

■ ANTHROPOSOPHY IN THE WORLD

Norway: 'School of Nature' Opens

Creative Forces in the Human Being and in Nature

The initiative 'The School of Nature', under the umbrella of the Anthroposophical Society in Norway, began with a week-long summer course from July 16-24, 2005. With seven instructors, 20 participants from Denmark, Germany, Norway, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland and the Czech Republic gathered capacity-creating experiences on the theme 'Creative Forces in the Human Being and in Nature'.



From inner preparation to hands-on dealing with nature (instructor Frode Barkved)

How can human consciousness, which has become abstract in the course of history, connect again to nature? How can the human being move from understanding things outwardly to being actively creative in and with nature? How do we go from a functional (mis)use of nature to a cooperative dialogue with nature? As the course 'Creative Forces in the Human Being and in Nature' progressed, it became increasingly clear that the intended goal of 'The School of Nature' (*Anthroposophy Worldwide*, no. 8, 2004, p. 12) is in no way about a romantic 'back to nature'; nor is it the special interest of a 'green group' within the anthroposophical movement. It is rather about a universal human concern – indeed a task of the modern consciousness soul. The path that was laid out and embarked upon to serve this purpose was a path of practice, and, with consciousness-raising attentiveness in soul- and sense-experience, opened one's own experiencing self as an organ of perception for the forces at work in nature.

The course took place in Foldsae (in Fyresdal, Telemark), a former state agricultural training center. A Steiner high school (upper school) with a study concentration in agriculture and horticulture has been

developing here for the past two years.

Becoming Competent to Experience the Landscape

In the mornings, eurythmy teacher Marianne Tvedt (Norway) led us into the soul experience of 'inner and outer' by working eurythmically with vowels and consonants. After this, teacher and eurythmist Frode Barkved and physician Ursula Flatters (Sweden) complemented each other in a seminar that led into an anthroposophically deepened knowledge of world and self. The profound imagery brought by Barkved from Northern and Middle European mythology and literature, with Flatters' exercises in self-knowledge – on the backdrop of the School of Spiritual Science – took on an existential quality.

Painters Patrick Müllerschön (Switzerland) and Hannes Weigert (Norway) led us over into a painting-breathing between inner and outer, in particular on hand of Rudolf Steiner's sketch of the tree by the waterfall and the elemental beings. In the afternoons, biologist Hans-Christian Zehnter (Switzerland) and gardener Michael Seddon (Norway) led us in-

to the first steps in coming to know a landscape, right up to concrete measures for giving it shape and form.

From Dualism to Monism

The weekend included two excursions – one to the summit of the Roan, from where there was an overview of the endless breadth of Telemark's mountain massifs of primordial rock, and the other into the dark narrowness of a former copper mine.

One participant went to the heart of the matter: "For a long time we've heard about monism, but have always lived dualism. In this course we get down to business with monism in that, in dialogue with nature and with the landscape, we fell tall pine trees with chain saws but also produce biodynamic preparations." The path to this kind of limb-engaging mode of dealing with nature led via the three steps of 'truth, beauty, and goodness', through which perception and sensitivity for nature as well as for the effect of one's own activity were schooled. The threshold before a first interference in the landscape (or before the first stroke of the brush with a new color), the liberation that comes with this as well as the necessity of remaining in perceptive, respectful dialogue with nature in all further action – all this became, with awakened consciousness, competence-building experience.

Onward by Practicing

The success of the week was largely built on the collegial tuning of the course: Instead of lectures there were exercises introduced in seminar settings, so that one's own experience and thereby also the power of discernment of one's own consciousness were addressed throughout. Wanting to accompany each other in moving forward on a path of practice and learning – forwards towards nature – was experienced as a task from the start. Climbing the Roan together, beginning with a barefoot crossing of a mountain stream, was in this sense a practice of connecting the generations. | *Hans-Christian Zehnter, Dornach (Switzerland)*

¹ See Rudolf Steiner (1923): *Fall and Redemption*, Mercury Press, Spring Valley, N.Y. (GA 220) Next summer course: 2006 Further courses in preparation. Information: Hannes Weigert ph. +47 (0)32 79 0394, hannesw@frisurf.no