

# Pacifica Journal

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## Climate Change and the Human Spirit

*Benjamin Cherry, Australia*

Something remarkable happened towards the end of last year: suddenly the media was taking global warming and climate change as a fact. An end-of-year edition of the conservative magazine *Newsweek*, for example, was devoted entirely to the question of energy. Article after article highlighted the diversity of approaches being taken to finding alternative sources, from applications of nano-technology to the genetic engineering of bio-fuels, along with more familiar options such as wind, sun and (terrifyingly) more nuclear power stations, many of them being mass-produced in Russia! Not one of the many contributors doubted the reality of climate change.

In Australia, meanwhile, a quiet coup in the Labour party, which has been in opposition and a muddle for many years, has brought not only a more dynamic leader but the appointment of a man as shadow environment minister who has been at the forefront of the environmental movement for years. Could this have happened even a year ago?

For many people perhaps it was *An Inconvenient Truth* that drew the strings together in a way that could no longer be ignored. It is the most important film I know of today. It speaks to the ethical individual in each person. It calls on our intelligence and uprightness as modern human beings. Knowing the facts that hitherto had been unclear in my mind because of political rhetoric, one-sided reporting and my own laziness, I am now free to make my own decisions and take my own actions. I feel responsible and I feel empowered.

I also feel hope. That's surprising perhaps for there are many reasons for being in despair.

As I travel from one place to another in my work of teacher training, I see little sign of change. Plastic bags and unnecessary packaging are as rampant a pestilence as ever, air pollution over much of Asia remains atrocious, the extravagance in shopping malls seems to be getting greater rather than less and Heaven knows what the energy consumption is in Bangkok's new airport! In many places recycling of garbage



*One of the most important films today is Al Gore's, An Inconvenient Truth, for it calls on our intelligence and uprightness as modern human beings.*

and reducing one's electricity consumption are still a token gesture and there is little awareness of the preciousness of water.

Add to this the lies, corruption, violence, greed and environmental and human abuse which characterize much of the news we receive almost every day, and there seems indeed to be little cause for celebration. It is hard enough to change habits in one's own life. With an ever-rising world population

and massive educational, health and social problems to deal with, what chance is there for humanity as a whole to change itself before we pass the point of no return?

Yet I feel hope. The thought of our technology becoming cleaner and our habits less wasteful is an exciting one. I am not naïve enough to presume that everyone is going to rein in their greed or that the exploration of alternative energy sources is necessarily altruistic, but more and more this will be the case for there is something in human beings that goes beyond mere selfishness and our times are calling this into action. Astonishingly, the state of the weather and of nature generally is becoming a guide towards ethical behaviour! Being efficient and economic is ethical. Isn't that wonderful?

In past ages, recorded in myths and legends throughout the world, it was supernatural beings who guided (and misguided) human beings, often revealing their message through natural phenomena such as storms, comets, eclipses, droughts, floods and famines. Now, because our survival depends on it, we are becoming sensitive in new ways to what nature is requiring. We are learning to communicate again.

Only a few years ago the hole in the ozone layer was regarded as an affliction we would have to live with on into the future. Now, it seems, because of the banning of certain chemicals that destroy ozone, it is healing itself. This is an eloquent example of the sensitivity of our environment and of how quickly a change of attitude on the earth is responded to high above our heads (and our normal consciousness). It is a delicate interaction with a power that does not speak in words but actions.

One could conclude from this that the problem we face is largely a technological and legal one for scientists, business people and governments to sort out. What this perspective overlooks, however, is that our technology and laws are expressions of how human beings are at a given stage of evolution. To put it bluntly, a dirty technology is an expression of a 'dirty' humanity. A clean technology, one that respects human values and the environment, is by nature ethical and human beings change both through creating it and using it.

Since seeing *An Inconvenient Truth* I have been asking myself what Anthroposophy is contributing to our finding a way forward through the mess we are in. Compared with the urgency of bringing physical solutions to the climate crisis, is it a luxury to spend time contemplating our relationship with higher worlds? I know it isn't, but how can I demonstrate this in outer reality?

We stand today at a threshold of consciousness. The thinking within which most of us have been educated is one which determines the future out of the past, which assumes boundaries to our knowledge and potential, and which believes there is little I can do to bring change because the big world outside goes its own way independently of me. I am a product of circumstance and within the boundaries allotted to me (intellectually, racially and genetically) the most sensible

thing to do is to get what I can and exercise my rights as fully as possible. There is little incentive for ethical action.

One can see the consequences of this one-sided outlook in the selfishness rampant in today's world; but it is not the only way of seeing things. Another recent film, *What the Bleep do we Know?*, which took the world by storm two years ago, bases its message on the cutting edge of quantum physics, claiming that reality is what we make it. The world we experience is the world we create, through our attitudes, desires, expectations and thoughts.

What we perceive, and how we make sense of it, depends on the concepts we have. If one thinks materialistically, then that is how the world becomes; if one's concepts expand to include the presence of higher beings behind outer phenomena, what one perceives with the senses slowly begins to change. In other words, our reality is a coming together of our concepts and all that one perceives outwardly and inwardly (including one's own feelings), one of the essential realizations in the first part of Rudolf Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom* more than a century ago.

Like a life-threatening illness in one's own biography, the environmental crisis is a call to change our reality, that is to say, to awaken. It is not the outer world only which is at a cross-roads; so is the soul of humanity. The two are different aspects of the same situation. I would love to be able to create a film to run parallel with *An Inconvenient Truth* about the state of this world soul. Where within it are the sources and symptoms of pollution and death and where is the power of resurrection?

If Anthroposophy is what it claims to be, a modern path to the spirit, then it is a source of new energy in our lives, for on the level of the spirit one has access to a dimension of creative potency that affects everything one does. Just think how a new insight can transform one's life! Where does it come from, such a thought, and how can it have such power?

One must be honest with oneself. If I feel drained through my work, as many people do today (even in Waldorf schools), and lack the creative sources of inspiration and energy I need, is that because I am living on the fossil fuels of the soul, that is to say, habits of thinking that belong to the past? When duty, ambition or fear outweighs love as a motive for one's actions, one is using energy reserves that aren't renewed and which leave deposits of pollution in body and soul. One becomes tired, perhaps bitter. One's work becomes a habit and there is never enough time to live as one longs to.

It is extraordinary how quickly a free-spirited action -- that is to say, one which arises from one's own active decision, one's own presence in the moment as a unique being -- brings new energy and creates more time! The answer to tiredness is not to do less but more, to put energy into doing what one has to do in a new way. This can only happen through calling upon something that goes beyond one's normal personality.

To what extent, as a person connected with Anthroposophy, do I *live* the thought of my own spiritual presence and of

co-working with other spiritual beings? To what extent am I schooling myself to think and perceive in this new spiritual communion so that my work each day can become more creative, responsive and precise?

To be an anthroposophist in today's world means to be a pioneer, whether that pioneering is directed primarily inwards or outwards. If the creative spirit grows weak, however, outer forms dominate and eventually there is nothing new in what is being done. Certainly what has been established (in Waldorf



schools, for example) helps the world to be a better place, but the dynamic seed of transformation, the nuclear power of resurrection, is no longer present – and that is what our world is being challenged to discover and wisely use today.

And it is happening! It depends on where one puts one's focus. I can be overpowered by a world which seems to be leading nowhere or I can take notice of the quiet revolution occurring in individual human beings everywhere (not only people connected with Anthroposophy, of course) who recognize in today's events something which calls on them personally to make changes in their lives. It is this that confounds prognoses of the future based on the statistics of the past, for free human actions are in every case unique, unpredictable and new.

This comes to the heart of what Steiner was describing in his *Philosophy of Freedom*. He wrote of the free human being as an 'ethical individual' who acts out of love for the action she takes, through her own inner sense of what needs to be done – and what she herself decides to do - in that specific situation. One might ask what is to stop such an independent person from taking actions that are selfish and destructive. Don't we also love such actions?

Perhaps we do, but what Steiner is describing is at a different level, a level which selfishness prevents one from reaching and one that is intrinsically moral. One is in that moment in touch with an aspect of oneself that is beyond the normal conditioned and wounded personality but which is also more authentically real and true than any other part. So often in a given moment one *knows* what needs to be done, but doesn't do it. In the free action one acts out of what one truly is, out of one's deeply hidden but deeply truthful knowing of the good.

I have hope for the future because in my work I meet more and more people in whom this striving shows itself. I find it also in certain books I read or films I see. It surfaces at moments even in the news. It may come only in a flash or in a particular situation but it is there – or rather, here - and through the events of our time it is taking root and growing. Amidst the totally atrocious actions being taken on this long-enduring planet, amidst the shocking evil of today, that which is ethical is arising in human beings.

And it cannot fail. That is the power of it. Though not created out of the stuff of this world, it is here to stay, irrevocably. It is a new world culture, a community that is unaffected by nationality, gender or even age. It is a resurrection.

Today's events, whether on a world scale or in our private lives, are so vast that they empower us to burn what is no longer of value in our souls. They set alight emotions and prejudices gathered over centuries and amidst the flames and destruction something new appears, not born out of that which is dying but totally fresh, rising up from somewhere else. In the midst of the old world of conditioned responses and fixed ways of seeing, a new world is appearing.

What then does Anthroposophy have to offer in our current crisis? Not only the many initiatives that have arisen from it in agriculture, education, banking, science, therapy, medicine, economics, management, the arts and so on, but a treasury of insights through which (if we work with them) we can learn to perceive in new ways and experience reality in a vaster, more meaningful context. These are pathways to a brave new world in which the gulf between what is practical and ethical becomes ever smaller. With eyes wide open now and in clear responsibility for one's actions, a new faith can enter daily life, a new love, a new hope. It is good to be alive today!



## Conferences Celebrating Anthroposophy in Asia

*Van James (Hawaii) and Penelope Roberts (USA)*

Nine chanting Buddhist monks, clad in orange robes, sat with a string running between their prayerful, clasped hands. The string linked them and ran up to a small golden statue of Buddha, then out and around the building in which more than two hundred people had gathered. The building was the new Panyotai Waldorf School in Thailand, the first of three Steiner school initiatives in Bangkok. The occasion was the blessing of the new school buildings that will be



*Blessing of the new Panyotai Waldorf School in Thailand that will be home to two kindergartens and classes one through ten, with two hundred students this year.*

home to two kindergartens and classes one through ten, with two hundred students. This festive dedication, which also included student performances, numerous speeches, and delicious local food, occurred only days after receiving government recognition as a legal educational institution. The event set the stage for a series of meetings and conferences celebrating the work of Anthroposophy in Asia.

### **Asia-Pacific Initiative Group Meeting April 25-27, 2007**

If a meeting to assess the state of anthroposophical initiatives in Asia were to take place in Europe, one might well expect all the doors and windows of the meeting room to be securely shut against the elements. However, here in a classroom of the Panyotai school, because of the high humidity and intense heat, all the doors and windows were wide open with numerous fans blowing at full power in the unfulfilled attempt to give the gathered delegates the illusion of relief. Nevertheless, the rhythms of the Foundation Stone mantra were the center of a study and country reports were presented from Australia, China, Taiwan, Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan,

Mongolia and New Zealand. Additional reports were given for Pacifica Journal and the Medical Section work in the region. The first days' perseverance was rewarded by a dramatic wind and rainstorm signaling that the monsoon season was not far off; the weather cooled by several degrees.

At the end of the day the following strategic questions had come up:

- 1) What combination of forces is it that creates a certain predominance of an activity in a country, like biodynamics in India and the medical work in Brazil?
- 2) What is the right time to found a national society?
- 3) How do we adapt the European biodynamic practices to the tropical climates.

- 4) How are the Delegates going to work together in the coming years?

It was clear from all of the reports that the anthroposophical work in Asia has seen tremendous growth since the first initiative meeting in Manila in 1996. A wish consciously to reform and rededicate the mission of this group was unanimously expressed by all the participating representatives and a decision was made to support Hans van Florenstein Mulder in planning and guiding this work. Estella Calingo of the Philippines and Sue Scott from Australia will work together with Hans toward a future meeting and Asia-Pacific conference in the Philippines in two years time.

