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at the Goetheanum

# Journal



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## Introduction

*Dear Friends of the Pedagogical Section,*



our new journal is accompanied by many post-Easter greetings.

Following on from Claus-Peter Röh's article in the March edition of the journal, No. 50, we continue the theme of transition. Both articles are designed to serve as an introduction to the conference scheduled for 2015:

*Transitions in Childhood  
from birth to 14 years:*

*Significance, Challenges and Consequences  
30<sup>st</sup> March to 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2015*

The moment of a transition presents us teachers and educators with special tasks. If we take these on in a conscious way, we are able to help support the children and young people in their stages of development. Accompanying these steps becomes easier for us if we understand them properly. What is taking place there? What should I look out for? How and where can I be of help? How will the lessons change following such a 'transition'? How do I address a three-year-old, a five-year-old, a Class One child, a pupil of Class Four, Class Six or Class Eight? There are many other aspects, too numerous to mention here. Initial information about this conference can be found on our website [www.paedagogik-goetheanum.ch](http://www.paedagogik-goetheanum.ch)

We are again negotiating some reductions in international air fares to Basel with the SWISS airline. More on this will be published on our website soon.

Some of the transitions take place during the class teaching years: Class One readiness, the

rubicon, the twelfth year and puberty. We are looking forward to welcoming many colleagues especially from the lower and middle school years.

At the International Forum last November we focused on the situation of the class teacher world wide. We published two articles on the theme of class teaching in the Michaelmas edition of our journal No. 49. We pointed to a survey which has now been completed and analysed. The results are summarised in this edition.

Three further contributions direct our gaze to the worldwide school movement. The article by Florian Osswald speaks about how the International Forum consciously includes the whole school movement and turns 'each village' into a 'global village'. Benjamin Cherry, in his report, introduces us to the status quo of the school movement in China. It is a big task and question as to how the curriculum must adapt to the different cultures in all parts of the world while still maintaining its roots and fundamental ideas, and Alan Denjean's concluding article deals with some of these issues.

We are pleased if you, our readers, find inspiration and enjoyment for your work in our journal.

Best wishes from Dornach

*Dorothee Prange  
translated by Steffi Cook*

## Transitions in the Human Temporal Organism (Part Two)

*Claus-Peter Röh*

*translated by Karin Smith*

The observation exercises for the powers of transformation at the transition points of the third and the sixth/seventh year lead from the actual physical encounters to the perception of an individual "melody of development". (See Journal of the Pedagogical Section, No. 50). The characteristics of the child's inner being show in the child's changing physical appearance and manner. The ability to "read" these characteristics enables us to find suitable approaches for the child's education.

Before we study the transition at age nine or ten, we want to change our focus from the child's outer appearance to his or her *zeit-gestalt* or temporal form. We can observe the child's physical body carefully with all our senses. The physical body, however, is being permeated by the child's individual temporal form at every stage of development, at every point of transition. This is an organism which consists of all the past experiences which now bear from the inside upon the child's further maturation, including:

- Childhood experiences
- Crises and illnesses
- Life in the family and in the kindergarten
- Friendships, new acquaintances, moving house
- Acquired habits and patterns of behaviour
- Developmental impulses which have been inherent in the child since pre-birth

### **Future Aspects of the Temporal Organism**

All learning and teaching which the child has experienced in the past becomes part of the child's temporal organism which extends far into the future. Past education touches upon the child's present development – today's education touches upon the young person's future development. Teachers therefore have a profound responsibility to include the inner laws of the temporal organism in their daily work and orientation. Rudolf Steiner describes this kind of responsibility. *"We cannot get to know people without considering the human being as a temporal organism... And if educators only look at the present life of a child, if they only look at the eight or nine year old, they do not accomplish their task properly. We can only teach and educate children appropriately if we are aware that whatever we do with the eight or nine year old, affects the temporal organism – which is a unity – and that the significance of education emerges from the child, from the middle-aged person, from the elderly. But it emerges in a different manner, it goes through a metamorphosis. We can only teach in the proper sense of the word if we are able to arrive at a clear picture of these modifications."*<sup>1</sup>

If we want to understand more about the connection between the past and the present, we can study those childhood experiences which we remember clearly and consider meaningful for our later life. Empirical studies

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1 Steiner, R. GA 297a, The Hague, 4<sup>th</sup> November 1922

based on the questioning of former pupils describe effects, attitudes and skills which originate in schooling. The context of the temporal organism shows in a particular quality when a person achieves to overview his or her entire life. The Swedish poet Tomas Tranströmer writes in "Memories Look at Me: A Memoir": *"My life – Thinking these words I see before me a streak of light. On closer inspection it has the form of a comet. The brightest end, the head, is childhood and growing up. The nucleus, the densest part, is infancy, that first period, in which the most important features of our life are determined."*<sup>2</sup>

Further back, in the longer part of the comet, Tranströmer sees his life as an adult. From there, he tries to approach the nucleus, his existence, through his childhood memories. What shaped him? What is the essence of his being? Part of the picture is his grandfather who was 71 years older than him and his "close friend". There is also the boy's obsession with collecting, the interest in insects, the joy of drawing and his first reading. Then, there is his method of cunningly protect himself in a fight with an older and stronger boy: *"When he approached me, I pretended that I myself had flown off and only a corps was left. I was just a limp rag which he could punch as much as he wanted to. He realized that. – I am wondering what it might have meant for my life later on, this ability to turn myself into a limp rag. It is the art to get run over while preserving your self-esteem. Did I not fall back on it too often?"*<sup>3</sup>

His time at school and the encounters with teachers have a special meaning in

Tranströmer's memories. *"The teachers which are predominant in my memories are of course those who created some kind of tension, the most striking originals ... We sensed that some of them were burdened with some tragic element in their lives."*<sup>4</sup> Assiduously, Tranströmer describes the expanse and candour of a child's soul. He assimilates even seemingly insignificant events profoundly; they continue to influence him for decades. *"There was an entry exam for High School. I only remember that I misspelled the word "särskilt" (special). I spelled it with double l. This led to some issues around this word which I could not get over until the 1960s."*<sup>5</sup> The Swedish poet considers the past as part of the future, he connects the sum of time with the qualities of the Self. *"I carry my former faces around within me like a tree bears its annual rings. The sum of these is my "Self". The mirror only sees my last face, but I can feel all of my earlier faces."*<sup>6</sup>

### Childhood and School as Biographical Sources

In summing up what has been said so far, we can describe the following qualities of an individual's temporal organism:

- Whatever has been experienced and assimilated in childhood may have direct and far reaching consequences and can resurface in a different way after a number of years.
- The web of experiences and their aftereffects create the biography's temporal organism.

