.



[Sidebar line drawings in this issue are by Marko Pogacnik and are from his book Turned Upside Down. All drawings depict exercises (titles and descriptions omitted) and are used with permission.]

Invisible - Visible Through Art International Youth Festival

*30. July - 5. August, 2005
Goetheanum - Dornach, Switzerland*

Whether you are just interested in art, or are an aspiring artist, or a genius, there is something for you. Meet, exchange, and make art with hundreds of young people and artists from all over the world.

With over 17 workshops that meet for 3 hours each day, you will create your own masterpiece that will be exhibited and presented at the conference finale on the last day. Each day will also be full with theater performances, puppet shows, mime, and improvisations from a wide variety of groups. Then there are the evening performances: Steiner Graffiti, Goetheanum Eurythmy, Schiller's Wilhelm Tell and Maria Stuart, and "On Foot....in the Solar System." To top things off, the night café will be a free-for-all improvisational space for everyone to laugh, dance, drink, snack, and have fun.

Is art just for looking at in galleries, or hanging on walls, or for long debates on TV, or in newspapers? Has art taken on a new role today? What is that role? The focus of art today seems more related to the creative process itself, the transformation of an experience, or the expression of a feeling, or an idea. How then does this relate to the individual and the world? Make the invisible visible!

This summer at the Goetheanum

Once the largest stage in Europe, the Goetheanum still stands as a marvel and revolution in architectural achievement. Located near Basel in northwest Switzerland, the Goetheanum is host to hundreds of conferences and performance each year.

It will be an unforgettable week, full of activity and surprises, new connections and friendships, new ideas and inspirations. You will leave the conference feeling exhausted, yet full of energy. So what are you waiting for?

<http://www.YouthConference.org>

Fundamentalism and Relativism: Two Boundaries of Spiritual Science

Michael Howard, Amherst, Massachusetts, USA

Recently an anthroposophical friend told me he would be organizing the lectures and workshops for the local branch of the Anthroposophical Society in the coming year. A conversation ensued around a dilemma he felt.

The committee of individuals who had approached him about taking on this task made a point of reminding him that only anthroposophical speakers should be invited. My friend smiled, saying he knew this had been emphasized because of his earlier spiritual affiliations. My friend is deeply dedicated to studying and serving spiritual science. But the question that weighed upon him was the following: Is anthroposophy best served by distancing itself from other spiritual movements or by creating some opportunities for interaction and dialogue with representatives of other streams?

My response took the following direction: I said I fully understood and appreciated his dilemma, nevertheless, I saw no simple solution. I made a comparison with a similar drama among eurythmists. There are those who are concerned to protect eurythmy from becoming watered down or distorted by outside influences such as modern dance. There are others who are concerned that eurythmy needs to grow and evolve in response to contemporary needs and developments. I said that I respected both positions as it seemed healthy to have both poles represented. It seems a very real danger that the deeper dimensions of eurythmy could get lost but at the same time I feel the deepening of eurythmy should keep it alive and contemporary in an authentic rather than a contrived way.

The same situation faces Waldorf education. There are those who actively represent the view that Waldorf education must reach as many children as possible even if it means making compromises. Other parents and educators see the need for a qualitative deepening and not merely quantitative expansion of Waldorf education if the individual and societal needs of future generations are to be met.

Behind my friend's situation in organizing Anthroposophical Society events and the examples I mentioned with eurythmy and Waldorf education, we encounter a broader issue that deserves conscious attention. The life and evolution of spiritual science are unfortunately

and unnecessarily undermined so long as we are unable to find a healthy orientation to a spiritual battle playing itself out in the souls of each individual and thus in our institutions. The spiritual battle I refer to is by no means limited to anthroposophical circles but pervades human affairs in all spheres and at all levels—in our personal, local, national and global relations.

It goes without saying that in every corner of the world stage we encounter all manner and degrees of conflict. What is so little understood are the spiritual forces that are behind and driving the outer conflicts. These spiritual forces go by many names; for my purpose here I will call them the spirit of fundamentalism, on the one side, and the spirit of relativism on the other. I submit that we need to recognize the spirit of fundamentalism and relativism, first, in ourselves so that we can better meet them in others and in all our social relations and institutions.

If I can assume the larger context of this question is self evident, my purpose here is to focus on what I perceive as a growing intensification of both a fundamentalist and a relativist spirit within our anthroposophical movement and the Anthroposophical Society. In today's world the term fundamentalism is charged with polarizing implications. To speak of fundamentalism in the context of anthroposophical circles may for some seem over-stated and thus inappropriate. Having seriously weighed that possibility I nevertheless consciously use it for several reasons.

Firstly, I wish to be clear that I speak of the spirit of fundamentalism; I have no need or intent to label any particular views as fundamentalism or any individual as a fundamentalist.

Secondly, as anthroposophist I believe we have been given the soul spiritual tools to work with this phenomenon in ways that may not only heal and enliven our relationships within anthroposophical circles but perhaps our earnest efforts in this regard can serve human society as a whole in confronting what is in effect the spiritual battle of our time.

Lastly, it is essential from the start to note that I speak not only of the spirit of fundamentalism



*Circle and Cross: #7,
Van James*

but also of the spirit of relativism. The term fundamentalism is widely used today, while relativism is not, at least in this context. There may be a better word than relativism but it is the best word I have been able to find to describe a mindset or spiritual disposition that is the opposite of a fundamentalist disposition.

I introduce the words fundamentalism and relativism to describe a spiritual polarity but it is crucial that they are not understood or used as synonyms of good and evil, as is often the case. Having said that, however, our task is complicated further by the need to understand how the polar spirits of fundamentalism and relativism are sources of good and evil.

In old cowboy movies white hats designated the good guys and black hats the bad guys, that is, to a white kid like myself. Today, I can appreciate that someone else might see the white hats as signifying the bad guys. Similarly, some people may automatically judge the fundamentalist spirit as bad

and the relativist spirit as good. However, others will see it quite the other way around.

We discover quite a different orientation to white and black—or more accurately, to light and dark—when we see that the full diversity of the rainbow colors depends on the interaction of light and dark. As Goethe first pointed out, color arises through the deeds and suffering of light and dark—yellow arising through the darkening of light, while blue arises through the lightening of darkness.

The emergence of color through the interaction of light and darkness is more than a poetic metaphor; it models a way of seeing and thinking. I believe nothing less than a different way of perceiving and thinking will enable us to understand and work constructively rather than destructively with the diverse spiritual perspectives and values of other people. Specifically, I wish to introduce the view that we can perceive the spirit of fundamentalism and the spirit of relativism as spiritual poles comparable to the poles of light

and dark. Just as light and darkness are necessary to the rich diversity of color and all the paintings created with color, the polar forces of fundamentalism and relativism are necessary to our creating a vibrant and diverse spiritual life.

I think it valid and helpful to recognize when we ourselves as much as others think and speak out of a fundamentalist or relativist spirit. For example, I am quite conscious as I write that I am walking a fine line between these two poles. I fully expect some readers will feel I am too relativist in my views, while others will think me too narrow and dogmatic, perhaps even fundamentalist. I try to be open rather than defensive towards such assessments of my views because I take for granted that my insights are incomplete and/or one-sided, and thus in constant need of revision and evolution. Some degree of one-sidedness in our views seems to me not only unavoidable but necessary. Something as basic as walking requires that we lean to the left and then to the right. To be willing and able to risk falling to the left or right is as necessary to spiritual walking as physical walking. We know that a child learns to walk through frequent falling to the left or right. Similarly, we can support each other in our learning to walk spiritually by giving each other the inner and outer space to move spiritually to the right and left. To be fearful for ourselves and/or to judge others for moving to the spiritual right or left promotes only spiritual paralysis that hinders our spiritual evolution.

I believe we can work with the spirits of fundamentalism and relativism as creative forces in a manner comparable to the way a painter works creatively with the forces of light and dark in color. The question is, how?

In this regard I draw the reader's attention to another dimension of art that Rudolf Steiner points to in a lecture given on February 15, 1918 (See Lecture 5, "The Two Sources of Art: Impressionism and Expressionism," in the collection, *Art As Spiritual Activity, Rudolf Steiner's Contribution to the Visual Arts*, Anthroposophic Press, 1998).

