

“With enthusiasm, great effects can be called forth.”

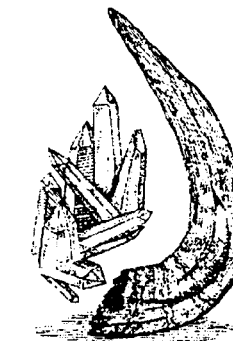
Rudolf Steiner – *Agriculture*, p. 78 (Adams translation)

SO THAT THE EARTH MAY BE HEALED
The Josephine Porter Institute
for
Applied Bio-Dynamics, Inc.
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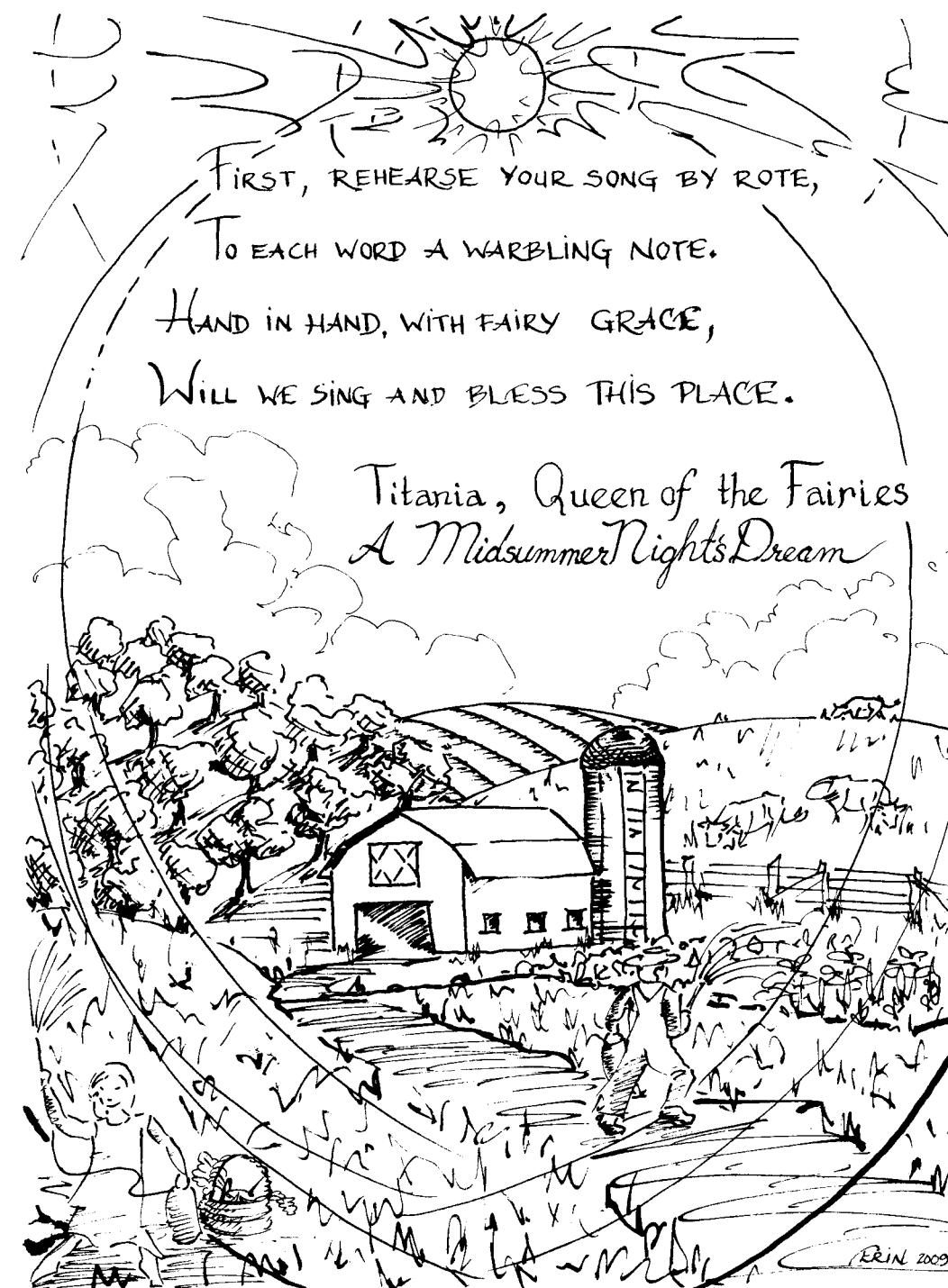
Applied BIODYNAMICS®



Summer, 2009

Newsletter of the Josephine Porter Institute • Woolwine, Virginia

Issue No. 65



Editor’s Note

It’s an interesting paradox that beginning with the first day of summer, the days begin to get shorter. And now, as we are deeper into the season of summer, here in Kentucky the air feels heavy, plants are fruiting (rewards of spring when growth activity was hastened), and we are appreciative for each summer shower. Four lectures by Rudolf Steiner, published as *The Cycle of the Year* (Anthroposophic Press), tell us a lot about what our souls, and that of the earth’s, experience synchronously this time of year. Steiner describes midsummer as the peak of the earth’s out-breathing of forces. Her soul element, “has been poured forth into cosmic space... and is saturating itself with the forces of the sun and the stars.” Thus, this is “the season [ancient] human beings perceived as the time of divine-moral enlightenment.” He tells us in a lecture how people of ancient times, “perceived through their feeling, that, above all they were to absorb into themselves, as moral impulse, what is revealed at the time of midsummer when light and warmth reach their highest point.”