2 Tranströmer, T. (2011) *Memories Look at Me: A Memoir*. A New Directions Book.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

- The Self's temporal organism is obviously active from infancy onwards, but only the totality of the "annual rings" can reveal its unity.

What Tranströmer describes in his memoirs as a determinative force,<sup>7</sup> is described by Steiner as the second etheric-spirit man in us: *"This temporal organism is really present in us as a second human being and we may indeed call it an organism. When a person gets older, when he becomes an elderly fellow just as I have become, then he can see that his soul has a certain constellation. The soul's constellation we see in us now is connected to the one we had when we were around five or six years old ... thus the various parts of the temporal organism are related to each other in time and not in space. I carry this temporal organism within me. In my books I have called it the etheric body or the body of formative forces."*<sup>8</sup>

The etheric body carries within itself the forces of growth and formation. The Higher Self, or the "second individual" in us, initiates our growth and maturation from infancy onwards. Their close connection is described at the beginning of lecture four in *Super-sensible Physiology and Balance in Teaching*. In the first few years of a child's life, the Self is assimilated into the physical growth. Later, the etheric forces are freed from the connection with the physical development and the Self is able to seize them in a new way. This happens at around the time when the child's second set of teeth emerges. *"What is freed now may be called the etheric body or the intelligence. At birth, the Self "came down", as it were, and this Self now exudes into the*

*etheric body and organises it by and by. In this way, the eternal Self amalgamates with the emerging intelligence, the parturition of the etheric body."*<sup>9</sup>

This description explains how and where the child keeps its childhood memories: Whatever the child experiences is impressed upon the etheric body or temporal organism. If this impression can be consciously re-read, then memory is created. If the experience sinks deeper into the subconscious part of the time organism, then it can be metamorphosed and reappear in a changed form later in life.

Here are two examples: In observing five or six year olds in free play we can see some surprising qualities. Each child acts and decides out of its own free will and these decisions have a distinct colouring: Some children watch their play mates in a dreamy way and others are very actively involved in the game. Later on in life, for example around the age of 25 or 26, the individual's way of becoming involved in life resurfaces as the demeanour in which someone uses their particular will power to face decisions in their life or career.<sup>10</sup>

When first graders imitate their teacher with unswerving devotion – "left hand to your right ear, right hand to ...", motor skills become deeply embedded in the temporal organism. Some children might do these exercises reluctantly and others might do them with great enthusiasm. Later on, we observe grown-ups' reactions in specific situations and realize that everyone has their own demeanour, their own particular mindfulness

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7 Ibid.

8 Steiner, R. GA 82, The Hague, 10<sup>th</sup> April 1922

9 Steiner, R. Balance in Teaching, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1920, GA 302a

10 See also: Steiner, R. The Hague, 27<sup>th</sup> February 1921



and wisdom with which they face life's challenges. Attitudes and skills acquired in childhood change into individual skills of orientation, thinking and acting in adulthood.<sup>11</sup>

The following gestures of change within the biography's temporal organism may be summed up from the above:

Will qualities in free play – quality of decision making and skill

Devotion at age seven or eight – confidence in personal orientation

Dexterity in the will – worldly wisdom and the ability to act

If we as teachers are able to develop an awareness for the active, preserving and creative temporal organism of the second individual within the young person, our attitudes and our teaching practices may change: We will examine the preparation and choice of lesson content for "educational sustainability": What is essential, what is secondary? Thus, a new depth and awareness for the way pupils develop interest will emerge in our encounters with them. We might suddenly see a glimpse of the future in the way a pupil speaks a verse or how she engages in questions.

### **Transitions in the Temporal Organism at the Age of Nine or Ten**

Transitional phases are somewhat isolated from the general effects of childhood and school experiences on the temporal organism in later life. When the child is moved and shaken in her self-esteem, new doors open to

the soul, as it were. This enables new qualities of experience and identity. As early as 1931, Rudolf Steiner described the child's development as an ongoing human development which leads to independence and self-awareness, without any other influences and challenges, only around the age of twenty-one.<sup>12</sup>

Steiner describes the flaring up awareness of independence and personality of a three year old as a "luciferic impact". (See part one of this paper in Journal Nr. 50). The education at home and at kindergarten can provide the necessary balance through long and intense care for the child's physical and emotional wellbeing.

A second impact on the child's independence can be witnessed at the age of nine or ten, this is described as an "ahrimanic influence". The "condensing of the sense of Self"<sup>13</sup> becomes so immediate that the child experiences some inner turmoil and struggles to find a new relationship to the world: The child's secure connection to people and nature is replaced by a sense of standing apart from everything else. The surrounding world is looked upon in a new way and the child has a desire to understand everything anew. This may lead a nine year old to exclaim, after a long day of strenuous building work, *"Now I understand what it meant for Adam and Eve to be driven from Paradise!"*

In 1941, nine year old Tomas Tranströmer was moved by the war reports in the papers. *"I was a skinny nine year old who bent over the map of the war in the newspaper: There were black arrows to represent the German tank divisions. The arrows pointed into*

