

Childhood, Radioactivity, and the Destiny of Japan

Kai Iruma

Dear friends of the Waldorf — and Anthroposophical Movement worldwide.

On April 2, 2012, the Japanese Association for Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Education has become a legal corporation. From now on, we will have to learn to cope with various realities of Japanese society and at the same time to deepen and strengthen our spiritual identity as an anthroposophical movement. For this reason, I have decided to write down my own thoughts that have guided me over the past year and will further be the foundation of my spiritual endeavors as I seek to work with other Japanese colleagues in our mutual attempt to serve the children's needs of our time.

I would be most grateful, if you, friends from various places of the world, would find some time to read this article and follow and share my thoughts, because I would like to be united and work with all of you in spirit.

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1. Haiku and its threefold structure

As I visited the Eurythmeum in Stuttgart around 1989 or 1990 with a Japanese friend who worked in its Ensemble at that time, Else Klink told us abruptly: “*Machen Sie Haiku und IAO, darauf kommt es an!*” I was quite surprised by this sudden remark. I did not understand why she had to say this at that moment, but it was naturally imprinted in my memory.

Last year, shortly after the great earthquake of March 11, 2011, I recalled these words of Else Klink and felt as though I finally understood what she had meant. At the World Trainers’ Meeting in Dornach in October 2011, I was able to share with the participants from the world some of my interpretation of Else’s words. As an introduction to the present article, I would like to first explain how I think the Haiku might be a bridge between the Japanese mentality and Anthroposophy.

Haiku, as most of you might know, is a Japanese traditional form of poetry, which consists of three phrases with 5, 7, and 5 syllables respectively. Because of this basic structure, every Haiku poem perceives and reflects in every phenomenon of daily life a “world creation process” in miniature. This aspect is probably most clearly exemplified by one of the best-known Haiku poems by Matsuo Basho:

Furuikeya Kawazu tobikomu Mizunooto

Old pond A frog jumping in, Sound of water

Matsuo Basho, perhaps the most famous poet of Japan, lived from 1644 to 1694 in the Edo period. He is said to have created this Haiku in response to his Zen master’s question: What is the state like before the green moss?

Prof. Tokiyuki Nobuhara, a Japanese Christian thinker who seeks a philosophical unification of Christianity with Buddhism, considers this poem to be reflecting the three stages of creation we he expresses as: 1) pure experience; 2) concrescence; and 3) satisfaction.

- Old pond (pure experience);
- A frog jumping in (concrecence);
- Sound of water (satisfaction).

Relying on the ideas of the Buddhist thinker, Suzuki Daisetsu and Alfred N. Whitehead, he says that the image of the old pond represents the primitive state of mind, pure experience, where all sense impressions are purely perceived without any filtering by mental operations.

This may be the original state of mind of God before world creation. There is as yet no movements or emotions in His mind.

As the second stage, movement comes in. In Basho’s poem, it is the jumping of the frog. Whitehead’s notion “concrecence” means “growing together”, different subjects affecting each other to bring about something new.

The third stage is the world as we see it. It is called “satisfaction”, because the impulse to creation has come to fulfillment. The end product of creation is what we perceive through our senses such as the sound of water in the above Haiku poem. In other words, it is here that the artistic creation of the poet begins. Through the sound of water, he realizes the whole process of creation that lies behind it.

For someone who is acquainted with Anthroposophy, these three stages of creation may seem to coincide with Rudolf Steiner’s notion of three stages of spiritual cognition: Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition. From the point of view of Anthroposophy, these processes of human knowledge are of the same nature as those of world creation through spiritual beings.

What we perceive through our senses is the world of Imagination. As with the sound of water, we become aware of the creation through sense impressions. Then, we move on to the world of Inspiration, where we come in contact with the workings of the Spirit that have brought about creation. Further, we come to the state of Intuition, where we become at one with the spiritual beings who have created the world and understand their original intentions as our own. Here, we reach the original state of the “old pond”.

Coming back to Else Klink's remark on Haiku and IAO, we may first say that these three stages of creation, which we see in the structure of Haiku, constitute the very nature of eurythmy as such. In his speech on the eve of the Christmas Conference 1923, for instance, Rudolf Steiner discusses how these three qualities Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition are at work in eurythmy: Imagination works in the eurythmic gestures, Inspiration in the sounds of poetry recited to eurythmy, and Intuition in the thoughts, which dwell in the poet's spirit.

After I came back to Japan, I read the book "Entstehung und Entwicklung der Eurythmie" and learned that it really was the first exercise given by Rudolf Steiner to the first eurythmist Lory Maier-Smits to experience the nature of the three sounds I, A, and O. However, it was only still some years later that I realized how deeply these vowels were connected with Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition, and therefore with Haiku.