In this lecture Steiner expands upon the common meaning of impressionism and expressionism to describe two starting points of art that embraces the full spectrum of artistic styles and streams. Steiner uses them as contemporary equivalents to the classical terms Apollonian and Dionysian. Steiner's intent is not to limit the rich diversity of art with abstract labels. Rather he uses the terms impressionism and expressionism to draw attention to the two poles from which all art arises in the same way that the infinite subtleties of color originate from the interaction of light and



Icon: #11, Van James

darkness. In the simplest of terms the two sources of art are outer experience and inner experience.

All art that derives its inspiration from the outer world he refers to as belonging to the impressionistic stream. However, when an artist merely replicates or copies the outer world, Steiner suggests that the artist's activity falls out of the sphere of art. All art that originates from an inner spiritual impulse he includes in the expressionistic stream. However, when an artist merely illustrates a spiritual experience or in today's art scene simply emotes in color or substance, Steiner says here too the artist falls out of the realm of art.

Steiner refers to these two tendencies towards outer and inner literalism as the "two sins of art." Such a phrase is provocative; sometimes it offends artists who otherwise are sympathetic to Steiner's indications about art. A deeper study of Steiner's full meaning, as elaborated in the lecture mentioned, can reveal that his purpose is not merely to cast judgment on certain kinds of art. His deeper intent is to draw attention to two ways artists fall from free creative activity into unfree activity.

In full awareness for a similar controversial reaction, I pose the possibility that the spirit of fundamentalism and the spirit of relativism are the two sins of spiritual science? Such a statement is not intended to judge the views and values of others. I simply submit that the fundamentalist and relativist spirits define the parameters of spiritual science. In that sense they constitute two spiritual boundaries which when crossed no longer serve human life and evolution because they leave us spiritually unfree. On the other hand the fundamentalist and relativist spirits play a vital and profound service in human evolution when they are active as the necessary poles for authentic spiritual and creative freedom.

If we see how the impressionist and expressionist artist exercises creative freedom while the inner and outer literalist remains unfree, then we have a model for seeing when and how the spirit of fundamentalism and relativism make us free, and when and how they make us unfree.

In summary, Steiner is saying that the outer literalist is unfree because he is limited by experience of only the physical reality of the outer world and remains unaware of the soul/spiritual dimension of the outer world. Likewise the inner literalist is unfree insofar as he is unable to give objective expression to his spiritual experience. Both the impressionist and the expressionist achieve a measure of freedom insofar as they bridge the outer and inner, the physical and spiritual. The impressionist begins in the outer but reveals the soul/spiritual in the outer through

the appropriate colors and forms. The expressionist begins from inner experience but objectifies his spiritual experience also through the appropriate colors and forms. In both cases the artist's capacity to live deeply into the soul/spiritual qualities of color and form creates the bridge from the outer to the inner or the inner to the outer. To be truly and fully human we must develop the inner freedom to bridge the physical to the spiritual and the spiritual to the physical.

Such a perspective can help us see how the spirits of fundamentalism and of relativism form the two boundaries of spiritual science from which we can rise from unfree to free spiritual activity.

The fundamentalist spirit is committed to the One Truth. The relativist spirit is inclined towards the multiplicity of Truth. The fundamentalist spirit relies on the authority of teacher and Holy Scripture—in our circles, Rudolf Steiner and his books and lectures. The relativist spirit finds merit in all spiritual teachers and teachings. The fundamentalist spirit focuses on what is different in teachings and values; the relativist spirit dwells on what is similar. The fundamentalist spirit demands exact literal interpretation of teachings and expects it to be applied to all people and circumstances. The relativist spirit prefers generalizations that are open to individual interpretation and applied differently in different situations.

Some may think I am opening Pandora's Box which is better left closed to contain the demons and serpents that would do us more harm. The truth is, the Box is already open and the serpents are on every side. Like those who would in modesty say the Emperor is clothed when he is naked, we do ourselves a disservice if we turn our gaze from the spiritual battle that surrounds us on every side. There is no magical formula that will subdue the dragons of the fundamentalist and relativist spirits. My intent is simply to draw attention to this battle within and around each of us. In conclusion, I offer one possible starting point in the hope that others will join me, like Laocoon and his sons, in wrestling these spiritual serpents who would inflict a mortal wound upon our budding humanity.

Let us turn to my friend's situation that I described at the beginning. Even if my friend decided to invite only anthroposophists, how would he determine this? Is it only those who have a pink card, or a blue card? Or, is it those who are particularly gifted at quoting Rudolf Steiner extensively and precisely? To quote Rudolf Steiner accurately does not by itself make a good anthroposophical lecture. A lecture could be factually correct from a spiritual scientific



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perspective and yet fail to be imbued with living meaning for the listeners. On the other hand, a lecturer could totally captivate his listeners with his warmth, humor and enthusiasm; he could take their breath away with a breadth and diversity of spiritual references. Everyone could go away highly stimulated and yet feel there is little spiritual substance to digest and work with.

Anthroposophy is spiritual science, exact spiritual knowledge. But spiritual scientific knowledge, when rightly perceived, is imbued with life giving meaning and creative impulses. Spiritual science is not a catalogue of spiritual facts for us to believe or that demands particular conduct.

If I lack experience with color and think a pale green yellow is warm, someone with more experience can help me discover it's coolness by placing a warm orange yellow next to it. But it would be quite another matter if someone like a painting teacher were to

say I am making a bad painting because I am adding a cool yellow to a painting with warm blue. Likewise, if I am mistaken about some spiritual or physical fact it behooves me to stand corrected. However, if someone says I am doing something wrong to myself, to others or an institution like the Anthroposophical Society because I am violating this or that spiritual truth, I submit that another kind of error is being made that has other serious consequences.

It is one thing for a physician to inform me that a certain substance or action is potentially harmful, but in the end the physician must respect my freedom to do otherwise—there may be karmic reasons, another order of good, that is not the business of the physician to judge. The insights of spiritual science are truths which are intended to make us more free not less free. We are more free when we can include spiritual perspectives with the purely physical reality we are more readily aware of. But the very same spiritual insights make us less free when they are used by ourselves or someone else to impose a

particular conduct. Steiner has spoken about the spiritual effects of eating meat versus not eating meat, tea versus coffee, but he makes no judgment about one being good and the other bad. A Waldorf teacher is not better than a public school teacher. An individual whose work and karma brings him or her into association with individuals of other spiritual orientations is no more exposed to adversary forces than individuals who associate with bankers and lawyers.

As brothers and sisters in spiritual striving we may be able to share perspectives that help us assess the spiritual implications of this or that action. But we violate a more essential spiritual truth—the truth that since 1879 the Christic Spirits guiding humanity are doing everything to promote and enhance our capacity for individual freedom—when we presume to judge the actions of someone else as appropriate or inappropriate to an anthroposophist. The Anthroposophical Society is an association of striving ethical individuals. In that sense the Society is a community where individual differences are encouraged rather than discouraged, or worse, thwarted. The Anthroposophical Society does not find its wholeness in commonality but in diversity. If the Society is a painting, its unity, balance and harmony are to be achieved not with one color but with the full spectrum of colors—a significantly more challenging enterprise, one for which we must engage all the forces and capacities of our humanity.

To cultivate a pragmatic empathy, that is to live into and work with the very different world of thoughts, feelings and will impulses of each other individual, is the great challenge before humankind. We must not confuse empathy and tolerance with a relativist spirit for it is just where we seek a living equilibrium between the fundamentalist and relativist spirits, that we encounter the christic spirit. The christic spirit is open but avoids becoming relativist through exercising discernment. Likewise, the christic spirit strives towards spiritual objectivity but avoids dogmatism and fundamentalism, by perceiving the spiritual truth in the many diverse ways individuals approach the spirit.

To creatively balance and harmonize the fundamentalist and relativist spirits in our self and in our interchanges is a sphere of opportunity for such christic spiritual activity that is essential to spiritual science and the cultural renewal it is meant to serve.



Koru: #1, Van James

Waldorf Education in China

Harry Wong (Huang Xiaoxing), Chengdu, China.

It has been an exciting year to see Waldorf education taking hold and growing in China. Our small school is tucked away in Chengdu in the southwest part of China. It opened in the fall of 2004. We have been through many bureaucratic hoops and finally are granted an official license to operate. Our friends may worry about our political situation for it requires some talent to work things out here. Some things in the school our western friends would not understand. However, if you visit, perhaps you will see why we do things the way we do.

