

Pacifica Journal

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Asian Teacher Training 2005, Bangkok, Thailand

Gerda de Jonge, Driebergen, Holland

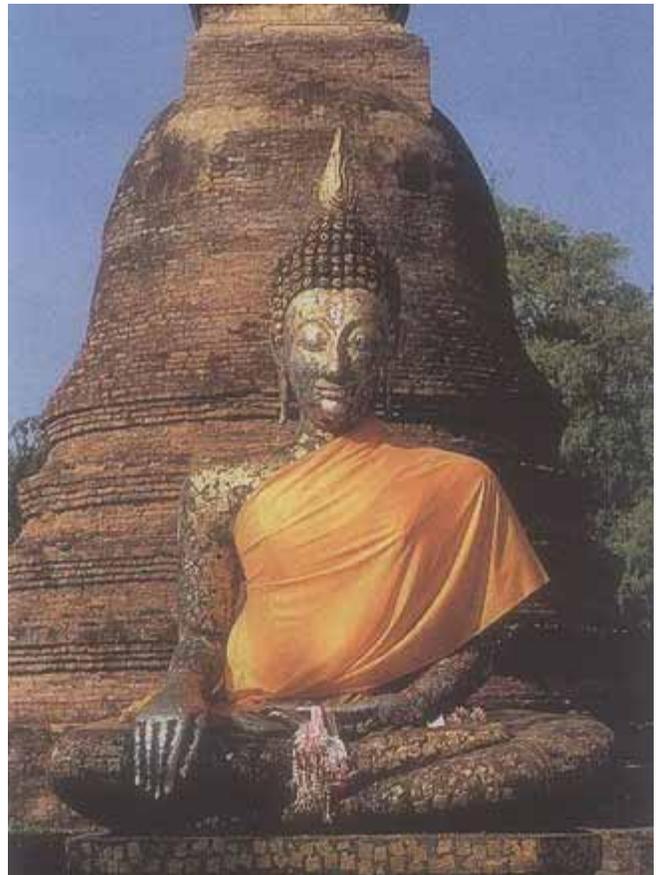
At the invitation of Mrs. U-sa Tanompongpan, director of Tridhaksa School, master Waldorf teachers from Europe joined Thai teachers between May 2 and 6, 2005 to present courses in Bangkok for the fourth time. Instructors included: Paul van Meurs, Gea Weere, Benno Nijhuis, all from Holland and Maria Domning, and Hermann Wessels, Germans living in Thailand. They were joined by Prof. Boosbong Tantiwong and Abhisiree Charanjavanaphet from Thailand. The Dutch preparation group included Gerda de Jonge, Emie van Minos and Gerard Reijngoud.

Over one hundred participants, from Thailand, China, Japan, Philippines, Singapore and even Norway, took part. In each workshop a regular translator translated English into Thai. Dr. Pathaya took care of the translation during the morning sessions and in the workshops of Paul van Meurs, and like last year he did it with the greatest enthusiasm!

The restaurant next door supplied meals and the school's catering group provided all sorts of drinks, snacks and baskets of colourful fruits. The whole environment was beautifully decorated with all kinds of flowers.

After Dr. Pathaya welcomed us all in the large hall of the Tridhaksa School, I was asked to talk about the history of the Asian Teacher Training organisation and to give a short explanation of the development of the Dutch International Helpfund. Then the trainers were introduced. A beautiful Thai dance followed and every trainer was given a fine bouquet of flowers. It was a warm and impressive welcome and a good start to the training!

The first morning session began with a talk on "The Temperaments," the theme for the whole week chosen by the participants at last year's conference. In each of the five morning sessions, Paul van Meurs took us on a journey exploring the four temperaments. He explained how the temperaments were used by Rudolf Steiner in the new Waldorf education, how to look at children and how teachers can benefit from this knowledge. Paul used Michelangelo's



Traditional images of the path of inner development abound in Thailand. Here a seated Buddha figure meditates before a stupa.

painting of the birth of Adam in the Sistine Chapel as an example for the moment the temperament develops in a human being. The touching of both fingers, of God and Adam, tells of the exact moment where the spiritual and physical parts of a human being meet and where the different aspects relating to temperament are developed. Paul clearly illustrated many variations on the subject, often using very humorous examples. We laughed a great deal!

The atmosphere amongst the participants was one of serious attention but also relaxed, happy and enthusiastic. This atmosphere prevailed right through the week, during the

lectures, seminars and workshops. Starting each day with singing and then doing special movement exercises after the lecture made it possible for all participants to refresh their energy and follow the workshops with renewed pleasure.

How to apply the concept of temperaments in practice was worked out for the different educational subjects. Benno Nijhuis



Thai students practice their handwork at Panyotai School in Bangkok, Thailand.

presented the teaching plan for classes 1 and 2, and talked about the importance of rhythm during the school day. Gea Weeren concentrated on several subjects for classes 3 and 4, especially on house-building and the different trades; the necessary working together of sun, earth, animal and human being to develop vegetation and to make it possible for the farmer to harvest the crops as food for people. For a geography lesson a “living map” was formed with signposts in the hands of the participants at the right spots. Beautiful drawings of a sowing farmer, an elephant and a colourful compass-card appeared on the classroom walls.

At the special request of Khun U-sa, a group was formed to deal with arithmetic and geometry education in classes 1 through 7. Paul van Meurs specializes in this subject and gave all participants a fascinating week!

The beginners group with 15 participants enjoyed learning about the various aspects of Anthroposophy and Waldorf education. Hermann Wessels explained the threefold and fourfold images and the spiritual aspects of the human being. Prof. Boosbong and Khun

Abhisiree taught a course on education towards freedom in connection with the very small child up to the higher grades. Maria Domning gave a presentation on teaching as a living art.

In order to get varied experience in different art subjects everyone had the opportunity to change workshops after each hour. The choices were: Modelling with Benno, Painting and drawing with Paul, Remedial Teaching/Extra Lesson and movement games with Gea, and Eurythmy (in two blocks) with Hermann Wessels.

It was a pleasure to observe the increases in both skill levels and technical abilities over only four afternoons. The colourful paintings in primary colours and the finished pictures of roses and animals were scattered around in the school corridors.

Every day closed with participants engaging in choral singing conducted by Benno. We practised quite a repertoire of songs through the week. A funny Japanese song about fireflies, taught to us by the five Japanese participants, became one of our favorites.

On the last afternoon of the week the various groups showed examples of what they had been working on and it was interesting and inspiring to get an impression of what everyone had done. As a final performance Benno and Paul took part in a Thai dance. They had learned all the movements for the harvest dance and did it very well. It was Khun U-sa’s birthday and Paul had made her a wonderful fairytale drawing with pastels. Expressions of gratitude were spoken to all those who worked so hard to make the training possible.

The closing evaluation with all the organizers, trainers, teachers of Tridhaksa, and guests made it clear that this event had been a very satisfactory one. Most of the participants emphasized the good quality of the work during the week.

Dr. Porn Panosot of Panyotai School in Bangkok was present for the conclusion. He had just returned from Taiwan and reported on the First Asian Waldorf Teachers Conference there. Plans are to hold another conference in May 2007 in Bangkok, following the Asia-Pacific Anthroposophical Conference. We all agreed to find ways that both training and conference can cooperate. The Asian Teacher Training, sponsored by the Dutch International Helpfund, is invited to return to Bangkok for the fifth time in May 2006.

Response-Ability

**New Zealand Annual General Meeting
Conference in Christchurch, July 8-11,
2005**

Robyn Hewetson, Hawkes Bay, New Zealand

The concept of the Annual General Meeting Conference of the Anthroposophical Society in New Zealand was enterprising. It was entitled: “Art – Awakener of Consciousness and Humanizer of Society.” Van James from Hawaii was the keynote speaker. He was at Emerson the year before I was and had arrived long-haired and washed up at the beginning of the turbulent 70s. There he first met William Mann, who taught the history of art courses, and through Mr. Mann he met his destiny. He went on to the Wagner Painting School and now is active as an art historian and artist in our Pacific movement. It was lovely to be able to laugh out loud and to sing and to feel free to respond to a speaker of such serious subjects.

Van James remarked that if you met a group of kindergarten age children anywhere in the world and asked them, “Who can sing?” they would all raise their hands. Asked “Who can draw?” once again, all will raise their hands. Asked “Who can dance?” You got it. All of them. Sadly he reminded us how few adults will raise their hands to all of these questions. He asked us to consider what happens to inhibit or destroy the natural artist that dwells within each of us.

Van commended the New Zealand Anthroposophical Society for daring to create a conference where the emphasis was not on “talking about” anything, but on actually doing the arts. He said the Arts Section in America had been most impressed by the concept of a National Society meeting together to work artistically. Each morning Van gave some ideas with which to work, we sang together and then went off to our morning workshops: stone carving, painting, drawing, lyre making, drama, music, singing, or Maori Eurythmy.

The concepts Van introduced that enthused me through and through were these:

In ancient times there was no word for “art.” It was not until the 14th century that the word was used in the sense we use it today. Van considered that this was because art filled every daily activity and was not seen as a thing apart. He mourned the “progress” of

the Roman times when art became decoration or simply an object.

He mused over the word “aesthetic,” revealing that the true definition of this word means “to enliven.” He pointed out that “anaesthetic,” a word used so often today in our world of surgery, means “to numb down the senses.” He motivated us to work with the idea that the arts are intended to enliven us to live a better life and warned us that without an artistic impulse, any activity we participate in will become an “anaesthetic” and will “numb down our feelings” to ourselves and to our lives.

*Christchurch Rudolf Steiner
School in New Zealand, venue
for the conference: “Art—
Awakener of Consciousness
and Humanizer of Society.”*



Van mused further over the word “responsibility.” He shared with us that he now considers the definition of the word to be about “response-ability.” How do we learn this ability to respond truly to life? The “ability to respond,” he assured us, is both awakened and developed through the arts.

Over the four days of the conference Van traced the evolution of the arts. Steiner considered seven arts: Architecture, Drama/Poetry, Drawing/Painting, Sculpture, Dance/Eurythmy, Music and one more. Rudolf Steiner teaches that the seventh art is the Social Art.

Van James challenged us with the question of how to live an “aesthetic life.” He suggested that by engaging in the arts in a responsive and responsible way that we would have the chance to live an “enlivened” life. Not engaging in the arts would result in an “anaesthetic existence,” a numbing down of our feeling life that would prevent the development of “responsibility.”