11 See: Steiner, R. GA 311, 15<sup>th</sup> August 1924

12 See: Steiner, R. GA 150, Augsburg, 14<sup>th</sup> March 1913

13 Ibid.

*France and they also lived in our bodies as parasites, in the bodies of Hitler's enemies. I counted myself in with them. I have never since been involved in politics with such heartfelt passion. It would be ridiculous to speak of the political involvement of a nine year old but this was not about politics as such. The thing was, I took part in the war."*<sup>14</sup>

As the child is shaken by inner turmoil, she focuses not only on what is going on in the world, but she also asks the people around her new questions, especially the parents and teachers. The child's inquiring gaze does not allow for the adults' words to be felt as a given and honourable unity but he asks deeper questions, he asks for the inner motive, the mental orientation. Once, Tarnströmer's teacher talked in front of the class about his animal drawings. This was seemingly meant well, but some very different layers were affected in the boy's sense of Self. He did not want to be called a nerd, he did not want to be different. *"The teacher said that my drawings were very "special" and I panicked again. There were some insensitive grown-ups who constantly wanted to expose me as "different". My peers were more tolerant. I was neither liked nor hated."*<sup>15</sup>

In the transition of the rubicon, the child's soul is absolutely open in its innermost core and asks the adult for a solid ground, for a strong moral humanity. The depth of a

human encounter during the rubicon affects not only the feelings felt in the soul and the acquired skills. The encounter with the teacher also affects the very sense of Self and therefore has such a deep and far-reaching effect on life's temporal organism: The pupil's questions are a deep calling for the balance of humanity in this transition at the age of nine / ten which binds the children closer to the physical body from now on. If we as teachers recognize this quality in the children's questions, then we can approach them with motherly and fatherly kindness.

In the openness of the rubicon, as described above, the child's Self "listens through" all the layers of events. Therefore, not only the actual lessons but also our everyday encounters and conversations can leave a lasting impression: What is our attitude and language when we greet the children? How do we answer their questions? It can happen that a child asks "her question" immediately and unexpectedly after the lesson. *"Last year you told us that God made the world and now in year four you are telling us about the giant Ymir. Which one of these stories is really true?"* The child's question is real and deep and the teacher's answer will be heard with exactly the same depth and sincerity; not just its actual content but also the manner in which it is offered. It is exactly this "solemn tact"<sup>16</sup> which helps the young person to cross the rubicon and to acquire far reaching human qualities.

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14 See footnote 2.

15 See footnote 2.

16 See footnote 1.

## The situation of class teachers worldwide

First results of a survey conducted by the International Forum

*Ricarda Kindt, Tomáš Zdražil*

In its meeting of last November the International Forum for Steiner/Waldorf Education looked at the situation of the class teachers in Waldorf schools. Rudolf Steiner thought that it was paramount for class teachers to stay with their classes for long as possible if education were to be meaningful. (cf. *Journal of the Pedagogical Section*, Michaelmas 2013, p. 28-52). From these indications arose the eight-year class teacher principle, with class teachers ideally teaching at least a two-hour main lesson every day from classes 1 to 8.

For some time now and in many places, changes have been introduced to this principle. Apart from measures that aim at supporting class teachers during those eight years – these include assistant teachers, the swapping of main lessons or team-teaching models – there are also schools where the class teacher period has been radically curtailed. In the Netherlands we also see situations where two class teachers “share” one class, each teaching on different days of the week.

In order to gain a clearer picture of the class teacher situation in the various countries and to inspire a fact-based discussion of the subject the Forum decided to carry out a survey. This international survey provides insight into how the class teacher principle is handled in Waldorf Schools across the world. How many schools are there that actually cut the class-teacher period short? What kind of middle school models do these schools use instead?

In July 2013 the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum sent out questionnaires to all

members of the International Forum, with the exception of those in Germany, a similar survey having been conducted there in 2012. We asked Forum members to pass on the questionnaires to the Waldorf schools in their country. In a separate response form the replies of the various schools were summarized and returned in a separate response form. Ricarda Kindt, a student at the *Freie Hochschule Stuttgart*, coordinated the survey and summarized the results as part of the dissertation for her Masters' degree. The questionnaire consisted of nine quantitative and two wider questions.

We received replies from 25 countries. Many countries sent a gratifyingly high number of answers back while the participation in others was rather low. The results reveal that there are countries where all Waldorf schools strive to adhere strictly to the eight-year class teacher time, with some even offering nine years. These countries are mostly to the east of Germany: Japan, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Hungary. The other extreme, that is to say countries where none of the schools operate the eight-year principle, is found primarily in the west, with Belgium and Holland being the main representatives. In the Netherlands, 53 out of 72 Waldorf schools took part in the survey, in Belgium 9 out of 15. In Australia, New Zealand and Switzerland 70 to 80 per cent of Waldorf Schools have reduced the class-teacher period. In Denmark, France, Norway and Austria around fifty per cent still have eight years of class teaching. Italy and Germany have introduced shorter

class-teacher periods but only in a very low percentage of schools.

What do Waldorf schools do that do not adhere to the eight-year principle? In many of them the class teacher period is reduced to six years and a new middle school teacher is introduced from class 7. In a few rare cases the classes are led by a team. Some countries, especially in Norway (16 Waldorf schools) use a seven-year class teacher period.

There are also countries where class teachers stay for even less than six years with their classes. While this is the exception in most countries, it applies in more than half of the schools in the Netherlands and in Belgium. In the Netherlands there are schools where the class teacher changes every two years between classes one and six, which means that the children have three different class teachers during that time. In the schools that operate this system it is not an emergency solution but part of their pedagogical concept. In these cases one can say that the schools have abandoned the class-teacher system altogether.

Why is it that some countries introduce such changes? Reasons vary from one country to the next, but also from school to school. The survey was mainly conducted to find out what such schools offer instead and not so much to find out their reasons for abandoning the classic system. The evaluation of the results led us, however, to look more closely at the circumstances in two countries. The first of them is Australia where the decision to reduce the class teacher period has to do with the state school system. The other country is Holland where we frequently find, in addition to reduced class-teacher periods, the phenomenon alluded to earlier that two teachers "share" one class.

