



Interview with Anezka Janátova and Pavel Selesi

In February this year the Training Council met at the Tabor Academy in Prague. Senta Stein and Angelika Gaech used the opportunity to interview Dr Anezka Janátova and Pavel Selesi.

Senta Stein: Anezka, how did the founding of the Tabor Academy of Curative Education and Social Therapy come about?

In 1984, I came to work as a psychologist at Dr Jedlika's special needs school in Prague, a school he had founded on the Vysehrad in 1913. It is part of a home for c. 250 children and young people, mostly with physical disabilities. I enjoyed working there and was appointed head of a unit in the institution in 1991. I then talked too much about anthroposophy and was dismissed. What was I to do with the rest of my life? I wanted to work with the anthroposophical image of the human being!

Pavel, how did you come to join the initiative? You are, after all, one of the co-founders.

A.: Yes, he was heaven-sent in the truest sense of the word!

P.: That's right! I am a keen hang-glider and also take part in world cup competitions. One day I crashed and literally fell at Anezka's feet. We got on really well from the word go.

How did you fit in? You are an electrical engineer and have your own printing works?

P.: Yes, but I first became a student at the Academy and familiarized myself with anthroposophy. At the same time I was able to help with legal issues and organization, having management experience.

What legal form does the initiative have?

We are a civic society, which means that apart from training in curative education, it has also been possible for curative education and social therapy initiatives to become established under its umbrella.

It started first on the premises of the Jelicka Home?

A.: That was in 1993. Then we were given notice. But there were some very small, modest rooms in a hut. We have been in this place from 2001. The position is good and we have a lot more room. We renovated it ourselves and, as you can see, are far from finished yet!

How long does the training take?

5 years. 3 years' study at the Academy, then the students do a practical year in an anthroposophical curative education or social therapy institution abroad. They write their final paper during a fifth year in Prague.

How many students do you have at present?

A.: All courses taken together we have c. 160. But it varies enormously. Some leave, and sometimes they'll also come back again.

How do students come to you?

A.: We don't advertise.

So it's by word of mouth?

A.: Yes.

How is training at the Academy financed?

A.: We get no money from the government. The students pay tuition fees. They have to earn these themselves. They work in shops, cafes, and so on in the evenings. Most do the training not only for vocational reasons but generally are seekers biographically and go through an enormous development during their training. Seven initiatives have already been started within the Academy by students who trained here.

Thank you so much for telling us these things. We wish you continued strength and courage in your work!



Anezka Janátova, Jean-Claude Hucher, Ekkehard Fiedler and Senta Stein at the Tabor Academy in Prague (see interview on this page)

Matters concerning recognition for training courses

Due to international working conditions, there are two levels for the recognition of training centres—a *national level* where a training centre is subject to the laws that govern training and professional life in the given country, and the *Medical Section level* which concerns the quality of training in the method of anthroposophical curative education and social therapy.

The members of the International Training Group for training in anthroposophical curative education and social therapy have agreed that at Medical Section level it is a matter of developing common bases and criteria for recognition. The first condition is active collaboration and involvement in the international network which has created the International Training Group and the Training Council as its organs.

Different interests pertain when it comes to the need for recognition:

1 Students want to be sure that the training leads to a qualification that is legally recognized and that anthroposophical institutions all over the world will recognize the competence gained in their training.

2 Curative education and social therapy institutions are interested in finding staff who have completed a recognized training course in the anthroposophical method.

3 The training centres themselves are interested in getting recognition in the Medical Section network and take part in a general process of development.

4 In their dealings with authorities and other training bodies, training centres can show that they are not isolated initiatives but members of national and international training schemes.

For these aspects to be given full relevance it will be necessary to develop the criteria for recognition and comparability within the Medical Section further (so far only the beginnings have been developed in the Handbook – see Handbook 3-3) and evolved clear procedures in a consensual process.