There are 13 children in the kindergarten and 8 in the mixed age primary school. Li Zewu is taking up the mixed age primary class. And Li Zhang is the lead teacher for the kindergarten. Tammy Hughes is helping with kindergarten and training new teachers. I am helping in the primary school and training new teachers for the grade school.

There are 14 young people from various parts of China that are helping us build up the school. They are playing different roles in the school while they study Waldorf education and Anthroposophy. They are assistant teachers, translators, administrators and gardeners. They hope to become kindergarten teachers or grade-school teachers one day. There are some mothers who have moved from other cities in order to enroll their children in our kindergarten. A community of young people has formed around the school. They study together, do artistic work and support the work of the teachers.

Our group is not only serving people in Chengdu but also serves the movement in greater China. We visit Hanzhou, Zhuhai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Beijing highlighting the responsibility to deepen the work here at the school. It is important that we remain responsive to requests to speak with groups interested in the education, but we are acutely aware of our lack of experience. The school is still new and has not yet found its feet. Therefore, we are inviting guest teachers from the west to train our teachers and prospective teachers. Brian Cusack will come to visit us in July in Chengdu. He will give a eurythmy course to our teachers and volunteers and then give a two-day workshop to the public in Beijing July 8-9. Some 40 people have already

committed to join the course. I believe it is the first time eurythmy will be presented in Beijing.

This is a dynamic time for China. What happens here is of global significance. The country is in the grip of materialism and has embraced many unhealthy western values. Physical needs have greatly out-weighted the spiritual needs so we work in an anti-Michaelic environment that requires extra strength and courage.

There have been many teachers in training who have participated in our school during the year. The requests for information about our school and Waldorf Education increase daily as newspapers report on our work. I am writing to ask your support to help in our work. As we plan to provide more classes next year, and train more teachers, it will be necessary to have qualified staff. In order to have teachers we will need to provide a salary which we are currently unable to do. I am writing to ask for your support for individuals who have volunteered for the year in our school (Tammy Hughes and other trained teachers). It has been very helpful to have these experienced educators with us. The new initiatives need an experienced teacher to visit, serve as a model and train teachers. Tammy Hughes is able to communicate in a mixture of Chinese and English. Her work in Chinese cities has already been very helpful. We would like it to continue. Our small school is not able to fund the development of Waldorf education in China, for we struggle to keep our school and teacher training going. We are seeking donations to keep the school running and support visiting teachers.

We are also inviting you to join our mailing list to keep you updated with our developments, as our work is dependent on your interest and support.

If you are in North America, a check can be made payable to the Rudolf Steiner Foundation in San Francisco. Mailing address is:

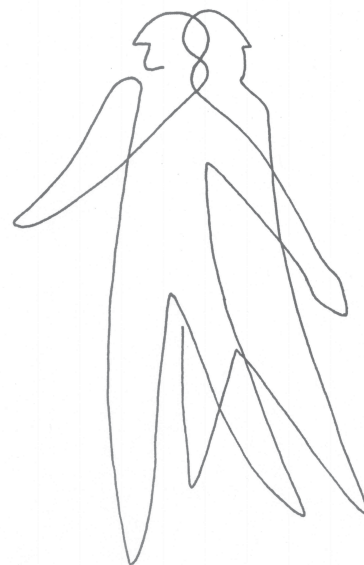
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Koepenicker Str 175, 10997
Berlin, Germany

Cheques should be earmarked:
Chengdu Waldorf School.

Many thanks for your support!



Physical needs have greatly out-weighted the spiritual needs so we work in an anti-Michaelic environment that requires extra strength and courage.

Teacher Training Course at Panyotai Waldorf School, Bangkok, Thailand

Neil Carter, Christchurch, New Zealand

I first met Dr. Porn Panosot, leader of the Panyotai Waldorf School, at an Asia Pacific/Anthroposophical Society Sections Conference, held in Hastings, New Zealand in July, 1999. With great pleasure I accepted his invitation to give a teacher training course at his school on the subject of Botany over the Christmas holiday, December 25-29, 2004.

Over twenty years ago, after giving up his medical practice in Bangkok, Porn Panosot and his wife Janpen went to Spring Valley, USA, where Porn trained for three years as a Waldorf teacher. In 1996 they opened the Panyotai Waldorf School, with six pupils as “home schoolers.” There are now about 80 pupils from Kindergarten to Class 7, in a large, rented property in the comparatively peaceful residential part of Bangna, south of Bangkok. At present, the school children are legally registered with a friendly local school because the rented school grounds are not large enough to be registered.

However, new land has been purchased and plans are underway towards building a complete school, and for Porn’s Class 7 to become the first Class 8 in the new school year, May, 2005.

This school is very active in its teacher training programme. Not only do the teachers meet after school on Tuesdays for three hours of child study, art courses and study of Dr. Steiner’s educational lectures, but they also have their regular College meeting on Thursdays and meet every Saturday morning for a teacher training course. Previous overseas lecturers who have given courses include Hans Mulder (NZ) on Inner Development and Astronomy (for this they had all gone out to the country to study the stars at night), Marjorie Theyer (NZ) on Early Childhood, Ben Cherry (Aus) on the Evolution of Consciousness, and Macrocosm and Microcosm, and Peter Patterson (NZ) who spent seven weeks mentoring and gave a course on music. A German Curative eurythmist, Hermann Wessels, from the other Waldorf school in Bangkok comes on Saturdays to teach the teachers eurythmy.

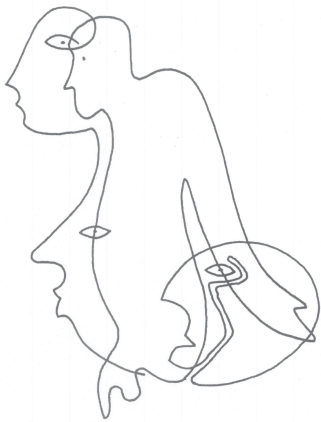
My wife and I were introduced to the school at a Christmas Eve celebration

(although the school is mainly Buddhist). There were Thai songs and Christmas carols in English (English and Mandarin are the two foreign languages taught in the school). I was able to talk to some of the parents and find their reasons for sending their children to such a different educational system. The common thread was that they did not want to subject their own children to the system they had been subjected to, i.e., long hours sitting in desks with no experiential work, and just rote learning by repetition and memorizing out of books. They were appreciative that they had found a school system that addressed spirituality as well as the intellect.

Our five-day course began each day with a “morning rhythm” related to the subject: some Bothmar exercises related to the three planes in geometry, and also astronomical exercises using our bodies to trace the path of the sun at different times of the year in the tropics, temperate zones and polar regions. This gave a link to the astronomy course that Hans Mulder had given. We spoke Rudolf Steiner’s morning verses in Thai. On the morning after the Southeast Asia tsunami disaster, one teacher led us in a time of silent prayer for those who had died. At that stage we had no idea just how huge and widespread the disaster had been.

The requested theme of the course was to work with the teachers in deepening their understanding of Rudolf Steiner’s indications for the teaching of Botany. I shared what, in my years of teaching, I thought had been successful, and what had not worked so well, from class one right through to class twelve. I emphasised that our task is to try to read the child so we can find the right curriculum, according to the time, geography and people we work with.

At the same time as our course, the Thai Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wan Nor) was holding the first National Organic Agricultural Foundation Meeting. He declared that Thailand had used chemical agricultural products for 40 years, and in 2004 alone 50,000 tons of fertilizer and pesticides costing 37 billion Baht (15 billion Euro) had been used. His aim was to make Thailand over 60% organic with 4,000,000 farms converted in five years. He also wanted organic farming integrated into the school curriculum. During the ministerial conference they recognised that organics involved improving the health of the soil and using a range of animals, i.e.



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mixed farming rather than monoculture. The above stated governmental aims seemed highly relevant to the small but radically different contribution that Waldorf Schools could make in Thailand. The Panyotai School already had a small garden for the older children, and had incorporated gardening in the curriculum. Further, when I later visited the school on a normal school day, I noticed how first thing in the morning the children were helping with handmade brooms to sweep the school clean of leaves and that there was a system for gathering and making compost. At lunch time all the children were provided with a healthy meal of organic whole grain rice and vegetables, which they ate together in their classes.