2. Walking, speaking and thinking as three manifestations of the Christ Impulse

For someone who lives in Asia, one of the main concerns connected with Anthroposophy may be: how do we work with the Christ Impulse in non-Christian cultures? For it is clear that this very Impulse is the core of all anthroposophical teachings, and all endeavors would remain on the surface, if we should detach ourselves from it.

On the other hand, there is the danger of introducing Waldorf education as something European, by superficially celebrating the same kinds of festivals such as Christmas or Easter. For the past 30 years, ever since I began working in the Anthroposophical Movement, this has always been one of my main concerns, because one could not act with full responsibility, unless the essence of the Waldorf education (for me the Christ Impulse) is truly understood in each individual soul.

As I began to work with Franziska Spalinger and other Japanese colleagues for the Kindergarten seminar at our national association for Waldorf early childhood education, Christof Wiechert suggested that we take the "First Three Years of the Child" by Karl Koenig to start with, instead of the "Education of the Child" by Rudolf Steiner as is most common in these kinds of teacher training.

The work with this book by Koenig brought me to the realization that these three human faculties, walking, speaking, and thinking that accompany us through the whole life can open the door to understanding the Christ Impulse for the Eastern mind. It is quite natural to observe these three basic talents as essentially human, and we can begin to appreciate them as real spiritual forces that support our autonomous existence.

If, as Steiner himself clearly states in his lectures on "Spiritual Guidance of Man and Humanity", these walking, speaking and thinking faculties are the manifestations of the Christ Impulse, it will be possible for someone in the non-Christian cultures to directly perceive and understand that there is something that makes each one of us "human" regardless of race or nationality.

For me, it is very important to openly emphasize this aspect in Japan, in order that the essence of the Waldorf education may be truly grasped from within.

Then it also becomes clear to us how the basic exercise of I, A and O in Eurythmy are deeply connected with Walking, Speaking and thinking, or, with Intuition, Inspiration and Imagination.

In fact, these sounds are associated with world creation. In his lecture on Cabbala: "Der Name Gottes und die Sprachtheorie der Kaballa", for instance, Gershom Scholem explains how three Hebrew consonants JHW, which constitute the sacred name JHWH, also function as vowels IAO. The world is made and sustained through these sounds.

In each individual human being, the sacred forces of IAO manifest themselves through the first years of the child in walking, speaking and thinking, so that each individual human biography may in itself be an act of creating the world anew; and in our knowledge, we may follow the world creation through the stages of Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition.

The Christ Impulse may be understood as the divine factor that has made all this possible for each individual human being.

When we consider how deeply Haiku is rooted in the Japanese mentality in its "threefold" appreciation of nature and life, we may dare to say that, for us, Haiku has paved the way to understanding the Christ Impulse. And this is how I thought I finally understood Else Klink's words after the great earthquake and the nuclear reactor accident in March 2011.

3. The nature of radioactivity in relation to the Trinity

As my own kindergarten is located only 80km away from the nuclear reactor in Fukushima, there was a natural urge in me to try to understand the nature of radioactivity, apart from the physical needs to daily measure the radiation dose or scrape off the surface soil of the school ground to replace it with fresh soil in an attempt to reduce the radiation as much as possible, etc.

As I studied the development of nuclear energy in the past century, I was surprised to find how the history of Europe, the U.S. and Japan were interwoven in this field, but most of all, how the idea of radioactivity seems to have been revealed in spiritual connection with Anthroposophy.

As is well known, radioactivity was discovered in 1896 in uranium by the French physicist, Becquerel. This substance in turn had been discovered in 1789 by the German Klaproth in Pitchblende and named after the new planet Uranus discovered in 1781. It is interesting that from the outset there was the connection with the planetary system in the scientists' minds.

1898, Marie and Pierre Curie discovered radium and its radioactivity. Then, already in 1908, Rudolf Steiner talks about the nature of radioactivity in connection with radium as follows:

“...Earth and all humanity will be spiritualized into the future. For physical activity, spiritualization means ‘dispersion into smallest parts’. When a heavenly body has fulfilled its task after long periods of time, it gradually begins to dissolve. The condensation of matter is being increasingly replaced by the dissolution of matter. We can already see in radium that Earth is beginning to disperse, to spiritualize” (Lecture on Feb.2, 1908, in Heidelberg).