### **Asia-Pacific Anthroposophical Conference, *Connecting with One's Destiny*, April 26-29, 2007**

During the afternoon of April 26 busses carrying 80 conference participants began arriving at the Wangree Resort at Nakorn Nayok, in the jungle clad hills 106 kms north east of Bangkok. This is a convention centre set in the midst of tropical nature with open-air catering facilities, large meeting rooms and modest but comfortable living

units. We were not the only guests and sometimes had to contend with the exuberance of large groups of high school students working on their team building skills.

In this setting our theme unfolded: *Connecting with One's Destiny*. Hans van Florenstein Mulder introduced the theme with two stories having to do with “two cups of coffee” from the life of Laurens van der Post and “three cups of tea,” a recent book by Greg Mortison who traveled to Pakistan and found meaning and purpose there. The stories illustrated the mysteries of destiny, how one can carry the seeds of one's actions over many years before their meaning is revealed and the question “Who am I?” begins to open into an answer.

Over the next days we heard from a series of speakers from the Asian context. Dr. Porn Panasot described with dry humor his “path from failure to failure,” coming always closer to his goal through the lessons he learned. He suggested that we should all receive medals for our failures! Then we would be so encouraged when we saw each other's medals and not despair. Ultimately we must act, not just wait and when we have acted, wait to learn the lesson of that action, be it in the success or the failure. Jake Tan spoke the next day about his path of initiative, beginning as an activist in his student days, which led him to Anthroposophy, medical work and education. The question of his youth: “How can I become an agent of change?” became his guiding star. Nirmala Diaz, founder of the Sloka Waldorf School in Hyderabad, India told of her lifelong love of language and how the words of the poets led her from dreams to action in the course of her life. Ya Chi Chan from I-Lan, Taiwan shared her struggles in relation to being Taiwanese, citizen of a country, which is “not a country” and to finding her individual destiny. She quoted Rilke: “Be patient to all that is unresolved in your heart.” Paul Mackay was the final speaker, bringing all our many encounters and questions into relation to seven aspects of Rudolf Steiner's indications regarding destiny.

Added to all this were two artistic evenings. A group of Thai high school students performed traditional dances for us and Jane Gilmer from New Zealand gave a powerful one-woman rendition of the entire *Tempest* by Shakespeare, incorporating fourteen different characters.

Of course the essence of this conference was the meeting from human being to human being within the conversation and artistic groups. Participants from Thailand, China, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Japan, India, Nepal, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, the USA and Great Britain all had a chance to enter into personal questions of destiny, forging new friendships and understanding.

### **Economics and Threefolding Workshop** **April 29-May 1, 2007**

A group of 24 people interested in new ways of working in the economic sphere met for two days. Two members of

the executive from Dornach took part, Paul Mackay and Cornelius Pietzner, as well as, Rolf Kerler the past treasurer of the Society. Christopher Houghton Budd from the UK had also been invited. Our hosts in Thailand were Wallapa and Hans Willenswaard, whose interest in supporting “green business” in Thailand had led them to Jane and Payong Srithong. This couple has set up a Community Supported Agriculture venture involving seven farmers and 40 consumer families. Joseph Win Hlaing Oo from



*Buddhist priest marking the Panyotai Waldorf School building with sacred signs in gold leaf. School founder, Porn Panasot, is holding the gold chalice (below center).*

Myanmar (Burma) came to tell about his rural development project, which endeavors to establish organic agriculture in the face of imminent threat from the military regime that are beginning to open the country up to the big chemical fertilizer companies. Ong Kung Wai from Penang, Malaysia is a consultant with the world-wide organization for organic growing and distribution. These as well as others from 11 countries entered into intense exchange on subjects of food production, consumer/producer relations, new ways of looking at corporations, branding, the future of on-line peer evaluation, sufficiency vs growth, communal entrepreneurship and many other themes. This was an exciting forum, which we all agreed must continue.



## **The Asian Waldorf Teachers Conference, *The Study of Man*, April 29-May 4, 2007**

Two-hundred and twenty participants from over a dozen Asian countries attended the second Asian Waldorf Teachers Conference, an increase by one third over the first conference of its kind held in Taiwan in 2005. This was both a conference and a training for active teachers with Christof Wiechert, leader of the Pedagogical Section, guiding the theme of *The Study of Man*. He characterized education of the past 500 years as a hammer pounding the heads of resilient children. However, the children of today can no longer take this hammering and they now come to school with ADHD, dyslexia, dyscalculus, forms of autism and identity disorders. Christof pictured the child's physical and etheric bodies as the hull of a boat, the astral body as the mast, and the "I" as a sail that catches the spirit. He went on to describe the teacher's painful struggle to perform three tasks: to picture the child correctly, to create a meaningful lesson, and to confront him or herself in self-knowledge. What is necessary in this struggle is to cross the threshold from day-waking consciousness to dreamy-feeling awareness, and then to enter the sleeping will-life during the night. Only in this way does one approach a true picture of the child, bring depth to a lesson, and transform the self. In ones teaching it is the head-pole of thought, the senses, and meaningfulness that must enter the limbs and be expressed through movement and action, while the movement of the limb-pole must express itself in thoughts and meaning. Discussion groups focusing on the various grade levels brought the lecture content into connection with teaching questions, and artistic workshops brought it into practical application.

Breakfast usually saw conference participants of the same countries sitting together but by lunch and dinner cultures were well mixed. Break times allowed for more cross-cultural meetings and evenings were filled with colorful presentations from the various Asian countries; schools from different national regions teamed up together often for the first time. A humorous skit by workshop presenters, instigated by Kiwi colleagues (Sue Simson, Dan Freeman, Jane Gilmer, Marjorie Thayer— Hans and Ineke van Mulder left earlier for Dornach) had brought everyone together in joyful laughter. The next Asian Teachers' Conference will join the Asia-Pacific Conference in the Philippines, May 1-7, 2009. (For more information contact Nana Goebbel at [www.freunde-waldorf.de](http://www.freunde-waldorf.de).)



*Asia-Pacific Initiative Group members and guests meeting in Bangkok, Thailand.*

## **Malaysia Country Report 2007**

*Ong Kung Wai, Penang, Malaysia*

### **Country Background**

Malaysia has a mix of public (government sponsored) as well as private education. Primary and secondary education in government sponsored schools is free and attended by the majority of Malaysians. The public education system is

regulated by the federal government through the Ministry of Education. Curriculum and textbooks for primary and secondary schools are set by the Ministry, as is the training and assigning of teachers.



*Asia-Pacific Initiative Group meeting with representatives from (left to right) Vietnam, Medical Section work in Asia (Australia), New Zealand, the Philippines, and India.*

The people of Malaysia are made up of the Malay, Chinese, Indian and Orang Asli (indigenous communities). The more widely spoken languages are Bahasa Malaysia

(National language), English and Chinese. Subsequently, there are three teaching languages available at the primary school level, i.e. Bahasa Malaysia (Malay language), Tamil (Indian) or Mandarin (Chinese). Bahasa Malaysia replaced English in the late 1970s as the teaching language in government sponsored secondary schools. The government is now re-introducing English as the teaching language for some subjects.

There are few private primary and secondary schools. The majority are Chinese language based attended by Malaysian Chinese. Private English schools offering British or US based curriculum cater mostly to expatriate families or families who wish to send their children abroad for higher studies. Private schools offering the national curriculum are available but few in numbers.

Preschool education is divided into kindergartens (5-6 years) and nurseries (0-4 years). The majority of kindergartens and nurseries are private. Kindergartens are under the purview of the Ministry of Education whilst nurseries are under the Ministry of Social Welfare. The Ministry of Education has set curriculum targets for Kindergartens (since Jan. 1999). The Social Welfare department has not set curriculum for nurseries. There is however a compulsory 3 weeks' training for nursery proprietors and teachers.

### **Taska Nania**

Taska Nania was probably the first Waldorf initiative in Malaysia, started as a home-based kindergarten in 1997, in Penang. It is founded by Ong Kung Wai and Junko Suzumoto with funding support from Freunde Der Erziehungskunst and a Japanese friend. Kung Wai and Junko studied Anthroposophy at Emerson College in the UK. Kung Wai studied Biodynamic Agriculture and Rural Development. Junko attended the Education course and Kindergarten training.

It is registered as a nursery (*Taska* is the Malay abbreviation for nursery) instead of a kindergarten because a nursery was easier to start up. Also with no government set nursery curriculum, it offers greater scope to work with Waldorf education at the pre-school level. Children attend-

ing Taska Nania range from 3 to 6 years old. Registration of an institution both as Nursery and Kindergarten for a mix age class is not allowed by regulation. However, registration is not required for a class with less than 10 children of a different age category, i.e. it is not a problem for Nania to have up to 9 children of a higher age group.

Junko is Principal as well as a class teacher. She manages the pedagogical aspects and day to day running of Nania. Kung Wai takes care of legal and business related matters. Kung Wai's main work, is as consultant in organic agriculture development.

Nania started with an enrollment of mix nationalities,



*Thai dancers perform at the Asia-Pacific Anthroposophical Conference in Nakorn Nayok, Thailand outside of Bangkok.*

Japanese, Malaysian, Australian, etc. in the first year. Teaching was in English by Junko. Due to the high interest from expatriate Japanese families in Penang, the class turned fully into a Japanese class in the 3rd year. After 5 years as a single home-based class, time came for Nania to open a second class. This was precipitated by the return of a former assistant teacher, who completed her two year Kindergarten teacher training course at the Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Teacher Training Seminar. Nania supported her tuition fee. The move to a bigger and the current address was made at the end of 2001.

Nania opened two classes at its new and present location from January 2002. Junko continue to lead the Japanese class and Ms Lee carried the second class in English. The English class started with 3 children and reached 18 children at the end of the year. The Japanese class had 24 children



from the previous location. Ms Thian Phaik Sze, the English Class Assistant Teacher at the time, took over the class.

Although it was a challenging year, 2004 turned out to be a good benchmark year for Nania and Waldorf education in Malaysia. Junko started a Saturday Study group and many new and interested people passed through, including a stop over visit by Helen Todd (Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Teacher Training Seminar) and longer stays by Tomoko Uchida (member of the Eurythmy stage group, Dornach) and Yachih-Chan (I-lan Steiner School, Taiwan). They

class]. Majority of children are from expatriate families. However, the proportion of Malaysian children has increased from a minority to a majority in the English Class today. There are currently more than 15 children on the waiting list.

Nania currently has a team of 9 full time and 1 part time staff (including Junko but excluding Kung Wai). Majority of the current team has been with Nania for more than 2 years. Staff turnover was previously high. Besides Junko, only one of the staff that started in 2002



*Teachers from the Taska Nania school, a Waldorf kindergarten initiative in Malaysia, perform a puppet play at the second Asia Teachers Conference, held this year in Thailand.*

provided refreshing input to Nania's staff and the Saturday Study Group.

In 2005, 6 persons from Malaysia took up studies at the Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Teacher Training Seminar. Their future plans are not known. In the same year, Junko and Kung Wai established a private limited company under the name of Life Spirit to take over Taska Nania. As it is now fairly well established, it was time to transfer Taska Nania from a sole proprietorship to a more independent legal entity. All staff who have been with Nania for 12 months or more were invited to be shareholders of the company. The transfer will be finalized by mid 2007.

Both classes are operating to full enrolment, i.e. 51 children [30 in the Japanese class and 21 in the English

remained. Staff receive in-house training from Junko. There is a scheduled daily sharing and feedback of the day between each class teacher and assistant(s). Junko and the English Class teacher have a planning meeting once a week. Besides the regular faculty meeting, separate weekly book study, child observation study and craft work were introduced in 2006 for staff. Besides in-house training, Nania offers up to 50% funding support for staff to engage in other trainings of their own choice, e.g. singing and English lessons. Over the years, Nania has also offered support to three staff in overseas training. Two to the Kindergarten teacher training course at the Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Teacher Training Seminar, and one to the 3 years modular teacher's training course offered in Bangkok



(October 2003). Of the three only one completed her training.

There are three development pathways to expand the implementation of Waldorf Education in Malaysia. They are opening more Taska Nania branches; development of other independent initiatives and encouraging existing nurseries & kindergartens to incorporate Waldorf methods in any way they can within their operating circumstances. The three are not mutually exclusive of each other.

### **Taska Lin**

Ms Lee Swee Lin started Taska Lin in June 2004. It is a home based class with 20 children. Whilst licensing approval has been received from the City Council, Taska Lin's application with the Ministry of Education is still pending. Ms Lee is planning to offer a Waldorf based home schooling programme in the future.