It was exciting to find just how much these Thai teachers had adapted Steiner's ideas to embrace their own heritage and culture. Our workshops were punctuated with the joyful sounds of Thai singing, e.g. finger game songs that named all the different tropical fruits, and also an ancient rice farmers' harvesting song. The Thai Class 3 children grow rice at school, then go on a train to the country to plant their seedlings in a paddy and later go to harvest it. I shared a Maori creation story of the trees of Tane, and heard in return that they use Thai and Chinese creation stories. I emphasised that although Steiner suggested that Botany and Plant Study as such may occur after the "nine-year-old change," this rubicon may occur later or earlier depending upon nationality and individuality, and the preparatory work before the nine year change is very important. I gave an example of the "meaningful tale" for young children, a teacher-created, imaginative, and truth-filled story where the plants and animals have the power of speech.

A highlight of the course was a visit to the Queen's Botanical Gardens (half an hour away from the school), where the teachers learnt about the lower plants: mosses, liverworts, horsetails and ferns through observational drawing. The teachers expressed enthusiasm for this style of hands-on learning using the real plants. A comment from the teachers was that their own schooling had been through rote learning, or at most through copying textbook drawings rather than observing the actual plants. They found that learning through actual observation and careful drawing was a positive experience. For me it was a wonder to see the huge tropical ferns, which normally only grow

in the jungles of Southeast Asia, and the extraordinary patterns of their spores. New to all the participants was to see the tiny prothallus of a fern, which is the second life form in the fern's life cycle, upon which the fern plant as we know it, is created.

On the last day we concluded with a study of Goethe's *Metamorphosis of the Plants*, using a Thai translation that Janpen had made



(Janpen is a tireless and gentle translator, to whom I am very grateful). We observed the huge variations in the flowers of the orchid genus and the range in leaf forms from the giant Amazonian circular water lily to the travellers palm (this had impressed Goethe in Italy) to banana leaves right down to the tiny cotyledons and the first leaves of a germinating plant. The flowers of the rose, water lily and lotus all showed metamorphosis of the petals, which gradually change into half petal/ half stamens to fully manifesting stamens. As the lotus is a sacred flower, we did not wish to destroy it with our studies, so instead we laid out the metamorphosing sequence of a rose bloom, from sepals to petals to stamens with many intermediate forms.

It was a privilege to have been asked to give this course, and to dwell for several days on the wonder of the plant world and how it could be brought in a healing way to school age children and young adults. I became increasingly aware of the suffering happening not so far from us amongst people affected by the tsunami, which gave an urgency to ensure we spent our time together as productively as possible.

I wish to thank those who assisted me in this venture in whatever way, and would gladly return were the opportunity to arise again.

Neil Carter, his wife and teachers of Panyotai Waldorf School, Bangkok, Thailand.

Report from India: A New Training

Penelope Roberts, Copake, New York, USA



Every day we worked with the basic understanding of the human being, child development, biography and practical aspects of care.

For two weeks at the beginning of February a group of 14 students from India and Nepal embarked on the first of a three-year, twice-a-year block training course in Social Therapy and Curative Education. All of them were already working in the field of mental retardation. The course took place at the Friends of Camphill community on Bannerghatta Road south of Bangalore in south India. Four of the students are co-workers from the community whilst the others came from Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai, Kathmandu and locally from Bangalore itself. With one exception none of the students had any prior knowledge of Anthroposophy so we really had to start at the very beginning.

Luckily Friends of Camphill has a large and flourishing tropical garden replete with banana, papaya, fig and coconut trees, every kind of vegetable, flowers, pulses and other plants which I cannot even name. Every day we did an hour and a half of plant observation and drawing with the specific aim of learning to perceive the 'laws of the living', the etheric. At first this was clumsy, childlike. Over the days, however, the thrill became tangible as the students returned from the garden bursting with their discoveries. Eyes were opening. They could actually perceive the subtleties of growth, of geometry in nature, of expansion and contraction, evolution and involution, inner and outer. How I wished that every introductory course could take place in such a garden where leaf, stem, flower and fruit coexist on one plant and where so many variations of the theme are evident.

Every day we worked with the basic understanding of the human being, child development, biography and practical aspects of care. We studied Rudolf Steiner's book *Theosophy*.

During the first week Dilnawaz Bana worked for half an hour before breakfast and then another hour after lunch on the basics of Eurythmy. Her sister Aban taught a short singing session each day and then did half an hour of speech formation at the end of the day. Throughout the second week Halina Rubisz continued the morning

Eurythmy. At the end of the day she took the speech work a step further, creating a dramatic play from the poem *The Owl and the Pussycat*. In the afternoon I did sculpture with them, first with seeds and then clay, again exploring the secrets of form and the etheric.

We also had several evening events: two cultural evenings with music and dance by the students and residents of the community, a biography of the Indian saint, Sri Ramana Maharishi, told by Aban Bana and my telling of Goethe's *Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily*.

As the central teacher I was deeply moved at the way in which the students took hold of what was being offered to them. They took extensive notes and then late into the night would copy them into their own 'main lesson books', large blank books which had been brought from Nepal. As the days went on and they compared books, the artistry and beauty grew to ever greater levels, the rather plain books becoming more and more filled with colour. Now they each have a proud record of all that they learned.

The students also changed. At first they were shy and timid, barely daring to speak up, quite closed off. Day by day they opened up, ever more confident. As we explored the mysteries of human life, always bringing it back to our own experience, they began to connect this new knowledge with themselves. Slowly new levels of meaning revealed themselves. At the closing review several of the students expressed that these two weeks had been life-changing for them. A couple said that they'd learned more in this time than a whole year at university!

What more could a teacher want to hear? This was a wonderful beginning to our course. We closed with the verse by Rudolf Steiner which had accompanied us each morning and evening:

To bind the Self to Matter
Means to annihilate Souls.
To find the Self in Spirit
Means to unite Mankind.
To behold the Self in Man
Means to build Worlds.

This modest beginning of a training in Curative Education and Social Therapy for India and Nepal is very heartening. I would like to thank all those who helped to make it possible, both in my home, Camphill Village, Copake, and in Holland and India.

A Visual Arts Course for Teachers in the Himalaya

From the Tashi Waldorf School Newsletter,
Winter 2004-05

Heather Maclaren and Meyrav Mor, Kathmandu, Nepal

The participants began to see that management of line is a way to take hold of one's own thinking, feeling and willing in a practical artistic way. After a break, Artistic Drawing including blackboard, main lesson book, gesture, animal, figure and landscape drawing using various mediums followed. Finally there was Painting in the afternoon where the



Participants of the Visual Arts Course held at Tashi Waldorf School in Kathmandu, Nepal.

In July 2004, Van James came to Kathmandu to conduct a two-week seminar on the Waldorf School Visual Arts Curriculum. This seminar was the first of a continuing program that will take place over 3 years. There were 23 participants including the teachers from Tashi Waldorf School and from Shanti Sewa School. We deeply thank the Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners e.V. for their contribution to the funding of this seminar.

Van James is a co-director of Kula Makua: Waldorf Teacher Training in Honolulu, Hawai'i, and gives training to schools in Asia and America. He had been a class teacher and now is a high school art instructor at the Honolulu Waldorf School, where he has taught for a total of over twenty years.

This first seminar was about Waldorf art instruction from kindergarten through class 5. Van started each day with a Hawaiian greeting song, and throughout the day asked the participants to share in performing songs, speech exercises and rhythmic games as transition activities between pictures. This helped to put everyone at ease as they experienced the various art forms.

Each day began with Form Drawing where the participants practiced symmetry exercises, ribbon forms, interlaced patterns, metamorphic designs and freehand geometry.

participants experienced how pictures can arrive at a finished form out of attention to colour and its surface area rather than outlining shapes and filling them in with colour.

The course ended with the creation of individual Mandalas using pastels on black paper. The finished Mandalas were hung up on the walls so all the participants could appreciate their wonderful artistic talent. Everyone is looking forward to Van's return in 2005 to continue this most joyful and creative experience. Further funding is still needed. If you can help, please contact "Children of Nepal" at: meyravmor@hotmail.com

Mandala drawings created by participants of the visual arts course held in Kathmandu.