...Die Erde und alle Menschen werden sich vergeistigen. Für das physische Leben heißt Vergeistigen “Zerstieben in die kleinsten Teile”. Wenn nach langen Zeiten ein Weltenkörper seine Aufgabe erfüllt hat, dann lösen sich nach und nach Teilchen dieses Weltenkörpers auf. Fort und fort wechselt das Zusammenballen der Materie ab mit dem Sich-Auflösen der Materie. Wir können schon am Radium sehen, dass die Erde beginnt zu zerstreuen, sich zu vergeistigen.

For Steiner, radioactivity is quite spiritual. It is an ultimate state to which all matter is sooner or later returning. From here on, Steiner's remarks seem to stand in a unique relation to the development of scientific discoveries concerning atomic energy. One and a half years later, in 1909, he talks about the atom in connection with what he calls the “Christ-Spirit”.

“A new central point was created with the Golgotha-Event. Ever since, the Christ-Spirit has been unified with the earth. He was approaching more and more closely, and he has been in the earth since that time. What is important is for the people to come to understand that the Christ-Spirit is in the earth since that time, and that the Christ-Spirit is in every product of the earth; and that it means to understand everything from the point of view of death, if they do not see there the Christ-Spirit; but it means to understand everything from the point of view of life, if they see there the Christ-Spirit.

...Only then do we understand the truth, when we see in every atom a part of the Christ-Spirit who has been in it since that time. What is the earth made of, since the Christ-Spirit has permeated it ever since? The earth, with its every atom, is made of life, since the Christ-Spirit has permeated it! Each atom has only then its value and can only then be understood, when you see in it a sheath, which embraces something spiritual. And this something spiritual is a part of Christ.” (Lecture on July 7, 1909, in Kassel)

“Ja, mit dem Golgatha-Ereignis ist ein neuer Mittelpunkt geschaffen. Mit der Erde ist seitdem vereint der Christus-Geist. Nach und nach ist er herangekommen, und seit der Zeit ist er in der Erde. Und es handelt sich darum, daß die Menschen erkennen lernen, dass der Christus-Geist seit jener Zeit in der Erde ist, daß in jedem Produkt der Erde der Christus-Geist ist, und daß sie alles unter dem Gesichtspunkt des Todes erkennen, wenn sie nicht den Christus-Geist darinnen erblicken, alles aber erkennen unter dem Gesichtspunkt des Lebens, wenn sie darinnen erblicken den Christus-Geist.

...Dann erst erkennen wir die Wahrheit, wenn wir in jedem Atom sehen einen Teil

des Christus-Geistes, der seit jener Zeit darinnen ist. Aus was beteht den die Erde, seitdem der Christus-Geist sie durchdrungen hat? Bis ins Atom hinein besteht die Erde aus Leben, seit sie der Christus durchdrungen hat! Jedes Atom hat nur dadurch einen Wert und kann nur dadurch erkannt werden, daß Sie in ihm sehen eine Hülle, die ein Geistiges umschließt. Und dieses Geistige ist ein Teil des Christus.“

At the time when scientists were eagerly pursuing the nature of the atom, Steiner attached most importance on the spiritual understanding of matter, which he saw as permeated by the “Christ-Spirit”. This was essential for Steiner, in order that the earth be grasped not as “dead” but as “living”.

Two years after this lecture, New Zealander physicist Ernest Rutherford discovers the atomic nucleus. Inside the atom, where Steiner said was part of Christ, the scientists now saw a certain structure like a solar system.

As if to correspond to this model proposed by Rutherford in March 1911, Steiner gives a famous lecture called “the Etherization of the Blood” in October of the same year. There he speaks as follows:

“Light is being destroyed within the post-Atlantic earthly process. Until Atlantis, the earthly process had been progressive, but since then, it has been a decaying process. What is light? It decays, and decaying light is electricity. What we know as electricity is light, which destroys itself within matter. The chemical force, which undergoes transformation during the earth evolution, is magnetism. Further, a third force will appear. If for the people today electricity seems to work like a miracle, this third force will even more miraculously influence the civilization. The more we utilize of this power, the faster the earth will turn into a corpse, so that the spirituality of the earth can transferred to Jupiter. These forces need to be used in order for the earth to be destroyed, so that the human being can be liberated from the earth and the earth body can fall off. As long as the earth was in a progressive process, this did not take place, because only the decaying earth can make use of the great cultural achievements of electricity. As strange as this may sound at present, but it must gradually be mentioned. We have to understand the evolution process, so that the people will come to evaluate our civilization in a right way. We will come to realize that the earth needs to be destroyed. Otherwise, the spirit will not be liberated. However, one will also come to value what is positive: the coming of the spiritual forces into our earthly existence.” (Lecture on October 1, 1911, in Basel)