Many Waldorf schools in Australia have no upper school. Once the students have completed their Waldorf programme they transfer to state schools. But as the high schools start with class seven or eight in many parts of the continent, it can be difficult to secure a place in secondary schools for students who join later. This puts pressure on parents to register their children as early as possible in these schools. Children also prefer to start high school from the beginning rather than join at a later stage. As a result many pupils leave the Waldorf schools once they have finished class 6.

Schools that try to implement the eight-year class teacher period nevertheless face the problem that their student numbers drop drastically in classes 7 and 8. Many schools therefore decide for financial as much as for pedagogical reasons to reduce the class teacher period to six or seven years. It often happens that Waldorf schools with no upper school lack not only the facilities and equipment to teach class seven or eight main lessons such as chemistry or physics, but they also lack the expertise in such subjects that upper school colleagues might have provided. In Waldorf schools with an upper school it is clearly easier to uphold eight years of class teaching.

In the Netherlands the government appears to exert a very strong influence on Waldorf schools. In 1998, the state decreed that all Waldorf schools in the Netherlands receiving state funding must introduce a "middle school" with teachers who have higher qualifications than their colleagues in the "lower school". Schools which only had a lower school were forced to send their pupils to state schools from class 7 onwards. In the wake of this regulation all Waldorf schools in Holland reduced their class teacher time to six years.

Today, only 24 of the 52 responding Waldorf schools in Holland offer a system with one and the same class teacher keeping a class for six years. In the remaining 29 Waldorf schools, the class teacher changes once or twice during that time.

Another interesting novelty in the Netherlands are the shared classes or "duo" classes mentioned before. In this system two class teachers form a partnership, each teaching main lesson on different days of the week. All the 52 responding schools operate such "duo" classes at times. The reason quoted was that the majority of class teachers in Holland are women (95%) and that many of these women teachers seek part-time employment so that they can coordinate their work with their families. The prob-

lem of not being able to find enough class teachers who are prepared to work full-time led to the introduction of the "duo" classes.

The results of this survey will be presented in detail and evaluated as part of the dissertation for a Master's degree that investigates the changing approaches to the class teacher principle in European Waldorf schools. The International Forum will continue to focus on these results and the class teacher question will form the main agenda item at their next meeting, which is scheduled to take place in Dornach from 29 May to 1 June 2014. The discussion will aim at strengthening, everywhere in the world, the image of the class teacher, which plays such a central part in Waldorf education.

## An International Forum

by *Florian Osswald*

translated by *Karin Smith*

### **The Global Village**

I have heard a number of times that the world is a global village. It is exciting to think of the world as a global village where everyone lives together. In this expression, the village and the world are really close. But our enthusiasm soon wears thin because living together can be a challenge; and how much more challenging might it be when people from various cultures live together?

The image of the global village came back to me when I started writing this article about the International Forum. People from all over the world meet twice a year for it, usually in Europe. They meet because Rudolf Steiner's educational impulse is a concern which really touches their hearts. Their meeting and mutual sharing enables them to bring about an awareness for the worldwide school movement. Each member creates his or her own global village filled with the concerns and issues of the various world regions. To experience themselves as part of the global village gives each member the strength to become active and to organize help for others whenever it is needed.

Already in the first few years after the founding of the first Waldorf School, there were some people who had the idea to build a "village". They wanted to gain an overview of the school movement in order to study its development. Some teachers cooperated in teams which included several schools and the first national associations were soon founded. A few individuals took up nationwide tasks. The more experienced teachers supported newly founded schools. There was

also the idea of an "International School Association" but this was never implemented.

### **The Dynamics of School Foundations**

The first Waldorf School was founded in Stuttgart in 1919. An educational impulse thus found its first form. Today, we are able to study the development of this impulse over a timespan of nearly one hundred years. Many new schools have since been founded all over the globe. If we look at the expansion of the schools in time and space, we notice disorderly, dynamic and unstable growth. In Buenos Aires, a kindergarten opened in 1939 and became the basis for the first Argentinian school. The New York Steiner School was set up as early as 1925; by then there were only three established schools in Germany. Even today we can only partially predict how Steiner's impulse is going to spread. At the moment, strong movements are particularly active in China, Brazil and Israel. Sometimes, new schools almost flood a country; this happened for instance in Romania in the 1990s. Numerous schools were founded there within a short time but only a few survived.

The first "village" in Stuttgart was followed by many more "villages". Today, the international school movement is a network of villages and it is just as dynamic and unstable as any other network. This is why we need people who consciously try to gain an overview of the movement. The International Forum is a place where a global village is being built anew at each meeting. We might have a crucial experience during this building process: Steiner's educa-

tional impulse does not focus on a particular culture. It is an impulse for everyone and in all cultures; it is a global human impulse. I carry "my village", the village I am from, with me to the meetings of the International Forum and there it can be transformed into a global village by mutual work and sharing. For this, I have to leave the familiar ground and leap into the new, into "the global" which is continuously in the process of being created.

### Teaching Practice – From Routine to Origin

The International Forum takes place because people feel connected to Steiner's educational impulse. But not only the International Forum is able to build a global village; it can be built everywhere.

How does the change from "my village" to the global village happen?

Each school has a "village character". People get together in a school because they want to provide child-centred education. The conditions for the change are already given if the child stands at the centre, because children are first and foremost world citizens. Their life in the village makes of them village citizens. They grow up in a specific culture and thus become individuals. But in the heart of the individual lives the true human being. By becoming individuals we find again the global village which was present at our birth.

It is the school's task to encourage children's inner stability, but also to give them the courage to face instability. In daily teaching we take care of both these elements.

Today, educational issues often focus on teaching methods but the refreshing origins of the

methods, the intuitions, are forgotten. Without the ideas of intuition, the methods are in danger of fossilization and become mere routine. Imagine you want to overcome an obstacle. Perhaps you have found certain methods to be particularly helpful. You might use the one or the other method and you have probably perfected it in the course of time. You have been really busy to improve your method until it has become "best practice". However, Dick Fosbury surprised the world in 1968 with a new High Jump technique. He invented a completely new sequence for the jump, a real help for many athletes. Fosbury did not improve the existing technique, instead he had an intuition and developed a new method from it.