### **Taska Langit**

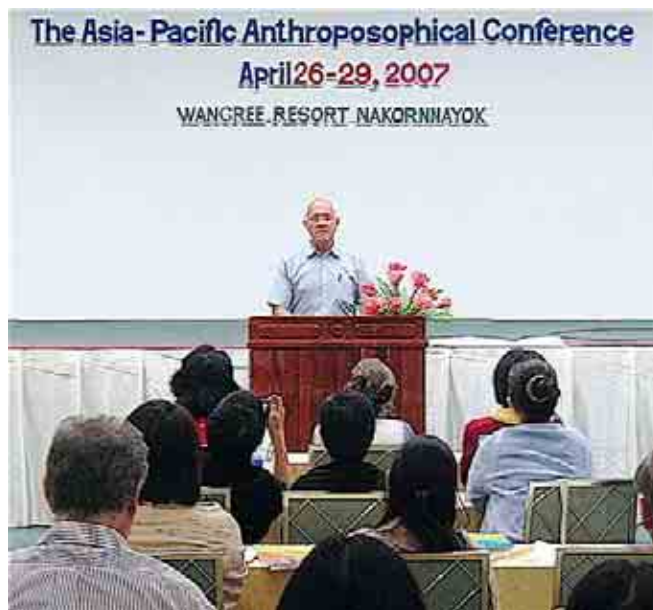
Taska Langit was set up by Ms Liew Siew Ling in January 2005 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It is dedicated to help children develop trilingual oral skills. Ms Liew believes it is important for Malaysian children, in a multiracial country, be nurtured to be trilingual to understand and communicate effectively between different races to maintain harmony in present society and future. Malaysian children, according to Ms Liew, have to acquire at least two official languages other than their mother tongue. The education policy sets Bahasa Malaysia as the main teaching language. Bahasa Malaysia and English are compulsory examinable subjects. Students are required to sit for examination in at least two languages. Malaysian children feel frustrated in their studies if they do not acquire a good command of their second languages. To help them master second languages, children need to be exposed in an environment where they can learn the second languages by listening and practicing it on a daily basis. This will help them pick up second languages naturally like they pick up their mother tongue at home with less frustration. Besides, children need to build up their second language skills before they enter primary school where they will be exposed to formal literacy. Taska Langit was set up to provide a relax and homey environment, conducive for children of different races to acquire a second language they do not normally speak at home.

In the beginning, Taska Langit had an enrollment of only 5 Chinese children who could not speak a word of English or Bahasa Malaysia. Ms Liew adopted the Waldorf curriculum to help the children speak English through exposure to a language rich environment with stories, singing, drawing, craft making and play in their daily routine. Over time the children display a remarkable willingness to learn. The children soon began requesting their parents to speak to them in English and love to listen to the stories

told in school. They then overcame their fear of speaking a second language. Parents were pleased to note the tremendous improvement in their children and as a result they began recommending children of other races to enroll in Taska Langit. Due to the overwhelming support of the parents, enrollment increased from 5 to 35 students, including some home schooling students of ages ranging from 2 to 10 years old. Due to the growing number of students, Taska Langit plans to start Class 1 and Class 2 for home schooling students.

Thanks to Hans van Florenstein Mulder and Ineke Mulder's mentoring, continuous support and concern for Taska Langit, including offering one teacher the opportunity to observe some classes in Christchurch Rudolf Steiner School, Taska Langit is sure that Waldorf education is the education that Malaysian children ought to receive. It has pledged to fulfill the Waldorf pedagogy to enable children to experience an enjoyable learning experience. Others, whose guidance Ms Liew is grateful for are Robert Mays, Dorothee Prange, Christopher Clouder, Holger Niederthausen, and Freude der Erziehungs-kunt.

Langit is a Malay term, which means sky. The sky stands for the wish to foster a vibrant education system and eternal love towards children beyond time. Ms Liew chose the term sky for Taska Langit because it denotes tranquility, calmness and eternal. Whilst the weather is fickle and clouds vary in different forms and shapes, the sky beyond is consistent. It symbolizes an eternal inner feeling of peace and quiet, which reflects Ms Liew's love for children and longing to set up a Waldorf School in Malaysia.



*Hans van Mulder, General Secretary for the Asia region, welcomes participants to the Asia-Pacific Anthroposophical Conference in Thailand.*

# Report from China

Harry Wong, Chengdu, China

## Initiatives in China

There are many people all over China who have learned about Waldorf education from the internet. Some are inspired by the work at the Chengdu Waldorf School and have come to workshops or have invited Chengdu teachers



*Li Zhang, from the Chengdu Waldorf School, and Nana Goebbel of the Friends of Waldorf Education, speak together in Bangkok.*

to give talks and workshops. In these fellow cities, initiatives have been formed and are working in different ways.

**Beijing:** A former college teacher who was trained in England at Emerson College helped a mothers group to set up a home style kindergarten in a flat. Now, it has been moved into a normal kindergarten. There are a few children in the Waldorf class. The kindergarten is struggling to maintain itself for the lack of trained teachers. There are some people who also want a school before a strong kindergarten is established.

**Shanghai:** A group of parents rented a flat with a little garden to start a home-style kindergarten for their own children. They invited teachers from Chengdu to help them build up their form and rhythm. A good Waldorf spirit surrounds them and they have put a strong will into their work. There are some guest teachers and foreign visitors that come to help them. They are working to get their teachers trained in Chengdu Waldorf School.

**Guangzhou:** Some people from here have been attending workshops in Chengdu and in Thailand. They are focusing more on Steiner's philosophy than education. One year ago, a dynamic mother set up a small home style kindergarten in a rental house after attending the part time Chengdu Waldorf kindergarten teacher training course. She also uses the kindergarten as a base for the Anthroposophical study group. She has worked with the

teachers in Chengdu Waldorf School to offer a few workshops. A group of parents have a strong will to start a Waldorf school once the teachers are trained.

## Chengdu Waldorf School: Highlights of the year 2006

1. The number of children and teachers has doubled since the fall of 2006. Now, we have 29 children in the grade school in four classes from grade 1 to grade 5. But we do not have grade 4. We have 45 children in three kindergarten classes. And there are some children are on a waiting list for the kindergarten. We have 26 teachers and assistants.

2. We finally have registered Chengdu Waldorf School as a not-for-profit organization. But, we still need to get meet the requirement of offering full day elementary schooling.

3. We have set up a three year, part-time early childhood teacher training program which began last August. There were over 65 people come from all over China join our teachers made up 80 people in the program. From our work in Chengdu, there are 6 Waldorf initiative groups are growing in different cities.

4. Because the size of our school has doubled since last year, we have rented one more house and a small piece of land next to our school.

5. We had offered six biodynamic workshops since 2004. More than 80 people attended the program each time. We have made the BD preparation from 500 to 506 and some compost with the participants.

6. We had three class teachers went Taiwan to visit Waldorf schools. It was a great event which strengthened the exchange between the Mainland and Taiwan. Three teachers also went to the Asia teacher training course in Thailand.

7. There are four books on Waldorf education have been translated into Chinese by our teachers and friends and published in China.

## The Current Situation

Chengdu Waldorf kindergarten and School was set up in the fall of 2004 with 3 children in the grade school and 5 children in the kindergarten. Now, the school has grown almost ten times larger than the beginning in two and a half years ago. We have run out of space into which the school can grow. The grade school classrooms are too small to fit more than ten children in one class. We do not have rooms for any more kindergarten classes. Besides needs for space, our teachers need more training to take on the upper grades we would like to add as we grow.

We have set up a three years part time early childhood teacher training programs with Thanh Cherry's help since last August. There is a great need not only for our teachers and kindergartens but also for all over China. There are more than 65 people enrolled in our training program in August in 2006. We had to stop taking more people for



secure the quality of the course and also we don't have enough space for the training. Our teachers really need more training. To improve the quality of teaching becomes critical for us. We are preparing for the grade school teacher training program starting from July 2007. We are urgently in need experience teachers come to stay in our classrooms to help our teachers. In the mean time, our teachers need a lot of time to do research to in curriculum that works in Chinese culture and situation

We are also practicing biodynamic gardening in a small patch of land in the school. There are ongoing courses on Biodynamic farming and gardening sponsored by Green Field Foundation in Hong Kong. We had given one week courses with an Indian Farmer twice a year. Through our workshops, there is a farm and a village nearby school has committed themselves to work with school community to supply us organic vegetables. There is the way that we are working with our school community. since the Anthroposophical concepts are sensitive to be introduced by now.

In the mean time, we have to keep up with the growth of the school. The school physical growth is very hard for the lack of funding. We now almost can cover our daily operating costs with the tuition income. But we pay our teacher low salary in order to achieve the goal. We need to pay our teachers better if we increase the enrollment in the future. But, we do not have facility to take more children now. Other words, we will have to rent or build more classrooms for the kindergarten and grade school with found outside.

### **The Property**

We are renting a previously ruined holiday resort. We are continually spending money on rebuilding and repairing the ruins in order to make it useful. We know it is not so good to do that but that is what we can manage now. We are hoping that we can have our own space so that we can build some thing good and beautiful rather than just fix it up and use it.

But, the price of land is crazy in china. To purchase is about 2 million Yuan (two hundred thousand Euros) per Mu (1 mu=660 square meters). It is impossible for us to purchase land. The land we are on now can be taken by the government any time in a few years if a good price was offered. This is the major problem for our school development. We are still looking for fund to buy the houses get the lease from our landlord. If we get the lease from the landlord, we will deal with the government so that we do not have to move at all. Our friends who work in the government will help us. In the mean time, we have to prepare for renting a piece of land from the government to build our school as soon as we can.

Our school needs to grow whatever it happens to the property. Now, we are looking for 100 thousand Euros (130

thousand US dollars) to build 12 classrooms. We are looking at building mobile classrooms because of the uncertainty. If we have to move, we will move those building. It is cheap and quit way to build too. In fact, it is the minimum requirement to meet the requirement to provide full days elementary schooling which we do not have now.



*Harry Wong (Huang Xiao Xing) translates for Chinese participants at the Asia-Pacific Anthroposophical Conference in Thailand.*

### **Legal and Political situation**

There is booming of private schools in China since ten years ago. Many private schools are business orientate schools. The Government does not support private schools financially at all. The government even collects tax from them if they do not register the school as not for profit school. In the beginning of 2005, we registered Chengdu Waldorf kindergarten as a not for profit organization. We also have registered the school as not for profit school in May 2006. Now, we have two legal entities. But, we can only legally offer supplemental schooling and adult education under the license of Chengdu Waldorf School. The school is still illegally providing children elementary schooling so far. We have been working in between current laws to provide children full day schooling for the lack of school building. We could do this only because the head of the local education department is protecting us. But, we are putting him in the difficult situation.

There was a report that was made to the city educational department on our school last month. The local educational department explained to their boss that we are home schooling our own children. And we only offer supplement schooling. In the mean time, all our children have registered in a public school nearby. It helps us get though this problem but the pressure are still there. We have been pushed by the local education department that we may no longer to continual our work if we do not get the credential to offer children full day schooling.

In the mean time, the local police have noticed that there isn't any small school and kindergarten alike us that there are so many foreigners visiting. They are watching us very closely. The chief officer has warned us that do not let any foreigner live in our school but they can come to visit. We do not have legal right to hire foreign teacher too. The police also questioned about the source of our funds and make sure that the fund will not come with attachment to political and religion agenda. People easily forget that we are still under the shadow of the communists for the appearance of China is totally capitalism in the business and we do have much great freedom than we even had. We are silently doing what we can do, but we are very much aware where the bottom lines are. We hope our friends will understand something that we are doing sound may not be right in the west, but, that this we will do it in China.

### **The Grade School**

Our school is growing even without classrooms, land and fund. We "officially" started our first grade in the fall of 2006 for our previous classes were only for our children. There were four children came from our kindergarten and three children came from outside. Our first grade school teacher was an editor and fairy tale writer. She had edited a couple of books on Waldorf education and had been a kindergarten assistant teacher for a half year. She changed her life in her mid life.