A Women's Conference for Peace

Tho and Lisi Ha Vinh, St. Prex, Switzerland

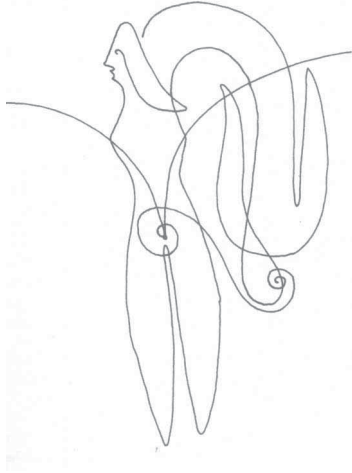
A few days before Christmas 2004, Tho and I were at an important meeting that took place in Jordan, organized by the "Global Peace Initiative of Women." For some years we have participated in some of their many efforts for peace around the world. We were touched deeply during these meeting days, as a gesture of peace and joy for the New Year.

Over 230 women (only a few men were invited) gathered around the theme Towards Justice and Reconciliation, near the Dead Sea, very near to the place where the baptism of Jesus by St John took place. There were around one hundred Israeli women, some members of the Knesset and government, but also women of different organizations working towards peace. Also, plain citizens of this troubled area took part. On the Palestinian side, there were almost as many participants, with a quite large delegation from Gaza that had to overcome tremendous difficulties to be able to join us. Some women have important positions in Palestinian society, others were mothers, sisters, daughters, wives, all victims in some way, of the conflict. Around these two groups of women, to support and to help, there were about thirty women from all over the world, coming from various religious backgrounds and connected with peace efforts in one way or another. Just to name a few, there was Mairead Corrigan Maguire, the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate from Northern Ireland, Dudu Chili, a participant of the Peace and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, Joan Chittister, a Benedictine nun and peace activist, but also Micheline Calmy Rey, of the Swiss Foreign Ministry and many others.

During the first afternoon and the next morning, we only practiced prayers and meditations, guided by the different participants, each in their own religious tradition. Tho and I guided the "Love Meditation" and the "Touching the Earth." Only on the second afternoon dialogue on all different levels of society took place. Tho and I guided as mediators a group called "Healing Narratives" and "Reconciliation."

There were many moving stories shared in this group and all throughout the conference. We were so touched by all these women who lost either a husband, a son or a daughter, a sister or a brother, who themselves had been hurt and wounded and who now could find a way to healing, to transformation and to forgiveness. These women, now in the midst of all this unresolved violence and conflict, reach out to their sisters in pain and together they talk in schools, in public places wherever and however it is possible to say that violence is not the answer and that reconciliation is possible. In this group of women, of whom one rarely hears in the media, we met some true heroines, true messengers of the Spirit. Once again we realized that it depends neither on a specific religion, nor on a specific ethnic or national belonging, ideology or diploma, but that freedom and love are possible wherever the heart wakes up to our true interdependence. Some of these women were Israelis, some Americans, some Muslim, some Buddhist, some Christian; some had important positions, others were mothers at home. What all these women had in common was that they found the strength to transform their suffering into compassion, their grief into courage, their anger into forgiveness. They developed the capacity to listen to their own and to others' pain. They found out that the suffering of an Israeli mother who lost her child in a suicide bombing is the same pain as one of her Palestinian sisters who just lost her child during the incursion of the Israeli army. They also realized that hatred, violence and retaliation are no solution. Only forgiveness, reconciliation and justice can heal their wounds. We all know this, but when we hear it told by people who stand in the middle of the turmoil of war, and who have actually transformed their suffering into compassion, it is an overwhelming experience.

We cried a lot during these days, but we also laughed quite a lot and even danced together. We all shared the same pain, but we also realized that we shared the same joy. We came back from this meeting filled with gratitude, admiration and hope! The way to peace may still seem very long and difficult, but it starts with every moment of our shared humanity. This is the little light of hope and joy we wanted to share with all of you for the New Year.



What all these women had in common was that they found the strength to transform their suffering into compassion, their grief into courage, their anger into forgiveness.

Symphonic Eurythmy to Premiere

Being Awake Conference 2005
Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA

"We have got to get everyone to see this!" said one gentleman into his cell phone after the workshop performance of Symphonic Eurythmy in Spring Valley, NY, this past summer, reported Barbara Danner of Wisconsin. "Eurythmy is supposed to be visible music," said Danner, "It was visible! The whole audience was very enthusiastic."

This is what Society members and friends can expect when they attend the premiere eurythmy performance of Antonin Dvorak's New World Symphony as part of Conference 2005, Saturday evening, August 13, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Conference 2005, "Being Awake: A Conference on Inner Work," is hosted by the General Anthroposophical Society, its School of Spiritual Science, and the Anthroposophical Societies in Canada and the United States. It is scheduled for August 11 – 14, 2005, on the campus of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Conference organizers have secured Power Center for the Performing Arts on the University of Michigan campus as an ideal venue for the company of 26 eurythmists to debut the New World Symphony program. Afterward, the company will tour North America through mid-October.

This ambitious project was initiated by Marke Levene, President of the Eurythmy Association of North America. "This is the first full eurythmy performance [in North America] with a symphony orchestra in 27 years," Levene said. "The people who saw it last have become grandparents since then."

The company is traveling with conductor Jim Papoulis of Manhattan, NY, and working with local symphony orchestras. Papoulis, who conducts orchestras all over the world, has recently conducted the New York Philharmonic in a performance of the New World Symphony.

Both Levene and Dorethea Mier, Artistic Director for the project, noted how working with such orchestras makes eurythmy more accessible. "It's a wonderful introduction, to go from something familiar (a local symphony) to eurythmy," Mier said. After the workshop performance, "the musicians were pleasantly surprised," according to Mier. "You are really moving to what we are playing!" she quoted them.

For more information about the summer conference, "Being Awake: A Conference on Inner Work," August 11-14, 2005, in Ann Arbor, MI, call 734-662-9355 or email conference2005@anthroposophy.org. To contact Marke Levene, call 707-875-2373 or email him at marke@ap.net.

Corrections

Anthroposophy and the Religious Life: An Open Letter

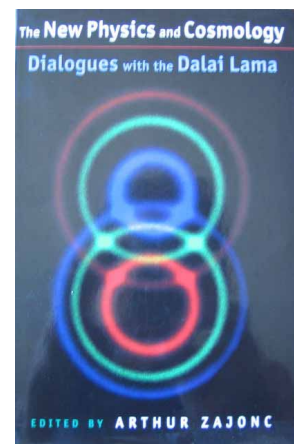
... I made the judgment that it was important for me to collaborate meetings of Buddhism and science as organized by a circle of individuals (scientists and Buddhist scholars) who I respect. The meetings are serious and strive to bring a careful and sophisticated understanding of science, philosophy and Buddhist thought to bear on issues concerning the nature of matter, life, and the mind. I have led two such meetings and have participated in three others. In my opinion the Buddhists present, including the Dalai Lama, have been open-minded and invaluable partners in the discussion. With the publication of the proceedings of the 1997 meeting I led, you can now judge for yourself.¹ It is important to say that as in Christianity, fundamentalist Buddhist sects do exist and they cause profound difficulties for those of a more cosmopolitan and liberal bent, such as the current Dalai Lama.

Finally, I resigned as General Secretary two years ago before these accusations became a serious matter. My recent resignation from the Collegium had also been in the works for some time. I delayed that resignation in part because I hoped that the case against me would be decided beforehand. As it turned out I resigned at the same Collegium meeting during which I was affirmed in my work on the Collegium. My reasons for stepping back from leadership positions in the Society are unrelated to the issue of my collaboration with Buddhists. Rather, I felt that I had made my contribution, my arch of leadership was at an end and that it was time for someone else to take on the varied roles I played on behalf of Anthroposophy. My work during the last ten years with members and friends in the U.S. and around the globe has been a great source of satisfaction to me. So many are selflessly and courageously doing the work of Anthroposophy. And wherever I go I meet the same deep longing for an open, future-oriented, and non-sectarian Society. I continue to work in many countries on behalf of Anthroposophy, but now — like so many others of you — I do so simply as a member of the Society.