### Global = moral spiritual

Practice makes perfect. We have to jump again and again in order to improve our technique; this will lead to real expertise. It is our task to encourage expertise. Today's children are not yesterday's children, they call for teaching methods which are relevant now. Perhaps this means that we have to find a new technique for our jumps. In order to do so, we need to let the familiar go and endure the anguish of change. We might then move on unsteady ground. Everything new is a risk and is calling for a leap of faith. In this sense, every one of us, every lesson, every school is on the way to the global village. The International Forum is only one of the places where the change from village to global village can happen. The International Forum is founded on what lives in teaching. This corresponds with Steiner's words at the beginning of a lecture series for teachers: *"Dear friends, we can accomplish our work only if we do not see it as simply a matter of intellect or feeling, but, in the highest sense, as a moral spiritual task."*<sup>1</sup>

1 Steiner, R. (1996) *The Foundations of Human Experience*. Anthroposophic Press. Translated by Robert F. Lathe and Nancy Whittaker.

## Resurgence in China

*Ben Cherry*

Waldorf education is in its tenth year in Mainland China. The first school opened in Chengdu in September 2004 with five children in the kindergarten and a home school primary class for three of the teachers' children. Now there are about 300 children and long waiting lists and the school is preparing to continue on into high school (grade 9) this September.

There are now thought to be more than 300 kindergartens and 36 grade school initiatives throughout China, basing their work on Waldorf education. Added to this are six 3-year part-time early childhood teacher training courses, five for primary school teachers and one for high school, along with courses in curative education, school administration, the arts and even a pioneer full-time teacher training course in Beijing.

What is the reason for this extraordinary development? And how can one ensure its quality?

One way of coming to an answer is to see it in the context of what is bubbling up in all aspects of life in China, in this time which the new president has called the Renaissance of the Chinese dream. For many, it is a time of optimism and exploration, as the country races to catch up with the standard of living in other prosperous countries. There is an energy in the land and the people, a feeling of almost unlimited possibilities.

One experiences the effects of this massive will for change in many ways. The earth is being dug up and transformed into concrete, expressways and high rise buildings at a rate that must be unprecedented in human his-





tory. Whole new cities are being created, high speed trains are being built throughout the country, and airports are continuously expanding. It is rare to fly on a domestic flight that is not full and it is equally rare to take off on time because of the congestion. Meanwhile, traffic on the roads grows like water pouring into a dam; and people are leaving the countryside, seeking employment in the cities, often in the building sites or factories.

Socially, culturally, economically and physically, China is on the move. In most places, no sooner is an estate complete than it is integrated into a thriving community of shops, people and street life. The environmental consequences are immense, of course, as is becoming ever more apparent. Water pollution and the smog and dirt in the big cities are huge problems. It is like a dream that is wonderful, frightening and inexorable. For those who have money, there is a growing awareness of aesthetics in architecture and life-style, and a plethora of self-development courses. For those who do not, the future is bleak. The divide between the super-wealthy and the poor grows day by day.

One can ask how this – and the growth of an education movement which develops independent thinking – can be taking place within a political system that is still communist. Here one enters into the subtle intricacies of the way of thinking that has evolved through China's long, dramatic history.

Though the government can be ruthless, as is well-documented in the West, it is also pragmatic and, because of its hold on power, can focus on the long term more than many other governments. Chinese people too are pragmatic. Generally they accept the way things are and get on with their lives. The essential attitude is one of free initiative – but

beware the consequences if something goes wrong or someone complains to the government, for the penalties can be severe!

If it were not for this, Waldorf education could hardly have begun, for out of the 36 initiatives which are working hard to develop themselves, only two are recognised by their local or regional governments! In Australia or the West, such a situation could never occur, for the relationship with the law is very different. Through long experience people in China have developed the art of moving in the space between the legal and the illegal!

Several schools have been obliged by the government to leave their properties, and this has brought considerable hardship, but so far none has actually closed down. Water has many ways of reaching the sea, and the carriers of the schools too find different pathways for achieving their goals. In one situation the same police officer who supervised the expulsion of a school from one property later found them in another, not far away, and simply told them to obey the laws! In other situations parents or benefactors in high positions have ensured that a school is protected. Relationship is what counts, along with courage, creativity and an abiding faith in what one is doing.

Another example of this mobile way of thinking is that over the past two years Waldorf teachers, whether from legal or not-so-legal schools, have been invited to participate in the annual conferences of an organisation called New Education, which is led by a professor of education who is a senior member of the national government. Each conference is organised in conjunction with the local department of education. Two years ago I gave one of the keynote lectures, alongside professors from Japan and the

United States representing other educational ideas. This year Christof Wiechert, previously from Dornach, gave an address, and both times a group of us gave workshops. Each time we were welcomed with generosity and gratitude.

From encounters such as these, it is clear that the central government is watching what is evolving in the Waldorf movement with interest – and, no doubt, caution. It is part of a wider research into educational methods worldwide, into which they are investing a lot of resources, for there is a growing discontent with the existing exam-oriented paradigm. In the public domain, meanwhile, on the internet and in magazines, there is a lot of discussion about Waldorf education, ranging from enthusiasm and gratitude to accusations of it being a religion.

China is forever a land of opposites. In some ways there is more openness to new ideas than in many Western countries, and a freshness in people's attitudes; yet one walks on egg shells. There are people in influential po-

sitions in government, universities and business who recognise this education as a path into the future which accords with the aspirations of Chinese culture, but it is no less true that if the political leaders were to decide to close it down, it would be done immediately.