Our teachers do not have enough experience to teach mixed age group so we have separated all mixed classes even the class is small. Now, the grade school is very much like a normal school rather than a home school. We have 7 children in the first grade, 7 children in the second grade, 4 children in the third grade, and 10 children in the five grades. In fact, the children are very happy to have small class. They are playing together with different classes in the break time so that they are still in one big group.

We have most of the lesson except Eurythmy. There is a Eurythmy teacher will come to our school next April for two months. We are very much looking for having her. We have Chinese brush painting and calligraphy once week. There are many Chinese hand craft can be introduce to our curriculum. Our teachers are working hard on getting the local materials in the curriculum. Chinese festivals are celebrated in schools.

### **The Kindergarten**

The great achievement that we had made in a year is that we have finally decided to take two and a half year old children. We now have now toddler class with 15 children from age 2 and half to 3 and half. We have struggling how to bring those children in. In the first two weeks, the mothers came to help. Now, it is very nice to see little ones. It really surprise to see the younger ones are much easier than the older ones. Many thanks to our friends who are a

Buddhism Master supported us for the building.

Our kindergarten day is from 8:30AM to 5:00PM, but the school bus will start at 7:15 AM, end by 6:30PM, it is a long day for our teachers. Therefore we have two swift for lead teachers. Our kindergarten teachers grow very fast. They also have to work very harder to find suitable materials in our culture such as songs, games, arts and Chinese festivals. There are some parents are very happy to see that we are working out of our culture instead of importing Waldorf education from Germany. They are very impressive by the parents.

### **The Teachers Training**

Once we had more adults than the children. In fact, we do not have enough trained teachers. There aren't any trained Chinese teachers out there to hire. We have to train our own teacher. Many of them are in the process of training. We invite experienced teachers from the West to give courses in our school and send teachers to the training courses in Thailand. Some teachers are also working in the school as assistants. We are hoping that we will set up a three years part time teacher training program in July 2007. Waldorf education has been widely accepted by Chinese parents, now the question is how we will bring it out to the people. What we are doing will be the example of whole China since we are the first school in China. There are people came from all over China to attend the early childhood training course last year. I believe that we will have a lot people interested in our training program too.

### **Biodynamic Work**

Jayake, who is a farmer in India, came to Chengdu to give a one week course in the May. This was the third time to come to Chengdu. We have about 80 people attended the course from all over China. The course was sponsored by Hong Kong Green Field Foundation. We have made all the BD preparation in our school. We have been working with a NGO call Partnership of Community Development whose base is in Hong Kong. We are working together promoting community support Agriculture. We bring the farmers and school parents work together and trying to form a CSA (community support agriculture). We do have some organic vegetables once a week. In the meantime, we need an experience farmer to help the farmers in practical level.

*[This and the following article have only been partially edited to allow the author's writing style to be preserved. —Editor.]*



# I Have a Green Dream

*Weihe Hu, Chengdu, China*

I was born in a beautiful small village in the south of China in 1982. I am the second of three sons. My father was a carpenter and he can make any kind of furniture. My mother took care of me and my brothers, she grew lots of vegetables and fed several pigs, also made tofu for sale. I helped my parents to water the vegetables and do lots of housework when I was young. Of course, we three brothers could play freely when we finished the tasks our parents gave us. We climbed trees to pick fruits, caught fish in the stream, we played in the dirt and sand, we baked sweet potato in the fire, we also made many toys using natural and waste materials. I had a wonderful childhood.

My whole family moved to a town when I was 11 years old, my parents were as busy as usual, but we three brothers did not have a place for us to play as in the countryside, because there was lots of traffic, more and more buildings and less farmland and trees. We lived in an environment that was getting further away from nature everyday.

My father sent us to a new school and he set his hopes for us on the education of the school. But the teacher in charge of the class was not so kind as the one in the countryside. He cared more about the students whose families were rich or had some political power. He did not care much about students like me whose parents were neither rich nor had political power but peddlers selling fruits on the street. Some classmates often teased us and I was alone and upset at school.

The yard in front of my house and the lot behind the house was my haven after school. I sowed seeds and transplanted what ever I came by; peach, banana, mango, grape, mulberry, guava, some vegetables, some flowers, and some herbs too. I spent several hours with them each day. It was so supernatural to me that a small seed can germinate, different seeds have different leaves, different flowers, different fruits and different uses.

I had a dream when I was at middle school to start an ecological farm, grow all kinds of trees, fruits, vegetables and flowers, feed all kind of animals, and bees too. As an environmental education center, I wanted to invite the school kids to spend their weekend and holidays at the farm, see the beauty of nature and eat the delicious food nature presents us while learning the knowledge about nature by playing games and doing farming work, taking care of the plants and the animals. I would give them some seeds and little plants to grow as homework when they left.

Looking back at my schooling, it was a hard journey! My elder brother finished his schooling after the second year of middle school, and my little brother ended up his schooling even earlier, only finishing elementary school. He had no

chance to go to middle school. Both of them are quite healthy and clever, but why couldn't they stay longer in the school? Compared to my two brothers, I am quite lucky! I think there must be a God or a spirit helping me. I not only finished the middle school, but also finished the high school and went to the university. I chose Biological Science in a Teaching Normal College. I love to do something that I like which is also good for people and the environment—especially in the fields of education and environmental protection.

After several exciting weeks at the university, I soon became disappointed about the lessons. The teaching method in the university was the same as in the elementary school and middle school, the teacher talking and talking, just asking the students to make notes and remember them. If you got good marks in your examinations, you would be considered a good student. There was seldom a connection with real life. Sitting on the chair in the classroom was like being put into a prison. I escaped from the prison, the classroom, and spent most of my time in the library and on the internet, reading books and magazines about education, farming and gardening, to get the knowledge and information that I needed. Studying and working for my dream was more satisfying!

When I got to know about Steiner's teachings, like Waldorf education and Biodynamic farming, I found what I really wanted to do in my life. Biodynamic farming offers people healthy food to help develop a healthy physical body, and at the same time, Biodynamic farming also helps to protect the environment. Waldorf education helps to develop the children's willing, feeling, and thinking, helps people develop a healthy spirit. With a healthy spirit, a person can become a whole human being. Children are the future, if we have healthy children, then we can have a healthy future.

I got in touch with people like Eckart, Gammin, Harry, Lily and Wubei who were working and studying anthropology and Waldorf education. We had many communications through the internet.

In 2003, Harry Wong and his wife Lily said they would come back to China to start a Waldorf school in Chengdu, so I decided to leave university. I traveled to many places for half a year and tried to learn more things from the society. I got a job working on an organic farm, I worked for a flower company, and I also worked in a supermarket selling vegetables.

In June 2004, with Harry, Lily, Zewu Li and other friends we started the first Waldorf school in Chengdu, mainland China. We work and live very happily together. I really love and enjoy such a community life. We share and learn from each other and offer what we have for the community.

I am in charge of the gardening work at the school, the farming of our vegetable garden and the gardening class in

the lower school. To discover the beauty and the magic of nature and share it with children, to sow the green seed in the children's heart, to enjoy the benefit of nature and to protect nature with the children is my job and my dream come true. I really enjoy being a teacher in the gardening lessons and the nature summer camp.

At the same time, I am running a Community Supported Agriculture Program, to help the farmers near by to do organic farming and to sell their produce to our school and



*Chinese teachers at the Asia Waldorf Teachers Conference in Thailand.*

the students' families. The students are often going back home bringing the fresh healthy vegetables after school.

I also taught children and their parents to separate the organic material in the rubbish to make compost at home in order to grow flowers and vegetables at home on their terraces.

Biodynamic agriculture is quite new for Chinese people. Harry invited some experts to give training courses on Biodynamic agriculture several times. I helped to organize and prepare things for the course. These were the most rewarding times for many people come to the course from all over the country. I not only learned a lot from the experts, but also made many of friends on the course. The planting calendar we used was similar to the traditional Chinese calendar, but much clearer. Many people can not understand how the homeopathy works in agriculture. I don't have much experience about such things either, but I want to learn more about it— it's amazing.

Several friends who attended the BD training course and I had translated the Biodynamic Agriculture Basic Course Study Material into Chinese for the future BD training in China.

I love the ancient wisdom very much, like the Chinese traditional medicine, Taoism, Confucianism, and I also love Christianity and Buddhism. I have some Christian, Buddhist and Taoist friends. I love to spent time with them and I learn a lot form them.

I am a member of Friends of Nature ( [www.fon.org.cn](http://www.fon.org.cn) ), and a volunteer of Partnerships for Community Development ( [www.pcd.org.hk](http://www.pcd.org.hk) ), I also work with people in some NGOs like Green SOS ( [www.greensos.org](http://www.greensos.org) ), Ecologia ( [www.ecologia.org](http://www.ecologia.org) ), Chengdu Urban Rivers Association ( [www.rivers.org.cn](http://www.rivers.org.cn) ) and Environmental Volunteers Association of Sichuan University ( [www.scueva.com](http://www.scueva.com) ).

I am also working with my core friends to start a Healthy Life Club, to gather books and videos about healthy living and environment protection, and to invite people to learn and discuss how to have a healthy life, to change unhealthy habits, and to improve our life quality. We would like to let everyone realize that, our personal health is connect to the whole environment, we need to change our ways which are not friendly toward to the environment, we have only one earth. We need to save energy and stop polluting the environment, and we hope all the living things can live on the earth harmoniously for ever.

Only if we understand, can we care,  
Only if we care, will we help,  
Only if we help, shall we be saved.

—Jane Goodall

While starting the Healthy Life Club, we also starting a Consumption Cooperation like the Consumption Cooperation in Taiwan ( [www.hucc-coop.tw](http://www.hucc-coop.tw) ), which is managed by some associates of the cooperation, buy the foods and things use in daily life wholesale for all the associate, like organic produce from farms and other green healthy products from factory. so that, it can save lot money which are earn by the business man and some fare which is not necessary in package and transportation. People can get the foods and things use in daily life truly and cheap. The healthy consumption can support the healthy production, and have a greener future.

I hope there will be an Anthroposophical Community in China soon, which includes a Bio-dynamic farm, Waldorf School , resthome, meeting /art center, and some small factory producing eco-product, creating a harmonious culture and sharing knowledge with people who are interested through all kinds of meeting, training course and workshops. And I hope there will be more and more harmonious communities like Anthroposophical Community all over the world.

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Every individual matters,  
Every individual has role to play,  
Every individual makes a difference.

—Jane Goodall



## Tinh Truc Gia: The Peaceful Bamboo Family

*Ineke van Florenstein Mulder, Christchurch, New Zealand*

It was a cool, very calm and misty morning near the old imperial city of Hue in Central Vietnam, just before dawn. Seven Buddhist monks in golden robes, three abbesses of the nearby Pagoda, Lisi Ha Vinh, co-worker of the Eurasia Foundation, and two guests, my husband Hans and I had come together for a ceremony to bless and ask the land for permission to build a building.

What a privilege to be there at the moment when the land where a new community for people in need of special care is about to be blessed. The community will be named: Tinh Truc Gia, the Peaceful Bamboo Family. The most important moment of the ceremony was the moment when a Foundation stone, on which was written when and why this ceremony took place, was lowered into the soil. This will be at the centre of the communal room of the new building.

Where did this all find its beginning? It all started 18 years ago when Lisi and Tho Ha Vinh, curative eurythmists at Perceval in French Switzerland, started Eurasia, a foundation for the development of curative education in Vietnam. The objectives of the Association are:

To foster the development and social integration of mentally and physically disabled children and individuals living in Vietnam. Also, to strive for recognition of, and respect for their dignity and rights.

Since then many things have been achieved. Classrooms for children with intellectual disability have been established in four primary schools. The teachers in these classes work out of Waldorf/Rudolf Steiner pedagogy. They have been trained in Perceval in Switzerland.

A post-graduate course in special education at the University of Hue has been established in partnership with an American university. A home for elderly women has been established where those who have no family members to look after them can find a place to live. But also a surgery programme for physical disabilities like clubfoot and other

rehabilitation programmes has been set up.

In 2004 and 2006 Festivals for disabled children have been held with three days of exhibitions of their work and performances for and by the students themselves.

But the children for whom this all was started have now grown up and need a new phase in their lives. They need more independence and workshops where they can work during the day. And so the wish to have a piece of land and a community came into being. It was the Government who found this particular piece of land as it is very difficult to buy land in Vietnam.