Wow! Does this grab you? I was floored by these ideas. If I had attended no other part of the conference, this would have been

enough for me to work on for the whole year. As a teacher of the Speaking Arts and Drama, the ability to respond is one of the conundrums I work with. I have often experienced here in New Zealand that it seems to be socially unacceptable to respond—audiences often hold their response or applause. In the USA, by contrast, people respond loudly and often. But to couple this idea of learning how

What our task is, he challenged, is to revive the arts in order to enliven ourselves, our relationships, our thoughts and our deeds.

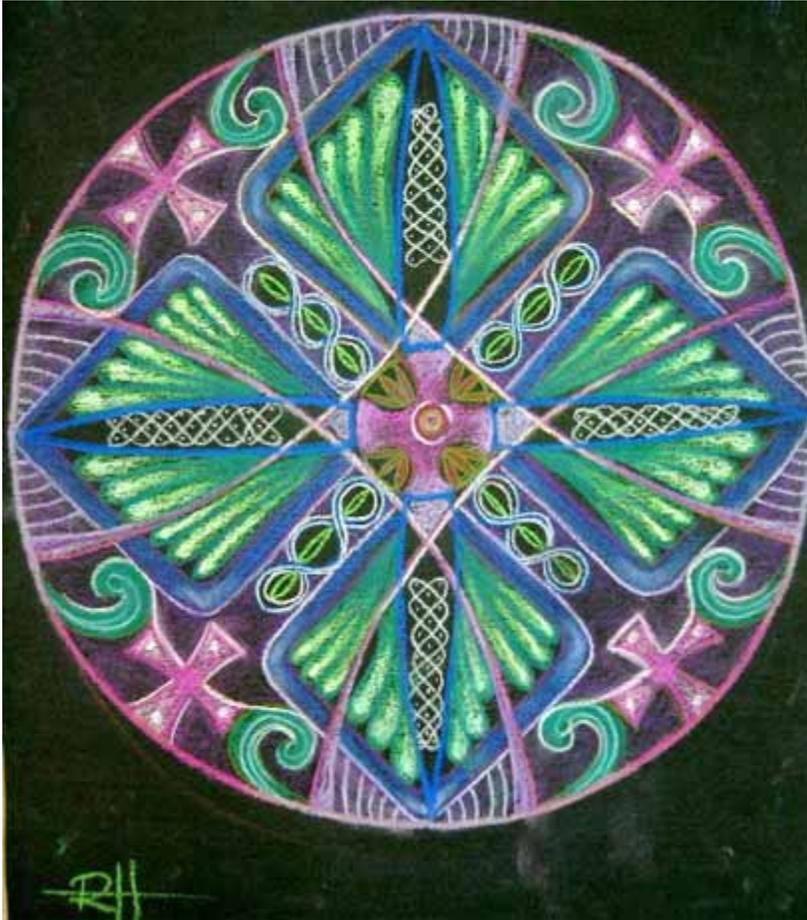
Why bother? Because the greatest art is yet to come into existence: The Social Art. He then quoted from the verse known as the Motto of the Social Ethic:

The healthy social life is found
When in the mirror of the human soul
The whole community finds its reflection.
And, when in the community
The virtue of each one is living.

These words are simple but they can sound as a clarion call to individuals and communities. We are reminded of the wonderful idea that if we all live together in the knowledge that each one of us is a manifestation of the incredible diversity of the human soul, that each person will be able to find their place and to make the contribution they need to give. Not only that, but if we can live in such a way that each of us is able to live in harmony with the task we incarnated on earth to find then we could help each other to find our true destinies.

A further part of the treat was that a play, “Sadako,” was performed in Hohepa’s new hall. This hall is the brain-child of Allan Cummins who has led the woodwork at Hohepa (Camphill-like therapeutic communities in New Zealand) for over 20 years and is an accomplished sculptor. After the play was over a group of us stayed for hours to be shown every detail of the new hall and all its facilities. I tell you folks, it is impressive!

My first impression was that it was something of a blend of “the OK Corral and the original Goetheanum!” While this man is not schooled in Anthroposophy, he has studied the buildings Steiner designed and the principles of our therapeutic work and he strives with the group from Hohepa Curative Homes to design spaces that both inspire and heal. This hall is beautiful. It has a large and comprehensive stage with a wide area in front of the curtain, which creates lots of opportunity for a variety of scenes on stage. It has wide wings and a very large back stage area with extremely high ceilings to allow for scenery storage. There are large dressing rooms, prop rooms and costume storage, a kitchen, bathrooms, offices, a therapeutic eurythmy room which is 27 feet high and shaped like a five pointed star, lazure painted and with stained windows.



Mandala by Rebecca Henderson, art teacher at the Christchurch Rudolf Steiner School.

to respond fittingly to the moment with the concept of developing responsibility as a human being, was liberating.

Van encouraged us to consider the importance of using architecture to create enlivened spaces—spaces full of the spirit of creativity—in which to live and work.

He talked about the time when “manufacture” meant work created by human hands and how it has come to mean work created by machines. This work created by machines, which made each item exactly the same, has now become a model for our education. With this has come the insidious idea that we should all turn out the same! This concept needs to be vigorously opposed in our world.

There is a bath therapy room, meeting rooms and a lovely reception and ticket selling area. The hall is an inner part of the building sculpted with replicas of the pillars and forms from the first Goetheanum and with windows covered in coloured silk to simulate the coloured windows. It is eight-sided and all the proportions of the hall adhere to the golden mean. Around the inner hall is the outer sheath which rises above the roof of the theatre and provides all the external spaces mentioned above. The inner hall is therefore beautiful and quiet, separated from the noises of the outer world. It is coloured beautifully and although many of the materials they use are not natural and are made to look like carved wood or stained glass, the overall effect is of grace and beauty.

The conference also allowed for those of us from all three Hohepa communities to meet. We all shared impromptu reports of our regions and got to know each other a little more. The overwhelming agreement of the whole group was that we would like to create a conference for Hohepa next year that would provide this same opportunity—to enliven our work through the arts! We all committed to returning to our homes and encouraging our administrations to work towards this fruitful goal.

The rest of the conference continued with a different artist each day giving a half hour presentation telling us about their work, its challenges and developments, and demonstrating their work. There was an extensive display of the work of the artists attending the conference and the standard and variety of work was impressive.

At the end of the conference participants from each of the workshops presented their work and a description of their process. As always it was heart-warming to see the standard of work that is achieved and to feel the appreciation given by the audience for all the presentations.

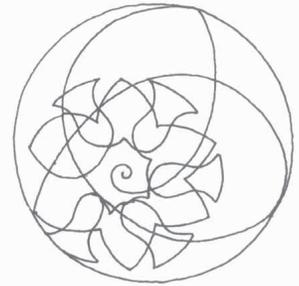
The hospitality of the Christchurch Group was excellent and the weather turned and gave us sparkling days and cold nights. I was filled with enthusiasm and hope for the future work after sharing in something as well planned and executed as this conference. It is important to find ways such as this to refresh our work, meet each other, be re-inspired and find new hope. Thank you to all who made it possible!

Dissolving the Cartesian Threshold

David Adams, Penn Valley, California, USA

To understand how anthroposophical art can have a greater impact on our contemporary culture, we first must ask: What is the state of our culture today? We live in a visual environment dominated by mass communications media, usually electronic media, such as television, film, computers, internet, radio, Xbox games, DVDs, videos, multi-function cell phones, pagers, iPods, etc. In most of the population the images and influences of these media – along with other advertising images in magazines, billboards, and newspapers – have to a large extent replaced the role and influence that the fine arts had in earlier ages. The impact of the visual arts has been devalued and weakened by the effect of easily mass-reproducible images and the allure of electronic screens. The underlying purpose of the corporations who control most of these media (in ever fewer numbers) is not to foster healthy social life or individual life or freedom or justice or education (let alone anything like spiritual self-development). It is solely to make an economic profit. Most of their income comes from advertising by other corporations whose sole, materialistic purpose is also to make an economic profit. Add to this the various modern advancements of technology and industry, and it is clear that, as Steiner predicted, we are living in an environment saturated with what he called Ahrimanic beings.¹

In this world climate, what is the purpose of our art? Today, and in the modern era in general even before the rise of most of the electronic media, it is not difficult to observe that the visual arts generally lead a kind of ivory-tower existence apart from the course of most people's daily lives and experience. This situation arose especially in the modernist period, although its roots go back to Romantic art (to the beginning of independent landscape painting, said Steiner²). Although before modernism art typically was well integrated with its surrounding social and spiritual orders, when materialism and commercialism grew more dominant in capitalist society, the early modernist artists developed an “art for art's sake” conception as a protest against acknowledging any merely “practical” or commercial value to the work of art (as well as a protest against the traditional, academic art of the



Before modernism art typically was well integrated with its surrounding social and spiritual orders.

Graphic vignettes in the sidebar columns of this issue are “cosmograms” designed by Marko Pogacnik.

time). These artists turned inward, away from the world, to concentrate on the self and its inner life. The work of art became an independent world of pure creation that had its own timeless spiritual essence or meaning.

This was the artist's response to a social reality he or she could no longer support. The artist came to be seen as a dissident against the social order, seeking freedom and autonomy, and becoming the last active carrier of spiritual value in a materialist world, especially through abstract art. The "avant-garde" continually created new, original styles, but at the price of becoming a socially estranged elite. However, by the 1950s and 1960s the original social revolt of the avant-garde had been reduced to a self-referential formalism occupied with arranging unique formal qualities (like flatness and color) and denying to abstract art any kind of dissident role or social meaning. It was in reaction to this situation that postmodernism developed beginning in the later 1960s.³

A number of statements by Rudolf Steiner show that he already was very aware of this situation of modernist art and saw it as the task of anthroposophy to overcome it. For example, in 1919 he stated: "... it is distinctly evident in social life that great numbers of people look on art as something remote, and unconsciously feel it to be a luxury of life, something that does not belong to every human life, and to every existence worthy of a human being, although, in truth, it brings completion to every human life worthy of the name."⁴ One could also cite various statements by Steiner about architecture and design in this context, how those art forms in which, we might say, we "live and move and have our being" unconsciously affect our soul life, our thought forms, our etheric and astral bodies, even our relationship to the elemental beings around us. This is one of the strongest motivations behind Rudolf Steiner's efforts over many years to develop a new style of architecture and practical design ("organic functionalism" or "spiritual functionalism"), also for Waldorf education.⁵ This is also a chief motivation behind the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art) that was and now again is seen in the Goetheanum as a demonstration of how an *integration* of all the arts can be achieved and what it can mean for our daily experience.