The most sensitive areas – and all foreign visitors who represent Anthroposophy or Waldorf education need to know this – are religion, politics, safety in schools and the infiltration of Western cultural values. One can speak about the spirit (though there are many ways of doing so) and there is a genuine wish in people to understand it, but one has to be very careful not to give the mistaken impression that Anthroposophy is a religion or a politically-oriented teaching. To do so would most likely bring about the closing of all the schools.

The fact that Chinese culture is based on philosophy rather than religion, however, provides a safe ground on which to work with Anthroposophy. It becomes a training in tact



and in thinking and speaking exactly, and it is always a delight to discover resonances between the two streams of spiritual knowledge, ancient and modern. In my view, it is to a large extent this resonance which is at the basis of the growing interest, not only in Waldorf education, but Spiritual Science.

In a remarkable way, people's encounter with Anthroposophy is also contributing to the growing longing in China to reconnect with what has been buried and almost forgotten on a cultural level. One could say perhaps that something is rising up spiritually from beneath the surface, just as in the cities the bulldozers, drills and cranes are raising up what is buried underneath the ground.

In a lecture he gave 102 years ago, the second in the series called *Earthly and Cosmic Man*, Rudolf Steiner spoke of how the time would come when 'imprisoned Atlantean spirituality' would rise up in China and amaze and shake the Western world, challenging the West's sense of its own cultural and spiritual tasks. His attitude towards this resurgence of the power of a distant past is that we should meet it out of a spirit of mutual respect.

Often I have wondered whether what he was referring to has taken place already – in the diaspora of Buddhist monks who fled Tibet in the fifties of the last century, or in the cultural, social and ecological revolution of the sixties, which began in the United States. Inspirers of this back-to-nature movement were profoundly influenced by ancient Chinese writings, and for many in the West this and Tibetan Buddhism have become more potent sources of wisdom than Christianity.

It could be that this is what he meant; but something is nevertheless rising up in China now too and my experience is that many in

the West (and the South) look upon it with amazement and fear. This time it is not only a cultural resurgence, but an economic and political one. It has power.

What is happening now in the meeting of Anthroposophy with Chinese culture is very important. Anthroposophy, of course, is not the only fruit of Western culture to transcend materialism, but it is one of the few that unites spiritual revelation with clear, practical application in facing the problems of our world today.

The longing in China is not only for an education which recognises the fullness of humanity in 'spirit, soul and body' – or, to use the traditional Chinese way of expressing the same thing, 'heaven, human being and earth'; it is also for ways of growing food, learning to work together and healing the environment, based on the same wholistic approach. The need for all aspects of the healing power of the anthroposophical way of seeing is urgent.

In all these areas, what is rising up culturally from the past can meet what Anthroposophy brings from the future. In both streams there is a sense of wholeness, and each activity and aspect is an expression of it. Both recognise the central importance of the human being and of the arts in all their forms, and in both there is a sense of how life itself can become an art.

This is the way of the so-called 'junzi' (pronounced like juindze), which is so much at the heart of Chinese cultural aspirations. Traditionally the word has been translated into English as the 'superior man'. I find it more appropriate to use Rudolf Steiner's expression, the 'ethical individual' – or even the 'becoming human being'. Through subtle correspondences such as this, these two great currents of world evolution can find a com-

mon pulse, and bring something fresh and new to birth.

I believe I can speak for others with whom I work in China in saying that this ideal works strongly in our will. Everything we do in the China Waldorf Forum, the network which takes on the task of trying to safeguard and enhance the quality of the Waldorf school movement in China and to keep the connection alive with the Pedagogical Section in Dornach and the outside world, is connected with this overall goal.

What is extraordinary is that the situation in China requires us to develop new ways in almost everything we do, for we have been advised that it would be politically unwise to set up a centralised association to control what is happening. Such respect as we in the coordinating group have from the schools comes, not from our position, but the relationships we form and the example we try to set of working together.

Much has been achieved, for example, by a grass-roots approach to creating a curriculum appropriate for China. Research seminars, organised by members of the CWF working group, take place in different regions several times a year, focusing on different aspects of teaching. Each seminar is led by a group of more experienced Chinese teachers and all teachers from the region are invited to participate. This collaboration is then continued in meetings organised by the teachers themselves.

In the same spirit, our annual conference last summer had the theme of Diversity within Unity. What many participants discovered was that the magic key for the development of quality comes not from just following or obeying (though rules and expectations have their place), but from the realisation of one's

own inner source of self-change. It is through the ethical individual that creative change can come. The more clearly we unite in our ideals and goals, the more individual we can become in our ways of working towards them.

This is the inner task of the China Waldorf Forum and the reason why it is called a forum rather than an association. It has the potential of creating a space in which we can recognise the becoming human being in ourselves and each other, and from this centre of inner autonomy and responsibility go back to our work in our separate locations.

It is far from easy and it depends on many people with teaching experience and human-artistic quality working with us, but such is our goal. Most astonishing of all is the thought that the time may come when, through what Anthroposophy carries and what it illumines in Chinese culture, it can come to realisation on a much larger scale in society, as a new expression of the ancient culture, in forms and concepts appropriate to today.

*Benjamin Cherry has been connected with the Waldorf movement in Mainland China since its birth (and pre-birth processes) ten and more years ago. Prior to that (and still now, where time allows) he worked with Waldorf schools and training centres in Thailand, Japan, Korea and Taiwan. He currently spends nine months of each year in the region and has been the Coordinator of the China Waldorf Forum since it was set up in September 2010 at a gathering of representatives from Chinese Waldorf schools, with the help of Claus-Peter Roeh from the Pedagogical Section in Dornach and Nana Goebel from the Friends of Rudolf Steiner's Art of Education in Berlin. If you have experience to offer and wish to help, you can contact the forum at: [cwforum@126.com](mailto:cwforum@126.com)*

## Curricula in Kiswahili, Arab, French ...

Alain Denjean

translated by Karin Smith

Meeting people who think, feel and live in different ways than oneself is one of the most fulfilling aspects of staying abroad. It is good to realise that we are all different from each other, despite sharing some common ground. To witness lifestyles which are unlike my own, to understand that other people emphasize different values and to watch social interactions is enlivening, refreshing and makes me ask questions; including questions about the education of these "other" people. One of the relevant questions for Waldorf teachers is: Does Waldorf education, as a universal form of education, need various curricula; does it need curricula which are aligned with the distinctive characteristics of the ethnic and cultural groups which practice Waldorf education?