“Das Licht zerstört sich innerhalb unseres nachatlantischen Erdenprozesses. Bis in die Atlantis hinein war der Erdenprozess ein fortschreitender, seither ist er ein zerfallender. Was ist Licht? Es zerfällt, und das zerfallende Licht ist Elektrizität. Was wir als Elektrizität kennen, das ist Licht, das sich selber zerstört innerhalb der Materie. Und die chemische Kraft, die innerhalb der Erdenentwicklung eine Umwandlung erfährt, ist Magnetismus. Und noch eine dritte Kraft wird auftreten. Und wenn den Menschen heute schon Wunder wirkend die Elektrizität erscheint, so wird diese dritte kraft in noch viel wunderbarer Weise die Kultur beeinflussen. Und je mehr wir von dieser Kraft anwenden, desto eher wird die Erde zu einem Leichnam werden, damit das, was das Geistige der Erde ist, sich hinüberwirken kann zum Jupiter. Die Kräfte müssen angewandt werden, um die Erde zu zerstören, damit der Mensch frei wird von der Erde und damit der Erdenleib abfallen kann. Solange die Erde im fortschreitenden Prozess war, hat man dies nicht gemacht, weil nur die zerfallende Erde die große Kulturerrungenschaft der Elektrizität gebrauchen kann. So sonderbar dies gegenwärtig auch klingt, aber es muss nach und nach ausgesprochen werden. Wir müssen den Entwicklungsprozess verstehen, die Menschen werden dadurch lernen, unsere Kultur in richtiger Weise zu bewerten. Wir werden dadurch lernen, dass es notwendig ist, die Erde zu zerstören, sonst wird der Geist nicht frei. Aber man wird auch lernen, das Positive zu schätzen: das Hereindringen der geistigen Kräfte in unser Erdendasein.“

For me, it seems very important that Steiner always added from his spiritual science positive pictures as if to complement the materialistic discoveries of nuclear physics. Steiner urged the people to counterbalance the negative, destructive forces of civilization, as represented by electricity and the “third power”, with positive, spiritual endeavors. That for him was the true task of Anthroposophy.

Around the time which Steiner predicted as the time when the etheric Christ begins to appear, in the 1930s, Hitler came to power in Germany, and English Physicist James Chadwick

discovers the neutron and thus completes the threefold model of the atomic nucleus with the proton and neutron in its center and the electron orbiting around it.

The neutron, discovered parallel to the coming of the etheric Christ, as it were, plays a decisive role in the development of nuclear energy and atomic bombs. It is with neutrons that an atom is split and massive energy is unleashed.

It is striking to see how much religiosity is hidden in the whole structure of the atom. Apart from the fact that many Physicists such as Lise Meitner and Albert Einstein were Jewish, there are always some religious associations in nuclear technology. The first nuclear experiment in New Mexico in July 1945 was given the name "Trinity", probably – so it is said – by Oppenheimer who had in mind the divine trinity of the Bhagavad Gita, Brahma (Creator), Vishnu (Preserver), and Shiva (Destroyer).

It would be natural to associate the threefold nuclear structure of protons, neutrons, and electrons with the Trinity, be it oriental, Christian or Cabalistic – IAO.

Also the names given to the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki grotesquely remind of the trinity: Little Boy and Fat Man. When American writer Salinger lets "Franny and Zooey" talk of their "Fat Lady with cancer" as a picture of Christ, this association becomes even more intriguing.

And when I think of the this "divine" nature of atomic energy, I feel that there must be a spiritual meaning to the collision between Oppenheimer's trinity and the mentality of the Japanese which I tried to describe in connection with Haiku.

4. Albrecht Haushofer and his thoughts for Japan / The Emperor-system and the experience of God becoming a man

There was a time in my life when I intensively worked with the 80 poems written by Albrecht Haushofer in the Moabit Prison in Berlin. I had the wish to translate and publish these poems in Japanese, and so I was struggling to understand the messages that this unique personality had sought to convey to the reader beyond time and space.

It was through this translation of the "Moabiter Sonette" that I had the privilege of meeting the Physicist and Philosopher Prof. Carl Friedrich von Weizsaecker, back in 1995 and 1997. He was a close friend of Albrecht Haushofer's, and I was allowed to speak with him about my own interpretation of Albrecht Haushofer's sonnets. To my surprise, Prof. von Weizsaecker told me that he had met Rudolf Steiner, as his father Ernst von Weizsaecker was a consul in Basel.