On May 12, 2007 we found ourselves celebrating this



*Buddhist monks and Lisi Ha Vinh at the blessing of Tinh Truc Gia, in Vietnam.*

moment of special significance. It was very solemn and created a wonderful atmosphere. At the end of the ceremony incense sticks were placed on the ancestral tombs that surround the land, this to ask their permission. Afterwards, the co-workers, Lisi, Hans and I, went to town to have breakfast in a French bakery where the jam made in one of the workshops is sold. The next day Hans guided some of the co-workers and 2 nuns in the stirring of the BD cow dung preparation (500) and at sunset we spread it over the land.

It is hoped that the first building of Tinh Truc Gia will be ready by April next year as construction begins soon.



# A Report from the Steiner School in Fujino

*Rieko Hata, Fukuino, Japan*

## Historical Background

The school system in Japan is made up of twelve years of schooling with six years of elementary, three years of junior high and three years of senior high school. There are nine years of compulsory education. Kindergarten is optional.

In 1987 the first Steiner school in Japan, and in Asia for that matter, was born on the first floor of an apartment building in the center of Tokyo. Like the growth of a person, this school grew through seven-year stages of development. In the first period teachers built up the curriculum of grades one through six. The small group of teachers and parents had to work together without a model or any government support. During the second stage attention was focused on improving the elementary grades and extending curriculum to the seventh through ninth grade. The number of children reached more than one

hundred in 2001. It was at this time that the school became recognized as a non-profit-organization.

From the year 2000 until now a few Waldorf schools have been established in other parts of Japan. These have been recognized as non-profit organizations as well. As NPO schools are non-accredited by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, these Waldorf schools have had and continue to have a number of obstacles to overcome. There are three main problems: first is the certification of graduation based on registration with a local public school; second is the obvious difficulty of financial support to cover supplies, salaries, rent and tuition; third is finding the right building space for more than one hundred children. These problems can be solved by working with the government in order to find land and buildings.

The Steiner School in Fujino, accomplished this by first sending a formal petition with requests to the government. Without having to own the land and building, we were given permission to rent the land and building with the Fujino township outside of Tokyo. The local government also sent





a letter agreeing to work together with us in a partnership. After eighteen years of work the first Waldorf school in Japan, now the Steiner School in Fujino, has full accreditation for grades one through nine. This is the first case for a Waldorf school to become accredited from grades one through nine.



*Students at the Steiner School in Fujino fire their own pottery.*

### Looking Toward the Future

Class 10 through 12 are still an NPO with no accreditation. Last year class 10 and 11 built the school dome. It was very hard but they learned a lot from working together. Everyday students worked with the ground, with wood and with tools. They struggled with themselves and strengthened their wills in the process.

Now we are planning a fully accredited senior high school. For the establishing of the accredited high school we have already found the property and we are negotiating the final details. After purchasing the land we will need generous donations in order to build an actual school complex for grades nine through twelve, 26 students in each grade. Our work is just beginning.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of April, 2007 a welcome ceremony was held for the new class one of the Steiner School in Fujino. This was a day when all classes 1-12 were gathered together for the first time in the twenty-year history of the school. Now we have 205 children in the entire school, seventeen full-time and ten part-time teachers, as well as two office workers.

More Waldorf schools in Japan will help our communities become more conducive to the needs of children in the various stages of life. These students will have the initiative to nurture future generations.

For more information and how you can help the next stage of the Steiner School in Fujino, contact:  
[www.steiner.ed.jp](http://www.steiner.ed.jp)

## Travel Journal of an American Waldorf Teacher on Sabbatical (ch2)

*Meg Gorman, San Francisco, California*

*[Meg wrote with clear observation, wit, and great affection of the people and places she met in Japan. I apologize for meetings and stories that were deleted for reasons of space availability. GS for PJ]*

### The Steiner School in Fujino

As I arrived at the station in Fujino, Japan, I was met by Rieko Hata, a lovely eurythmist with the grace of a butterfly. The Freie Waldorf Schule in Fujino sits in a town that reminds me a bit of the Alps. This is a mountainous region, and it is winter. I left Honolulu in sweltering heat, and arrived to temperatures below freezing - the first graders brought me small sheets of ice from the lily pond to prove it. Sakae Yomato, the first grade teacher, taught a picture-perfect main lesson. The children lined up to shake hands and greet him with glee. Then they had a rigorous circle time with many poems, flute playing, and singing, with extra lesson exercises woven in. The children were learning their letters, and Mr. Sakae did a lovely job of reviewing their work, and drawing the Japanese character for the sound O from the figure of a woman about whom he had told a story. Once the character was on the board, the children drew it in the air and on each other's backs. Only then did they fetch their books and draw the letter in them. Every child drew a fine character. After circle, chairs and desks were arranged for bookwork. Toward the end of the lesson, they pushed their desks together for a new story. The moving of furniture gave them a rigorous workout and kept the students from getting squirrel-like. They certainly love their teacher, and he obviously loves them. What lucky children! At snack time, because I had no goodies, the children laid out a cloth and they each donated something from their snacks: a raisin, a bit of rice, a pickle, bits of fruit. I was well fed. It was a lovely experience.

I was ensconced in an art colony retreat house where my room was lovely. The Japanese bath was a delight, an extensive room where one showers well and then sinks into a warm, square pond the size of a large hot tub. Japan is world of sliding doors - even in supermarkets - and various slippers. When anyone enters a private building (school or home), the outside shoes come off and a guest pair of slippers is provided. The bathrooms have no locks. Instead, one slips off the indoor slippers and leaves them outside the door, and slips on a pair of wooden-soled or plastic slippers sitting at the door. When the bathroom slippers are not at the door, no one goes in, for this is a signal that the facility is in use. This neat and silent arrangement seems better than trying the door with vigor as we do in the USA. This is a clean, efficient culture, punctual to the minute, and yet the



people are remarkably warm. To me it feels more like a heart culture than a head culture.

My translator in Fujino, Satoru Masabuchi, a thoughtful, lovely man, worked artfully with me through two lectures: one on the high school and one on parenting. Both were well received. A seasoned Waldorf teacher, he will be the first grade teacher in Tokyo in a new pioneer school. I also got to see the fourth grade play and a Japanese festival during which fifth grade students, all born in the year of the



*Mount Fuji, Japan.*

boar and dressed in traditional kimonos, threw dry beans at the audience to chase away bad beings. I had a splendid time speaking to grades eight, nine, and the pioneers: a combined class of grades ten and eleven. They were very taken by the CD of my son, Daniel and his band, Chk!Chk!Chk!, to which they listened during the English lesson. His band will be performing in three venues in and near Tokyo the first week of March. Amazingly, the pioneer class has built the first high school building, a fine geodesic dome. They complained that it was very hard work, but they were clearly proud of it. The whole school was impressive.

### **Yokohama**

Next I traveled again by train to Aobadai, a suburb of Yokohama. The Yokohama Steiner School is a transformed office building. Three Graces form the College of Teachers, Midori Sumida, the eurythmist and my host, Mami Magai, grades 2 & 3, and Minami Kanda, grade 1. All are single, living with widowed mothers. Two of them travel over an hour and a half one way, by train and bus, to get to the school. Midori speaks good German and Japanese, and I speak only English with a handful of German words. Thus, we sat at the table with our dictionaries and spoke what I have come to call Germlish.

Waldorf Education in Japan has grown out of Saturday schools or after-hours schools. For twenty years, these

classes have brought Waldorf enrichment to children. The Yokohama school has had Saturday school for 15 years and continues to do so while they create their grade school. All the full-time teachers work several hours each Saturday!

At the Yokohama school, I observed classes, talked to teachers, and had a long session with parents. Eurythmy class with Midori was like a good wind blowing through the building. It's great to see how much children love eurythmy here. The class teachers are good, solid folk and the children are well served. Eurythmy seems to hold a hallowed place in all Japanese Waldorf schools, as well it should.

The food is always good here. Miso soup, special pickles, a bit of fish and some rice form breakfast. It is amazing how many ways rice can be used. Lunch is similar. The children bring tea in a thermos. Balls of sticky rice of various shapes and sizes often house treasures from pickled plum to sautéed meat or fish. The evening meal is the big event. Twice I have had fabulous nabe, a home-cooked soup created at the table in a large bowl of beautiful crockery. A variety of vegetables, seafood, chicken and other mysterious items go into the broth as desired. Dining rooms are equipped with gas wall outlets to allow a serious flame for the soup. The broth gets better and better as the meal progresses. I have had divine potluck at two gatherings including the best sashimi I have ever eaten. I am convinced now that all soups should be imbibed directly from bowls. The aroma and simplicity of the process make soup all the more delicious, and all noodles should be slurped as our grandmothers told us not to do.

The Japanese women I met in Fujino and Yokohama are incredibly strong and in-credibly self-effacing. Japanese men frequently work late and then take one-to-two hour train rides, arriving home at 9:00 PM or so. It is hard to recommend that little children be in bed before 8:00 when they will seldom see their fathers as a result. Mothers are often home alone with small children for many hours after school and into the evening.

I have learned a few things so far about Waldorf education: that temperament is universal; that the children are noisy and rambunctious on Mondays and settle better into the work on Tuesdays, that the work with the parents needs to be conscious and embracing, that good Waldorf teachers are hard to find, and that many people are making huge life sacrifices to bring Waldorf education to the world. The challenges seem to build strength in the long run, but require much crisis management in the short run. Many children have learning challenges. And the teachers have few therapeutic resources. The pressure from Game-Boy here is also intense. The good Waldorf teachers are holding their fingers in the dike, but there never seem to be enough fingers. It is very hard to find trained class teachers in Japan. Japanese people travel far for teacher education. In various schools I have met folks who trained at Emerson College in England, several German Waldorf Schools, Rudolf Steiner

College in California, and Sunbridge in New York. International karmic steams are flowing everywhere.

In terms of Waldorf faculties, disagreements often run along familiar lines. I am convinced that learning to work in process as free individuals is the call of the time; however, it is incredibly difficult. Old souls sigh as young souls, who are filled with energy, rush ahead unaware of their effect on the people around them. Process is especially hard for the young folks, and, because they work so hard, they are baffled by the old souls who ask questions and point out the human wreckage that the young souls are sometimes leaving behind them. The young souls are hurt that the considerable amount of work they do is underappreciated. They often have difficulties with parents because the parents do not feel heard by them. The young soul dismisses this as the parents' problem. The old souls know that relationships are the key to all, yet they are often discouraged and don't want to make the effort to do the necessary work to mend things. They are, as Steiner tells us, a bit soul weary. My take on all this is that we badly need each other and need to find ways to talk to one another so that all are appreciated and valued. Perhaps we need a workshop on this in the movement. I see these patterns everywhere.



*Michael College campus at Hibiki no Mura community, in Date, Japan.*

After a week of hard work at the school, its administrator, Makiko Kobayashi, who was once a parent in the Princeton School, took me to the heart of the city along with her husband, Makoto, and their son, Misami. We had a splendid day. It was unseasonably warm, thank goodness. Pale white plum blossoms, Japanese flowering quince, and narcissus were beginning to bloom. The Museum of Cultural History was wondrous. It traces the cultural history of the city from 30,000 BC (earliest settlers) to the present. A special exhibit of fishermen's kimonos was amazing. An extraordinary wooden temple, reconstructed with carved

posts and beams without a single nail, was like a beautiful three-dimensional puzzle. Other highlights included an exquisite 14th Century Buddha, models of Perry's Boat when he arrived in Yokohama, and wonderful dioramas of both ancient and modern life. After loudly slurping soba noodles and vegetables for lunch (the polite way), we visited the Archives of History and a Silk Museum, both of which were excellent.

## **Hokkaido**

Flying north over Japan was wonderful. It is a very mountainous place, and the peaks were covered in snow. Large ships steamed up and down the coast, as we moved north to Sapporo, the home of the famous beer and one of the Winter Olympics. I was having anxieties about my limited winter clothes as the world below grew whiter and whiter. When speaking of Hokkaido, everyone in Yokohama makes shivering gestures.

Ryoisha Hagiwara met me at the airport. It was so good to see him after ten years. We drove in his small Mitsubishi jeep into the spectacular beauty of winter in the far north.

