

Educational Practice in the Arts and Crafts Classes for the Harmonious Development of “Thinking” , “Willing” and “Feeling” : Focusing on the Clay Modeling in the Steiner School

Nahoko YOSHIDA
Doctoral Program in Art and Design, University of Tsukuba

ABSTRACT

I consider whether it is possible to practice the art education of Steiner schools in the public schools of our country. From practical examples, I try to suggest the way to conduct the arts and crafts, and classes in which harmonious development of "thinking", "willing" and "feeling" is encouraged. I planned and practiced classes aiming for harmonious development referring to the classes, which I have observed at the teacher training course at the Nuremberg Steiner school, and to some books for teachers about method and the view of the subject. And from children's remarks and questionnaires, I considered lessons from the viewpoint of "thinking", "willing" and "feeling" in the classes. In that sense, this research could propose the lesson of arts and crafts for development of human nature and show a potential to practice the activity of clay modeling at the Steiner school in the arts and crafts at the public elementary schools in Japan.

1. INTRODUCTION

The major factor of the attention to Rudolf Steiner (1861 - 1925) and Steiner school (Free Waldorf school) in our country was a book written by Michiko Koyasu¹ in the 1975 about her daughter's school life at the Steiner school in Munich. The background of attention was explained in the research about the trend of Steiner school in Japan as follows.

In the 1970s, the values of the Meritocracy and competitionism accelerated further, caused overheating of the educational competition, and school violence, bullying, school refusal were became a problem. Within these backgrounds, Alternative education has gradually begun to bud as an antithesis to the public education. (Ohno, 2008: ²)

After the book was published, researches and translation into Japanese progressed by some scholars and translators. Kindergartens accepting the Steiner's ideology and activities of "Saturday class" were spread all over Japan. From the 1990s to the beginning of 2000, the Steiner schools were founded one after another. At the present, 2 schools as an educational foundation and 7 as a NPO are in the list by the Association of Waldorf schools³.

¹ Koyasu, Michiko, 1975, *A Primary School in Munich*, Tokyo.

² Ohno, Hiromi, 2008, A Trend of the Steiner Education in Japan, *Studies in humanities and cultures: Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Nagoya City University* 10, 95.

³ Association of Waldorf schools, Waldorf World List, 2017, August 28, 2017, from [https://www. fr-eunde-waldorf. de/fileadmin/user_upload/images/Waldorf_World_List/Waldorf_World_List. pdf](https://www.fr-eunde-waldorf.de/fileadmin/user_upload/images/Waldorf_World_List/Waldorf_World_List.pdf)

In a foreign country, for example the United States, Australia, there are some public schools accepting the education of the Steiner schools into the educational curriculum. However such a school doesn't exist in Japan, so there is little research about practices of the Steiner school's education in Japan.

Therefore, through this research I will investigate the potential of art education at the Steiner schools in the arts and crafts lesson of the public elementary school in Japan. About earlier researches, there are studies of Sasaki and Kuragano(2010, 2011: ⁴) who tried to practice art activities of the Steiner schools in the music, arts and crafts and Japanese calligraphy lessons. These are valuable researches that proposed the practices of the Steiner school's education in the Japanese public school. In these researches he practiced wet-on wet painting with watercolors in the arts and crafts and practice of straight line in the Japanese calligraphy lesson through the physical activities in terms of the bringing up of sensitivity of children. However a lesson of wet-on wet painting was with only one color, and children could not feel enough the beauty of colors and mixing experience as essence of wet-on wet painting. Also, these researches don't suggest the lessons from a "harmonious development" point of view, at which Steiner schools aim, because it focuses on only the sensitivity of children.

2. HUMAN FORMATION IN STEINER SCHOOLS

Steiner schools depend on an "anthroposophy(Anthroposophie)" human oriented spiritual philosophy, which is founder Steiner's ideology, and he aimed for harmonious development in education. Specifically, it is assumed that the Nature of human being is "body(Leib)", "soul(Seele)" and "spirit(Geist)"⁵, and develop of human beings can divide every 7 years. Teachers must work for children in first term, from 0 to 7 years old for its "body", in the second term, from 7 to 14 years old for "soul", and in the third term, from 14 to 21 years old for "spirit"⁶. So at the Steiner school, which educates children in elementary school stage, it mainly focuses on development of "soul." Steiner said, the activities of "soul" was "thinking(Denken)", "feeling(Fühlen)" and "willing(Wollen)"⁷.

Last year I clarified here, that how to raise, "thinking", "feeling" and "willing" in art activities, through lesson examples at the Nuremberg Steiner school. I made it clear that "willing" was raised from own desires and motivation to product, "feeling" was by emotional changes such as "sympathy" and "antipathy" to the art work, and "thinking" was by linking with contents of other subjects. In other words, the educational goals of the Steiner school is to make "thinking", "feeling" and "willing" work in the school education,

⁴ Sasaki, Hiroe & Kuragano, shiro, 2010, Class practice about Expression for children's Sensibility: Realization for Steiner Education, *Kushiro Ronshu: Journal of Hokkaido University of Education at Kushiro* 42, 145-153.