I had not known at that time how deeply he was involved in the German nuclear research project. Had I known then what I know now, I would have had many more questions to ask him. However, what struck me was, apart from his kindness, his deep interest in the Japanese culture. Albrecht Haushofer, too, had visited Japan and describes his inner interactions with his friends who have crossed over the threshold using the Japanese word "kami" (meaning "god").

I have been asking myself what it could be that brings this affinity for Japan, especially in German people? I know feel that this might have to do with our relationship to Christianity. What I would like to share with you might sound a little peculiar, but this is a thought that is personally very important for me. I would be grateful, if you would try to follow my thinking.

Japan in the Edo period persecuted many Christians. However, there was a major turn in the Japanese consciousness with the Meiji Restoration. Hirobumi Ito, the first Japanese Prime Minister in the modern Japanese government, went to Germany to study the Prussian Constitution. According to the Japanese political scientist Masao Maruyama, Ito then realized that in the West Christianity functioned as the spiritual axis of a nation. He looked for what could serve in a similar way in the Japanese culture and "found" the Emperor (tenno) system.

Thus, the Emperor was made a "God" and placed in the center of the Meiji Constitution. Shintoism was rendered a state religion. With this modern myth of the Emperor system, Japan became an Imperialist state like European countries. Emperor was virtually worshipped by the nation, and Japanese soldiers fought and died in his name.

In other words, Emperor became a monotheistic spirit invented with the modernization of Japan. When the former American President prayed to "God" before starting a war, I felt that

this monotheistic spirit was still living even in our time.

What is unique in the modern history of Japan is that this man-made God declared that he is a human being at the end of the World War II. This speech was broadcast on the radio nationwide and received with a great shock. It indeed was an experience of “God becoming human” before the eyes of the whole nation. The divine figure, in whose name millions of Japanese have fought and died, is now saying that he is a human being. This left a great psychological impact on the Japanese mind, which I would like to call a “miniature Christ experience on the national level”.

All this had to do with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and led to the formation of the new Japanese Constitution which contains the famous “Ninth Article”. In this article, the Japanese people “forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation”.

As regards the World War II, many problems still remain to be faced, discussed and solved, especially in connection with the atrocities that the Japanese inflicted on the rest of Asia.

In order for each individual Japanese to face these questions with responsibility, it would be important to reflect over what took place on the national level and try to live it on a personal level. And I think that this is a question very much related with the Christ Impulse in nature.

5. The image of the Sleeping Child on the Cross

In the aftermath of the nuclear reactor accident, I was asking myself, like many others, what this whole catastrophe could mean to the Japanese. How could I understand the message that this whole issue of radioactivity is telling about the task of us Japanese?

One thing was clear: the nuclear plant was a product of the human intellect, of modern science. But this science, which should actually be a pursuit of truth, was filled with all kinds of lies and deception.

As I came across the following words of Steiner’s, I felt that he was addressing the essence of our own problem:

“What is this science? In reality, it is nothing but the tree, which grows out of Adam’s grave, and the time is approaching when people will understand that this science is the tree growing out of Adam’s grave. The time is approaching when people will realize that this tree needs to turn into the wood, which is the cross of humanity; that this wood can only then lead to a blessing, when crucified on it is that which unites itself in the right way with what lies beyond death but lives already here in the human being...” (Lecture on December 19, 1915, in Berlin)

“Diese Wissenschaft – was ist sie? Sie ist in Wirklichkeit nichts anders als der Baum, der aus dem Grabe Adams wächst, und die Zeit wird immer näher rücken, wo die Menschen erkennen werden, dass diese Wissenschaft der Baum ist, der aus dem Grabe Adams wächst. Und die Zeit wird heran rücken, wo die Menschen erkennen werden, dass dieser Baum zum Holze werden muss, der der Menschheit Kreuz ist, und der erst dann zum Segen führen kann, wenn das daran gekreuzigt wird, was sich in der richtigen Weise verbindet mit dem, was jenseits des Todes liegt, aber schon im Menschen hier lebt...”

With “Adam’s grave”, Steiner refers to a legend about the origin of the cross. After Adam and Eve had eaten of the fruits that grew on the Tree of Knowledge and were cast away from heaven, the legend says that this Tree came into the sequence of generations preceding the physical birth of Jesus Christ. At first, it grew from the grave of the sinful man, Adam, who was now buried in earth and united with it. The cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified was also made of the wood of the tree that once stood as the Tree of Knowledge in Paradise. That is to say, the Tree of knowledge was removed from Paradise and came with the human being onto the earth.