Ruediger Grimm

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International Training Conference Kassel, May 2003

7th International Training Conference for Anthroposophical Curative Education and Social Therapy, Kassel, Germany, 7 – 10 May 2003

The theme for this year's conference was 'Conditions of life for the creative idea—methods and approaches in training'. 67 people from 18 nations attended. Following the creation of the Training Handbook in recent years, it was now a matter of sharing experiences with the Handbook. It seems that all who came found it extraordinarily enriching and stimulating to see in how many ways, and very much alive, themes can be presented. This was just as evident in the training workshops as in the many and varied examples from practice that were offered.

Ha Vinh Tho's concise daily talks also brought a deepening quality to the practice workshops that followed on them, a meditative approach that people could take with them for their own work. The group work yielded great riches by way of themes for future work. Apart from questions as to how we come to commitment through the Handbook, and establishing the remit for arbitration, numerous tasks to be taken up were also identified. These need to be sifted and put into some kind of order, and made us much aware of the need for further collaboration.

For our social evening we went to the institution in Altenschlirf and saw Michael Ende's play *The Mountebanks' Tale* at Jean-Paul School. The players had come specially for us and it was magnificent! At the end, representatives from the 18 nations each presented a rose to one of the players and Mr Venschott, their producer to say thank-you.

On the last evening, for getting to know one another, reports ranged from San Salvador in Central America to Russia and Central Asia/Kirgisia. This very much brought to life for us how far our training impulse extends around the world. Anna Meuss interpreted for us again, making a major contribution to bringing the nations together. Thank you, Anna!

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The next Training Conference will again be in Kassel, on 28 April to 1 May 2004. It will allow us to deepen experience with the triad training system even further.

Senta Stein

Conditions of life for the creative idea Ha Vinh Tho's talks in the mornings

A key motif in training is to awaken creative powers and let them take effect in a specific professional field—this is how Ha Vinh Tho introduced his daily talks, saying that under this aspect, anthroposophical training is also the forecourt of a mystery centre. Today, many urgent demands are made in training that concern everyone, e.g. the question of providing water everywhere in the world. It has become evident that old ways of thinking have led to these problems, for which they can offer no solutions. It needs a radical change in approach, an appeal to human creative powers! The focal point of Ha Vinh Tho's reflections was a verse Rudolf Steiner gave in a public lecture on the human soul and the human spirit in Berlin on 10 December 1915.¹ It refers to an important source in the human being for the development of creative powers:

'When human beings, warmly and with love,
give themselves as souls to the world,
when human beings, in light-filled reflection
win the spirit from the world,
then in soul illumined in spirit,
and in spirit sustained by soul,
the spiritual human being
in the earthly human being
will truly be revealed.'

Thinking and doing are transformed in two opposite developmental directions when people go through inner training. In our ordinary thinking, attention is caught up in sensory impressions; in meditative life, the mind follows the inner thinking process. A gesture of growing inwardness then leads to living experience of the creative processes that came before birth. Training one's thinking leads to *concentration*.

Meditative deepening of the will also takes normal conscious awareness further. The sleeping will is normally absorbed in our actions; with persistent practice it can come to inwardly real experience as an inner onlooker also involved in the action who connects the human being with his future as will becomes action. This is like an opening gesture turned towards the world, comparable to the mindfulness or attention to the little things referred to in the curative education course.²

Ha Vinh Tho related this to the question as to which elements of inner training are appropriate for the present age of the spiritual soul and can be conveyed or suggested in professional training. Preparing for the spirit-self culture as a task for the future does above all call for cleansing the astral body and hence taking the world of feeling to a higher level. Concentration as the basic gesture in training our thinking, and mindfulness as the basic gesture in training the will can certainly be key motifs in this.