The actual celebratory festival days are only anchor points in a larger cycle. Most of us tend to pay more attention to the festival day, and not so much the weeks and months in between. As we progress from summer to fall,

and the earth begins her great in-breath, we move toward the mood of Michaelmas, the season where the intellect, and our desire to know nature takes hold of our souls. We experience the movement inwardly, from enlightenment (summer) to knowledge (fall), and our task is not to fall into materialism, but to “grasp in the nature-knowledge a picture, a reflection, of a knowledge of divine spirits,” and this takes soul-courage and soul-activity, both of which are greatly supported by eating biodynamic food, which we know supports spiritual development. It is wonderful to know that there is so much esoteric knowledge available to us, and so much potential for developing ourselves spiritually, when we allow our thoughts to consciously live with the seasons.

This issue of *Applied Biodynamics* reflects both the practical work involved in biodynamics, and also the esoteric work. Two small press books on current biodynamic research are reviewed and announced in this issue. Both are published in the United Kingdom. JPI’s collection of books offered for sale is an amazing resource of biodynamic work, including some of the more obscure and lesser known booklets, lectures and books. The complete list of books available from JPI is on the website and has recently been updated.

Have a wonderful summer and please share your insights on the transition period between St. John’s Day (June 24) and Michaelmas (September 29).

—Christy Korrow

Applied Biodynamics

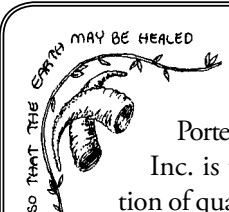
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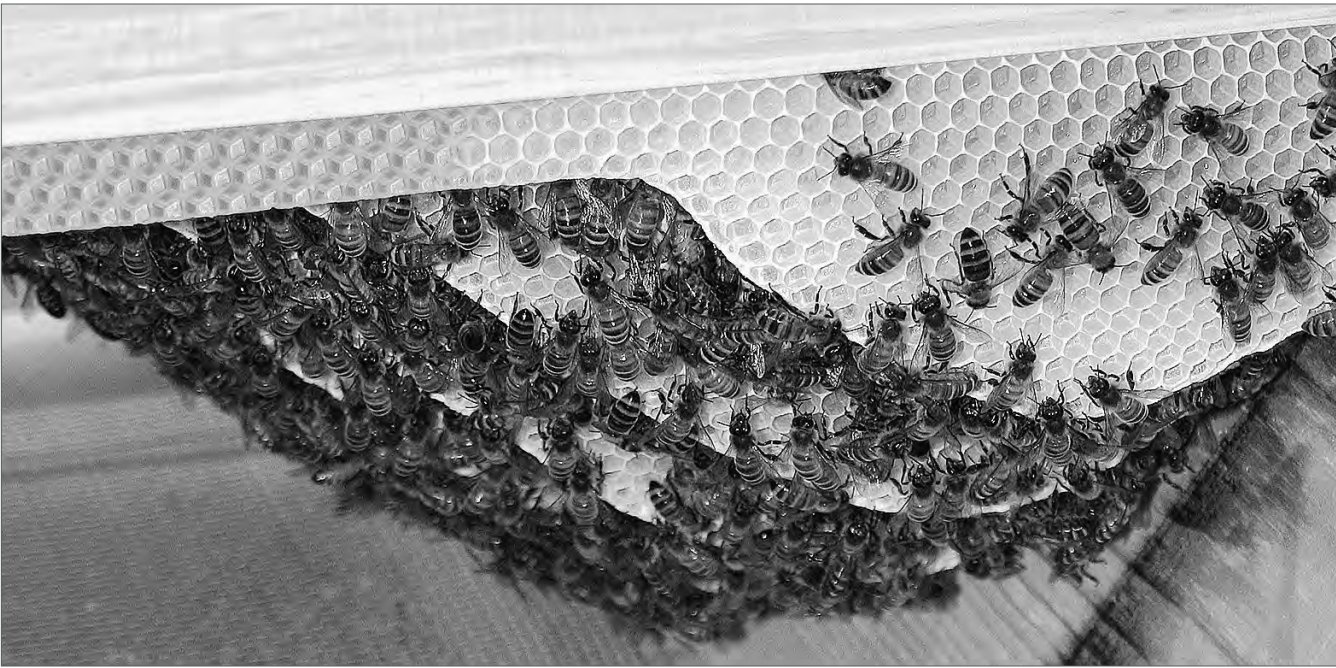


Mission

The mission of the Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Biodynamics, Inc. is to heal the earth through production of quality biodynamic preparations based on the spiritual scientific discoveries of Rudolf Steiner and to advance education and research in biodynamic agriculture.