Thus, the cross of Jesus Christ represents the knowledge given to man through Lucifer’s temptation, and Steiner is saying: “our science is nothing but the tree that grows out of Adam’s grave”. Our modern science is the new cross of humanity. His main message, however, concerns the question: who should be crucified on this cross of humanity in our time?

For him, it is “that which unites itself in the right way with what lies beyond death but

lives already here in the human being” that should be “crucified” on the cross of humanity. This is how he characterizes what lives as “child-ness” in each one of us.

Then, Steiner introduces a beautiful picture as follows:

“Those who are educated also will at first have to go the way that the naïve people’s souls have gone. There was a time when they pictured the child not in the cradle, not in the manger, but the child was pictured as sleeping on the cross. The child sleeping on the cross! A wonderfully deep picture that brings the entire thought to expression that I have wanted to let emerge before your souls today” (Same lecture as above).

“Diejenigen, die gelehrt sind, werden auch noch erst den Weg machen müssen, den diese einfachen Menschenseelen gemacht haben. Es gab auch eine Zeit, wo man nicht das Kind in der Wiege, nicht das Kind in der Krippe darstellte, sondern wo man das Kind schlafend am Kreuz dargestellt hat. Das Kind schlafend am Kreuz! Ein wunderbar tiefes Bild, den ganzen Gedanken zum Ausdruck bringend, den ich heute vor Ihren Seelen habe erstehen lassen wollen.“

The child should not really be “crucified”, but should be able to sleep in peace on the cross, which is our knowledge and science. This is how our science should be, and this is how I understand the message given to us through the nuclear accident: to unite with science what lives as the child in each one of us. This is what I think spiritual science or Anthroposophy may look like.

Earlier in this lecture, Steiner explains the meaning of Christmas in relation to “childhood”:

“When we rightly understand ourselves, we are, throughout our earthly life, always looking to our childhood. There, in our childhood, what really is our spirituality remains. We are always looking at it, if we understand the matter correctly. Humanity should be educated to look toward what the Spirit can call from the heights: ‘Let the little children come to me!’ Not the human being who is connected with the earth, but the little children. In order that Humanity should be educated in this direction, the festival of Christmas was given, in that this was added to the Mystery of Golgotha. This needed to be given to humanity only in relation to the last three years of Christ’s life, where Christ was in the body of Jesus of Nazareth. This festival shows how Christ prepared himself the human body in childhood. This is what should be at the root of the Christmas feeling: to know how the human being has always remained united, through what has stayed behind in his growth, what has stayed in the heavenly heights, with what is now coming in. In the Child-Figure, the human being needs to come to the human-divinity, from which he has moved away by coming down to the earth, which, however, has come again toward him. The human being should be reminded of this child-ness. He should be reminded of Him, who has brought child-ness back to him. It was not easy, but the way this Cosmic Child Festival, the Christmas has developed in different places of Middle Europe, makes visible the wonderful, sustaining force at work” (Same lecture).

“Wenn wir uns recht verstehen, so schauen wir durch unser ganzes Erdenleben hindurch immer auf unsere Kindheit hin. Da, in unserer Kindheit, ist zurückgeblieben das, was gerade unser Geistiges ist. Wir schauen immer darauf hin, wenn wir die Sache richtig verstehen. Und dazu sollte die Menschheit erzogen werden, hinzusehen auf das, zu dem der Geist aus den Höhen sagen kann: <Lasset die Kindlein zu mir kommen!>, nicht den Menschen, der mit der Erde verbunden ist, sondern die Kindlein. Dazu sollte die Menschheit erzogen werden, in dem ihr das Fest der Weihnacht gegeben worden ist, indem es hinzugefügt worden ist zu dem Mysterium von Golgotha, das sonst nur der Menschheit verliehen zu werden brauchte in bezug auf die drei letzten Jahre des Christus-Lebens, da der Christus in dem Leibe des Jesus von Nazareth war. Dieses Fest zeigt, wie der Christus sich den menschlichen Leib in der Kindheit vorbereitet hat. Das ist das, was der Weihnachtsempfindung zugrunde liegen soll: zu wissen, wie der Mensch eigentlich immer verbunden geblieben ist durch das, was in seinem Wachstum zurückbleibt, was in himmlischen Höhen bleibt, mit dem, was nun hereinkommt. In der Kindesgestalt soll der Mensch an das Menschlich-Göttliche, von dem er sich entfernt hat, indem er auf die Erde hinabstieg, das aber wiederum zu ihm gekommen ist, an dieses Kindhafte in ihm sollte der Mensch erinnert werden. An denjenigen sollte er erinnert werden, der ihm das Kindhafte wiedergebracht hat. Es war nicht gerade leicht, aber gerade an der Art und Weise, wie sich dieses Weltenkindesfest, das Weihnachtsfest,

in die mitteleuropäischen Gegenden hereinentwickelt hat, gerade daran sieht man die wunderbar wirkende, tragende Kraft.“

Here, Steiner emphasizes the importance of the first three years of life, in contrast to the last three years of Christ's life, which culminate in the Mystery of Golgotha. Quite different from the common picture of Jesus Christ crucified on the cross, Christ is characterized as someone who has come to remind us of our own childhood.