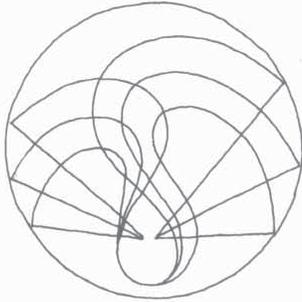
However, this same surrounding influence is true of the buildings, spaces, and even social forms in which we practice art – studios, galleries, museums, even all systems and social-economic relationships supporting artists and

artwork today. We have learned from Steiner's epistemology (theory of knowledge) that there is no pure, conscious, visual/sensory perception without a conceptual element integrally involved. Our experience as human beings is artificially split into two halves, percept and concept, so that we must be free in how we do or do not link them. As a result, when we perceive art, we should try to be as aware as possible of the conceptual elements (also feeling) conditioning or "framing" what we expect and what we observe. Since the mid-1960s artists outside anthroposophy, especially within the postmodern movement, have also been trying to do this with the whole context in which art appears, especially the gallery and museum, but really the entire structure of the "artworld" itself.

The Modernist Illusion

The relation (or non-relation) between art and life that Steiner described is pretty widely recognized and acknowledged today even in mainstream art. Since Romantic art, modernism increasingly prized the romantic exile of the artist, the image of the artist as rebel or hermit remaining aloof from the crass banality of ordinary Western society or maybe confronting it with radical, perverse, or shocking artistic gestures. This highly individual, specialized artist expresses in "his" art an isolated, alienated self and seeks to know himself as a private activity; art is primarily about the unique individual, freedom, and self-expression – or perhaps at times a limited confrontational counterculture, which gives art a certain enclosed meaning only in relationship to the work of other artists or previous art. The individual genius produces masterpieces that are displayed in the museum or gallery and perhaps published in the expensive art book – this is the modernist model, especially late modernist. This modernist art is not tied to any mere practical goal or use, is accountable to no one, and is produced for its own sake, as art for art's sake. Kurt Schwitters stated the ultimate modernist credo: "The picture is a self-contained work of art. It refers to nothing outside of itself." Nevertheless, at least in early modernism, and even as late as the early 1970s, the idea of the avant-garde implied both aesthetic innovation and a wish to change society, to use art to inspire fundamental reform.

But this modernist movement also has been steadily, and now pretty much completely, co-opted by the power structure of mainstream



The "avant-garde" continually created new, original styles, but at the price of becoming a socially estranged elite.

society, especially the processes of the “culture industry.” For the most part, culture today is simply an arena for artistic individuals to become successful, to achieve their own professional ends. The dominant capitalist model of competitive, self-serving profit-seeking has been largely internalized by “professional” artists, who produce their products for sale to become economically successful and to attract the attention of galleries, collectors, curators, and critics. The precious art object (isolated from the outside world in the museum and framed or placed on a pedestal) is observed by spectators who remain outside the artwork and separate from what they see. The relationship of the non-artist to art is either as spectator or as consumer. This non-participatory, “disembodied eye” of the spectator tends to support an aesthetic that is formalist and abstract. Art is a spectacle and also a commodity. Powerful, wealthy invested interests work diligently to maintain this rather patriarchal status quo. If we want things to change, we will need to develop effective alternative models for the practice and social role of art.

This modernist separation of art and life, and the understanding of art that goes with it, is based on a still more fundamental separation of self and world, subject and object. For the past few centuries our common western understanding of the nature of knowledge and, largely, our own experience of knowing, has followed the Cartesian, scientific model of onlooker consciousness. According to this understanding, a separate subject perceives and knows a separate object, and the task of this “knowing subject” is that of forming true mental “representations” of so-called objective reality, which is only indirectly present to the senses. The subject is a conscious, thinking being of “soul” (and perhaps spirit as well), while the object (objective reality) is a world fully in-itself, just waiting for a cognizing subject to come by and form a “mental representation” of it. Nothing of the same psychological quality as my own subjectivity is apprehended or exchanged with the object as part of the act of knowledge. This divorce between subject and object allows the subject to examine the object scientifically and mathematically, to form thoughts and theories about it, and, in modern technology, to manipulate the object (including the natural world) in desirable ways.

For the postmodernist era that began to emerge at the end of the 1960s, the end of

modernism means the end of this epistemologically centered philosophy, the end both of what modernism understood by “the subject” and the “objective world,” as well as a consequent demise of the very ideas of “knowledge” and “truth” as traditionally understood. Perhaps the first beginning of postmodern philosophy in the academic philosophical world can be traced to Edmund Husserl’s



A Way of Seeing by Demain Hirst, is an installation made of wood and glass with a mannequin inside poised at a microscope.

phenomenology, developed around the turn of the twentieth century. In attempting to overcome the subject-object split at the basis of modern philosophy, Husserl effectively deconstructed both the “epistemological subject” and the “objective world.” Husserl arrived at the shipwreck of fixed western subject-object dualism as the consummation of modern rationalism (despite the confusing, more traditional interpretation he gave his own work). Martin Heidegger first began to realize what Husserl had done, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty really developed it, followed by various later, mainly French, philosophers whose work is the primary foundation of today’s postmodernist culture.⁶

What did Husserl see? He realized that the objectivity of the object is entirely *relative* to (i.e., connected to) the subjectivity of the subject. If all consciousness is consciousness *of* an object, he wrote, then there can also be no object apart from a consciousness that intends it. There cannot be a subject without an object (or a concept without a percept) and vice versa. Moreover, this relation between consciousness and reality is itself constituted by conscious-

ness. “Reality” is nothing other than the ideal object of all possible conscious acts. Thus, Husserl overcame the subject-object dichotomy of modernism. The real object is not some unknowable, Kantian thing-in-itself outside of consciousness; rather, it is immanent within consciousness as part of our human experience, even as, it could be said, the ideal unity of an indefinite number of experiences.⁷



Honey Pump by Joseph Beuys was an installation/performance piece suggesting the activity of the social process and the human heart.

Steiner tells us that, as a result of the Mystery of Golgotha, this Cartesian onlooker conception of experience is an illusory, what he calls Luciferic picture of the nature of knowing, although our pervasive belief and practice of it makes it a kind of self-fulfilling reality in our own experience.⁸ In fact, Steiner refers to this Cartesian worldview (“I think, therefore I am.”) as “the opposite of the truth.” In ordinary thinking we only live in abstracted mental images or representations of reality. (Rather, “when we think, we are *not*,” says Steiner.) However, at a certain stage of life (and of human evolution) the self-conscious ego’s detachment from the world – supported by the way reality meets us in the split, one-sided forms of separated percept and concept – works to help us develop a strong, independent self-consciousness and free will. My favorite passage from Steiner’s *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* since the first time I read Chapter 4 nearly thirty years ago is: “Therefore thinking must never be regarded as a merely

subjective activity. Thinking lies *beyond* subject and object. It produces these two concepts just as it produces all others.”⁹ For its time and even now, this is a very radical philosophical statement, making a quite similar point to Husserl’s.¹⁰ In fact, we can understand Steiner’s concept as an essentially postmodernist statement that has implications for our understanding of works of art.

“All understanding is interpretation,” wrote Hans-Georg Gadamer, who could be considered one of the indirect pioneers of postmodern philosophy.¹¹ Thus, a work of art is not a fixed, self-contained meaning, but it is rather the “promise” of meaning, an invitation to experience. So various interpretive “hypotheses” about a work of art would correspond to different intentional perceptions (or “points of view”). The meaning is not something fixed “out there” apart from interpretive, observing activity and experience. But this does not mean that all meaning of a work of art is only arbitrary, subjective, relative, and historical (as deconstructive postmodernism alleges). It is not identical with any one given interpretation, nor is it something other than its various interpretations. It could be said to

be the ideal goal of interpretation. The objectivity of the artwork cannot be divorced from the subjectivity of the interpreter (as a particular, concrete, historical observer) and how that interpreter is changed by the experience. As G. B. Madison comments in a postmodern way on Gadamer, “Truth refers not to a static, mirroring relation between a subject and an object but to the transformation process which occurs in all instances of genuine understanding.”¹²

This postmodern insight is similar to Steiner’s “anti-metaphysical” approach to knowledge, where attempts to base meaning and objective truth on an unperceived (metaphysical) something outside of ourselves and our own activity is rejected and our free spiritual activity of knowing or interpreting is emphasized. We are actively involved in the interpretations by which we know the world through the spiritual activity of active thinking.¹³ Perhaps this is philosophically true, we may respond, but is this how we actually experience works of

art (and the rest of the world)? If not, why?

Exhibition as the Isolation of Art

For one thing, we are encouraged to look at art this way by how works of art today are made only for exhibition in galleries and then shown in protected, white-walled gallery and museum spaces isolated from the rest of social life. As early modernist styles of art began to shake up traditional values and speak for radical social change, works of art began to be removed from too much public exposure and placed within the protective white walls of museums and galleries. New “art for art’s sake” aesthetic theories arose supporting artworks’ accompanying status as precious, desirable commodities. The preference arose for time-honored or ahistorical aesthetic values tied to “charismatic” artists (instead of common social values), since this led to more marketable and collectable artworks seen as unique products of individual geniuses.

As a further effect of the nineteenth century’s collectivizing of works of art from many different periods, societies, and locations within the art museum, the museum steadily became a place where the original meanings of artworks within their social contexts were neutralized by how they were intellectually classified and displayed within the history of art. Everything within the museum was leveled out, erasing differences so that all works of art could be compared equally as isolated objects. The works came to be considered as collections of formal qualities, just variant signs within the larger field of visual meaning. The museum’s uprooting and equalizing historical survey of all art, along with the rise of photographic reproduction, made it easier to view works of art in purely formalistic terms isolated from their social context.

In the decades after the first world war the exhibition space for art first regularly became the “white cube,” gradually creating an exquisite gallery showroom for works of art as expensive commodities and, soon after, investment tools of choice for the rich.¹⁴ Works of art conceived only “aesthetically” (i.e., intellectually or formalistically) as in modernism are typically displayed in hermetic white cubes as unique objects apart from subjects and apart from ordinary life and society. This approach was exposed by certain artists and critics in the later 1960s and 1970s with the beginning of postmodernism. These postmodernist artists criticized, challenged, or rejected many aspects of the kind of environment and support

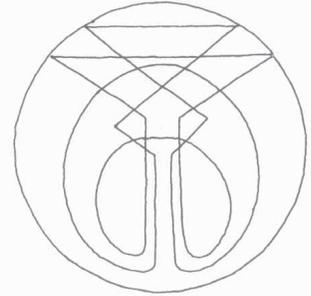
system that had sustained art during the modernist period. However, perhaps due to lack of effective alternatives as well as economic self-interest, most artists soon re-succumbed to the capitalist free-market image of “success,” and the white-cube gallery market system returned all the stronger in the 1980s, continuing up to today.