No I am not a Buddhist, but this is not the point. Like you I am a striving individual who has found Anthroposophy to be an infinite source for renewal, one fed by the Christ-spirit which flows through the great initiates — the Buddha, Christian Rosenkreutz and Rudolf Steiner — all of whom work harmoniously together around the globe and among all peoples for the benefit of beings everywhere.

—Arthur Zajonc, Amherst, Massachusetts

Because of an editorial error two mistakes occurred in the last issue of Pacifica Journal. Apologies to Halina Rubisz, director of education at Shanti Sewa School in Kathmandu and new Asia-Pacific Initiative Group member, representing Nepal, whose name was misspelled. We also left out the final sentence of Arthur Zajonc's article, Anthroposophy and the Religious Life: An Open Letter. We apologize for the deletion and include the last few paragraphs of Arthur's article here. —PJ



1. Arthur Zajonc, editor, *The New Physics and Cosmology: Dialogues with the Dalai Lama* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2004).

New Eurythmy Training to Graduate its First Students.

Rudolf Steiner College, Fair Oaks, California

The new eurythmy training at Rudolf Steiner College in Sacramento, California will graduate its first students in the coming academic year. The training, initiated in 2002 by Cynthia Hoven, has already added another class, which is now entering its second year. A new first year will begin in fall 2006.

Cynthia Hoven has been teaching eurythmy and Anthroposophical studies at Rudolf Steiner College since 1992. Founding a eurythmy training at the college is the realization of a dream she has held for a long time.

A graduation performance tour is already in the planning stage. All four students will visit Waldorf schools to share their work – mostly on the West coast, but a visit to North Carolina is also planned, as well as a trip to Dornach for the ‘Eurythmy Olympiad’ where as many trainings as possible come together and share their work.

The graduating year has four students: two American and two Canadian. Elizabeth McKay-Gilbert hails from the South, Ruth Dorst is a local Sacramentan, while Ester Chase comes from British Columbia and Karen Renaud from Ontario. “These four are pioneering types,” says Reg Down, their other eurythmy teacher. “They all have strong wills, a huge work ethic, and overcoming a challenge or two (such as Steiner’s eurythmy choreography) is no big deal for them!”

Their first year class was considerably larger with students predominantly from the United States but also from as far as Japan and Korea. Seven of them will continue into the second year and they will be joined by two new students from Romania and the US.

As with most things connected to anthroposophy the eurythmy training is far from onesided. In addition to doing eurythmy about four to five hours per day, students also participate in other related studies. In the first year, students join with the students of Dennis Klocek’s Consciousness Studies program for the first period “Inner Work” Course. They also study “The Human Being and the Stars” with Brian Gray.

In the second year of the training, students join with Foundation Studies students in courses in Philosophy of Freedom, Cosmology and Karma and Reincarnation.

Beginning in the second year, students visit Waldorf schools twice a year to observe children in the classroom. They also study child development, and do practice teaching in the fourth year, gathering skills for working as teachers after graduation.

Artistic studies such as painting, sculpture, speech formation, etc. are also part of the course. Because both plants and eurythmy have a strong connection with the etheric world the students participate in plant studies and gardening, and the fundamental works of Rudolf Steiner, meditation and consciousness studies are also ongoing over the four years. “A critical component of a movement training based on spiritual science is the development of consciousness,” comments Reg Down. “Eurythmy is not just movement and expressive gesture; what lies behind these gestures is a training of the soul – and that cannot, or at least should not, be done in a one-sided way. That is why it is critical to have a broadly based curriculum on the one hand, and many hours of eurythmy training and practice on the other.”

“Our aim is to have our students come out of the training as well-rounded individuals,” says Ms. Hoven. “This gives them a full palette to choose from when making life-path and career decisions after their training. Our current graduating students want to use their eurythmy training in Waldorf education and as a basis for their work in the social realm.”

The eurythmy training works upon students in a profoundly transformative way, which is why it takes four years. However, individuals are invited to apply to the program to do the first one or two years without the intention of becoming professional eurythmists.

For further information and details on the training, click on the eurythmy page on Rudolf Steiner College website (steinercollege.edu), call the college at 916-961-8727, or send an email to Cynthia Hoven at choven@steinercollege.edu



Eurythmy is not just movement and expressive gesture; what lies behind these gestures is a training of the soul.

The Art of Colour: Colour as a Healing and Formative Force

A Painting Conference at the Goetheanum, July 10-16, 2006

Caroline Chanter, Ernst Schubert, Elisabeth Wagner

We would like to invite all friends of colour to a painting conference at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland.

The hectic pace of life and the influence of modern media with its multitude of images that deaden the soul seem to rob us of an enlivening, more intimate appreciation of colour. By building a more conscious relationship to colour the soul is nurtured and doors can open to deeper levels of experience.

During a week of painting with plant colours, a seminar on metamorphosis, picture observation and talks we want to offer participants an opportunity to pursue and deepen their appreciation and knowledge of colour.

Rudolf Steiner's indications for a renewal of painting and an understanding of colour have given birth to an abundance of creative impulses. The painter Gerard Wagner took up these indications, and in developing a path of training planted seeds that have borne fruit for artists, teachers and therapists worldwide. This conference, taking place a hundred years after the artist's birth is meant as a celebration of his life's work and of colour. His students now active in various fields of artistic work internationally will be leading the various conference activities.

The day will begin with a talk—a presentation out of a particular area of painting and art. The main part of the day will be for practical activities and in the evening Elisabeth Wagner will give a series of slide-lectures on Gerard Wagner's 70 years of painting and colour research.

There will be an exhibition of Gerard Wagner's work, and guided tours of the Goetheanum including Rudolf Steiner's sculpture—the Representative of Man—will be part of the conference activities.

The conference languages will be English and German.

Further information from

Caroline Chanter, Hohle Gasse 7, CH-4143 Dornach. Tel: +41-61-7021423. E-mail: c.chanter@paintingschool-goetheanum.ch
www.paintingschool-goetheanum.ch

Workshops:

Painting as an inner Path of Training. Caroline Chanter

Painting out of Colour with Children: Indications for a Waldorf School Painting Curriculum. Van James

A Process of Metamorphosis between Centre and Periphery. Painting with Children in Curative Education. Karin Joos

The Festivals of the Year, Rudolf Steiner's four Watercolours. Angela Patten

The Creative Forces of Colour: Painting Nature Moods. Hans Schumm

Knowledge of Nature through Art, the Principle of Metamorphosis in Art and Nature. Ernst Schubert and Dorothee Stutz

Dynamic Colour Circle Exercise, as used in Painting Therapy. Heilgart Umfrid

Lectures:

Rudolf Steiner's Painting Impulse and the Pioneer Gerard Wagner. Caroline Chanter

Art as Threshold Experience: Sense Phenomena, the Spiritual and the Truly Human. Van James

A Process of Metamorphosis between Centre and Periphery. Karin Joos

Rudolf Steiner's Plant Colour Impulse. Elica Meier and Alfred Herrmann

Knowledge of Nature through Art. Ernst Schubert

Rudolf Steiner's Painting Impulse—a Source of Healing. Hans Schumm

Gerard Wagner's Painting and Research. Elisabeth Wagner:

1. The Discovery: Observing the Human Soul According to the Methods of Natural Science.

2. The Christian Motif: The Human Being in Balance.

3. Nature Motifs: Metamorphosis. Learning to Create as Nature Creates.

4. The Cycles: A Path to Anthroposophy.

5. The Late Work: On the Threshold of the Spiritual World.

The Exhibition at the Goetheanum of Gerard Wagner's work opens on Saturday the 27th May 2006 at 4pm and ends after the closing of the conference on the 16th July 2006.



The Gardener,
by Gerard Wagner

Vietnam Children's Project

Thanh Cherry, an Australian who grew up in war torn Vietnam and was a founding teacher at Rudolf Steiner School of Bowral, Australia, started the Vietnam Children's Project in 1998. The Project is a charitable fund dedicated to the health, welfare and education of disadvantaged children in Vietnam.

Money from the Project helped pay for restoration of two buildings at the orphanage attached to the pagoda Dieu Giac in Ho Chi



We practiced different exercises to purify ourselves and the earth, open our hearts, and create new codes for initiating communication with these beings with whom Gaia has a mutually supportive relationship.