I think that here is a new aspect of the Christ-being that Steiner shows us. In his lectures on the Fifth Gospel, Steiner points out that of the three questions posed by Lucifer and Ahri-man, the one concerning stones and bread remains only half answered. In my view, there was still a fourth question, which was posed by Christ himself on the cross to his Father:

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?”

I think that these words indicate a new task for the present-day humanity: This could be the child asking his/her parents about their incomprehensible action. This question also remains to be answered.

As Ahriman's question awaits an answer from humanity in the field of economy, it will be up to us grown-up human beings to try to answer the child's question in place of Father-God. Here, I personally see the reason for the shift from Theosophy (wisdom of God) to Anthroposophy (human wisdom), through which the human beings take over the responsibility to find answers to the child's question by showing the possibility of “science filled with love” – as Dr. Helmut von Kuegelgen once characterized Anthroposophy.

I think that most of us have asked ourselves: why all this misery and injustice on earth? If God exists, why has he allowed all this to happen? This is “child-ness” asking within each one of us, and for me, it is one aspect of the Christ Impulse to feel the urge to search for answers by oneself.

And the courage that we need as we try to answer the child's questions as grown-ups, will be given by looking toward the three manifestations of the Christ Impulse, walking, speaking and thinking that accompany us all through life. There is a new Mystery of Childhood.

6. The state of homelessness as our starting point

At present, according to the local government of Fukushima, 97,799 people have evacuated following the accident at the nuclear plant. They were forcibly moved away from their home.

It is said that over 43 million people are displaced. We see on the city streets people and children living. These people are all forced to be “homeless”.

As people with certain diseases may be considered representatives of humanity, unconsciously taking on the tasks that actually face all of us, I cannot but think that these uprooted children and people show us the inner landscape where we all are.

For Steiner, the inner state of homelessness was a prerequisite for spiritual development. As the Waldorf Education introduced into many different parts of the world and we ask ourselves how we could grow this movement in harmony with respective cultures and traditions, it would be my suggestion to really start from this homelessness in each one of us.

For “homelessness” is also something universal. It is some place in nowhere where we could all meet, because each of us will have had the feeling of belonging to nowhere.

Otherwise, without this consciousness of being homeless, all the efforts to “combine” Anthroposophy with different cultural elements might mislead us into becoming nationalist in some way or other.

The homeless state of consciousness may be called “consciousness soul” in anthroposophic terms.

In his “Occult Science”, Steiner discusses three stages of the development of ego-consciousness, the last of which is the consciousness soul.

At first, the human being becomes conscious of him/herself on the basis of physical sensory perceptions. This is called the “sentient soul” and would correspond to the awakening of the “I” around the age of three in the child.

Secondly, the human mind begins to exert refined mental operations using concepts

and mental pictures gained through perception, thereby becoming conscious of the self as detached from the outside world. However, this self-consciousness, called the “intellectual soul”, is still rooted in the physical senses. It would correspond to the second awakening of the “I” in the second 7-year period in childhood.

Further, the self-consciousness can sustain itself while cutting itself totally from all sensory perceptions, and is called the “consciousness soul”. It would correspond to the third awakening or “crisis” of the “I” in puberty. Because this state of consciousness is “free”, it is deprived of all kinds of cultural roots, with which it could identify itself.

This process can also be regarded as the development of “home-consciousness”. At first, the child identifies with its immediate surroundings as its home, perhaps together with its mother and/or father. Secondly, this home consciousness expands to the local community and identifies with its ethnic group or country as its home. With the consciousness soul, the young person can either expand his/her consciousness and identify with the whole world as his/her home, or only feel uprooted and belonging nowhere.

But for the question of cultural diversity, I think that the Waldorf education could only work from the consciousness soul, that is, we could only start from homelessness or/and “world citizenship”.

It is important for me to consciously look at the threefold structure of childhood, where the “I” passes through three stages of its development. In the background, there are the unconscious experience of Intuition (will, imitation), Inspiration (feeling) and Imagination (thinking).