Although works of anthroposophical art so far have generally been exhibited in similar settings and also reflected a modernist context in other ways, this cannot be a model for how anthroposophical art is to have a greater impact on our society. New forms must be found, ones in tune with both the real nature of our contemporary culture and the new spiritual potentials of human life today.

Bridging Dualism as a Basis for New Art

In the third volume of *Karmic Relationship* Rudolf Steiner points out that we don’t have to actually reject and oppose materialism. Materialism is correct – within its own domain. Likewise, we don’t have to condemn non-anthroposophical efforts or styles in art (but not ignore them either). We only need, he says, to add “something more” to materialistic culture.¹⁵ I feel that, to do this effectively, we need an active appreciation for the radical philosophical core of anthroposophy that explains how our spiritual activity, our active thinking, is what constitutes both subject and object within our experience. Likewise, our artmaking needs to open a window to the spirit, to bridge or rather to transcend the modernist divisions of subject and object, of spirit and matter. But it will take strong individual initiative, sensitivity, creativity, and moral technique to bring such an art of spirit and connectedness into our culture in an influential way. Can we rise to Steiner’s challenge to realize an appropriate, up-to-date role for the visual arts within this cultural situation, one that is not just “preaching to the faithful?”

Despite a few cracks in the structure, ordinary human consciousness today is still mired in the illusion of the Cartesian dualistic worldview. Steiner tells us that our ordinary consciousness “casts a veil over the connection of the ego with the objective world.”¹⁶ Because of this we can’t really answer the riddle of the subject-object divorce on the level of ordinary consciousness, that is, by just observing our own soul life. But Steiner also adds a more esoteric aspect that we can take up as a way to transform our actual experience – in fact, one



New forms must be found, ones in tune with both the real nature of our contemporary culture and the new spiritual potentials of human life today.

that it is important for human evolution that we do take up. Because the resurrected Christ has united himself with the earth and become “the soul of the earth”¹⁷, a soul element (of the same dimension as our own subjectivity) has irradiated the “objective” processes of the life-world of the earth. Our most direct access to this new, Christianized soul-element is through our processes of sense-perception. An element of exterior soul (astrality) streams into us borne by the etheric element of each sense perception (a flamelike “light” or “afterimage”), although this normally occurs unconsciously. In the process of sense perception this external sensory element encounters similar physical, etheric, and astral elements within our own human nature. Steiner speaks of a “crossing” that takes place between an external soul element of cosmic thought and an internal soul element of will. Normally we are not consciously aware how the activity of our will in every sense perception forms this “crossing point” with the more passive cosmic thought- or soul-element streaming in from outside.

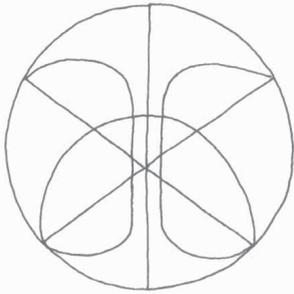
Through meditative exercises that strengthen and “intensify” our normal inner soul activity and gradually separate it from its ordinary connection to our physical organs, we gradually can come to experience that spiritual activity that is “beyond subject and object.” Through the related practice of the “New Yoga,” as in the exercises described in Steiner’s *How to Know the Higher Worlds*, we can become conscious of how we continue “objective” world processes within our own being and also of how “subjective” (soul) processes exist within the external world. A union takes place between our soul activity (thinking, feeling, and willing) and that in nature (the object). Then the Cartesian abyss between subject and object begins to be overcome within our own experience – and this forms the basis for a new kind of postmodern interconnectedness or wholeness, a combined “subjective-objective experience.” Steiner describes this as “the Christ relationship to outer nature,” which is something like a “spiritual breathing process.”¹⁸ It is, however, a “breathing of the senses,” a conscious interchange between astral and etheric elements that are within us and within the world we perceive. Artists have an advantage in this kind of meditative work. Artistic work requires one to become a kind of inner “connoisseur” of things like intention, attention, “seeing into,” and various subtle

aspects of our soul activity of thinking, feeling, and willing. The kind of sustained, contemplative, qualitative perception naturally involved in creating and observing works of art helps develop these abilities needed for grasping a spiritual reality “behind” or within an outer object.

Moreover, the practice of a *constructive* (versus *deconstructive*) postmodern art based on such experiences does not limit itself to the supposedly fixed divisions and dichotomies of the typical modernist worldview: self and other, inner and outer, subject and object, thinking and feeling, spirit and matter, doing and thinking, meaning and chaos, rational and irrational, time and space, myself and yourself. It breaks down (or rather ignores) these boundaries in expressing modes of the interconnectedness of all these things. Perhaps we can begin to think of anthroposophical art in terms something like this? Even if it doesn’t itself know this, today’s postmodernism can be seen positively as the creeping, not always very conscious efforts of ordinary culture to finally dissolve the congealed, illusory subject-object structure of our experience and find the way to deeper sources of experience, to the conscious, actively thinking Higher Ego, to a living spiritual way of conceiving and visualizing the world. In fact, this way is nothing other than anthroposophy itself! Postmodernism may not yet know it or acknowledge it, but it needs anthroposophy to complete its search.

For artwork out of anthroposophy to enter today’s postmodernist culture, we, too, must educate ourselves in its key ideas and language of expression. In art created out of anthroposophy we are not imitating some particular stylistic appearance or technique or “master.” We are not creating beautiful objects to be admired, appreciated, exhibited, or sold. We are engaging in processes beyond the threshold, beyond the subject-object dualism of everyday Western consciousness, engaging at the crossing point of cosmic thought and human free will as a process of spiritual research. If this activity is really there, it does not so much matter what visual medium, technique, “style,” or “school” we work in. Our work will be socially and spiritually effective.

(This article was adapted from part of a lecture given in July 2004 at the “Art = Capital” conference in Sacramento, California, and abridged from the *Art Section Newsletter*, No. 24, Spring-Summer 2005.)



We are engaging in processes beyond the threshold, beyond the subject-object dualism of everyday Western consciousness

ENDNOTES

- ¹See Rudolf Steiner, "Technology and Art" in *Art as Seen in the Light of Mystery Wisdom* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1984), pp. 7-16 ff.; also in Steiner, *Art: An Introductory Reader*, ed. Anne Stockton (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 2003), pp. 67-76 ff. See also Rudolf Steiner, *The Karma of Vocation* (Spring Valley, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1984), pp. 184-187.
- ²Rudolf Steiner, *The Social Future* (Spring Valley, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1972), pp. 78-79.
- ³See David Adams, "The Postmodern Revolution and Anthroposophical Art" in *Art Section Newsletter* Nos. 22 (Spring-Summer 2004): 15-22, 27; and 23 (Fall-Winter 2005): 4-6, 14.
- ⁴Steiner, *The Social Future*, p. 79.
- ⁵See David Adams, "Organic Functionalism: An Important Principle of the Visual Arts in Waldorf School Crafts and Architecture," *Research Bulletin* (of The Research Institute for Waldorf Education) 10:1 (January 2005): 23-38.
- ⁶Among others, this would include Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, and Jean Baudrillard.
- ⁷In this description I have relied on arguments made very cogently and more extensively by G. B. Madison in *The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).
- ⁸Rudolf Steiner, *The Mission of the Archangel Michael* (New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1961), pp. 51-52.
- ⁹Rudolf Steiner, *The Philosophy of Freedom*, seventh edition, trans. Michael Wilson (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1964), p. 43.
- ¹⁰Steiner uses active thinking in place of Husserl's act of consciousness as the deeper foundation of subject and object alike.
- ¹¹Hans-Georg Gadamer *Truth and Method*, second edition (New York: Crossroad, 1989), p. 389. Gadamer's work represents one of the later interpretations of Husserl and a chief and pioneering track in the contemporary philosophical movement sometimes known as "Phenomenological Hermeneutics."
- ¹²Madison, *The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity*, p. 117
- ¹³These points are elaborated in more detail in Andrew Welburn, *Rudolf Steiner's Philosophy and the Crisis of Contemporary Thought* (Edinburgh: Floris Books, 2004), e.g., pp. 17-26, 35-46, 57-58.
- ¹⁴The typical modernist setting for art exhibited in this way came to be called the "white cube" in a series of articles in *Artforum* in 1976 by Brian O'Doherty, since published as *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).
- ¹⁵Rudolf Steiner, *Karmic Relationships: Esoteric Studies*, Volume 3 (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1977), pp. 153-158.
- ¹⁶Rudolf Steiner, *The Riddles of Philosophy* (Spring Valley, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1973), p. 451.
- ¹⁷Rudolf Steiner, *The East in the Light of the West* (London: Rudolf Steiner Publishing Company, 1940), second edition, pp. 123-124.
- ¹⁸See Rudolf Steiner, *The Mission of the Archangel Michael* (New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1961), pp. 101-103.



Les Balles Tirées de l'Avant-Garde (Spent Munitions of the Advance Guard) by Van James, is an assemblage piece of used oil pastels and resin in plastic.

Being Awake

Summer Conference in Ann Arbor, 2005

Genie Sakaguchi, Honolulu, Hawai'i

It was wonderfully inspiring to experience a gathering of nearly 700 Anthroposophists from at least 14 countries, come together in Ann Arbor, Michigan around the theme, *Being Awake*. Each of the six sessions on various aspects of wakefulness began with audience participation in speech or singing, leading into a pair of talks on the subject, followed in most cases by conversation involving audience members. The arts well represented by this participation, by two towering graphic pieces, a fascinating two-person dramatization of "The Green snake and the Beautiful Lily," and an absolutely stunning eurythmy performance of Dvorak's "New World Symphony."

To describe or summarize the content of the twelve penetrating presentations would take quite an extensive write-up. In essence, the twelve speakers were each able to bring basic, familiar Anthroposophical ideas enlivened with personal, life experience, the effect of which was a very uplifting, encouraging vision of Anthroposophy in the world today.

Everyone who has had an opportunity to attend such a conference knows that a very important aspect of such a gathering is the social interaction that conference participants can experience. It was a joy to greet old friends and meet new people, to build the personal bridges between Hawai'i and friends far and near. I was glad to be allowed to stand up for Hawai'i in the larger assembly, to remind the friends that Anthroposophy is also at work in the central Pacific region.