Ha Vinh Tho then spoke of Buddha's teaching of love and compassion. Its concepts show marked similarity to the inner development motifs in the curative education course:

smirti – the right mindfulness
samadhi – concentration
maitri – well-meaning will, will to help
karuna – empathy
mudita – inner joy, enthusiasm for truth
upeksa – equanimity, inner steadfastness

The depth given to these terms in the talks cannot be gone into here, but it did give us a feeling for the inner effect of the Buddhist way of meditation.

The two poles – concentration directed inwards, and openness, equanimity, calm directed outwards – are the two basic requirements for creative intuitions. In meditation, the inner effort to concentrate takes us to a certain point; then being able to wait calmly is a precondition for spiritual scientific results. This reflects the two streams of

– cosmic thoughts incarnating, their content lost, though the spiritual activity remains: *offering*.

– developing powers of love for the world out of our own drive- and body-bound inner life: *purification*.

These two streams reflect the process gestures of concentration and mindfulness.

Ha Vinh Tho related these ways of inner development to the present situation as regards the gaining of insight. In meditation, the spiritual cosmos shows itself to be macrocosm, and the inner world of the human being as microcosm. These two spheres of insight have been obscured as human thinking evolved, vision of the spiritual cosmos by the theories of Newton, for instance, and by the view of humanity that arose with Darwinism. Descartes did elucidate the process of cognition as such, but obscured its spiritual aspect. In consequence, the gaining of knowledge and ethics are going apart everywhere today. In earlier civilizations it was natural to have the gaining of knowledge go hand in hand with a transformation of the person who gained it, i. e. his ethical and moral development. Today we have the paradigm of a reputedly value-free science.

The situation of our time demands that a new approach be taken of our own free will. In the sign of the spiritual soul we can freely offer our powers of thought—which have come to us thanks to the sacrifice of the powers of wisdom—with the conscious mind awake at the time and our thinking independent. Meditative practice taken up from free initiative will initially be subject to distraction through sensory perceptions and associations. Later on, more subtle interference of an emotional nature takes three main forms:



– wrong kind of orientation to the future, clinging, with addictive gesture: 'The next one will prove satisfactory.'

– rejection, fear or antipathy in an inner struggle rather than meditative peace, or

– dullness of mind that does not lead to anything.

Knowing about these obstacles and dealing with them lets the way of gaining insight in meditation come full circle and lead to mindfulness of our emotions. Freud's theory that emotions cannot be suppressed is taken into account here, for in meditation the emotional world can be penetrated with the light of conscious awareness.

The final motif Ha Vinh Tho brought was that curative education and social therapy are spheres of life where we are challenged to be mindful at all times. Though done on our own and in a quiet sphere, the basic elements of meditation are part of our training in everyday curative education and social therapy work. Study of the curative education course as a training work can in this context establish a new community.

¹ Steiner R. Aus dem mitteleuropäischen Geistesleben. GA 65.

² Steiner R. Education for Special Needs. London: Rudolf Steiner Press.

Angelika Gaech

Professional profile and mission for our time

Eighty years ago, children were in need, and young people were ready to help and go with them on their way, and there was an image of the human being through which that need could be fathomed in its depths. These three elements gave rise to the curative education course with its fundamental and sustaining insights. Gradually helpful approaches developed from that original impulse, all over the world, and disability was no longer just a misery, but a different and original way of existence and of life that can be enriching. Several generations of children profited from this healing education, grew up and lived then in suitably protected environments. Social therapy thus arose, also a worldwide movement today, appreciated, structured and differentiated. Training work in these two spheres of life led to the development of professional practice in many forms, where people could be supported in a qualitatively salutogenetic way in the developmental process of finding their identity, their I. A new culture has arisen with this, with Christian inspiration, and this has been able to serve humanity and the earth, consecrating and nourishing them.

Out of the need of our time, out of the good will of many, out of the light of Anthro-Sophia, earthly paradises were thus able to develop ...

