

# INSPIRATIONS

## For Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy, Hyderabad, India

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The Sweltering heat of summer in April makes it no easy task to have trainings of any kind in the city of Hyderabad, South India! The city is abuzz in the mornings and evenings with the rush of people travelling to their work places and back home - both places generally air cooled to keep away the heat and discomfort along with the accompanying soul moods which often borders on anger and foulness...

Yet we were – a pocket of ‘Lovers of Waldorf Education’ – daring to embrace the heat and yet managing to stay joyous and supportive of one another’s learning process. The credit largely goes to the group of teachers who had come to train us – Peter Glasby, Dan Freeman, Guy Walker and Rosemary Glasby. Hyderabad has four Waldorf initiatives – Sloka, the first Waldorf School of the city, Diksha, Prerana and Abhaya. The plan was to have a five day training module followed by a two day session on the meditative aspects of Anthroposophy.

Every morning started with the whole group of adults willingly turning into children (brats could be a closer description!) and playing out-door games led by the ever enthusiastic and never tiring

Dan Freeman. It brought the eighty odd participants together in a spontaneous manner making the teachers realize the value of such games when played with children and youngsters.



*Workshop participants playing games*

This was followed by an introduction to adolescence and sciences from an anthroposophical perspective. In those five days, Peter gradually led us into the world of the growing adolescent. It was also a lesson in understanding how the right approach to sciences can have a nurturing effect on the growing adolescent. He awakened in the participants the limitations of the purely materialistic perspective of the human being that is often portrayed from the dominant paradigm of science. The methodology of teaching the adolescent, actively working with the night to transform the lesson was practically experienced by the participants.

After the introduction we had various group work shops. Organic Chemistry and Electro magnetism - led by Peter, Bothmer Gymnastics by Dan Freeman, Lazure painting by Guy Walker and Shadow puppetry by Rosemary Glasby.



*Unloading the conference material at the venue, Abhaya School, Hyderabad, India*

The group that attended Peter's science workshop seemed to have a unity from two perspectives - their passion for sciences and their frustration at the limitations posed by the mainstream approach to it. While those with a Waldorf background grew in the depth of understanding, those new to it seemed to find space for questions that were perhaps long haunting them. As Mita expressed herself on the last day - 'I am still under the spell of Peter'. As I thought about this outburst of a deep soul movement I



*Barometric pressure being demonstrated - part of the morning lecture on Adolescence and Waldorf Sciences*

realized that one of her chief frustrations with the mainstream manner of bringing Sciences was the alienating effect it had on life...and here was a way to connect the growing adolescent to the world around through Science.

The team working with Bothmer Gymnastics made all the others feel a wee bit envious - what with all the excited screaming and laughter filling the school with life. To move and to move in a human way seems to be the need of the day. The group worked with various exercises and indoor games. Often one noticed participants limping after the session but nothing could keep them away from it.

The group with Guy Walker worked with colour exercises before getting to paint the walls of a classroom. It was fascinating to watch how harmoniously he worked on the walls - a learning in allowing the inner movement to guide the outer. Our mistakes were generously pardoned, and even more generously corrected - even if that meant repainting a whole wall. In our discussions he mentioned the need to be aware that the closer an artistic work is to the physicality of what it

represents, the farther it is from truth. At school we have begun to work with this thought actively. To distinguish the living forms from the dead forms calls for a kind of sensitivity that can only grow with time, repeated observation and inner discipline required to grow beyond personal likes and dislikes.

Rosemary's group was hardly noticed - till the last day when they put up a fantastic set of Shadow



*Principles of chemistry being demonstrated by Peter Glasby*



*Dan Freeman making a point during the Bothmer workshop*

plays. A simple cardboard refrigerator box had transformed into a large beautiful screen for the shadow play. Stories were chosen in no time, puppets made and practiced in the quiet confines of the Kindergarten. On the last day we were invited to see the shadow plays. We were spell bound by the sheer beauty and life that seemed to flow from the screen to the audience - once again a reminder of what is health giving for children.

The afternoons were filled with artistic activities - we could choose to do clay work, led by Peter and Rahul, wood work by Guy Walker and Veeru, or movement by Dan Freeman. The participants of wood work and clay work were carrying back with them tangible things at the end of the week; those who worked with movement in relationship to child development carried that back with them as an inner light - a new sensitivity towards the growing child.

This was followed by a week-end program at the Celebrity club. The two days were filled with practical as well as contemplative activities. We had an experience of 'Goethean observation', a glimpse into the spiritual influences of the heavenly worlds coupled with observation of the night skies, gymnastics and painting. Peter gave us information about the Anthroposophical society and the school of Spiritual Science. A mood of inner quiet enriched the week-end and nearly everyone felt that this was too short!

It was a very special week for all the participants who went on to their summer holiday not exhausted as a year end leaves us usually, but energized and looking forward to the coming year. We are thankful to all the trainers. Special mention needs to be made about Jayesh Pillarisetty, who not only mooted the idea but also carried a considerable part of planning and organisation for the whole week. We need more such experiences - after all who can say 'enough' to inspirations? ♦



*Rosemary Glasby with her team of shadow play participants hard at work*

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