I am grateful to have been able to attend this conference, and enjoyed seeing many of our friends from around the world.

Painting for the Fifth Cultural Epoch

Caroline Chanter, Dornach, Switzerland

“Aesthetics are higher than ethics. They belong to a more spiritual sphere. To discern the beauty of a thing is the finest point to which we can arrive. Even a colour-sense is more important, in the development of the individual, than a sense of right and wrong.”

During my never-ending research into art and the meaning of art, I recently came across the above statement by Oscar Wilde. His points of view, delightfully controversial then as now, brought to mind Rudolf Steiner’s suggestions for the very first painting lesson in class one in Waldorf schools and his reasons for the need to cultivate a colour-sense from such a young age. In this first lesson the children should begin by painting a patch of yellow next to a patch of blue and then repeat the process, but this time with yellow and green. The teacher is then to tell the children that yellow and blue together is more beautiful than yellow and green. Rudolf Steiner goes on to say that a sense for colour grows into a feeling for truth, and in the lecture “The Dornach Building – a House of Speech” he makes clear that art, an art true for our time and beyond, can change war into peace and criminality into love.

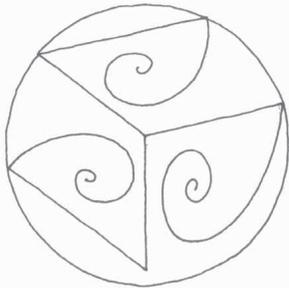
In a conversation with Walter Johannes Stein (as told to me by John Benians) Rudolf Steiner is reported to have said that if more people had seen the first Goetheanum building it would have changed the world. For our present age then, not any old art will do, but just that art which speaks through its forms and colours in such a way that human beings are able, by experiencing them, to effect deep changes within themselves. Rudolf Steiner speaks of this new impulse in the lecture entitled “Technology and Art”: “Likewise the paintings in our Goetheanum building will not be there for their direct effect, as used to be the case with art in the past, but it will be there for the soul to encounter, so that the experience resulting from this encounter will be a work of art. This involves a transformation of an old artistic principle into a new one. This involves the sculptural, the pictorial element being taken a stage further and led over into a kind of musical experience.” Think of the capitals and architraves of the first Goetheanum resounding through their elemental forms in a flowing sequence of time! This revelation in its full meaning within

the sphere of painting was yet to come.

On January 9, 1923, a schoolboy by the name of Gerard Wagner living in the north of England read an article in the Manchester Guardian newspaper entitled, “The Goetheanum, Rudolf Steiner’s headquarters burnt down,” and the thought arose in his soul that now he would never be able to see that building. When in 1926 he did arrive in Dornach, Rudolf Steiner had died and the building of the second Goetheanum was in progress. Wagner had got a lift with friends who were attending the English summer conference and his intention was to go on to France to paint. Destiny, however, had other plans and Dornach was to become his home from that summer onwards until his death in 1999 at the age of 93.

The art training Gerard Wagner had just completed at the Royal College of Art in London would take 10 years to get “out of my system” and more years than that of blood, sweat, and tears were to come until he was to find the key to Rudolf Steiner’s training motifs for painters. It was during the initial short training period with the painter Henni Geck that perhaps the most essential aspect of these training motifs revealed itself. In Gerard Wagner’s words: “I only got as far as painting the first three motifs, Sunrise, Sunset and Shining Moon. When you took pains to observe and re-experience the colours, lines and forms in those sketches you felt that something was going on in your inner being. An intense interest awakened that might be expressed in the words: ‘Why, these are living organisms!’ You experienced something that made you feel that all the forms and colours ‘fitted exactly,’ without there being anything haphazard or arbitrary about them. Although they did not depict the likeness of any natural object, all the details of form and movement fitted together, carrying and complementing each other in a way that is otherwise only seen in the different parts of a living organism where every detail must necessarily be related to the whole. They do not depict anything; they *live*. This was a constant feeling that only gradually became more conscious in the decades that followed.”

After the discovery of the living element—of the *etheric*—in Rudolf Steiner’s training sketches it was natural that metamorphosis would also become visible. Gerard Wagner discovered with time that these so called “sketches” have the ability not only to transform and to metamorphose into each other, but they also contain the possibility of developing into



A sense for colour grows into a feeling for truth.

quite new forms. Just as the multitude of plant forms have the archetypal plant as a starting point, the thousands of paintings done by Wagner in relation to these training motifs, and that is essentially his total output, show a picture language arising out of the archetypes drawn and painted by Rudolf Steiner. Gerard Wagner's destiny and task was to discover the secret of the sketches and to work out a path of training based on the way Rudolf Steiner had painted form out of colour.

Near the end of his life, in the catalogue of his 1997 exhibition at the Hermitage, St Petersburg, Gerhard Wagner wrote this about his work: "Results of observing the human soul according to the methods of natural science." This motto from Rudolf Steiner's *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* is at the same time the precondition for the type of research meant here. In relation to painting the following factors are to be considered:

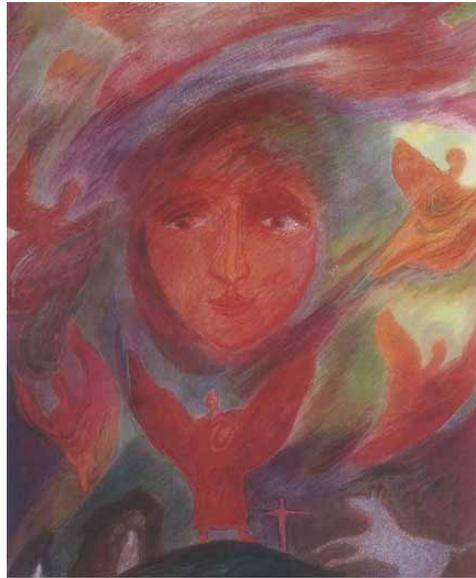
- 1) The sense impression of the colour
- 2) The feeling of the colour
- 3) The consciousness of the feeling

The task is to find the first step into the living world (das Lebendige). Our normal faculty of understanding relates to a three-dimensional world, which we regard as complete but we don't know how it has come about. To understand this we need to immerse ourselves in the two-dimensionality of the etheric world. Here the colour sequence, the time element, plays a decisive role in the build up of the motif. The next step is "measuring" into the space, a weightless balancing on the two-dimensional plane. We need a new consciousness of time, a qualitative grasp of number and a new experience of space, which is measured by the "mass" of the spiritual form of the human being. The riddle begins to be solved when one can bring consciousness to the sensations, to one's feelings. Feeling is also a kind of consciousness that gradually transforms from a more sleepy dreamy state into an awakened one. All this needs life-long practice and only then can one really be in the activity of painting meant here.

What we have known as painting hitherto needs to be based (in Rudolf Steiner's words) on "a totally new principle" and only then will the possibilities for transformation contained within it be able to blossom fully.

To celebrate Gerard Wagner's life work a century years after his birth (5th April 1906), and at the same time to put a focus on the beauty and task of art, there will be a summer painting conference at the Goetheanum next year.

As Gerard Wagner combined the English and German spirits it is only natural that the conference should be in both languages and we are happy that Anna Meuss will be able to do the translating for us.



At the Threshold, a painting by Caroline Chanter.

THE ART OF COLOUR

Colour as a Healing and Formative Force

July 10th – 16th 2006

During a week of painting with plant colours, a seminar on metamorphosis, picture observation and lectures we want to offer participants an opportunity to pursue and deepen their appreciation and knowledge of colour and painting. Gerard Wagner's students will lead the conference activities. The conference will open with a eurythmy performance (with lyre music) of the whole of Rudolf Steiner's lecture "The Being of the Arts," spoken in German. Each day will open with singing and a lecture. The main part of the day will be for painting and in the evenings Elisabeth Wagner will give a series of slide-lectures on Gerard Wagner's seventy years' painting activity and research. Guided tours of the Gerard Wagner exhibition and of the Goetheanum including Rudolf Steiner's great sculpture "The Representative of Humanity" will be part of the conference activities.

We look forward to seeing you at the Goetheanum next summer!

Further information and brochures from:
 Caroline Chanter, Hohle Gasse 7, CH - 4143
 Dornach. Tel: 0041-61-7021423. E-mail:
 c.chanter@bluewin.ch In October the conference
 details will be on the painting school website:
 www.paintingschool-goetheanum.ch

Waldorf Education in China

Tammy Hughes, Chengdu, China

The seeds for Waldorf Education were sown in China about eleven years ago when Ben and Thanh Cherry, Waldorf teachers from The Bowral Waldorf School in



Cornice features on traditional Chinese Confucian temple.

Australia, were traveling through the country as part of a journey from Australia to England. They had many conversations with many different people over the course of their journey, which is in part documented in their book *Of Pandas and Wandering Geese*. The conversations of great consequence took place in Chengdu, Sichuan with Harry Wong and Li Zhang in their restaurant that served many foreigners. On Thanh and Ben's last visit to the restaurant, Harry was working on his biography to send to Emerson College. In the years to follow Harry and Li pursued various teacher training possibilities and experiences in anthroposophical communities in England and the US. Over time they touched many other people in China who were inspired to seek new ideas in relation to education, and to life in general. Some of these individuals were able to study abroad while others were not allowed. Luckily, there have been some books written in Chinese by those who have gone to study. There are individuals who are translating anthroposophical works into Chinese. Eckart Loewe, a Waldorf graduate from Germany who has worked in poor Chinese villages has written a book and hosts a web site that

provides inspiration for many Chinese parents and young people to look at education anew. Another avenue for Chinese people to learn about the education is to access the Chengdu Waldorf School's web site: www.waldorfchina.org.

All this preparation led to a group of people renting land in Chengdu to start a kindergarten and a combined grade school. The Chengdu Waldorf School is on a piece of land that was once a weekend resort well outside the city, but now as the city is fast approaching and there will soon be local children to serve. (Currently children come from more affluent families within the city.) The land provides a very pleasant setting for the school with trees, flowers, gardens, and grass.

The Chengdu Waldorf School opened last September with great good will and support from many co-workers within the school and many colleagues around the world providing financial and heartfelt support. Over the course of the year the school has been made more beautiful and more suitable. In the first year with so much work to be done, many young volunteers came to live in the basic guest rooms and were ready and willing anytime that help was needed for special events or everyday needs of the school. There were a few who had done teacher training: Li Zewu, Li Zhang, Harry Wong and I. Our community of about thirty people volunteered for the year, with food and board being offered.