Sasaki, Hiroe & Kuragano, Shiro, 2011, Class practice about Expression for children's Sensibility: Realization for Steiner Education Part2, *Kushiro Ronshu: Journal of Hokkaido University of Education at Kushiro* 43, 15-20.

⁵ Steiner, Rudolf, 1968, *Allgemeine Menschenkunde als Grundlage der Pädagogik*, Dornach, 54.

⁶ Steiner, Rudolf, 2011, *Die Erziehung des Kindes*, Dornach, 29.

⁷ Steiner, 1968, *op.cit.*, 90.

and make whole human beings work, "body", "soul" and "spirit". These can become aspects of the lesson to practice art activities of the Steiner school at the public school in Japan.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

Therefore, in this research, I planned lessons of arts and crafts with clay in terms of the harmonious development of children's "thinking", "feeling" and "willing", and I practiced these clay modeling lessons for 6th grade children in the public elementary school in Japan(in Tsukuba-city). In the lesson, I used the voice recorder and camera to record it. After the lessons children filled out a questionnaire of the description form. With these materials I looked back and hypothesize lessons in terms of children's harmonious development.

4. CLAYMODELING IN THE NUREMBERG STEINER SCHOOL

In Steiner schools, there are some art activities, those are woodworking, metalworking, stone carving, painting and so on. This time, I observed the clay, because that is utilized not only in the lower grades but also in the upper grades. In the Nurnberg Steiner school, beeswax clay and soil clay are used in the lessons. In the lower grades, they use beeswax clay related to the characters in the picture book, which class teacher read in the class and learning of zoology or botany of Main lesson. Children over 5 grades study clay modeling in a professional lesson called "Handwerk". The 9th grade children make abstract forms such as sphere and geometric solids, after that they make a representational forms such as human and animals. Subject of human head is in the 10th grade.

5. PRACTICE IN THE ARTS AND CRAFTS IN A JAPANESE SCHOOL

Based on the above, I planed lessons of arts and crafts in the public elementary school in Japan. To practice in the public elementary school, I designed the lesson based on the textbook of arts and crafts, and I used art activity of Steiner school as an introduction and preparation of lessons. I practiced the lesson relating to the subject of, "From the mysterious entrance..." published from Kairyu-do, textbook of arts and crafts 5, 6th 2nd volume. All subjects were 8 times long, and I tried the subject of making sphere with clay 2nd times.

In the lesson, first I asked children "What is the form of Sphere?" We talked about the form with remembering the mathematics of the 5th grade and with reminding other sphere-shaped things. I gave them clay and I talked to make a form with only own hands. At first children clapped the clay to make the rough shape, and the movement of the hand gradually changed, they fixed a form with palm or fingers. In the lesson I found that children tried to fix a part of art work with unsatisfying until they satisfied. And in this lesson nobody said "finished!" on the way of lesson, they concentrated on working. At the end of the lesson, children made a circle in the classroom with clay in their hand, and turned the ball of clay around according to the rhythm to appreciate the differences one by one. As soon as clay comes from a neighbor, they noticed the difference of weight, size, temperature and so on, such as "heavier", "lighter", "smaller", "bigger", "warmer", "cooler", "slippery" etc. From these comment, these subject stimulate children's feeling, "sympathy" and "antipathy" and worked to "feeling".

After I finished this all lessons of "From the mysterious entrance ...", I carried out questionnaire. As a result, 99% of 129 persons except absence had enjoyed these subjects. In the field of free description, about half of them have written about the activity of baa of clay and shapes with corners and surface that I practiced in the 3rd times of lessons. For example, they wrote about the difficulty to make even a simple form with hands, about the difference of artwork and others and oneself.

5. CONCLUSIONS

From the above, this lesson was possible to work to children's "body" by using the palm and fingers, and make children concentrate to the activity with a "willing", that make rounder form or more beautiful. And children acted with the ideal "ball" in own image. That works on the children's "feeling" through feeling "sympathy" and "antipathy", while they are making. In addition, the subject using the contents of the previous learning not only has led to the motivation to the activity, but also has developed the ability of the multiple thinking. In other words, it has been seen that this lesson has raised a "soul" through working on "thinking", "feeling" and "willing".

This research was a practice of art activity of Steiner school in the arts and crafts lesson, utilizing the official textbooks in accordance to the Japanese national curriculum standards. In my lesson practice, I was able to encourage children's harmonious development through working on "thinking", "feeling" and "willing", which is the activity of "soul" in order to try to bring up it at elementary school stage based on Steiner's human ideology. In that sense, this research could propose the lesson of arts and crafts for development of human nature and show a potential to practice the activity of clay modeling at the Steiner school in the arts and crafts at the public elementary school in Japan.

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*Address: Nahoko YOSHIDA, Doctoral Program in Art and Design, University of Tsukuba
1-1-1 Tennodai, Tsukuba, Ibaraki, 305-8574, JAPAN
E-mails: yoshida.nahoko.xp@alumni.tsukuba.ac.jp*