Board of Directors

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Early development of comb in a top-bar hive. Photo: Chris Korrow

The communal life of the bee develops from its connection with Sun rhythms. Bees flying out in the world of nature are always seeking the Sun forces which are present in flowers as nectar. The nectar is actually the fluid quartz principle of the soil, transformed and refined by the light which then becomes the pure rejuvenating force in honey. The fluid quartz-principle which the plants draw out of the soil – transformed, purified and rarified – is penetrated through with the hexagonal formative force of the Sun. The bees seek it out and live on it.

—Nicolaus Remer, *Laws of Life In Agriculture*, p.125 (Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association 1995)

Save the Date

JPI will host the Ninth Annual Future of the Preparations Conference from February 19–21, 2010. The event will focus on the horsetail herb, *Equisetum arvense* (BD #508).

“Good old horsetail plant, so very high in silica, looks like a carryover from the dinosaur epoch. It grows wild along shady edges of lakes around here. Cut, dried, boiled and sprayed on tomato vines, horsetail’s silica strengthens plants to resist fungal attacks like the deadly tomato mosaic virus.” – Anne Morgan from her weekly CSA newsletter. She and her husband Dewane, operate Demeter Certified Biodynamic Midheaven Farm in Minnesota.

Thank You for the Dandelions

JPI would like to thank all of those who contributed their dried dandelion blossoms to us for the making of BD #506. Would you like to harvest dandelion for JPI? If so, contact JPI for details on how to harvest.
Kathy Neely – Santa Barbara, CA
Susanne Rogge – Olympia, WA
Susan Peterson – Flint, VA
Megan Raddent – Lewisburg, WV
Cordelia Lane
New Elm Farm – Freeport, ME
Catherine Kazlo – Claverack, NY

Karen Robertson – Calpella, CA
Mary Maruca – Arlington, VA
J. Thomson – Crestone, CO
Maggie Lee – Sante Fe, NM
Rudi Marchesi
Montinore Vineyards – Forest Grove, OR
Jane Horst – Wilmington, NC
Virginia Baran – Bethesda, MD
Nancy Keiser – Marne, MI
Bill Oshima – Las Vegas, NM
Turning Roots Farm – Downingtown, PA



Horn pit

preparations could be created, with knowing the healing of the land comes as a result of their use, and with knowing that these transformative substances made at JPI go out all over the world – thus seeing the big picture (I am sure still not fully) for the first time – was intense! I will be processing the experience on many levels for some time.

Having now been a part of the process of the preparations from creation to application to witnessing the results, I have a whole new appreciation and reverence for them. I

JPI To Accept Applications for Executive Director

Dear Friends,

For the past twenty-five years, Hugh J. Courtney has developed the Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Biodynamics, Inc. to its current status as a major supplier of biodynamic preparations both in this country and abroad. Having this access to quality preparations has allowed many individuals, farms and vineyards to practice the biodynamic agricultural method. The educational workshops held both at JPI and elsewhere, under JPI sponsorship, have substantially increased participation in biodynamic agriculture and encouraged many in the making of their own preparations.

Hugh has determined that it is now time to pass the strenuous work of leadership and management of JPI into younger hands. The JPI Board of Directors supports Hugh in his decision and has been working with him to create a strategic plan and time line for this transition.

This is a challenging time, and an extremely exciting one for JPI. The Board, Hugh and the staff are committed to insuring the stability, longevity and accountability of the organization; and to a comprehensive orientation for the new Executive Director. In order to achieve the latter, the

also have a much deeper level of gratitude for the plants, animals, trees, minerals, and human efforts involved. I have no plans to make the preparations on my own; however, I think I would be able to if necessary. And I know absolutely that every part of the experience of this workshop will live on in me whenever I buy, work with, apply, and speak about the preparations. It was an honor to be a participant in the workshop, to meet the other participants and hear their work, to help co-create the preparations, and to witness the spirit of biodynamics living at JPI. I highly recommend this workshop to anyone of any level of experience with an interest in biodynamics. It will change your life.

To learn more about Maria Mihok’s work with biodynamics, read *Applied Biodynamics* Issue No. 57.

Annual Fall Preparation Making Workshop October 21–25, 2009

Join us for five days of hands-on workshops and lectures covering the harvesting of sheaths, and the making of the Biodynamic preparations. Guest speaker Dewane Morgan of Midheaven Farm in Park Rapids, Minnesota will talk about building topsoil through biodynamics.

following time line has been approved by the JPI Board of Directors:

- January 1, 2010:
Solicit applications for the position of Executive Director
 - March 1, 2010:
Review of applications by the Board of Directors
 - April 1, 2010:
Interview candidates by Board of Directors
 - June 1, 2010:
Announce the selection of the new Executive Director
 - June 1 – August 31, 2010:
Provide comprehensive orientation for new Executive Director to ensure smooth transition
 - September 1 – October 31, 2010:
Executive Director assumes duties of the position
- Your suggestions and comments are most welcome. We thank you for your continuing support of the Josephine Porter Institute and we will keep you informed of our progress in the selection process.