Looking out into the world today we see the problems of our time—alienation from self, loss of meaning, addiction, escapism, depression



and violence. It happens in every street, wherever human beings cannot be the subject, the author, of their actions but become object, victims, of violence in the world. How can light and love rise again, so that there may be healing and recovery from him, for me, for us, for being truly human? This is where the great need lies today—with young people who are difficult to educate, addicts who are a tremendous potential danger, wherever denial and destruction of self takes hold of our brother because he has lost his way, lost touch with his angel; in other words, wherever the outcasts of our society are who are waiting for a new concept, content and meaning of life, calling out for it. Do we, in our golden cage, hear them? Are we prepared to meet them, too, confront them and be with them in the good way we have so far learned and used with our human brothers with special needs? Can the enormous savoir-faire we have acquired also serve this need in the world? What should our present-day training methods contribute so that coming generations, often affected by this themselves, may be enabled? Helpless though many of our colleagues and social educators who are confronted with this may feel, they do try to the best of their will and knowledge. What can we contribute? How? There is no curative education course for this, and yet many useful and valuable insights have been gained through anthroposophy!

I'll never forget the words of a former student who is working in the 'fourth' world of Switzerland: 'People with special needs teach us how to connect with other people; this basic faculty is unique and transferable; we must apply it wherever there is a need.'

What should and could our training centres do in this direction, therefore, so that—'socially therapeutic' in the widest sense—this will be one train that we do not miss in the world?

Jean-Claude Hucher

Ideas on developing commitment in training courses

Efforts to date—the Training Handbook

The 'Training in Curative Education and Social Therapy' handbook, produced in close collaboration among training centres in different countries, gives a comprehensive overview of the basics and guiding principles of anthroposophical training courses in curative education and social therapy. It also makes the wide variety of training centres in different parts of the world transparent. This transparency will make it easier in future to gain one's own and outside assessment of what one is able to offer.

With regard to training, the Training Council suggests that every training centre write a brief annual report once a year for the Training Group. Among other things it should give information on students and teaching staff, areas and offers of training, self evaluation, special events, etc. More detailed information about this will be sent to all members of the Training



Group in the next few months, and we hope that at the next Kassel conference we will already be able to build on this mutual perception. Other possibilities, e.g. reports in *Newsletter Ausbildung* or the cultivation of 'neighbourhoods' will support and further refine mutual perception in future. There is justifiable hope that this will encourage growing interest in trans-national training work under the aegis of the Curative Education and Social Therapy Council.

Mutual interest in our training mission, concerns and needs of training centres all over the world (from the Urals to Brazil, Scandinavia to South Africa) that take their orientation in anthroposophical curative education and social therapy, vary enormously, last but not least also being dependent on cultural, legal and social conditions in individual countries. This does indeed make collaboration exciting and interesting, though it is also very demanding. Committed collaboration for the future will hardly be achieved unless there is a lively interest in one another that goes beyond national borders.

Training centres' agreement to be involved and transparency as a basis for committed collaboration

Every existing training centre has its individual profile, and also exists in the context given by its country, having gained its special form of recognition on the basis of social and legal regulations. New initiatives will on the whole follow similar patterns.

A training centre enters an agreement with the International Training Group to conduct its training work according to the mission, goal and guiding principle set for itself (individual agreement) and in harmony with the principles outlined in the Training Handbook. Balance will, however, only be achieved with regard to mutual commitment once the Training Group has been able to signal agreement with both the mission and the goal and guiding principle.

Following the agreement of the Training Group, the training centre commits itself to the self-chosen mission and is prepared to give account of this and ensure the necessary transparency.

The freedom training centres have to choose and develop their training courses is counterbalanced by the recognition that must be granted by the Training Group. As collaboration continues, a training centre's individual agreement signifies that it accepts the responsibility to give account and ensure transparency. The centre guarantees that the schedule will be met. Every professional qualification is greatly helped by the sharing of knowledge and skills. This applies both to the individual student and to the training centre. A suitable commitment-based form of collaboration will thus be able to guarantee further development in the quality of our training.

Hans Egli