Minh City, where Buddhist nuns care for 125 children from infancy to school leaving age. The improvement in their accommodations is important, but more important is their future, and for these needs the Project helps to support two Waldorf kindergartens. Aiding in the training of teachers at no cost are the Rudolf Steiner School in Bowral and the Rudolf Steiner Teacher Training Seminar in Melbourne.

Still needed are funds for the operations of the kindergartens, mainly teacher salaries and sponsorship for the orphans. If you have questions or would like to donate to this worthy work, contact Thanh Cherry at thanh@hinet.net.au or thanhcherry@hotmail.com

Earth, Spirit and Aloha: On the Threshold of the House of the Sun

Sophia Barashkoff, Maui, Hawai'i

Slovenian geomancer, Marko Pogacnik, practices the art of Earth Healing around the world. In June he came to Haiku, Maui, in Hawai'i, to lead a three and a half day retreat, share his knowledge and experience of working with the nature forces of Gaia, and show us some practices to align ourselves with the new energies from Gaia's ongoing transformation.

Pogacnik based this retreat/workshop on the theory and practice of how to rediscover the Hermetic principles for healing the earth. Each morning and evening he lectured and during the day led journeys through the landscape to specific chakra points, ley lines, and places where ancestors, elemental beings, animal spirits and angelic beings might be contacted. We practiced different exercises to purify ourselves and the earth, open our hearts, and create new codes for initiating communication with these beings with whom Gaia has a mutually supportive relationship.

Pogacnik opened the workshop with the insight that when ancient civilizations shifted from an earth centered consciousness to a sun centered one that no longer considered the earth sacred and alive, the earth lost the "I am" of its being, its heart. The lack of human love for the earth has resulted in the crisis state we see occurring at every level of existence today.

The significance of this loss can be seen by recognizing the power of the 'center' of living things. All beings have a center and the integrity of the center affects the integrity of all other beings. This is true within and across the three realms of the physical, mental and spiritual dimensions. Pogacnik explained this concept in more detail by use of the holographic principle that expresses the essential unity of all things: through our DNA each cell of our body has the blueprint for our whole being. Likewise from a cosmic point of view each part of the earth, however manifested as matter, energy or spirit, is a holographic imprint of the whole. One function of the earth's consciousness is to store limitless amounts of information (vibrational) and this information can be found in each stone, tree, valley, mountain and sea. We are in constant resonance with this vibrational level of nature despite our lack of awareness of it, and we also send vibrational messages out through our

feelings. Our senses, mental perceptions, and transcendental awareness all have influence. These are the same insights gleaned from quantum physics, where the observer is not separate from the observed object, but influences the outcome, as evidenced in Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. Heisenberg noted that "What we observe is not nature itself but nature exposed to our method of questioning."

Similarly Pogacnik posits that because of humanity's heliocentric focus, human consciousness has developed for centuries disconnected from its natural source, the Universal Goddess embodied in Gaia, Mother Earth. Our methods of questioning have had little relationship to the most significant aspect of our being and therefore we have lost our collective ability to recognize the messages from nature and to find the keys to understanding her.

In the distant past various shamanic cultures, for example from Tibet, Siberia, the American Southwest and many others had objective communication with the invisible world of nature and held the keys to creating subjective meaning. That epoch is long over. Now most people are incapable of pursuing the invisible world because we lost our intuitive abilities during centuries of individualized development. Western culture has elevated the intellectual capacities of the mind over the intuitive and emotional aspects such that we are unable to experience the messages of nature even when we try. This is partly due to the fact that the nature spirits and elementals, beings that represent the consciousness of the earth, are slumbering. When we awaken them they will respond to us by modeling our initial communication whatever it may be. Since cultural context creates the subjective experience, we need to honor our development and create new modes of perception and communication that reflect our individualized consciousness.

We traveled up to the summit of Haleakala (House of the Sun), a 10,000-foot dormant volcanic crater, to witness the sunrise on the first morning of the retreat. As the golden morning light spread out from behind the low and distant cloud layer, we practiced an exercise to balance our body consciousness. Throughout the day we practiced a number of purifying, grounding and consciousness exercises. One that seemed to work well to free my mind from its intellectual posture was to stand relaxed but firmly on the earth with arms out-stretched to the sides at shoulder height. One then imagines the head as a ball slowly rolling down along one

arm and gently stopping at the upturned hand only to return up the arm, over the neck and down the other arm. The head continues rolling back and forth along the arms in this way until there is a sense of peace and clarity. "Oh", says Pogacnik "at the end don't forget to reattach your head."



That afternoon we walked the beautiful retreat property in Haiku through verdant steamy swales, and along narrow rocky trails, down to streamside sanctuaries, and up again to the windswept heights, at each place grounding, purifying, and inviting the elementals to meet us.

The next workshop theme focused on earth transformations and the necessary human transformations that might follow. Pogacnik told us of a significant dream he had some years back which he interpreted as Gaia sending out the message that she was transforming, that she was going through evolutionary changes on a path of self healing. With this process Gaia left the old codes, the old ways of communicating, behind and if people do not learn new codes of communication we will suffer. He was quick to note, to some people's relief, that this was not about punishment but was Gaia's consciousness exercising her responsibility to take care of herself and of the subtle level where life originates. Gaia is creating a completely new etheric structure. People will need to build a new awareness of Gaia's multidimensionality, in which all dimensions co-exist simultaneously. This will manifest on the soul level. Since that dream, Pogacnik has noticed shifts in frequency

Marko Pogacnik on the grounds of 'Iolani Palace in downtown Honolulu, Hawaii.

One particularly memorable experience was the form of sound lithopuncture we practiced beside a stout and noble old tree that had one half of its soil completely removed, exposing massive roots that formed an X or Hawaiian *kāpu* symbol (meaning forbidden and sacred).



levels to a finer degree. His understanding, shared by others, is that communications between dimensions will become more possible for those who try. We are straddling the old ecosphere and the new paradigm. The message is to become more aware of challenges of cosmic proportions as evidenced by the uncharacteristic increase in simultaneity. Additionally the Luciferic and Ahrimanic influences tear apart humanity because so many of us concentrate on their cosmic strength. Pogacnik offers that we don't need to do that as we have our own Gaia centered consciousness that is far more suitable for finding lasting strength.

In short we need to pay attention; learn to recognize the new multidimensionality available to us; make efforts to communicate

with the nature spirits and elementals; and collaborate with the ancestors. "Ancestors" refers to all those we knew once in this or other lifetimes who are now in the astral world, and who are able to communicate with us because the etheric membrane is thinning between the physical and astral worlds since Gaia's radical transformation began. This potential collaboration among human souls serves the purpose that the living elders of the old tribes used to serve. These ancestors can assist our visioning. Another area to pay attention to is islands of light, usually in nature, that serve as anchors for the new etheric structure. Pogacnik also suggested that we can use our creative imaginative potential to create more

time. Linear time is shortening and spacetime is wide open for our budding perception of multidimensional reality.

The earth is covered with scars on the etheric landscape, including war zones, places where torture and human suffering took place, and the physical/environmental destruction of the harmony of the earth's surface. Pogacnik illustrated this point with examples from history like the victory over the Celts by the Romans, who used dark magic to destroy the Celtic spiritual center. European conquerors used this dark magic method all over the globe to dominate aboriginal peoples. Going back to the idea of the significance and power of the center, Pogacnik noted that when people are disconnected from the whole through destruction of their spiritual center, they lose etheric harmony. Now is the time for forgiveness, to release the bound spirits of both the oppressors and oppressed as we enter the new earth epoch. Pogacnik says we actually do not heal but can give the impulse for healing by forgiveness and purification.

Our first experiential work on this day was to offer forgiveness to unhappy spirits dwelling in the front of the Haiku property. This ritual began with purification and grounding exercises and ended with each of us directing a "tear of grace" toward the troubled spirits. We moved to several other disturbed energy centers near the main building and offered the impulse for healing using other practices. One particularly memorable experience was the form of sound lithopuncture we practiced beside a stout and noble old tree that had one half of its soil completely removed, exposing massive roots that formed an X or Hawaiian *kāpu* symbol (meaning forbidden and sacred). We stood hand in hand in three concentric rings, intoned resonant vocal sounds, and consciously directed them deep into the earth and far up into the cosmos. I believe all involved experienced the tremendous power of this practice. Our nearly thirty voices saturated every fiber of my being and this sound was tremendously grounding for me. Just as we finished I felt a strong, steady, almost plaintive vibration come up from the ground into my feet and legs.