Sincerely,
Gena Nonini, Board Chair

Biodynamic Ashing at Sophia’s Garden Weaving Together Biodynamics, Healing Medicinal Herbs, The Zodiac and Cosmic Dance

Christy Korrow

“I should apply the method at once, for I am sure that it will work.” Rudolf Steiner, *Agriculture*, Lecture Six, p. III. (After introducing the method of ashing for weed management.) All quotations by Rudolf Steiner found throughout this article are from Lecture Six of *Agriculture*, Adams translation (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1984).

Monique Camp, of Demeter Certified Sophia’s Garden in Sebastapol, California, achieved positive results using biodynamic ashing for gopher control on her six-acre property. Her story represents the successful use of the ashing method and demonstrates how the success of this practice is inextricably intertwined with one’s relationship with the land, the cosmos, a commitment to meditation, and a willingness to ask questions and patiently listen to the answers. Monique has gained much understanding from her work with the Sophia Foundation of North America (co-founded by Robert Powell and Karen Rivers), and Sophia’s Garden is a fruit of that work, which explores the mysteries of star wisdom and Choreocosmos (cosmic and sacred dance). Over the past four years, Sophia’s Garden has produced fine quality herbal blends, tinctures, essential oils and hydrosols. Her customers, many of whom know nothing of biodynamics, notice the vibrant life forces in her herbs and products. At the time of this writing, Monique was busy filling an order for one-hundred gallons of hydrosol. Two-hundred and twenty-five pounds of poppies and two-hundred and fifty pounds of Helichrysum italicum had been harvested, and the*

distillation process had begun. Visit Sophia’s Garden website at <www.sophiasgardenherbs.com> and the website for the educational work done at Sophia’s Garden at <www.garden-sophia.com>.

In Lecture Six of *Agriculture*, Rudolf Steiner suggested we burn the seeds of unwanted plants, animal skins or insects, and spread the remaining ashes on affected land as a method of pest control, dating back to a time when, “such things were known and mastered... by an instinctive farming wisdom.” (p.III) Biodynamic ashing or peppering is possibly one of the most underutilized of the various methods Steiner introduced in his *Agriculture Course*. Whereas, for example, the use of the nine preparations are considered to be integral to any biodynamic farm or garden, we don’t commonly hear of growers employing biodynamic ashing in any serious way, and moreover, some people say they haven’t gotten results from it. Counter to this, one should be led to believe that Steiner placed significance upon ashing; he devoted almost an entire lecture to the subject, and an enthusiasm and conviction for the method can be sensed in his words.

It might be that biodynamic ashing is a method whose time has not yet come. Maybe we have not arrived in our consciousness development where we can obtain a sufficient connection with the forces at work in growth and reproduction. These are the realms within which we work when using the ash as Steiner suggested. Ashing is one of the biodynamic practices that employs intention, and requires a degree of responsibility, and an ethical attitude on the part of the individual. Why? With ashing, we are ridding an area of a plant, animal, or pest because we do not want it to be there. (p.107) Moreover, successful ashing, according to Steiner, requires a developed understanding of the moon forces, planetary influences (when working with plants) and the far-reaching stars, specifically the zodiac (when working with animals, pests), since, with ashing, we are countering the growth forces which originate in the cosmos and result in reproduction. (p.110)

It seems likely that this work will become increasingly important as new farms crop up in developed areas or areas surrounded by chemical farms, and weather patterns continue to intensify, requiring humans to take a more proactive

Biodynamic Preparations Legend

BD #500 – Horn Manure
BD #501 – Horn Silica

BD #502 – Yarrow
BD #503 – Chamomile
BD #504 – Stinging Nettle
BD #505 – Oak Bark
BD #506 – Dandelion
BD #507 – Valerian

} Compost
Preparations

BD #508 – Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*)

Choreocosmos: Development of the Cosmic Aspects of Eurythmy

Choreocosmos – cosmic and sacred dance – is a metamorphosis of the ancient temple dance cultivated at various mystery centers in antiquity. The ancient temple dances were practiced in association with a temple – for example, the great temple of the Earth Mother (Demeter) at Eleusis, near Athens, Greece, where the sacred dances in honor of the Earth Mother were an intrinsic part of the initiation ceremonies.

— Robert Powell, author of several books, including the annual *Christian Star Calendar*.

Learn more about the Sophia Foundation at <www.sophiafoundation.org>.

role in restoring balance. Perhaps, the following story about the work at Sophia's Garden can provide some insights.