I am clearly underdressed for the place, so Ryo's roommate has provided me with a warm coat. On the first day, the wind was howling outside the window. Ryo's kindness and my little kerosene heater kept my room relatively warm, but I am also warmly dressed. This is indeed a different world from Yokohama.

The town, Date, stretches along the sea and a major river. It sits in the shadows of spectacular volcanic mountains, one of which erupts regularly every twenty to thirty years. Onsen or hot springs abound. Date, pronounced Datay, is a hard-scrabble town of fishermen, small businesses, and farms. Because the growing season is short, greenhouse agriculture is plentiful under plastic covered, half-moon frames, which look a bit like Mandan Indian structures. The town's good restaurants affirm the Japanese love of delicious food.

The Steiner School Izumi-no-gakko (which means school of spring water), is small and stretched to the maximum. Housed in temporary buildings, it looks more like a boot camp than a school. However, inside its small classrooms there is beauty and real Waldorf education going on. I had the good fortune to observe Rei Hayashi, the teacher of the sixth grade class. She taught a beautiful, rhythmic history lesson with very attentive students. They worked hard. Her timing of the three parts of the main lesson was also excellent. After an artistic opening, she had the students work together to practice their math. It was great to see the demands she put on them. Her own presentation was exactly a third of the class, and her students were spellbound!

Thankfully, the school has found new digs in a nearby town, Toyoura. They will move next April. In a charming resort area, the new building is big enough for the entire

school, including the high school, and looks much like a 1950's American school, replete with a gym and a large playing field. From its spot on the side of the mountain, the new school has a view of the sea from one side and snowy mountains on the other. Toyoura has some wealth, so I hope the school can build up its enrollment there.

The first day, I met with a board member and his wife, Koji and Hannako Iyota, who are the kind of parents who make a school possible. We talked about the usual Board issues, fundraising, enrollment and so on. I learned that 70% of the school was made up of parents from outside Hokkaido. Of those families, half do not have fathers at home. They commute as they can from places like Tokyo, 500 or so miles away. However, about a quarter of the listeners at my lectures were fathers, which was wonderful.

After a week of working with the school community, Ryo took me on a jaunt around Lake Touya. Still in a snow-covered wonderland, we circled the Lake which sits in the bottom of an old caldera and has steep peaks, both around and in the lake, all of which are the results of old volcanic eruptions. I saw a pair of swans with a teenage offspring on the shore. I was staggered by the beauty of the place.

We also visited a little iron-red baby volcano, Showa Shin-zan, that sits on the side of its big, regularly erupting papa, Usa-zan, and emits steam pretty much non stop. More like an iron kitchen kettle than a caldera, it is a cosy volcano; and it was loved by a remarkable man, Masao Mimatsu. In the middle of the war, this postal clerk, with only a bit of knowledge about volcanoes, began to study the little fellow as it rose up and lifted twelve farms with it near the village of Sobetsu. Mr. Mimatsu bought the volcano and its surrounding land, and began to document its activity carefully. He left invaluable records for future vulcanologists. Later, when it became famous, he would not allow the area to be exploited by commercial interests. He left it to be a wilderness park, and died at the same time the big volcano, Usa-zan, began to erupt again. Inspired by his story, Ryo and I went to the site and took a picture of his statue.

Michael College is an extraordinary experience. I woke every morning to a snow white valley of rolling farms and the little volcano, Showa Shin-zan steaming away outside my window. Yuko Omura, her friend, Toyo, and now her son, Jiro (once my high school student in Sacramento), have built up an amazing set of natural wood structures that house the first eurythmy hall in Japan, a preschool, a farm, a beginning Raphael school, several homes and cottages for visitors, students and co-workers, and an adult education building

with offices, classrooms, a gorgeous dining room and a professional kitchen. It is amazing what Yuko and the Michael College community have accomplished. Yuko told me that her dream has been to have a home for all aspects of anthroposophical work. She has certainly begun the process with vigor. However, like so many of our full-time teacher-education institutes, Michael College has few full-time students, and supports itself mostly from an intense and well-attended summer program. They are trying to figure out how to draw more students to the year-round program or use their incredible facility for something else such as a retreat center during the year.

My week at Michael College was intense. I added a two-hour plus lecture on the threefold social organ-

ism every morning to my school-support schedule in the afternoons. Each morning the number of students increased, and we had to add extra tables almost every day. That people care about the threefold was so heartening for me. We had good sharing and excellent questions on subjects ranging from local currencies to wedding regulations. I learned so much. I have also got the hang of how to lecture with a translator. I don't know if I will be able to speak normally in the future. I have become used to long pregnant times to look at my students and think before I speak (an almost novel idea for me).

I have worked harder in Hokkaido than anywhere else. The first week I did three lectures on parenting from kindergarten through high school, and participated in quite a few faculty meetings. One evening I returned to Michael



*Autumn leaves in Hokkaido, Japan.*





*Primitive dwellings constructed by students as part of their class studies at the Steiner school, Izumi no Gakko, in Date, Hokkaido.*

College for a retelling of the story of Parzival and a potluck with the staff there. I asked them to play son Daniel's CD, and we all ended up rocking and rolling around the dining room. Yuko danced, too, and she is pretty good. I think we need a bit more rock n' roll in all our teacher trainings. We laughed a lot. Thus, in spite of full days, I have had a great time.

I turned 63 in Japan. The landscape was pristine in her elegant white mink as folks sang Happy Birthday at various significant points in my day. I got the Waldorf version, the regular American birthday song, and something wonderful in Japanese. The day ended with a fabulous dinner that Toyo prepared. The nabe had a crab that was enormous and looked like parts of a giant spider. Fish and various vegetables filled the steaming pot. The whole family was involved in the preparation of a plate of sushi fit for the gods. Pickles and other condiments rounded out the meal. It was a fabulous event, and I could hardly walk after all the good food I ate. I later found out that Toyo was a professional chef and had once worked in a Sacramento restaurant where he actually met Yuko. Isn't life wonderful?

My roommate at Michael College, Thanh Cherry, who is originally from Vietnam, was teaching the early childhood work. I had met her in Bangkok years ago. She has been traveling through the world for years now helping Waldorf schools. Fluent in English, she has been to some of the schools I will visit in China, and she gave me some excellent advice for next month. We had a wonderful time in our adjoining rooms with a sliding door. We lay in bed one night and talked like college girls in a dorm room. For breakfast, she rustled up enormous bowls of vegetable soup with soba along with rich insights about life and the work of spiritual science. This was a fortunate meeting indeed for me, and I

would love to find a way to bring her to America.

The onsen in this area are sulfur hot springs of dubious and varying odors. Yuko assured me this was a valued Japanese experience. As she, Thanh and I prepared to get out of the car, I was instructed to put away all valuables and take along a small towel along with other cleansing gear. First we procured and scrubbed a small plastic stool and basin. Next we sat on the low stools before a shower apparatus and cleaned all parts with vigor. Then came the hot spring itself. Just relax, said Yuko and Thanh. I made an effort, but soon found myself itching all over. My wild Irish skin was not up to it. Knowing that very hot water relieves the itching of poison oak, I headed for the hottest pool. I lasted about five minutes. I'm telling you, folks, this was not Calistoga's gentle waters. This was for serious bathers. Once home, I could barely eat (me!) and was in bed by 8:30. I felt like phlegmatic for a full twenty-four hours. Several other Japanese friends have cheerfully suggested an onsen since, but I have decided that one sojourn into phlegma for an old choleric is enough for this lifetime.

I finished the week on Saturday with an all-school meeting of parents and faculty. That afternoon, Ryo and Matt, the American spouse of the third grade teacher, took me on an adventure. We drove high into the mountains, picked up some snowshoes, and started hiking. Our goal was a small cave. I had to approach the entrance on my hands and knees to keep from breaking through the snow crust. I realize that this posture is about right for me as I approach any threshold of significance. Inside the cave we met extraordinary ice formations, beings of ice that grow each winter in exactly the same patterns from the dripping ceiling of the cave. After an awesome silence, we left quietly for a rigorous hike home to beat the setting sun.

On the way back, we stopped at a wonderful farmer's house. After Ryo and I had told him about the new start-up schools in China, he gave me the unwashed fleece of a sheep which I shall divide among the Chinese Waldorf schools which have little money and very few supplies. I now have a large box full of the scallop shells I found along the shore and very smelly wool, which, thanks to Patty Townsend's good instructions, the Chinese children can wash and dye with their kindergarten teachers. How I will manage all this luggage is still a mystery, but I am sure the good gods of this trip will help me somehow.

Anthroposophy is alive and growing in this part of Hokkaido. In addition to the work at Michael College, many other young people in the area are interested. Ryo is a quiet inspiration in this area with his study groups and holding of the work. We had some fine conversations around Anthroposophia which nourished me a great deal. Unfortunately, there are rifts in Japan as elsewhere in the world. I wish we could find a better way to meet one another. Along with the various streams, young and old soul thoughts come again, but I am sure of one thing: with so many disparate opinions abounding, we are not a cult. I am also sure that the good hearts of the Japanese people are very open to the richness of Anthroposophy and may well be able to carry it with more warmth than others.

## Yokohama

Now I am back in Yokohama in considerably longer days and beginning cherry blossoms. Chie Sasaki and her fiancé, Riozo, met me at the airport after an airport concierge phoned and told Chie that I was too burdened with luggage to take the train.

Chie is a wonder. After losing her father, her mother was murdered in a brutal knifing by a robber and several months later, Yasuhiro, her son who died of Tay-Sachs disease. Recently, Yasuhiro has guided her to go to Thailand, where she is moving soon to create a center for her organization, Mothers of Angels, to help the parents and children of the tsunami as well as others who have lost children. Her book is out, *My Little Angel Yasuhiro*, and I recommend it to anyone who has lost a small child. It is straight from the heart. There is a happy karmic twist in her life now. Riozo, whom she married this year, is the detective who finally cracked her mother's case, so her murderer could be tried and convicted. Again, I ask, isn't life weird and wonderful? Someone once gave me a quote from Steiner after the first Goetheanum burned to the ground that goes something like this: "The deeper sorrow carves itself into our lives, the more joy we can contain." Thus is Chie now a buoyant helper of others.

Chie and I took the train to the city part of Yokohama for lunch at a restaurant overlooking the harbor. We were joined by five young women and one older woman, all of whom had lost children. It was very moving to meet these

people and to hear their stories. All of us shared in this experience with losses from still-births to a twenty-one year old. Afterwards, we wandered through the basement of a place that had hundreds of little shops, many of which were offering free samples, including my beloved weakness, ice cream. It was great to watch Chie holding court and getting these grieving mothers to laugh and smile. I parted from the group reluctantly because we had made such a strong heart connection.

My days with these wonderful people, Chie and her friends, ended at the train station. Yuri traveled with me to Tokyo, so I would get on and off the right trains, which was a godsend. Later, I waited at the Starbucks that overlooks Shibuya Station for Chisako, an English teacher from the Fugino school. While there, I watched the foot traffic traverse the street. Every two minute between two or three hundred people gather at six "corners" and wait for the signal to cross the intersection. When the light turns green, they take off. I reflected that I was watching the population of a full twelve-grade Waldorf school weave through each other every two minutes. Despite the mass of humanity, few jostled or bumped into one another. Boundaries in Japan are well established. It was awesome and strange.

When I met Chisako and her lively daughter, Akari, they took me to a temple area where one can wash in smoke to alleviate any health problems. Twice I tried the Shinto luck drawers. After shaking a cylindrical bin vigorously, I drew out a stick with a number on it that corresponded with a numbered drawer in which there were small paper fortunes. Both times I drew dreadful fortunes with terrible predictions about the future including my house burning down and other possible disasters. Following Chisako's instructions, I tied my two misfortunes on the appropriate wires to reject them.

That night I slept at Chisako's apartment. We had such good talks about life, divorce, and Anthroposophy. She is another friend that I will know a long time. Spring was burgeoning around us, cherry blossoms and all, as we strolled through a nearby park, had a coffee and finally reached the bus station. After sad hugs, I hauled myself on to the airport bus. What gifts I have received in this country, the gifts of many people. I have been carried with incredible love here in Japan, from the home made lunch boxes that appear like magic at the school, to the warm grace of these kind people. Knowing I will probably not see the schools and children again in my lifetime fills me with sadness as I leave each school. So many wonderful folks have helped and given me so much. When I left Hawaii for Japan, I thought I was entering a world of unknowns. Instead I have found new and old friends more deeply than ever. Yes, I have fallen in love with Japan. Without her warmth, I don't know if I could have survived my first leg in China. It was only hours before I was wondering about the power of the Shinto bad luck papers, but that is another story...