Healing the earth begins with our potential to experience the new multidimensionality of Gaia's transformation by creating new codes of communication with the beings who have an objective relationship with Gaia. These are the elementals, ancestors, animal archetypes, and angelic beings that are attracted to the chakras of the earth, where we can work with them to purify and re-harmonize the landscape.

The third night's lecture theme addressed how to connect our personal wholeness, our being, to the landscape. Human beings have the unique capacity to possess a physical body, etheric structure, and astral consciousness, as well as other mental and spiritual qualities. We are composite beings, both mortal and eternal. We experience our soul quality through the influence of our chakras. The elementals are more limited yet also unique in that they represent the totality of identity carrying consciousness. A water elemental is the total presence of water and exists for all water energy everywhere. It is the sacredness, the divine core of the whole. An elemental's higher self is experienced directly as Gaia. We differ from each other yet need to care for the planet in a similar way. We are cared for by the consciousness of Gaia, which means we incorporate elemental beings in us through our emotional or astral fields. This means that we have both the elemental energy structure and the offshoot of Gaia consciousness within us. The elementals can attune to us through the astral field of our aura but not through our mental and physical aspects. Pogacnik stressed that we must allow nature to work properly within us. In the past people were initiated into understanding the elements that were responsible for each area of life. The human race used to collaborate with the elementals for the sake of qualitative life. Our ability to create and to procreate is related to the super gifts of Gaia and is shallow if we do not use it fully. The other extreme is that we are pure spirit, with no mental, physical or emotional attributes. Within this dichotomy we have our own spiritual evolution distinct from Gaia and also along with Gaia. We have the consciousness of Divinity represented by the angelic world. This doesn't influence our bodies or emotions but is concerned with our spiritual evolution.

There is a corresponding angelic presence that takes care of the evolution of Gaia's spiritual purpose. Angelic beings in nature are here for each part of earth for the whole of evolution. They embody love but not individually. The elementals and angelic beings are two extremes with many levels of dimensions in between. Chakras are the energetic etheric organs of our subtle body. Landscape chakras serve the same functions for the earth. They attune deep earth energies and cosmic energies to be available for the surface of the earth. Animal consciousness exists in group souls, which do not incarnate individually but remain in a group or family. Animal archetypes are incorporated into our physical bodies and

psyches, as we lived with them for ten million years to learn how to live on the earth plane. Now they want to join us to elevate their consciousness. The same is true for the elementals, who want to learn how to love.

Although each of these beings is present in us, we are also separate in the sense that we have ego or soul-spirit individuality. Pogacnik explained that ego keeps us free from being enslaved by any other aspect of our being. He noted the importance of our axial role in facilitating the evolution of consciousness for all beings of earth.

The final day we spent practicing more sound lithopuncture and purification of the property in the areas identified as solar plexus, heart, and throat chakras. Pogacnik elaborated on the holon levels of chakra energy that interconnect the cosmic, planetary, geographic, local landscape, and human systems. We ended with a practice intended to build up our land chakra among the islands of Maui Nui. We went out in groups of two to the various places we had visited in the past days. These locations represented the four elements, animal archetypes, angelic beings, ancestors and several chakras. We sat in meditation in these places, connected with the beings and energies, and asked them to help us with this healing. At a predetermined time we focused our intentions toward the area felt to be the local communication chakra of the property. With the help of the nature spirits and elementals we sent rainbows of healing light to that spot and directed it through the earth back to ourselves like a giant wheel, around and around. Apparently this was startlingly effective because Pogacnik had to step away from the area when there appeared a dark churning coming out of the ground, an energy too intense to hold. But, as hoped, it released the negative energies troubling the place. We shared our personal experiences of this powerful practice and Gaia healing, which was perceived as the rainbows shooting up from the spot and branching out to the other islands.

Needless to say we were tempted to stay on in this remarkable place to work together and to learn from Marko Pogacnik's extraordinary teachings. He reminded us that this work is an art and it is fun—we are using our creative imagination to make the new codes, the new language of ritual that can provide the earth with the impulse to heal. We can do this work with modest intentions or more focused individual and group activities as we work in our home gardens, teach in school farms, or stroll through city parks.



Chakras are the energetic etheric organs of our subtle body. Landscape chakras serve the same functions for the earth.

La'a Kea: A Village for Developmentally Disabled Adults

Christina Chang, Maui, Hawai'i, USA

The La'a Kea Foundation, in partnership with the County of Maui, is actively in the process of establishing a socially supportive residential community for developmentally disabled adults. Our village will be agriculturally based, using Steiner's biodynamic model, giving residents vocation and value in their daily lives. The project will consist of several residential homes, farm buildings, greenhouses and a farmer's market. In addition, a cultural arts/therapy building will serve both the needs of the residents and create a bridge for the education and enjoyment of the greater community.

Now we have more exciting news to share! We have signed the lease with the county for the development of our project on county land and we are currently on the Maui Council agenda rapidly moving toward approval!

We are asking for public support in gaining Council approval, so please visit our website, www.laakea.org, where you can respond to our questionnaire and submit comments. You can also send us testimony expressing reasons why we need this community in Hawai'i.

If you are interested in testifying on the date of the Council review {to be determined} please contact Christina Chang, our Board President, at 808/ 249-0254 or candamaui@yahoo.com and she will confirm the date.

La'a Kea is also welcoming Claus Sproll, an administrator at the Camphill Beaver Run program, as a mentor for our project. His guiding light and years of experience will assist us with our strategic planning. We invite all interested parties to attend a free La'a Kea sponsored workshop with Claus beginning on the evening of September 22 continuing through the 23rd and 24th.

Claus' expertise will bring us closer to fulfilling the mission of bringing a new model of socially therapeutic community for adults with developmental disabilities to the Hawaiian islands. This model is inspired by Rudolf Steiner's realization that every person, regardless of ability or disability, needs friendship, a consistent, supportive social environment, meaningful work, and opportunities for creative expression.

We are delighted with all of the positive movement focused on our project and invite you to participate in any way you are able. Are you available to volunteer? Are you hoping your child

will be a resident in the future village? Would you like to become a donor, future coworker or houseparent? Please become part of the La'a Kea family and share your interests, needs, ideas and prayers with us. Visit our website at www.laakea.org or contact Christina Chang at 249-0254 or candamaui@yahoo.com.

Crossing the Threshold

Paul E. Chu, long time member of the Anthroposophical Society in Hawai'i, crossed the threshold of death at age 98 in February of this year. He lived for many years in New Jersey where he raised his family but returned to Honolulu to spend his last years in Hawai'i. In 1998 he traveled to Dornach to work on the Goetheanum renovation project where he astounded co-workers with his joy and energy at 90 years of age. He was the author of *Life Before Birth*, *Life on Earth*, *Life After Death: A Scientist Selects Some Highlights from Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy*.

Calendar

Asia-Pacific Anthroposophical Conference in Lahore, Pakistan, October 25-29, 2006

Asia-Pacific Initiative Group meeting, October 25-26, 2006.

"Healing Forces in Childhood Education," a conference on aspects of curative approaches, medical practices, poverty and human rights. Oct. 27-28, 2006.

Waldorf Roundtable meeting, Oct. 29, 2006.

Proposed Asia-Pacific Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, April 25-May 3, 2007

Asia-Pacific Initiative Group meeting April 25, 2007.

"Connecting with Ones Destiny" conference, April 26-29, 2007.

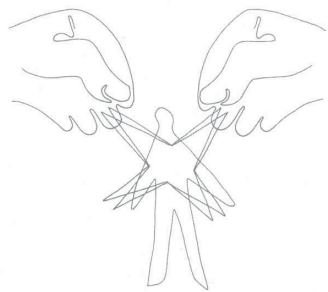
2nd Asian Waldorf Teachers Conference, April 29-May 3, 2007.

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—Eugene Schwartz, author and educator.



This model is inspired by Rudolf Steiner's realization that every person, regardless of ability or disability, needs friendship, a consistent, supportive social environment, meaningful work, and opportunities for creative expression.

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The human being of the East once experienced the world within himself and this resounds within him even today;
The human being of the West is at the beginning of his experience and is only on the way to finding himself in the world.

—Rudolf Steiner