

■ ANTHROPOSOPHY IN THE WORLD

Norway: NatureSpirits Course at the School of Nature

## Perception that Forms Nature

20 participants came to the Rudolf Steiner School In Foldsae (near Fyresdal) for the third School of Nature course on June 30–July 8; the course was led by Hannes Weigert. It was fitting that the course took place in the Telemark's wooded landscape with its many lakes; there were encounters with elk, badgers, and more.

What moves students, couples, seniors, and individuals of all ages from around the world to undertake a trip like this? The School of Nature course uses exercises, artistic and landscape-forming creativity, conversations, and lectures to find and work with the forces active in human beings and nature. To this end, participants follow Rudolf Steiner's indication in *The Study of the Human Being* (GA 293) "that we make use of our soul life in order to approach things and observe what we experience about them."

With Dorian Schmidt—gardener, researcher, founder of the "Formative Forces Research Association, and scientific co-worker at the University of Gießen (Germany)—we practiced a more conscious step-by-step perception of the forces active in us and in nature. Dorian Schmidt has the ability to perceive etheric effects very precisely and clearly. It surprised him how strong and diverse they were for him at our location in Norway. In a humble and, at the same time, quite motivational way, he was able, by means of his own perceptual capacities, to bring the participants' observations and experiences into connection with the reality of the etheric and astral world. As a result, it was interesting to see how the observations of the participants were intense and often amazingly similar.

### Perceiving the Situation

Another active encounter with nature took place in two groups. One was led by Hans-Christian Zehntner—biologist and long time co-worker of the Natural Science Section at the Goetheanum (Switzerland)—and Michael Seddon—horticulture teacher at the "Balderskole" (Norway) and a landscape architect with international experience. In a forest area just above the conference site, the members of this group explored part of the swampy meadowlands belonging to the local Steiner school. Through pointed questions, the participants were schooled in perceiving the grounds in their own

context and developing their own plans of action. Thus drainage ditches were dug, a ford was laid out, and a major tree was freed from underbrush so that it was able to resume its special place in the landscape.

The other group—led by Frode Barkved, teacher, eurythmist, and General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in Norway; and Marianne Tvedt, eurythmy instructor at the eurythmy school in Oslo—worked with artistic forms of expression like sound, eurythmy, language, and color as they related to the effect and experience of the elements.

### To Perception of Structure

Every day, the group hiked through a soggy, swampy, mossy area to the same spot far removed from neighboring buildings. This locale—defined by granite cliffs rising around a mountain stream, with the Roan, the highest mountain in the region, as the backdrop—is surrounded by pine trees and moss; it served during the entire week as the afternoon meeting place for this group.

A shared intensive process began with a feeling of alienation and wistfulness, then led to a clear perception of structure, even harmony. Among the stopping points along this difficult-to-describe path were joint work with images of tone and movement using our voices and iron gongs; we also painted and installed meters of fabric paths through the area. In the process we were able to experience something of how we interfere with relationships in nature by imposing forms with our human perception.

After supper, the close of the day was focused around remarks by Florian Roder—author, lecturer, and co-worker at the Munich center of the Anthroposophical Society in Germany. He spoke about Rudolf Steiner's "basic exercises" and other central aspects of the anthroposophical path of schooling. Here a fundamental connection was made to our morning exercises.



*Mental references placed into a more comprehensive context of consciousness: Exchange during the School of Nature seminar*

The organizers must be thanked for their success in founding this course around the turn of this century. A rather unconscious (at best) spiritual experience of the etheric world can become more conscious for anyone willing to make the attempt and practice patiently.

### Mediation by the Rhythmic System

The capacity can thus be developed to place purely mental/intellectual references—for example, "environmental protection" or "landscape architecture"—into a more comprehensive context of consciousness. The mediator in this process is the middle, feeling realm of the human being (found in the rhythmic system where etheric effects are particularly noticeable). It is not only during the course that we should open up this realm as a field of perception for all twelve senses and make it an instrument to enter into a conscious activity appropriate to both nature and human beings. A beginning was made. Now we need to practice further!

The knowledge that other people in very different places all around this earth are similarly concerned and involved serves as a source for additional strength. | Angela Schmidt-Schwarzer and Sigfried Schwarzer, (Germany)