The basic leitmotif of the Waldorf curriculum differs considerably from general 20<sup>th</sup> Century curricula because it is based on the free spiritual life and has little to do with commonly known curricula. Which are the characteristics of the Waldorf curriculum? One of them is the teacher's freedom. The teacher is absolutely free to use whichever method he or she considers best. *„The other day, I had the opportunity to take a visitor into a first grade writing and reading lesson. This subject can be taught in a hundred different ways. In the Waldorf School, teachers are given absolute freedom in their application of basic principles. Education is an altogether free art. The subjects might remain the same, but teachers may present*

*their content in their own individual ways and according to the specific character of their pupils“.* (Rudolf Steiner, *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy, Lecture given 26<sup>th</sup> September, 1921 in Dornach; GA 304*)

This shows that the curriculum has to be unified because *“the subjects might remain the same”*, but the teacher and the students vary: *“teachers may present their content in their own individual ways and according to the specific character of their pupil.”* This means that, within the art of teaching, the *manner* of teaching “the same” is more important than what we are used to. Therefore, the crucial aspect is the artistic methodology. The art of teaching is based on the qualities found today, on actual reality, just as any other form of art. The curriculum addresses the teachers' and pupils' natural artistic qualities. Therefore, the curriculum has more to do with the artistic process than with the teaching of knowledge.

If we study the foundations of Waldorf education, we quickly realize how Steiner treated the idea of curriculum in a differentiated way. In the essay “The Educational Foundation of the Waldorf School”<sup>1</sup> and in “Practical Course for Teachers”<sup>2</sup> he describes the curriculum from various angles.

There is the “proper curriculum”<sup>3</sup> which is based on the particular needs of the various

1 In “Dear Children”, GA 298

2 GA 294 and 295

3 In GA 298, Steiner uses the term “proper curriculum” and in GA 294 he calls it the “ideal curriculum”.

age groups and which is therefore universally valid for our time.

Furthermore, there is also "our curriculum" which is the result of the "ideal curriculum"<sup>4</sup> and the "compromise". In order to gain permission to run a school, Rudolf Steiner had to develop a curriculum which matched the state curriculum at three year intervals. This was considered a compromise. Steiner was free to design the curriculum for the time between the points of correspondence in whichever way he chose. This rule did not lead to the death of Waldorf education, thanks to the fact that the "free teachers" were able to teach their pupils the skills required by the education authority.

The individual classes are the third level of the curriculum. Even though the "proper" or "ideal" curriculum aligns with the children's developmental phases, some of the content had been designed for the actual classes<sup>5</sup>. This means that the school system, within which a school is operating, needs to be taken into account. In Germany, primary schooling then took eight years and it does so still today. The curriculum is based on this system. In other countries, for example the US, primary schooling takes seven years; we therefore need to find ways to change a curriculum designed for eight years into one for seven years.

In summing up, we can see that the Waldorf curriculum has a three level structure. It is a being with a spirit, a soul and a body. The "proper" or "ideal" curriculum is based on the spiritual cognition of today's people. It contains, just like an archetypal plant, every single detail, all real plant forms, as it were. Its universal aspect includes within itself all the

variations which the individual cultural groups can or may develop. Further, the "class curriculum" is "embodied" in people's actual lives and in the lives of groups of people all over the world. Between these two aspects is the "compromise curriculum", "our curriculum", like the soul, like a Janus head, a pendulum between the two poles. Its artistic methodology enables the two sides to meet.

The implementation of such a curriculum requires an extraordinary flexibility by the teacher. She or he can achieve this only by artistic means. The absolute freedom of the teacher, as mentioned above, is the only guarantee for the effectuation of the Waldorf curriculum. The teacher needs to feel free to explore the spiritual foundations of the curriculum day by day, to put it into practice according to his or her insight. If this does not happen, the curriculum first becomes a worn out path, then tradition and finally a mere list of norms which have to be adhered to. However, the absolute freedom is in danger of turning into arbitrariness if the teacher forgets the following: *„For, mostly what is understood by free spiritual life is a structure in which people live, where each one crows his own cock-a-doodle-doo from his own dung heap – excuse the somewhat remarkable picture – and in which the most incredible consonances come about from the crowing. In reality, in free spiritual life, harmony comes about through and through, because the spirit, not the single egoists, lives – because the spirit can really lead its own life over and above the single egoists. There is, for example, – one must already say these things today – a Waldorf School spirit definitely there for our Waldorf School in Stuttgart that is independent of the body of teachers, – into which the body of teachers*

4 GA 294 and 1. and 6. September 1919

5 Explained in the seminars, GA 295 and often in the conferences, GA 300

*grows, and in which becomes more and more clear that possibly the one can be more capable or less capable, but the spirit has a life of its own,, (Rudolf Steiner, The Art of Lecturing, Lecture given 12<sup>th</sup> October, 1921 in Dornach; GA 339).*

The question which I asked at the beginning of this paper, "do we need several curricula according to the various world cultures?" has to be asked in a different way. The real question is, "how is the curriculum implemented by the various cultures?" An exchange of thoughts and ideas between Waldorf teachers worldwide can have a tremendously enriching effect on one's own teaching practice. This enlivening exchange can start with discussions with close colleagues in our own school and expand to include teachers in other countries and those who speak different languages.

Not long ago, a colleague who teaches in German pointed out to me that she discusses the character of Dietrich von Bern in the *Nibelungenlied* with her year ten pupils especially because he embodies an idol for young people: He didn't use the victory over his enemies to increase his power and self-confidence but he rather tried to honour the enemy and with him, create a better world. Now, she said with delight, this very same attitude she found in the recently deceased Nelson Mandela. In her joy I saw the wealth of the curriculum which does not state to study the *Nibelungenlied* with South African students but rather offers every culture an open door to study anthropological topics which lead the students' souls to further development at the right time.