Sophia's Garden: The Farm Individuality

For thirteen years, Monique gardened on her six-acre property organically. In 2004, she began biodynamic work, and eventually the land was Demeter Certified Biodynamic in 2006. The land sits in a valley, and was once under the ocean, thus Sophia's Garden has predominantly sandy soil, and seashells can be found as layers of the earth are penetrated. When asked about the name, Sophia's Garden, Monique says, "The land named itself. All gardeners begin to recognize the wisdom at work between earth, sky and the elemental world, all of which reside in Sophia's body of intelligent weaving. Sophia being the wisdom that underlies nature."

Nature Responds

From the beginning, Monique cultivated an intuitive relationship with her gardens. The area where she lives is dry and water-impooverished. She ran out of water and brought in a water drilling company, but after three days of finding no water, the drilling company was about to give up. Monique prayed that if she was meant to stay and steward the land, water would be found. She received guidance about where to drill, and suggested two places to the drillers. Water was found in both places. This was the first of what Monique considers to be miracles that unfolded once she began working in a conscious way with her land. Another pivotal experience occurred as Monique prayed for water. She promised that, should water be found, she would create a sacred rose garden. But, the spot where she

was guided to plant the roses was shaded by a thirty-foot tree. The very next morning, it was discovered that the tree creating the shade had split down the center during the night, and had to be removed. Monique was able to have the tree chipped and used for mulch in the rose garden she planted there. The arborists could not explain what had happened to the tree.

Development of the Gardens

Following this, Monique felt the need to gain an understanding of the etheric landscape and locate the chakras (energy centers) of the land. For a number of weeks, Monique meditated on the in-breath and out-breath of the land. She was able to identify three hearts in three different locations on the property: The cosmic heart (which would be the location of sacred spaces, temple gardens, etc.), physical heart (barns and sheds), and the etheric heart (near the home). Knowing that Sophia reveals herself through form, Monique was drawn to a sandy, sloping, weedy patch. It was here that she began a new level of cocreative work with Sophia by establishing a circle with a thirty-three and one-third foot radius (a number derived from the life of Christ), and planted it in clover, as a gift to the elementals.

One year later, on a cold rainy day in December, using principles of sacred geometry and patterned after the zodiac, Monique broke ground in the circle and created twelve heart-shaped gardens surrounding the circle. Her goal was to create a garden whose *soul* purpose was to serve life and to become a resource for teaching proper land stewardship. The inner circle would be dedicated as a Sophia temple, and a place for Cosmic and Sacred Dance. Up to this point, the ground had been worked with draft horses, and now she brought in a tractor and backhoe. The man driving the backhoe called her over and showed her an intact mortar and pestle which he had just unearthed in the center of the circle. It was later determined that the relic dated back to the Pomo Indians who had done sacred dance on that very spot. Tribes would come from the main village several miles away to this spot to celebrate.

She went on to create the twelve gardens, working with a master earth carver, Michael Presley, whom Monique refers to as a true artist of the land and a teacher of Permaculture. Herbs from the Bible and Egyptian times were planted including hyssop, chamomile and thyme. Robert Powell describes the garden in a *Sophia Foundation Newsletter* as, "a Nature temple – a circle like a great Sun, that is thirty-three and one-third feet in radius (honoring the thirty-three and one-third years of the life of Christ), with a crescent Moon garden rising up at the western end of the circular dance space, and surrounded by twelve heart-



JPI Preparation Making Workshops include lectures and classroom time, in addition to hands-on learning (All photographs courtesy of Konomi Campbell)

afterwards, I could feel my whole body processing the passing of this being. As Hugh has previously written, "at the moment of slaughter, the cow actually presents herself in a gesture of sacrifice as if to say she understands the need far better than do any of the human participants in the event" (*Applied Biodynamics* Issue No. 55).



Cows at JPI



After the slaughter and gathering of the needed parts, we began to make the preparations: dandelion, chamomile, barrel compost, oak bark and horn manure. We sat and stuffed cow intestines and mesentery with chamomile and dandelion flowers, we scraped skulls, stuffed brain cavities with oak bark, stuffed cow horns with manure, and spent hours turning manure for barrel compost (a.k.a. Biodynamic Compound Preparation). We were amazed by just exactly how many handfuls of flowers or bark could fit into the cow parts! We were awed to observe the noticeable difference in the cow manure's odor and texture pre- and post-turning. We also dug up preparations that had been made and buried in the previous year. And so, we were able to witness what the end result of our own labor would be.