In the beginning of the year it seemed quite a struggle to get everything organized for such a large live-in school community of co-workers, families, and teachers. It seemed off balance to have so many workers for so few children in the grade school and kindergarten. After many meetings and much thought, it became obvious that our task was more that of an intentional community that was helping the overall development of many individuals. By the springtime when Ben Cherry was able to make a second visit to Chengdu, we saw our co-workers as teachers-in-training. Our meetings at this point were very fulfilling. One evening we each shared what had led us to the school and in this meeting you could feel the searching for much higher goals than one's own needs. In a teachers' meeting when we took up a young grade school girl in a child study, I was so moved when the young colleagues began to offer their observations. They had taken their

task very seriously and with all loving earnestness we were building a picture of who this child was. A large part of the work with the young co-workers has been for them to explore their own educations, with all of the many faults and problems. Finding Waldorf Education has been a healing experience. Many of the young teacher trainees want to help others to find this education that they see as humane and as developing the whole human being, and giving people an opportunity to consider the soul and spirit of a human being, and better ways to relate to the environment. Over the year, I could see they had gained more of an understanding of Waldorf education, had matured, gained confidence, and were more open to each other.

Due to the economy in China, the funds that we raise for tuition cannot cover many of the larger expenses such as building, salaries, and travel. We have been very fortunate to have great support. Friends of Rudolf Steiner Education has helped so much with supporting mentors to come to China and for teachers to go abroad (most recently to Thailand, and hopefully to New Zealand in the future). Li Zhang and I were able to go to the International Early Childhood Conference in Dornach due to kind support from our colleagues in America. It was particularly meaningful to go to Dornach—we were able to see all the ways and places that Waldorf education is coming into practice. In China, we are always asking ourselves, “What does it mean to be a Waldorf School in China?” In the conference, we had a workshop that focused on multiculturalism and there were so many individuals who enriched our view of childhood and gave us courage to keep going with our work even though our financial and living circumstances are quite challenging. We felt strengthened by being part of a world movement and I was able to visit various Waldorf Schools where I spoke about our efforts in China and saw their schools

This summer, the Chengdu Waldorf School, in conjunction with Friends of Waldorf Education, hosted a week-long training on Waldorf Education focusing on thinking, feeling and willing. Ben Cherry gave the morning lectures in which the seventy participants opened up to seeing the world and education in a new way, and there were supporting workshops in handwork, clay modeling, painting and eurythmy. It was

a very touching event to see so many parents, teachers and directors of schools looking at education and wondering how to improve education in China. Discussions were endless, throughout lunches, dinners, and into the evening. There was a real hunger to know many things: how could the education fit with Chinese culture, can it work along side Montessori education, will the education prepare children for exams, and how can one become a Waldorf teacher? One evening the weather so overpowered us in our common room that we were not able to talk, but rather enjoyed each others company with songs and games from all over the world. On the last day as people began to leave, we could see in a very real way that new ideas were going to many parts of China. The seeds are already beginning to burst forward in many ways: Beijing will begin a kindergarten this fall, a conference participant will take up teaching in Shenzhen’s home nursery, and many others are taking ideas into their existing programs.

Once the guests had left, the Chengdu community continued on with its work with Ben Cherry, looking back on our year more consciously. It was a good year, but it was a tough year. There were times of great joy and stress. There were always many hands ready to help, whether it was lantern-making in Spring or preparing for guests. There were lots of break downs and inconveniences: leaking roofs, lack of hot water for showers, mosquitoes, ineffective meetings, and a year without salaries. Yet the love and interest among the community members for one another is so real, so vital that by being in the presence of one another one feels awed to be part of what is living here. Children are being educated in a very wholesome way in this community. And so the year ended with a bon fire for St John’s, as a letting go of the old and to welcome the new.

It is now time to look forward to the fall. For those of us in kindergarten work in China it is a joyous time as Thanh Cherry will come to work with us. It is a new beginning as it brings us together as a kindergarten community working for the protection of childhood in China. Children living in the cities in China have all the common problems that are in the west: intellectual work too early, poor nutrition, over scheduled lives, too much TV, and a lack of rhythm in their homes.

I want to return to this very important



Due to the economy in China, the funds that we raise for tuition cannot cover many of the larger expenses such as building, salaries, and travel.

question of what it means to have a Waldorf School in China. I think that those of us working with Waldorf Education in China feel very fortunate to be able to teach, train others and give lectures, when not so long ago there would not have been any possibility for any education besides government education. I have been fortunate to have had experiences of working with the



Traditional Chinese dancers.

Chengdu initiative, the budding home kindergarten initiative that will begin this fall in Beijing and the home kindergarten in Shenzhen. (In addition there are day care centers in Shenzhen and Zhuhai with rooms where Waldorf education is used.) Perhaps you wonder if we are free to carry out our work the way that we see it should be. I know that in Chengdu there were times when the Chinese teachers seemed cautious. However during the educational seminar this summer, there was no skirting of topics about spiritual science. The work that is being done in China is solid, not an initiative of Waldorf methods. And yes it is natural that teachers take the ideas and thoughts and initially are not able to bring the whole education to the fullest expression. Thus training will be ongoing so the education can reach a real depth.

In regard to physical circumstances, given China is so crowded, kindergartens end up in apartment buildings. When you are used to an expansive space and garden for your

kindergarten, it is hard to imagine that a kindergarten can be in a flat in an apartment complex, but I am very happy to say that when there is a will there is a way. The mothers in Shenzhen rented a very nice flat which has good play spaces, light and air. Since we are part of an apartment complex our kindergarten community is very large indeed. The children are able to meet and greet adults and children of all ages, which certainly helps them to develop in a more wholesome way. We are very fortunate to be able to run small errands to our shops and post office in an atmosphere much like the olden days main street, where individuals are interested in each other. We are fortunate to have a park designed for individuals with handicaps. This is a park filled with interesting ramps and paths to explore, winding rivers, large stone frogs to ride, countless trees and flowers and even grass to sit upon. Within the actual classroom, many of the toys are those you would see in any Waldorf Kindergarten in the world. Perhaps, the things that make it feel Chinese are the traditional cooking tools.

In the next year, I am looking forward to the challenge of working in another setting. I will be teaching the oldest kindergarten class at The High Gate House School in Hong Kong. Hong Kong is an international community so I will once again teach in English, but will certainly be trying to see how to honor what lives in Hong Kong and understand a new cycle of the year. I will continue with teacher training and building bridges of communication.

If as you read this it peaks your interest for how you could offer something to a growing initiative, please don't hesitate to be in touch.

tammyhughes@fastmail.fm

Donations may be made to:
Rudolf Steiner Foundation
PO Box 29915
San Fransisco, California 94129
Cheques earmarked Freunde/Chengdu

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Children of Nepal and Tashi Waldorf School Newsletter--2005

*Meyran Mor and Heather Maclaren
Kathmandu, Nepal*

As we move through the summer months it is monsoon season in Nepal. The monsoon rains have been very sporadic this year. The farmers are worried about their rice crops. We pray that the rains will be plentiful, bringing a bountiful fall harvest for the people of Nepal. Tashi Waldorf School began its 6th school year on May 2nd and continues to flourish. The school is now in its second term of the school year. Construction of the school facilities is finished and its programs are in place. We are thankful that the school community is now able to focus more of its energy on the individual needs of its children.

We welcomed Chandra Tamang back to Nepal and the school at the end of July. Chandra has completed her three year kindergarten teacher training at Emerson College in England. Chandra will prepare over the coming weeks to begin her kindergarten group in the fall.

We have been busy with our in house training program focusing on language arts, math, speech and plays, puppetry, nature studies, lesson planning, library, child development, lots of music and singing and continuing the development of the curriculum. We have been deepening our understanding on the ideas of Karma and karmic relationships and this has brought some fascinating discussions in our group. We have also been deepening our understanding of the festivals we celebrate here in Nepal. We feel so much more the richer for being able to study as a group such things that nourish our whole being and strengthen the being of our community.

In April 2005 Tashi Waldorf School's first Class 3 graduated. All of the children have gone on to join other schools. They keep in close touch with their teacher Nima by telephone or writing letters. Nima says that all of the children are happy and settled into their new schools. Nima hopes to visit these new schools over the coming months to see how the children have transitioned into the mainstream educational system.

Lobsang Dolma's Class 3 children have been very active with their curriculum this year. During their first main lesson block on Hindu

Creation, the children learned about Das Avatar, the 10 incarnations of Vishnu. They visited Reclining Vishnu, a holy site in the northern part of the Kathmandu Valley. During their second main lesson block on Human Habitation and House Building, the class built a small playhouse for the nursery children using the traditional mud and brick construction methods of Nepal. The children are now doing their main lesson on People and Occupations. They recently took a field trip to Patan and Bhaktapur to experience traditional craftspeople at work such as metal workers, wood carvers and stone cutters.

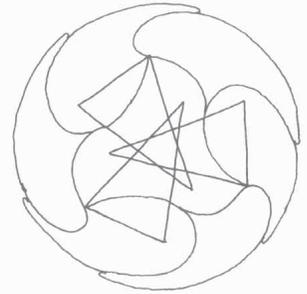
Nirmala Gurung's Class 2 children have been receiving main lessons including Buddha Stories, Jakarta Tales, Aesop's Fables, Fairy Tales and Nature Stories. The class recently visited Nammu Buddha, the holy site where Buddha offered himself to the hungry tigress so that she could feed her cubs.

Nima Sherpa's Class 1 children have been receiving main lessons introducing the Nepali alphabet, numbers and the four mathematical processes. Fairy and nature stories from the children's own culture have been used to introduce these aspects. All of the class children planted the school's rice field at the beginning of monsoon in June.

In the kindergartens, Durga, Kripa, Kamala and Roshni have been busy with the children. The children have experienced circles of the seasons of summer and monsoon, birds and bees and the jungle and its animals. Many fairy and nature stories have been shared with the children. The kindergartners performed a puppet show of the story "The Little Donkey" at the end of Term 1. On Friday's the children make roti which is enjoyed by everyone for lunch. The children love to make "achar" during out door playtime by grinding leaves with small stones. Achar is made by grinding various herbs and spices into a paste to accompany "dal bhat" the Nepalese meal of rice, lentil soup and curry. In the kindergartens the children make mint achar, using mint from the school's garden.

During the past few months the school community has celebrated Buddha Astami (birthday) and the Dalai Lama's birthday. Krishna Astami will be celebrated later in August. These festivals have been celebrated through telling stories and performing puja's in each class and kindergarten.

