

# A Report on the Goetheanum Impulse Workshops and the East-West Art History Conference in Taiwan

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## The Goetheanum Impulse

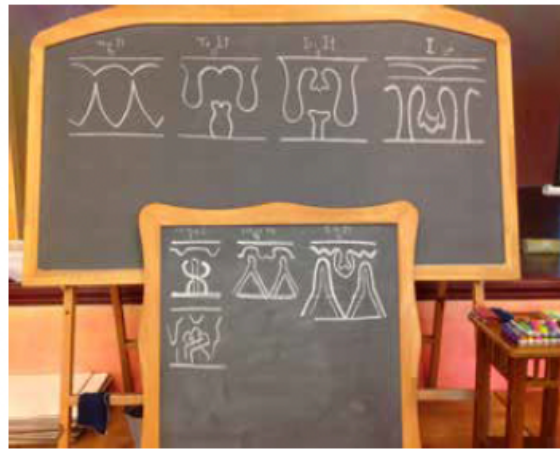
*"May this stone be a first foundation stone for the redemption and transformation of our planet Earth, and may the power of this stone work a thousand-fold."*

—Rudolf Steiner, *Malsch Foundation Stone* verse, 1909

Why study a building that no longer exists?

Two weekend workshops (Fridays through Sundays) in Taichung, Taiwan tackled this question by way of lectures, hands-on artistic work, eurythmy, and Q & A sessions. The Goetheanum Impulse weekends in October 2018 focused on the innovations of the First Goetheanum architecture as well as the influence that this building had on the visual and performing arts of its time, right up to the present day.

Because forty teachers of the Shan-Mei-Jhen Waldorf Education School were planning an autumn visit to the Goetheanum they requested these preparatory workshops to get some background on the historic impulse of this unique place. Opened up to the community, over 70 participants took part in the sessions that considered the modest beginnings of a rented lecture hall in 1907 Munich with painted columns and seals evolving into the Malsch Bau, The Stuttgart Theosophical building, the Munich Johannes concept, and ultimately the total work of art named for German poet, natural philosopher and statesman, the Goetheanum. The sacred architectural principles, the metamorphosing sculptural forms, the plant colored paintings, the carved colored glass windows, and all of the other remarkable features of this unique structure were examined and artistically considered by the participants. Eurythmy with Katja Pinsuwan moved many of the Goetheanum themes. The underlying theme throughout the workshops: the spiritual striving of humanity.



The second weekend moved from the first to the second Goetheanum, how it metamorphosed from the first, what occurred during its renovations in the '50s and late '90s of the last century, and how debates continue on how to more adequately fulfill its completion according to Steiner's few indications.

In conclusion, the Goetheanum Impulse was considered through the architecture, sculpture and painting that followed on from the buildings in Dornach. It became apparent that throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century many inspired works of art and architecture owe much to this generative impulse that began in central Europe a hundred years ago.





Out of these workshops the wish for more work on the theme of metamorphosis as a window into experiencing the etheric, living realm of the formative forces, arose and also the wish to study more deeply the painting indications for artists that Rudolf Steiner gave following the color work done in the Goetheanum. And so the Goetheanum impulse continues.

of art for the life and development of the adolescent. Many examples of student's work were shown.

An interesting surprise to the conference was that the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade of the Hai Siann Waldorf School attended the first two days, as the conference fell on in-session school days. This required a somewhat altered presentation style while still

covering the same material for adults. But it was a nice addition for the art historians, teachers and parents in attendance.

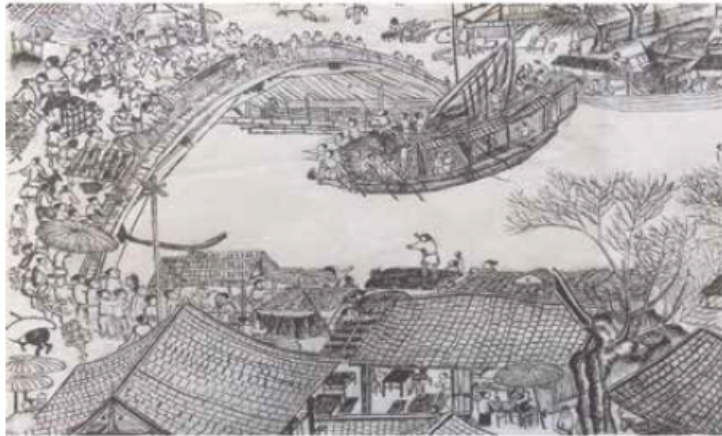
Afternoon workshops dealt with the history and evolution of Chinese calligraphy.

This gave rise to the question of where and when does one teach Chinese (Asian) art in the Waldorf curriculum? And how does one introduce, and at what age, all of the Chinese characters that must be learned. I showed how it is possible to bring the Asian art and architecture in small ways into connection with the western stream of development and as part of 10<sup>th</sup> grade Ancient Civilizations. However, it still remains a big question (Asian art history and teaching of calligraphy) that the Chinese schools will need to solve over time.

I suggested that a fruitful direction for a future art history conference might be setting side-by-side the development of something like Eastern and Western landscape painting or portrait painting. It would have been interesting to compare the evolution of Western calligraphy with that of the Chinese calligraphy we heard about and also practiced in this conference. (Setting Asian writing along side Western art history was like comparing apples and oranges.)

It will be interesting to see what is planned for next years East-West Art History Conference in Taiwan. With the enthusiasm that was brought to this last event it is sure to be worthwhile and inspiring no matter what art history theme is chosen. It would be nice to see such themes and such interest for them take shape more often in the West.

## 東西方藝術史 East and West Art History Conference



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2018  
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主辦單位 | TWEEF 台灣華德福教育運動聯盟  
Taiwan Waldorf Education Movement Federation

### The East-West Art History Conference

*"Let what is fired from the East, Through the West be formed."*  
—Rudolf Steiner, *Foundation Stone Meditation*, 1923

Also in Taichung, was the second year of the East-West Art History Conference. This was sponsored by the Taiwan Waldorf Education Federation and the Hai Siann Waldorf School from October 18 to 21. Last year Andrew Wolpert from England was a keynote speaker at the conference and the focus was on the Italian Renaissance and contemporary Chinese calligraphy.

This year I presented four lectures followed by artistic workshops on the four years of the Waldorf high school aesthetic curriculum. The original aesthetics stream in high school called for art history (visual art up to Rembrandt) in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Poetics in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, music history in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and history of architecture in 12<sup>th</sup> grade. I have been teaching history of art up to the Italian Renaissance in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, the Northern Renaissance to Rembrandt in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, Romantic and Classic art up through the Impressionists to the Expressionist art in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and Modern and Contemporary art in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, with the history of architecture also given as a separate course in 12. An emphasis was placed in this conference on the importance