There is an intensity that comes with doing any sort of work in a conscious and spiritual way for long periods of time, and that was certainly present during the four days of making the preparations. There is also an awareness on the land and in the environment at JPI of the significance of the preparations. I found that the space there held the context for the work. I didn't really have to do anything but the physical work. The vital spirit of the preparations abounded and permeated me and my thoughts while I helped to create the preparations. As I put together animal, tree, plant, and mineral, what kept involuntarily coming to mind was "this is life, this is life..." In the combination of the offerings of the animals, plants, trees, minerals, and human beings, a substance is born of this composite that contains the quality of each, and yet is its own thing. And that thing has the capability and power to heal the Earth. The hours and days spent working in and with the presence of Steiner's consciousness, and the spirit of the preparations (with each the four earth kingdoms represented), as well as with knowing the cow was sacrificed so that the

However, in spite of the concerns which are expressed in this review regarding certain aspects of Nastati’s commentary, the stimulating and thought provoking concepts presented are well worth detailed study and implementation until practical work either confirms or refutes any of his conclusions.

Notes

1. *Commentary on Dr. Rudolf Steiner’s Agriculture Course*

- was translated from lectures originally given in Italian.
2. Rudolf Steiner, *Agriculture*, Adams translation (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1984), pp. 38–39.

Commentary on Dr. Rudolf Steiner’s Agriculture Course is published by Mark Moodie Publications, Oaklands Park, Gloucestershire, UK, and may be purchased from JPI for \$30.00 plus shipping and handling.

Reflections on the Fall 2008 JPI Preparation Making Workshop

Maria Mihok

It was a beautiful day driving down to Woolwine. I was excited at the thought of seeing JPI for the first time, and also excited about the opportunity to work more closely with the preparations. I had wanted to try Hugh’s suggestion of working individually with the preparations (which he wrote about in *Applied Biodynamics* Issue No. 47) for some time, but had yet to do so. It seemed to me that I now had another opportunity to deepen my relationship to the preparations, and I was looking forward to it. Yet, I also wondered what I would do with the knowledge of making the preparations afterwards as I am not an agricultural person, nor do I have a farm, nor had I ever had any thoughts of making the preparations on my own. I was quite glad that JPI existed!

I knew how the preparations were made. That is, I had read in books how they were made, so I was aware of the parts used and of how they were put together. I have experienced opening a JPI package, how good the preparations feel, and then opened the plastic pouch and smelled the wonderful contents. I have felt the land ask for the prepara-

tions, and I have felt the difference after giving them to the land. However, all of this did not prepare me for the initial process of actually helping to create the preparations.

The first evening of the workshop, we were introduced to the cow that would be slaughtered the next day. The next morning the butcher came. Everyone, including the cow, was smudged, and within an hour or so the cow was entirely butchered. What transpired within this initial hour was profound. After shooting her with a .22 caliber rifle, the butcher cut her throat. A bowl was placed under her neck to collect the blood. A workshop participant spontaneously went forward, knelt, placed her hand on the cow, and sang to her. Many people watched with tears as the cow passed. I knew from asking that many participants had not seen a cow slaughtered before, myself included. However, we all felt the weight of her sacrifice and wanted to witness the profundity of her passing.

The cow was then de-hoofed, as those parts would be used as well, and then hung to begin the butchering process. Participants and JPI staff helped skin the cow; the hide was then salted and bundled. The butcher then cut her belly open and her insides were deposited into a large tub where Hugh, staff, and participants began to gather the mesentery, intestines, and other vital parts as we all received an introductory lesson on the inner working of the cow. Now, I am not a cattle person... I find dairy farm smells very disagreeable and generally do my best to stay away from cow products for various reasons. I had a mixture of disdain and sympathy for them given the condition of their lives one often sees. As I observed the cow being butchered, and saw her organs, and how everything worked together, I was amazed at how she functioned. I was awed by her beauty, and humbled by her sacrifice and the offering of herself. The entire experience went far beyond my mind, emotions, and psyche, and for a week

shaped Star gardens each dedicated to one of the twelve signs of the zodiac: with Taurus in the East, Leo in the North, Scorpio in the West, and Aquarius in the South, aligned with the cosmic archetype of the zodiac defined by the four royal stars spoken of by Zoroaster (Aldebaran at 15° Taurus as the Watcher in the East; Regulus at 5° Leo as the Watcher in the North; Antares at 15° Scorpio as the Watcher in the West; and Fomalhaut at 9° Aquarius as the Watcher in the South). This Nature temple mirrors the image of Divine Sophia as “the woman clothed with the Sun, with the Moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars (Revelation 12:1).”

Ashing

As the gardens were established, nature found a new equilibrium at Sophia’s Gardens. But with her sandy soil, and natural predators driven out by encroaching development, the gopher population was seriously out of balance. Monique appealed to the group soul of the gophers, and checked in with local ag extension agents, where she was told, that with her sandy soil, she could have as many as *three thousand* gophers per acre. One could cast their eye in any direction on the property and see as many as fifty holes in any radius. When she read Hugh Courtney’s two-part article, “Ashing or BD Peppering – A Function of Lunar Forces,”** she knew she must try the ashing method. She appreciated Mr. Courtney’s assistance in understanding how to burn and create the gopher pepper, and how to homeopathically dynamize the ash.