## Curative Education and Social Therapy in India

*Penelope Roberts, Copake, NY, USA*

In February 2008 a group of men and women who have been working and studying Curative Education and Social Therapy in India will receive their graduation certificates. This will be the culmination of three years of intense application on the part of these individuals, but more than this is that it will be a significant stepping stone along the path of introducing this field, this particular profession, based as it is on the work of Rudolf Steiner, into the sub-continent of India.

This thread, amongst many threads weaving Anthroposophy into the Indian culture, had its beginning in 1990 when Kumar Mal, native of India and coworker at Camphill Village, Copake New York, invited a group of his colleagues to tour India with the purpose of ascertaining whether there was an opening for starting a Camphill inspired community in his homeland. In the course of our tour we stopped off in Bangalore to visit an old friend of Kumar, Mrs. Ursula Chowdhury. Ursula had grown up in Germany during the war, gone to Waldorf School and then met her future husband who happened to come from India. By the time we met her she was widowed with grown children and ready for a project! Camphill in India!

In the spring of 1992 Ursula invited me to give a weekend workshop on Curative Education and Social Therapy in her home. Ursula sent out announcements to many professionals in the field of mental health: to medical doctors, social workers, special teachers, psychiatrists and psychologists in the Bangalore. About 40 people attended, not only from Bangalore but also from Pune, Madras and Mumbai. Over the course of that weekend the participants were introduced to the basic principles of child development as described by

Rudolf Steiner. Dilnawz Bana introduced the art of Eurythmy and Aban Bana gave a talk about Waldorf Education by. Finally I gave a presentation on the work of the Camphill Movement. That was the beginning of a long collaboration.

Ursula's conviction that we should start a Camphill-like place in Bangalore began to spread. This workshop was the first seed of what became a little plant in December 1994, when the Friends of Camphill India Day Centre opened in Bangalore.

I had gone that year to spend a sabbatical in India and

together Ursula and I found a house, interviewed young people and their families, trained coworkers and planted a small example of Social Therapy in India. The first coworkers were Molly and Sebastian from Kerala, who had previously been connected with L'Arche. Although this day centre survived for less than two years, it made its mark. A group of young people with disabilities and their families had experienced something, which they did not forget.

It was not long after that that Anantha and Francis Aradhya who had been eight years at Christophorus Camphill School in the Netherlands made a decision to follow their star to India. Anantha had grown up in Shimoga, a city in the state of Karnataka (as is Bangalore). He could speak the language and knew the culture. After a year of adjustment with their two children in Shimoga, Francis and Anantha decided to re-open the Bangalore Day Centre. This was in 1997/8.

In March 1999, after an enormous amount of support from many friends in India, the United States, the United Kingdom and Holland a residential community, The Friends of Camphill India, was opened in the village of Bannerghatta on the southern outskirts of Bangalore.

But to go back: From the time that Francis and Anantha arrived in India they carried an impulse to have annual Anthroposophical conference/workshops for all those working out of Anthroposophy in India. It was not always possible, due to enormous distances and cumbersome transportation, or everyone to come, but these events took place faithfully every year in



*Members of the Curative Education and Social Therapy Course in Bangalore, India.*



February. As the years went on and as the Waldorf Movement took hold in India and developed its own training and conferences, the Bangalore events became more specifically concerned with Social Therapy. Each year new faces appeared as the word went around. Often people would come just on the basis of hearsay: "Something different is happening here." The Friends of Camphill Community, small and pioneering as it was, was always a gracious host to all who came from far and wide. Everyone took part, even the temporary volunteers from overseas. There was art and colour, excellent cooking and much inspiration.



*Indian teachers at the Asia Waldorf Teachers Conference in Thailand.*

In February 2004 Francis felt that a new step was needed. It was time to make a firmer commitment. It was time for a formal training course in Social Therapy and Curative Education. She asked me to work with her, Aban and Dilnawaz Bana and Halina Rubisz (a curative educator working in Kathmandu) to develop a program. This would take place in fifteen-day blocks twice a year for three years. We called it Training Course in the Art of Curative Education and Social Therapy.

In November 2004 we advertised a weekend introductory workshop. Of the 20 or so who came, a group of 16 emerged who wanted to go further. They were from Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Kathmandu as well as coworkers from the community itself. Some were graduates in Special Education. Some were medical doctors or therapists. Some had very little education at all but had experience. All were in some way working with children or adults with disabilities. The language was English, though a few needed support, as this was not their first language. We began in February 2005. The first step was to build up a firm understanding of the human

being as developed by Rudolf Steiner. The first three sessions focused on the Etheric, the Astral and the Ego. In the Indian context this had to be done completely freshly, drawing strongly on nature observation and biographical experience. All the arts accompanied us. Every morning before breakfast eurythmy opened the day. Painting, modeling,

drawing, singing, recorder, speech and drama, form-drawing, mask-making all supported the learning path. Study material and other homework as well as practical tasks were given for the months between blocks. We had many wonderful experiences.

During our exploration of the Astral and the Soul we went to the nearby Zoo to experience all the animal archetypes. We made friends with the local dental college and borrowed their skeleton. We performed the entire story of Parsifal with a role for everyone in the community (almost 40 souls). Although each of the first three sessions had incorporated many aspects of Curative and Social Therapeutic instruction, only in the subsequent blocks did we fully turn to this. At this point we became aware that we have only made a beginning.

By February 2008 the group will have finished the course, but already it feels like climbing the foothills only to discover new mountains ahead. Although we have had

courses on child development, on the curriculum, on diagnostics, we have only scratched the surface. We realize that what we have provided is an intense introduction. By now our students have become conversant with Anthroposophy. They have tools for their work, but in order to be fully considered curative educators they need to deepen their knowledge. Two of our students, Dr. Swapna Narendra and her colleague, Shushmita, run the Sandeepani School for Handicapped Children in Hyderabad. They are now planning a more in-depth course in Curative Education, hopefully with the help of educators from abroad. The same could be said for the Social Therapy course. On the basis of this foundation much more study and integrative experience will be needed.

Over the years a few of the original students have dropped away for one or another reason. A few more have joined. But the ground has been laid and a group of dedicated individuals is emerging who will bring work further in the very needy situation of India. I am sure that we shall be hearing more of them.

## Medical Section work in the Asia Pacific Region

*Sue Scott, Sydney, Australia*

### **The International Post-graduate Medical Trainings**

The International Post-graduate Medical Trainings are run by the Medical Section in Switzerland. The format of the trainings was developed in response to requests from different countries for a visiting training, after the close of the well known Lukas Clinic trainings, given in Arlesheim, Switzerland. A programme was formulated, to be given in those countries which did not as yet have their own medical training, to give an impulse which could be freely taken up by individuals. Dr. Gloeckler is the leading co-ordinator for the training, and arranges the variations of workshops in the afternoons. Facilitators are given travel support to get to the country, but otherwise offer their services as a donation. They are given accommodation and meals.

The training is run over 5 years of one week blocks each year. The format is always, beginning the day with eurythmy, exploring through the five weeks different aspects of eurythmy in relation to human development, and where possible a therapeutic eurythmist offers the session. Following this, is nature study, text study, both offer exercises in observation and inner development. The afternoons have practical workshops, often related to the theme of the morning text study, and each evening there is a review of the day with participants taking turns to present their group work, followed by a presentation from Dr. Gloeckler.

Different countries negotiate who they involve as participants. India is the strongest in relation to involving teachers, who then need to have education specific workshops in the afternoon. However, it is clear, that the IPMT is not offering a teacher training by enabling the wish of a community to have a teacher's component. The Medical Section is clear that teacher's training is a matter for the Pedagogical Section, and local training organizations. At this stage, it is more a matter of sharing resources and opportunity.

The next IPMT is in Australia, July 17-24<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

### **Kolisko Conferences**

2006 saw a large number of regional Kolisko conferences for the first time, these were held in India, Philippines, Mexico, Australia, France, Sweden, Ukraine, South Africa, and Taiwan. The conferences all share the theme of understanding health through the impact of education, from a pedagogical and a medical perspective. Conferences were open to teachers, medical practitioners, allied health practitioners and parents. They were all a success in terms of numbers of attendees, with the minimum being 200 people. A text "Education-Health for Life" was published

by Dr Gloeckler, co edited by Stefan Langhammer and Christoph Weichert. This text was written in German, and translated into Russian, French, English, Spanish and, just recently into Chinese. Distributors are listed on [www.kolisko.net](http://www.kolisko.net), alternatively, English copies can be ordered via Sue Scott at [suescottau@yahoo.com.au](mailto:suescottau@yahoo.com.au).

There are no immediate plans published in regard to future Kolisko conferences, but information will be posted on the above web site within the next month.

It is encouraged that each country now take up documentation of research and sharing this with others, leading to the Teachers four yearly conference, to be held in Switzerland in April 2008.

### **Nepal: Shanti Sewa Griha**

The Medical Section was invited to bring anthroposophic medicine to a leprosy rehabilitation centre in Kathmandu, Nepal. This centre assists to provide accommodation, schooling and workshops/farming possibilities for many people who would otherwise be homeless. The Medical Section focus on receiving the request was to develop a small pilot/humanitarian project to give a medication program to 10 participants as a tentative step to see what help could be given to their overall health and in particular to the peripheral nerve regeneration affected by the leprosy. This project began in 2005 with preliminary visits and the actual program began in 2006. The Medical Section is now actively seeking funding to further support these initial stages of the project.

### **Asia Pacific Representative**

Sue Scott was appointed Asia Pacific representative for the Medical Section in August 2005. Sue is contracted to the Foundation for Anthroposophic Medicine, funding will be required if the work is to develop in the long term. The tasks to date have mainly evolved around supporting the Kolisko conferences and the Australian IPMT, plus organizing the Sydney Kolisko conference. Sue's task is to support the work of the Medical Section. Feedback on the experience to date from different countries would be useful in terms of directing the work. Please contact:

Sue Scott [suescottau@yahoo.com.au](mailto:suescottau@yahoo.com.au)

PO Box 112, Pennant Hills 1715 NSW Australia  
tel. 61 2 9945 0064



*See book review on next page concerning Education – Health for Life: Education and medicine working together for a healthy development.*

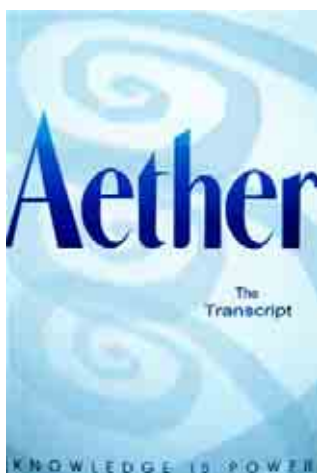
## Book Reviews

### ***Aether: Knowledge is Power***

Paperback book and CD  
Pathway (Initiatives) Ltd.  
2007

[www.aetheraware.org](http://www.aetheraware.org)

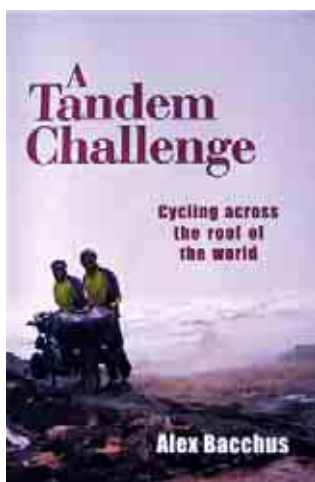
This fascinating work has woven together numerous interviews with cutting edge scientists, engineers and researchers to create an in-depth picture of the reality “we don’t know” enough about—the Aether. With contributions by Nick Thomas, Margaret Colquhoun, John Wilkes, Arthur Zajonc and many others, the producers of this CD and transcribed booklet have made an important contribution to the field, even if its tone is overly self-righteousness. Recommended for anyone who thinks science should deal with truth, the whole truth and all the facts, not just the convenient ones.