Ursula Bernhard, a Waldorf special needs teacher from Vienna, has been volunteering at the school these past two months. Ursula has



We feel so much more the richer for being able to study as a group such things that nourish our whole being and strengthen the being of our community.

been working with one of the teachers, Dolma Chonzom, to observe and design programs for the special needs children. From Ursula and Dolma's observations it has become clear that several children would benefit from physiotherapy. We are now looking for a physiotherapist to work with these children.

Tashi Waldorf School has a school doctor after working with a few different doctors and clinics in the past. Doctor Dipendra Sharma practices at Shechen Clinic in Kathmandu. Shechen Clinic is an income based clinic with an excellent reputation. The clinic offers health and dental care. The school's families are now connected to a good affordable clinic for their entire family's health needs. Dr. Sharma has been coming to the school weekly over the past two months to conduct the initial health review of each of the 75 children at the school. Overall the children are in good health. There are a few children who require ongoing monitoring to determine if they have chronic ailments. One of the special needs children has recently started to experience mild epileptic seizures. The doctor, child's parents and teacher are working together to further observe the child so that the right treatment can be given. The children will participate in eye and dental clinics in the fall.

We would like to thank everyone for their help in keeping the school supplied with Waldorf educational materials, such as water colour paint, coloured chalk, beeswax and wooden coloured pencils. If you are traveling to Nepal and can make room in your luggage

Marko Pogacnik at Ali'iolani Hale in downtown Honolulu, Hawaii. (See page 19)



to slip in some water colour paint or coloured blackboard chalk we would really appreciate it. It's a challenge to keep these supplies on hand for the school.

We thank our child sponsors for their most generous and ongoing commitment to help the school and its children. You should have received an annual progress report for your sponsor child in June. We have been hearing from some sponsors that our mail has not been reaching them. Please let us know so that we can send the report again if you haven't received it.

As always there are children who are in need of sponsorship at the school, so please if you can pass the word about the school around in your communities we are ever so grateful for your help. There are more and more families migrating to the Kathmandu Valley to escape the conflict in the rest of Nepal. These families live in desperate conditions and need our help for their children to attend school.

Our effort to raise funds for the school by selling Nepalese handicrafts continues to be driven by Barbara Maclaren, Phyllis Townley and Arnold and Jayne of Good Karma Imports in Canada; and Barbara Bartzsch and Renate Wolfrum in Germany. Everyone volunteers their time and effort to sell these products in support of the school. Thank you very much to the marketing team and to everyone who has purchased a product.

We would like to thank all of the individuals, families, classes, schools, businesses and communities who support Children of Nepal and Tashi Waldorf School. We thank you for your tremendous effort, dedication and caring. The school would not exist without your help. Each day at the school we experience the difference Waldorf education is making in the children's lives. The children open and blossom to the world! —With our deepest thanks and best wishes!

You can help! Please send a donation to the associations as listed below:

The Rudolf Steiner Foundation (USA)

Email: mail@rsfoundation.org

King's School Worcester Nepal Trust (UK)

Email: j_walton2@hotmail.com

Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiner (D)

Email: feunde.waldorf@t-online.de

Prometheus Ethical Finance (NZ)

Email: ethical@prometheus.co.nz

A Slovenian Geomancer in Hawai'i

Van James, Honolulu, Hawai'i

If one were to stumble upon a Marko Pogacnik workshop in progress, one might think: "What kind of New Age mumbo jumbo are these folks up to?" People making unusual gestures and sounds, meditatively present with closed eyes—it's not exactly a typical outdoor scene. However, if one actually tries some of the exercises that Marko Pogacnik recommends, ritual-artistic movements that connect subtler layers of one's own being to the elemental surroundings, one comes away with a different attitude altogether.

Marko Pogacnik is a trained sculptor and earthworks artist who has, for the last two decades, trained his sensibilities to work with the elemental forces and earth energies within the natural environment. He is a professional geomancer who works with lay lines, earth chakras and elemental spirits with an end to engage in earth healing.

Pogacnik visited Hawai'i in the summer of 2005 to lead a retreat called "Earth, Spirit, and Aloha: On the Threshold of the House of the Sun," on the island of Maui. Before going to Maui, he spent time in Honolulu, traveled around the island of O'ahu, and visited some of the ancient Hawaiian sacred places. Immediately after arriving at the Honolulu International Airport, following eight hours of flying and a busy workshop schedule on the mainland, he insisted on seeing Hawai'i rather than settling in and taking a rest. Our first stop was a standard scenic spot known as "Pali Lookout." It was striking to see how Pogacnik approached the lookout: he stepped over a low stone wall and walked across the grass in what seemed to be the most natural approach to the place, thus avoiding the paved walkway full of tourists. He gazed at a high pinnacle of rock piercing the clouds and took a dirt path through the trees to view it again, this time from the side of the Pali (cliff). He described high spirits hovering in the cloud above the peak and streams of elemental beings moving up to meet them, like honeybees to pollen-laden flowers (fig. 1).

It was clear from this first stop that the usual island tour needed to be altered

somewhat, that sacred rather than scenic sights were the order of the day. We then headed for the center of the island to a place called Kukaniloko or the Birthing Stones, a site that Hawaiian *ali'i* (royalty) used as a sacred place for giving birth, in order that their children would gain special *mana* or spiritual power. Kukaniloko is considered the *piko* point or navel of the island. It lies in the rich fertile plateau between the Wai'anae and Ko'olau mountain ranges, the belly of the island. Marko Pogacnik described a large bluish "plate" below the surface of the earth, beneath this site where numerous basaltic rocks of unusual shape are strewn about, in which the feminine mother-forces were still present (fig. 2). This Mother-Earth energy formerly worked through the stones in connection with the stars and aided in the arrangement of a favourable birth chart for those children coming into incarnation here.

Our next stop was Waimea Falls Park to see Hale O Lono Heiau, a small temple dedicated to agriculture, and Pu'u O Mahuka Heiau on the ridge overlooking Waimea Bay, the largest temple platform on the island of O'ahu. Pogacnik went to the lower end of the latter, 300-ft long *heiau*, where it had not been cleared of brush and said that the beings were "in a condition of waiting" in this lower area because rituals to bring them into connection with the present evolution of the earth had long ceased. Pogacnik referred to a kind of "spiritual suicide" attempted by the Hawaiian people in breaking the *kapu* system and demolishing the old religious rites in the time of Kamehameha II. With no continuance of the rituals, elemental beings and nature spirits lost their connection with human beings and became dislocated from their tasks in the present time. Pogacnik located an old stone lying apart from the *heiau*, which he said predated the decadent *heiau* practices and must have been from the pre-Tahitian migration period. Native Hawaiian tradition holds that Pu'u O Mahuka (Hill of Flight) was used as a *luakini heiau*, a place for human sacrifice.

During a swim in the ocean on the north shore of O'ahu, Pogacnik used his back as an organ of perception and noted high spiritual Beings above the islands, something he had also perceived from the airplane, Beings unable to connect through lack of a contemporary vessel or vehicle on

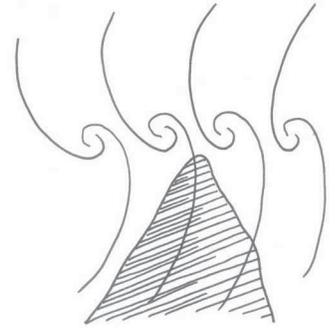


Figure 1.

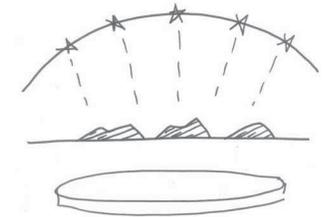


Figure 2.

the islands.

On the following day Pogacnik visited downtown Honolulu and a burial mound on the grounds of 'Iolani Palace, the only royal palace in the United States. Here, below the burial mound, which he said served as a very ancient center point for the area, was a

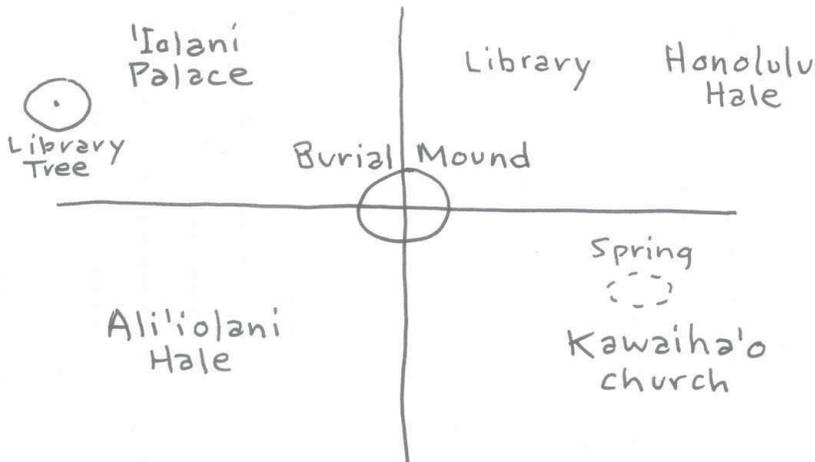


Figure 3.

place where souls of the dead descended in order to discard their etheric and astral sheaths and then ascend to higher spiritual realms. He said it was a kind of vertical axis and center of a mandala-like structure divided into four quarters (fig. 3). In one quarter stood 'Iolani (heavenly hawk) Palace, in another Ali'iolioli Hale, the first palace, which was abandoned before use as a royal residence and is presently a government office building; Kawaiha'o Church and its sacred spring; and finally Honolulu Hale (City Hall) and the State Library's main branch. Pogacnik said that Kawaiha'o (the waters of Ha'o) Church, built by the early Christian missionary, Hiram Bingham, was "pinching" the spring. He said this was a place where some earth healing could take place in order to bring the water beings into harmony with their present situation. On the grounds of 'Iolani Palace Pogacnik spent a good deal of time with a large tree whose spirit told him that it was a kind of "library tree" that stores very ancient knowledge of the area. It stands as a natural contrast to the State Library's nearby collection of books.

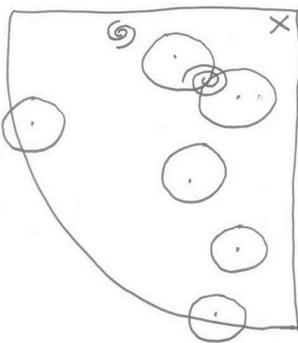


Figure 4.