Before she began, she adopted an attitude of prayer, since she would be sacrificing gophers for this process. She felt the gophers were coming to her property for water, so she sent a message to the gophers that she would provide food and water for them, but that there were certain areas of the property where they should not come, such as her gardens. Her intention was to use the ashed skins to give the gophers an indication of where to reproduce and where not to reproduce, based on Steiner’s words, “And there remains, in what is thus destroyed by the fire, the corresponding negative force as against the reproductive power of the [in this

case] field-mouse.” (p. 113) With the assistance of a man who helps her work on the farm, the skins were stretched and hung out to dry. The first skin was taken away by some kind of critter, so Monique suggests one should dry the skin in a place where it won’t be stolen.

“Provided it has been led through the fire at the high conjunction of Venus and Scorpio, you will find this an excellent remedy.” (p. 113) Based on Steiner’s recommendation for ashing mice, Monique burned four gopher skins while Venus was midway through the constellation Scorpio. When Steiner introduced the idea of peppering or ashing in the sixth lecture he gave to farmers, he referred to the zodiac as the “animal circle,” and as the place where influences on the animal realm come from. He described this as the astral realm (whereas for plants, the influences come from the etheric realm, therefore, for weed management, the farmer should work with the moon influences.) Animals, as is the case with humans, have emancipated themselves from the external moon forces, the lunar *forces* are fully developed in the animal. (p. 113)

She burned the skins on a grill, and dynamized them, along with a portion of the wood ash, by grinding the powder for one hour with a mortar and pestle. She then took the six tablespoons of the dynamized ash and homeopathically potentized it (1:9 parts water) up to D8.**

Monique sprayed the resulting mixture (D8) three days in a row, and then did another three-day application several months later (Moon in Taurus). In each of the following two years, she did a three-day repeat application.

By ashing, Monique believes the message is sent to the reproductive forces of the gophers that this is not the place to reproduce. It does not kill them, but through influencing the reproductive cycle, creates an environment that is not inviting for fertility. When asked why people haven’t used more of the ashing, Monique suggests it might be because, “It is really energy work that can’t be easily measured, it is true spiritual science.”

Here, it is interesting to note Steiner’s comment about “prevailing judgment” toward the ashing method: “Spiritual-



The ashing process at Sophia’s Garden (Photographs courtesy of the author)



The Pied Piper of Hamelin

scientific truths are true in themselves, we need not have them confirmed by other circumstances or by external methods.

“Our scientists have made this mistake of looking to external methods to verify these truths. In the Anthroposophical Society, too, our scientists have done so. They at least should have known better; they should have known that a thing can be true in itself. However, to get anywhere nowadays, we must always verify things externally. It is no doubt a necessary compromise; in principle it is not necessary. One knows of these things inwardly. They stand inherently, by their own quality – this is how one knows them.” (p. 112)

Monique went on to say, “We can ask for something to hold onto, but I began by doing this in faith and out of what I *do* understand – I recognize I need to assist in creating a balance on this land. I don’t understand exactly how the process of ashing is communicating to the gopher, but I am staying with the question. I live with it, not trying to second guess its meaning. If we believe in the forces of the spiritual beings, of the stars, and the zodiacal realms, and that the in-streamings from all of these realms affect what is happening in our gardens, then we can begin to understand that with which we are working. When we spray BD #500 and BD #501, for example, we are sending a clarion call, this is a call to action to the elemental world.”

The tale of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, who drove the hoards of rats from his village into the river with his flute song, is the image Monique refers to when describing how she felt as the potentized gopher ash was sprayed across the land. The intention of serving nature brought her joy.

Order Out of Chaos

Monique’s attitude of reverence is inspiring, and her connection and attribution to the spiritual world are evident,

“The beings who have led this work are Zarathustra and Christ, they are the guiding beings for the farm organism.” Three years after her initial gopher ashing, Monique sees a significant decrease in the gopher population. She began to hear owls. A bobcat came back, a fox came back, a balance was renewed. She even saw an endangered predator, the California ferret, jump into a gopher hole.

She admits the ashing process has been a lot of work and time, but, she says, “You also get incredible energy when you make a commitment to the rhythms of nature, when we say, ‘Yes’ with our will forces and agree to help restore the balance on our land.” Monique emphasizes that ashing isn’t something you can hire out, or pay someone else to do. She also points out that we need patience when working with the rhythms of nature. We would not step into a condition, such as the plague, and imagine we could eliminate it with one application of a remedy. A key to the success of ashing is our conscious participation, and by guiding our thought processes in this way, we begin to penetrate the mysteries of nature at work in our gardens.

To Monique, a biodynamic practice is based on understanding the etheric life forces of warmth, light, tone and life, opening to the question of what is needed, and perceiving a response. “When the human being sees what is needed and asks, ‘How can I serve?’ the answers come in the form of inner guidance perceived through discriminatory understanding. Miracles seem to appear when we interface with the elemental world,” she says.