### ***A Tandem Challenge: Cycling Across the Roof of the World***

Alex Bacchus  
Daylight Marketing,  
Hastings, New Zealand  
[words@xtra.co.nz](mailto:words@xtra.co.nz)

This travel journal based on the notes of a Waldorf alumni and his brother describe a tandem bicycle adventure through Asia and Europe in brief but striking word pictures. The journey is all that more astounding once we know what the author had gone through previous to the tandem challenge. A nuts-and-bolts, easy read that makes one glad to join the adventure from the comfort of one’s chair and that a new discovery can always be found around the next corner.



### ***Education – Health for Life***

*Education and medicine working together for a healthy development*  
Edited and co-authored by Dr Michaela Gloeckler, Stefan Langhammer and Christof Wiechert

Kolisko conferences have become known around the world, for their medical-pedagogical content, seeking to strengthen the understanding of Waldorf Steiner education. Earlier, run every four years, in one country only, nine conferences were organised in 2006 around the world in: India, Taiwan, South Africa, Philippines, Ukraine,



Australia, Mexico, Sweden and culminating in France in the UNESCO facilities in Paris. Dr Michaela Gloeckler (see photo on previous page) was a keynote lecturer in each of these conferences.



Out of the world-wide impulse of the 2006 Kolisko conferences, came the request for a conference compendium. The concept of the book developed from one of specific published research to a text that shares the experiences and thoughts of more than 15 individuals well known in their fields. The driving force for this text was Dr Michaela Gloeckler, paediatrician who was also a Waldorf teacher. There are 20 chapters, with numerous sub-chapters, the contents of



which range from The Task of the School Doctor, Gifted Children, Meditations for Teachers, to Projective Geometry. A particularly moving chapter contains questions from teachers, such as How do I love my children, particularly the difficult ones.



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The Bookstore at Rudolf Steiner College  
Tel: +1 916 864 4858 • Fax: +1 916 961 3032  
Email: [orders@steinercollege.edu](mailto:orders@steinercollege.edu)  
See [www.koliskonet.com](http://www.koliskonet.com) for distributors in other countries.



## News & Notes

### Friends of Waldorf Education

The Friends of Waldorf Education (Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiner) now have an English language section on their website with reports and articles concerning their activities worldwide.

[www.freunde-waldorf.de](http://www.freunde-waldorf.de)

### Pacific/Asia Youth Section Initiative

An Inaugural Pacific/Asia Youth Section Initiative Meeting will take place in Auckland, New Zealand, around the third week of January 2008 (dates not yet fixed). The interest is toward "providing tools for the renewal of anthroposophy through the actions and spiritual striving of young people in the Pacific/Asia region." For information contact:

[heloisevaldivia@ihug.co.nz](mailto:heloisevaldivia@ihug.co.nz)

[www.youthsection.org.nz](http://www.youthsection.org.nz)

### Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

In the *Pacifica Journal* of November 29, 2006, Bruce Kirchoff states in the introduction to his so-called free rendering of the Foundation Stone Meditation that he believes it was Rudolf Steiner's intent to write the Foundation Stone Meditation in the first person. He also suggests that his version of the meditation is designed for meditative practice for English speaking people. I think this is disastrous advice and I believe Bruce Kirchoff has completely reversed the Meditation from the original intention of Rudolf Steiner.

In the Foundation Stone meditation, we listen to a voice that calls the Human Soul to its highest potential. It is an urgent call to get beyond our individual self so that we can say "we," which means Humanity as a whole. This concept was the founding impulse for the Anthroposophical Society at the Christmas Conference of 1923-1924. As presented, out of context and with much personal interpretation, the Foundation Stone meditation has not been represented appropriately. If the editor had added the original version along with Bruce Kirchoff's misrepresentation, the error could have been more easily noticed by readers. While it is too late to reverse what has already been published, a full article about the Foundation Stone Meditation along with the meditation itself will give your readers an opportunity to see and experience it as was intended by Rudolf Steiner.

Greetings,

Jannebeth Röell, Portland, Oregon, USA

[Editor's note: Jannebeth Röell will write an article on the Foundation Stone Meditation for the next issue of PJ.]

## Calendar

The Hawai'i Cosmogram workshop with Marko Pogacnik has been postponed. Look for an update on rescheduling in a future issue of *Pacifica Journal*.

**A Brief Conversation on Biodynamic Compost and CO<sub>2</sub>**  
with Nikolai Fuchs, international BD section director from Dornach  
Maui July 14th • Contact Ellen Sugawara 808-558-8297

### International Post-Medical Training

Australia, July 17-24th, 2007

Contact: Sue Scott, [suescottau@yahoo.com.au](mailto:suescottau@yahoo.com.au)

### Mystery Wisdom Inspired Arts:

#### The Living Impulse of the 1907 Munich Congress

August 17-18, 2007 at Rudolf Steiner College

Friday, 4 pm-9 pm and Saturday, 8 am -9 pm

Dennis Klocek, Thomas Adam, Michael Leber, & others

This centenary celebration will focus on the building of the new mysteries through the arts and offer a re-membering of that which Rudolf Steiner brought as seeds for the arts in 1907 with what has continued to be revealed since, and an envisioning of future directions. Artistic hands-on workshops will contribute to a forum of creative sharing. For more information and registration forms go to [www.steinercollege.edu](http://www.steinercollege.edu)  
Registration info: 916-864-4864 or email [conferenceregistration@steinercollege.edu](mailto:conferenceregistration@steinercollege.edu).

### Healing Our Earth, Healing Ourselves

Biodynamic Farming & Gardening Association National Conference  
August 24-26, 2007

Rudolf Steiner College, 9200 Fair Oaks Blvd, Fair Oaks, CA

Biodynamics has long been known as a method for creating health and balance in the soil, the plants and animals, and the human being. It is based on the premise that the more self-sufficient a farm is, the healthier it will be. Presentations (by Alan York, Beth Wieting and Harald Hoven) and workshops will be offered covering biodynamics in all its applications, from backyard to farmyard to vineyard. During this conference we will be taking up many aspects of the healing quality of biodynamic agriculture and gardening, both from a practical and a spiritual point of view. For information and registration, contact the Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association at 1-888-516-7797, [biodynamic@aol.com](mailto:biodynamic@aol.com), or [www.biodynamics.com](http://www.biodynamics.com).

### The Heart of Nutrition

Anthroposophical Society in Australia • New South Wales  
Regional Conference • Newcastle

September 28-30, 2007 • For details contact: Margie Bruvel  
[margiebruvel@hotmail.com](mailto:margiebruvel@hotmail.com) (02) 4938 5435

Full details and registration forms will be mailed out in August.

**Binary Being—Staying Human in the Computer Age**  
Symposium: July 26-29, 2007  
UC Berkeley Campus, California • [www.binarybeing.org](http://www.binarybeing.org)

Most of us use computers everyday and would be hard-pressed to imagine a world without the productivity, accessibility, and ingenuity these machines bring into our lives. But, do we really know what we are doing with this technology? Do we know how this technology is affecting us? The purpose of the conference is to create an opportunity to consider this topic. Participants, inspired by the keynote speeches, by dramatic presentations, and engaged in artistic activities can contemplate these and other related questions, and start a dialogue leading toward to a more conscious relationship with the computer.

### **Depression and Anxiety**

A conference with Dr Michael Evans (author of *Healing for Body, Soul and Spirit*) and Marah Evans (art therapist)  
October 26-30, 2007 • Medical Association, New Zealand  
Contact: [sbednarek@xtra.co.nz](mailto:sbednarek@xtra.co.nz) or [anthroposophy.org.nz](http://anthroposophy.org.nz)

### **Art and Life: Joseph Beuys and Rudolf Steiner Blackboard**

October 25, 2007 – February 17, 2008  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Contact: [kitty.walker@ngv.vic.gov.au](mailto:kitty.walker@ngv.vic.gov.au)

### **2nd International Wagner Painting Conference, 2008**

with Caroline Chanter • Sydney, Australia  
Brochure, exact dates and further information available later this year.  
Enquiries: Diane Watkins, +61 2 9550 1682

### **In Search of the True Hawai'i: Impressions & Expressions** with Van James • June 14-21, 2008

A one-week art vacation with artist and author, Van James, on Moloka'i Island. The least developed of the Hawaiian islands, Moloka'i has an impressive natural beauty, many cultural sites and a rich traditional history. Soaring sea cliffs, empty beaches, rolling ranchlands and tropical, forested mountains all offer impressions of the real Hawai'i. Slow down and relax in a rustic setting on this tranquil Pacific island, where there are no traffic lights, shopping centers or high rise buildings, but plenty of time to read, learn some Hula, take walks and catch up with yourself. Join us at Pu'u O Hoku (Hill of Stars) Ranch and experience a wealth of natural impressions that will rejuvenate you and stimulate your artistic expression. Each day will include time for artistic work with pencil, pastel or watercolor, and guided or self-guided excursions and delicious local meals. Limited to 20 participants.

For further information: Sarnia Guiton at  
[sophiatours@hotmail.com](mailto:sophiatours@hotmail.com)  
Phone: +778-668-4653



## **Biodynamics Hawai'i**

Phyl Dwyer, Kona, Hawai'i, [bdfarm@konapacific.org](mailto:bdfarm@konapacific.org),  
[www.konabiodynamicfarm.org](http://www.konabiodynamicfarm.org)

This is to share a bit of tropical BD news with you. **Nancy Redfeather and Gerry Herbert's** Kawanui Farm ([www.konaearthfestival.org/events/Sustainable-Food.htm](http://www.konaearthfestival.org/events/Sustainable-Food.htm)) is making quite a splash as is the Hawaii Seed Exchange. Nancy's HIGEAN and GMO-free Hawaii ([www.higean.org](http://www.higean.org)) activism has been truly inspirational. **Patrick Moser's** farm (Maui) is hopping with active CSA and intern programs ([www.patsbdfarm.com](http://www.patsbdfarm.com)). **Rich and Virginia von Wellsheim** continue to make many robust contributions to the Hana/Kipahula (Maui) area with their community development and bamboo work ([www.whisperingwindsbamboo.com](http://www.whisperingwindsbamboo.com)). **Ellen and Jack Spruant** are busy holding the east end of Molokai in peaceful productivity ([www.puuohoku.com](http://www.puuohoku.com) and [www.diamondorganics.com/ellen](http://www.diamondorganics.com/ellen)). **Evelyn Giddings** continues to serve on various board and advisory groups, conduct monthly compost workshops and numerous other creative enterprises throughout the Islands. **Bob Layer** of Kauai, is so busy keeping so many folks' projects growing, running and solar powered that three regular handymen could probably be kept in full time work. **Marie Mauger**, with her Spirit of the Earth Farm (or Uhane Aina) on Kauai, is doing important work with BD bioremediation of land previously polluted with agricultural chemicals ([www.biodynamics.com/pdf/mauger2.pdf](http://www.biodynamics.com/pdf/mauger2.pdf)). **Randal and Anita Yokota** have been steadily grounding their BD intention for their germinating Under the Rainbow Farm in Waimanalo (Oahu). **Stephanie Derauf** (Oahu) has completed her BD training at Taruna College in NZ, with just her final farm plan paper to submit. The **Waipio Botanical Gardens** is exploring hosting a monthly hands-on BD development and outreach program for the Waipio Valley kalo (taro) growers and others interested in growing biodynamically in the tropics.

Kona Biodynamic Farm & Learning Center has closed following the closure of Kona Pacific Waldorf School. Dismembering the farm transformed from a mornful process into one of amazing celebration when various parts found new homes at literally dozens of family and community projects. We said good-bye to the last 9 work exchange apprentices, 6 weekly children's classes, a couple of dozen CSA families, 3 milk cows and calves, over 3 dozen laying hens, pigs, crops, pastures, composts, wheatgrass juice, BD workshops, butchering, BD preps, 3 goats and a donkey.

We say hello to new friends on Oahu where our children will be going to the Honolulu Waldorf School, their Mom will be a class teacher and a group is forming to develop a new BD educational community farm.

It's been a wonderful ten years since the founding of Biodynamics Hawai'i. We send warm aloha laden breezes to everyone!



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*Traditional Thai dancers performing  
scenes from the Ramayana at the  
Asia-Pacific Conference in Thailand  
(May 2007).*



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**"All forces are but empty husks when destitute of spirit content;  
But they are strong creative powers when they clothe the spirit."**

*—Rudolf Steiner*