This does not mean that everything has to be created anew by each culture. Some topics are universally relevant, always and everywhere. However, they have to become true experiences. One of my colleagues told me how she talked with her grade 4 class about the horizon. A pupil stated quite rightly that everyone sees their own horizon because none can stand in exactly the same spot as someone else. Another pupil replied that if one person stood on top of another one, they would see the same horizon. A third child, however, said that there must be a slight difference because the one on top would be positioned higher up. The teacher who told me this was very happy about this discussion among the pupils because the following morning she could introduce the terms zenith and nadir with ease. To experience the coordinate system as such is possible in every country and in every school.

Another colleague showed me his blackboard chalk drawing for year two and explained that shadows are not yet important because the children at the age of eight or nine perceive the soul qualities of a landscape rather than a physical space dominated by perspective. He told me that this is important with regards to story telling and a different set of questions can thus emerge from the children than if the blackboard drawings were completely realistic.

Conversations with senior Waldorf teachers frequently show that something has changed within them during their teaching years: the Proteus-like variety of the curriculum lives with them and vice versa; in Kiswahili, German or Russian.

## Waldorf Education and Teacher Training in an International Context: New Challenges and Developments

*Peter Lutzker*

The increasingly rapid expansion of Waldorf education throughout the world can be considered one of the most significant developments in its entire almost one hundred year history. In countries ranging from Iraq to India, from Mexico to Kyrgyzstan, new schools are being founded and countless initiatives are on the way. Considering the fact that in China alone, more than 35 Waldorf schools and 300 kindergartens now exist, it is evident that Waldorf education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can only be perceived and addressed within a global context. These extraordinary and exciting developments also present a wide range of new challenges and tasks; most obviously for the pioneering teachers and parents in these countries who are initiating these developments, but also for those who have had the privilege of working in countries in which, over the course of almost a century, practices and traditions have been built upon and developed.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, one of the keys to the further development of Waldorf education will lie in the nature of the dialogue that takes place between those educators who are presently creating and developing new Waldorf institutions in their respective countries and those educators who have been working within longstanding Waldorf traditions. The quality of this dialogue will depend on the mutual respect and genuine interest which each of the partners bring to these discussions. The subjects of these discussions will necessarily include a wide range of themes, ranging from the adaption of key aspects of the curriculum to the specific cultural and

historical traditions of a country, to developing appropriate structures which reflect the individual needs and requirements of a school, to the question of what the study of Anthroposophy and Waldorf pedagogy means in an international framework.

With respect to the internationalization of the Waldorf curriculum, the Pedagogical Section has recently initiated a process in which a group of experienced teachers have been working together in trying to ascertain and describe those 'essentials' of Waldorf education which could present a basis for teachers in countries throughout the world to design their own curriculums, addressing the specific traditions and requirements of their respective regions. Such essentials thus involve those elements that constitute the underlying Anthroposophical and anthropological basis of Waldorf education and not curricular choices which will invariably be rooted in specific languages, cultures and traditions. This work is done in the spirit of a dialogue in which the mutual exchange of ideas and experiences can become fruitful for all the participants. In the course of the next few years, a series of articles addressing these questions for different age groups and in different subjects will be published in English, German and Spanish and will also be available on the website of the Pedagogical Section.

Regarding teacher education, the Pedagogical Section in Dornach and *Die Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners* in Berlin, have each seen an increasingly pressing



worldwide need for an intensive and deeply-grounded training in Waldorf education, which would be conducted in English and run by an experienced and officially accredited academic institution. For this reason, they asked the *Freie Hochschule Stuttgart/Seminar für Waldorfpädagogik* in Stuttgart, Germany, whether they could also offer their fully accredited German Master of Arts Programme for Steiner School class and subject teachers in **English**. Starting in February, 2015 and concluding in July, 2016 a full-time course of studies will be offered in Stuttgart, consisting of core elements of Anthroposophy, pedagogical anthropology, child and adolescent psychology and subject methodology, combined with an intensive artistic training in music, speech, Eurythmy, painting, drawing and sculpting. The faculty for the new International Masters Programme consists of both a number of professors and instructors who already teach at the Freie Hochschule including Peter Lutzker, Stephan Ronner and Tomas Zdrzil as well as a num-

ber of guest instructors including Florian Oswald, Martyn Rawson, Claus Peter Röh, Christof Wiechert and Dorit Winter. For more information see the website: [www.freie-hochschule-stuttgart.de](http://www.freie-hochschule-stuttgart.de)

The beginnings of Waldorf Education had its roots in the humanistic and spiritual traditions of Central Europe. In the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as this pedagogical impulse slowly began to spread through the world, it gradually began to take on new international dimensions and forms. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is now no longer any question that Waldorf education has become a worldwide impulse. The fact that children are now being offered the opportunity of going to Waldorf kindergartens and schools in places where it would have previously seemed inconceivable, is truly an extraordinary development. For the sake of those children and for coming generations of Waldorf pupils, it is up to us as Waldorf educators to make the most of these new possibilities.

## Agenda

### 2014

- June 13 – 15 RE Teacher's Conference at Trinity  
'The health giving element in the curriculum  
and the school services'
- June 15 – 19 Ausbildungsseminar Religion  
(only in German)
- September 12 – 14 Tagung zur Allgemeinen Menschenkunde  
(only in German)
- October 26 – 29 Conference for Educational Support Teachers  
(in German, English and Spanish)

### 2015

- February 13 – 15 Meditative Praxis (only in German)
- March 30 – April 3 Transitions in Childhood from Birth to 14 Years:  
Significance, Challenges, Consequences  
Tasks for Educators and Teachers
- October 5 – 9 International Conference for Mathematics  
Teachers

### 2016

- March 28 – April 2 10<sup>th</sup> World Teachers' Conference