After some years of preparation usage, Monique noticed dew drops were lingering longer after sunrise, and she sensed a new redemptive quality on the land. She realized that it was not hopeless, that there is a way to restore balance amidst increasing urbanization. By stirring the preparations, Monique understands that biodynamic land stewardship is an attempt to restore order in chaos. The vibration can move out from the farm, expanding to a larger sphere of influence. Monique reminds us, “We can begin by inviting order on the farm, and from there, radiate out bringing harmony and order into the surrounding environment.”

Notes

*Hydrosols are produced in the process of the steam distillation of plant material in the making of essential oils. The resulting product contains the essence of the plant, as do the essential oils, but in a more mild, diluted form.

**For an in-depth study of moon forces, their relationship to growth and reproduction, and the process of ashing seeds for weed control, please see Hugh Courtney’s two-part article: “Ashing or BD Peppering – A Function of Lunar Forces,” *Applied Biodynamics*, Issue Nos. 27 and 28.

Commentary on Dr. Rudolf Steiner’s Agriculture Course
By Enzo Nastati

Reviewed by Hugh J. Courtney

First of all, let me state clearly, up front, that anyone who regards themselves as a serious biodynamic practitioner should read and study this book. That being said, I must also caution that take what is presented therein with a grain of salt, as much of it requires much future examination and experimentation. The book is a compilation of talks given by Enzo Nastati from January 2001 to January 2005 and contains many marvelous insights into the deeper meaning of Steiner’s *Agriculture Course*.¹ It is obvious from numerous references that Nastati has made a deep and penetrating study of a large body of Steiner’s work.

Nastati presents a most intriguing interpretation of the structure of the *Agriculture Course* by suggesting that Lecture One correlates to the Persian epoch, Lecture Two to the Egypto-Chaldean-Babylonian epoch and Lecture Three to the Greco-Roman epoch. He spends considerable time sharing his insights on the rhythms and movements of the planetary bodies. These insights suggest that in our work with plants we should be paying much closer attention to some of the more subtle movements such as whether or not a planet is above or below the path of the Sun or whether or not its motion is retrograde or direct when seen from the Earth. In the *Agriculture Course*, Lecture Two, Steiner points out,

“If mankind with their present state of knowledge were suddenly obliged to create, from the comparatively few plants of the primeval epoch of the Earth, the manifold variety of our present fruits and fruit trees, they would not get very far... They were produced at a time when humanity had knowledge, out of primeval and instinctive wisdom, how to create the different kinds of fruits from the primitive varieties that then existed.

... This [primeval and instinctive wisdom] must be rediscovered if we wish to go on working on the Earth at all.”²

It is quite possible that Nastati’s insights revealed in the first several chapters (talks) provide us with a road map to a more conscious way to rediscover the necessary primeval wisdom that will allow us to continue working on the Earth.

Nastati is also the promulgator of a spin-off from biodynamic agriculture which he labels “homeodynamic” and which appears to rely on homeopathically derived versions of the preparations or combinations thereof. Nothing in

this publication provides the reader with sufficient clarity as to exactly what “homeodynamic” agriculture might be. He also makes oblique reference to his own preparation formulations, including a “horn clay” that seems to depend on a burial around the twelve days of Christmas. He confidently assigns the label of BD #508 to this preparation, thus totally ignoring the fact that a goodly percentage of the biodynamic world has assigned BD #508 to *Equisetum arvense* or horsetail herb. The recipe or protocol for Nastati’s horn clay is not provided in this publication.

Many in biodynamic agriculture over the years have speculated on Steiner’s statement that “...it is well to add a dose of clay to the soil. (I shall indicate the proper dose later on).” Since no trumpets were sounded, the assumption is that the “proper dose of clay” was never described. Yet, Steiner subsequently gave us the biodynamic preparations, virtually all of which gain a colloidal or clay-like nature *if properly made*. The fact that many practitioners make preparations without a colloidal nature and incorrectly assume that they have a properly made preparation may be the reason for this rush to judgment that somehow Steiner failed to “indicate the proper dose” of clay. Thus these repeated efforts to come up with “horn clay” as the answer to the “dose of clay” speculation.

One additional stumbling block for Nastati’s interpretation of the *Agriculture Course* is his admitted failure to have any success in his “ashing” efforts. The principal reason for this lack of success is perhaps his failure to recognize *Equisetum arvense* or horsetail herb (BD #508 to many BD practitioners). Once this preparation is elevated to equal status with the other preparations and used with due diligence in biodynamic practice, an entirely different dynamic of forces comes into play. The moon forces are harmonized in a sense and the other planetary forces (Venus, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter and Saturn) can be more equally expressed in the kingdoms of nature.

One wonders whether Nastati has much communication with the rest of the biodynamic world, starting with European efforts. This publication was hurried to press in order to be available at the most recent meeting of the Agricultural Circle in Dornach. One unfortunate result is that there are an abundance of editing changes that were not made. The publisher makes due apology for that shortcoming and it is hoped that future printings will allow for closer editing.