In other words, these are all manifestations of the “I”, just as walking, speaking and thinking are manifestations of the Christ Impulse.

Childhood, as taken in its broadest sense to encompass the whole period from the embryonic phase to 20 or 21 years of age, can be seen as the period, in which the “I” unfolds itself. And if the “I” of the human being and Christ are of the same nature, then it follows that it must belong to the Christ Impulse to protect and foster childhood all over the world.

With this understanding, the study of childhood itself would be a path for approaching the Christ Impulse in non-Christian cultures. For Japan, for instance, Haiku with its threefold structure would begin to appear as a threefold way that the “I” of the human being can interact with nature and biography.

What seems most essential to me, however, is that we first meet in the realm of consciousness souls, where we can recognize one another as contemporaries, as equally homeless, uprooted world citizens, sharing the same tasks of our time, and then descend, so to speak, to respective cultures and traditions.

Especially for Asia and the Pacific regions, this new encounter would be of most importance, which, in my view, is only possible through Anthroposophy.

7. Let from the East inflame what through the West is formed...

I do not know to what extent I have been able to make my thoughts understandable to you. It has not been my intention to convince the reader; all I wanted to do was to show that here too is someone who is struggling with the destiny of his nation and of our time.

By showing my immature thinking, I have hoped that you would join me/us in the struggle to understand what seems so understandable in our time, so we could act in spiritual solidarity.

What the accident at the nuclear plant in Fukushima really means to us, remains yet to be seen. In fact, we have not even figured out what the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki really means to us. I think that the meaning of these catastrophes, not to mention Chernobyl, Three Mile Island and numerous nuclear tests, needs to be “created” – not found – by our active thinking and action.

As strange as it may sound, I believe that it will make a considerable difference to the health of the children in the near future, whether we as grown-ups, and as Anthroposophists, spiritually confront the nature of radioactivity and the destiny of our country/countries and work with full responsibility in our respective fields.

When we decided to give our Japanese Association for Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Education a legal form of corporation with the goal to be acknowledged as a “public service organization” in the near future, it was a conscious decision to enter fully in the Japanese realities and carry, together with other organizations and individuals, the destiny of Japan. It is our hope that Waldorf education will not stay within closed circles but really reach through many different channels as many children and parents as possible.

I feel that our spiritual foundation for this work will need to be consolidated by spiritual interaction with the rest of the world. Especially in Asia, we have many festivals and traditions in common. If we could work together on the meanings of our festivals, for instance, this would certainly bring a new insight into our tasks in the East.

In connection with the Christ Impulse in the East, I have been specially inspired and encouraged by one sentence in the middle part of the Foundation Stone Meditation of the Anthroposophical Society, which corresponds to the working of Christ:

Let from the East inflame what through the West forms itself...
Lasset aus dem Osten befeuern, was durch den Westen sich formet...

From the West, we have certainly received Christian values such as democracy, human rights, equality, freedom, which humanity have consciously fought to acquire. Some might say that these already exist in Eastern traditional religions. In social forms, however, community still tends to come before individuality in the East, whereas individualism tends to overwhelm community in the West. The achievements of the West would be seen in the formation of society through Christian ideals. These work as forces of individuality in giving “form” to human life.

Our task in the East would be to bring warmth and life to the forming power of Western individuality. In this sense, I would dare to say that the Christ Impulse could not work in the West alone, it could only work in the meeting of East and West, and naturally, of North and South.

Nuclear physics was mainly developed in the West. Although there have been some important Japanese Physicists who contributed to the development of atomic energy, the technology that built the nuclear plant of Fukushima came from the United States.

In the nuclear reactor accident of March 2011, 66 years after the Atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I personally see the collision between the Western forming power of intellect which has reached the threefold physical structure of the atom, the object, and the Japanese mentality, which, as in the case of Haiku, perceives nature with the threefold quality of the “I”, the subject. There is the “spirit” on both ends.

In this sense, the nuclear accident of Fukushima for me is a call, a warning for both sides, to consciously work with the question of the atom – the individual (atomos and individuus, both meaning “indivisible”) – and spirit, which is “universal” – “community”.

This very paradox – one and all - is the nature of the human “I”. For me, the Christ Impulse is the will and the determination in each one of us to live with this paradox, and to bring these (the individual and spiritual) together in our individual endeavors.

And “childhood” makes it possible for us to live and work with the Christ Impulse, whether we are in East, West, South, or North. With this conviction, I will continue to try to “inflame from the East what through the West forms itself”. I would be most grateful, if you would think of me as one of your friends working with you in spirit.