On the outskirts of the city, Pogacnik walked the grounds of the Honolulu Waldorf School and remarked on three important energy features. One was a chakra point for Niu Valley, a solar plexus chakra center, important to the local valley as a whole. Another feature of significance was

an elemental being, a consciousness nexus in the landscape where the canopies of two large Monkey Pod trees came together. The third point of interest was the very back corner of the grounds where Pogacnik said the old spirits of the valley congregated. This he referred to as the terminus of the property (fig.4). The school is planning a new high school building within the triangulation of these living features so it was good to hear from Pogacnik that he saw no problems with such a building plan.

Before leaving O'ahu, Pogacnik visited a site known as Pele's Chair, a large rock formation on the southeast corner of the island where it is said that the volcano goddess, Pele, sat just before moving on to form the more southerly islands of the Hawaiian chain. Pogacnik commented that "rainbow-like light bridges" went from this point over the channel to the other islands and stretched even beyond, over the ocean, to more distant shores (fig. 5). It is Hawai'i's position in the central Pacific and its relationship to the surrounding lands to the east and west that Pogacnik would like to work with more in the future. Our hope is that a workshop to study the nature of cosmograms and to create a lithopuncture project (artistic forms that work to harmonize earth energy, forms utilized by Marko Pogacnik) will be possible. We hope that such a project may help to enliven and harmonize the nature forces, not only of the local property on Maui, but the entire island, the Hawaiian archipelago, and ultimately the greater Pacific region. In this way, the art of geomancy may help to fulfill Hawai'i's potential and the Pacific regions mission for the future.

(Figures by Van James.)



Figure 5.

Book Review

The Notebooks of Rudolf Steiner, Etsuko Watari and Walter Kugler.

Tokyo: Chikumashobo Publishing, 2001.
160 pages, large format.

This fascinating publication, illustrated in color throughout with text in both English and German, is the exhibition catalog for the first public presentation of content from Rudolf Steiner's private notebooks, held at Warari-um, The Watari Museum of Contemporary Art, in Tokyo, April 14 to August 27, 2000, and also shown in Osaka in 2001. The Watari Museum had organized a traveling exhibition of Steiner's blackboard drawings in 1996-97.

In a 1923 lecture Steiner described his process: "It is my habit, with a pencil in the hand, to write down, to formulate either in words or in some sort of signs, everything I experience from the spiritual world. Therefore, the number of my journals amounts to several wagon-loads. I never look at them again. They exist, yet they are there only to unite the entire human being with what is researched in the spirit, so that it is not only comprehended with the intellect to be communicated in words, but so the entire human being is experienced." The exhibition, titled "Rudolf Steiner: One Hundred Notebooks" and subsidized by several German and Swiss foundations, consisted of 100 pages selected from the over 600 surviving notebooks kept in the Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung in Dornach. These are each illustrated in the catalog along with many other smaller color photographs of Steiner's architecture, life, historical literary artifacts (including the notebooks themselves), the exhibition itself, and so forth — as well as blackboard drawings on the various topics

The 100 pages are organized by content into nine subjects: The Human Being, Nature, Body-Soul-Spirit, Sun and Planets, Vortices, 12 Senses and the Zodiac, Medicine, Remedies, and Architecture (also including Color and Glass Window Designs). Contemplating Steiner's notations and drawings, one feels intimately drawn into the mental workshop of the initiate. We are allowed to glimpse his own spiritual research methods and inner struggles to cast soul-spiritual processes into human language, thoughts, drawings, and diagrams. These rougher, often more tentative drawings and diagrams were Steiner's own preparation for finding and forming the blackboard drawings and concepts that were presented in his lectures. In their initial form they often retain an

open suggestiveness and multi-referential quality that has become more fixed in the final lecture.

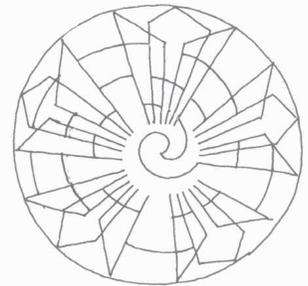
Walter Kugler from the Nachlass, whose essays and talks have often served as the primary interpretive aid for exhibitions of Steiner's blackboard drawings, again writes the chief essay in this book. In a style more poetic than usual, Kugler sketches the historical context in which Steiner's work took place and tries to help the reader appreciate the imaginative quality of Steiner's notations. He remarks that "in Steiner's notebooks each word, each concept, each sign gets its place in an amazingly concentrated and stimulating fashion." Perhaps as a cautionary note, he adds: "Whether art or non-art, that is not the point. The sketches move something in the observer and that — and only that — is the point." Toward the end he notes two often repeated and not unrelated themes in the notebooks: continual movement and thus new life; and opposites and the mediation between them.

A shorter, concluding essay by curator Etsuko Watari notes the similarity not only of Steiner's blackboard drawings, but also of these notebooks to the drawings of artist Joseph Beuys, especially his earlier ones, as both men struggled with "thinking in images," with "pictorial thinking that bears what is impossible to express in logic or text. . . ." Unfortunately, the essay's translation is poorly rendered into English and requires a fair amount of sympathetic "reading between the lines."

The book concludes with an outline of Steiner's biography by Kugler and an index that documents the sources of each page, giving its date when known.

It is impossible to cover the actual content of the pages in a short review. Here is a quotation from one that may serve as an example of the nuggets of wisdom to be found therein: "Sun: It is the concentrated etheric — it is so constructed that its surface behaves as center and the center — in the spiritual allows the etheric to disappear?" (p. 68) Like most of the pages, this requires concentrated study to yield its riches. In another example (p. 84-85), Steiner draws three different configurations of relationships between the twelve senses and the zodiac, which perhaps also reflects the different schemes he provided in various lectures. Occasionally more explanation could be helpful (e.g., p. 122 where the relationship between the developmental process/drawing to the Goetheanum architrave should be made explicit) or a different translation (e.g., p. 143 where the German *Glanz* in reference to colors is translated as "sheen" instead of more usual English "luster"). But these are minor quibbles in what is a very valuable addition to our knowledge of Steiner's work and working process.

—reviewed by David Ada



The sketches move something in the observer and that — and only that — is the point.

Kona Biodynamic Farm & Learning Center

Phyl Dwyer, Kealahou, Hawaii

This year's farm summer camp at Kona Biodynamic Farm and Kona Pacific Waldorf School really hopped. The four week program was extended an extra week due to numerous requests. Twenty to thirty children attended each week and participated in a variety of garden, animal, nature, play, cooking and farm craft activities.

We are excited to start another school year with Kona Pacific Waldorf School. Farm staff member and board director Catherine Carter is working with first grade teacher Kathy Darcy to further develop our farm school program. Catherine was a school teacher on the mainland US prior to moving to Hawaii in 1988. She recently started Kula Makua's three year Waldorf teacher training program along with Lynn Bell, another director of our farm's board.

Farm coworkers are the backbone of our farming efforts. As a host farm for WWOOF Hawaii we are privileged to meet and work with many wonderful folks. (WWOOF, World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms, is a contemporary migrant farm work exchange program of international scope.)

We are starting a new study group on the farm. The text is Peter Proctor's *Grasp the Nettle*. Biodynamics Hawaii sponsored a week long biodynamic workshop in the late 90's taught by Peter. We are pleased to be studying such a good text, and the work of such a good friend. The farm staff is also reading Wolf Stori's *Culture and Horticulture*.

We encourage folks to buy a food share in our farm to support the production of organic, biodynamic produce. Shareholders receive a cooler of food every week and the cost of the food is deducted from their deposit. This money, in turn, is used to support farm operations such as buying seeds and tools for the garden, feeding our animals and farm workers, and paying for the always-needed farm maintenance projects.

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Calendar

Forming Heart Thinking

Canberra, Australia

Greenhills Conference Center

January 20-23, 2006

With Cornelius Pietzner, Karl Kartenbach, Van James and others.

Contact: vkhillman@ozemail.com.au

The Ongoing Improvement of Our Educational Skills: The Child Study

Honolulu, Hawaii

Honolulu Waldorf School

February 15-18, 2006

The Annual Interisland Waldorf Teachers conference with guest speaker Christof Weichart

Contact: hwsniu@lava.net

Asia-Pacific Anthroposophical Conference

Labore, Pakistan, October 25-29, 2006

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

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

Waldorf Roundtable meeting, Oct. 29, 2006.

Proposed Asia-Pacific Conference in

Bangkok, Thailand, April 25-May 3, 2007

Asia-Pacific Initiative Group meeting April 25, 2007.

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

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

Comments on PJ

"I have been sitting and reading and scanning the new issue of *Pacifica*. What an amazing job you all have done putting it together. It is beautifully laid out as well as full of substantial articles. Congratulations on creating a model publication covering an exciting area of development."

—Arthur Zajonc, author and professor of physics.

"Thanks so much for the *Journal*. A piece of beautiful work! I am very glad and honored to receive this and will circulate it around the group in Hong Kong."

—Constance Chang, kindergarten teacher and former police officer.

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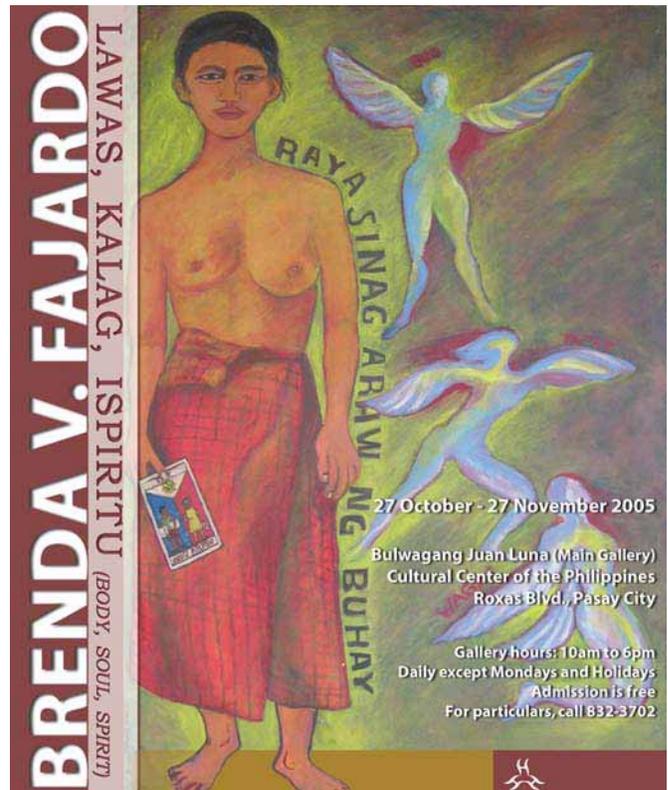
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To have a sense for beauty means for humanity, not to deny in the physical world a connection with the spirit.

—Rudolf Steiner