

5. Variations on Threefold Walking: “The Bells”

With your first threefold walking lessons, you practiced walking very slowly, so that you could take one breath with each step. You moved very slowly, at a speed that would let you be conscious of being how you were moving your body. At that speed, you could feel yourself moving in light, balancing above and below, left and right, front and back. You could let the thoughts of your everyday life fall away and focus on how you are embodied consciousness, embodied spirit.

In this next exercise, you will move at a more normal speed, while still using the practice of threefold walking. You will start with a slow and relaxed step, and, bit by bit, accelerate your tempo until you can do threefold walking quickly, with grace and fluidity.

You will develop the ability to be fully present in your stepping even as you move quickly. Your feet will be able to be in constant conversation with the earth, carrying your heart through the world. At the same time the arms will be free for the beautiful speaking and singing gestures of eurythmy, while you hold your head as if crowned with the light of spirit consciousness.

Prepare for this practice by swinging your arms forwards and backwards, like a big church bell. Begin with them behind you, and swing them down, past your legs, and forwards, with a big, heavy movement, lifting your arms only as high in front as they were high in back. Then let them swing back again, with another “ring” of the imagined bell. Continue this movement several times, establishing a rich and



heavy rhythm. You will keep this slow and steady pace in your arms throughout the whole exercise.

Now begin to integrate the feet. With the next ring of the bell forwards, step forward and put your weight onto your right foot. Inwardly count “1.” Then as the bell rings backwards, step back onto the left foot, and again inwardly count “1.” Don’t bring your feet together now: keep the right foot forward, but don’t put weight on it.

With the next ring of the bell forwards, take two steps during the one great slow ring of the imagined bell. That is to say, you will step twice as fast. Step onto your right and then your left foot as you make one great ring forward.

Inwardly count “1,2.” Then, as the bell rings backwards, step onto the right foot and then onto the left. Inwardly count “2,1.” Again, don’t put your feet together at the end.

With the next ring of the bell forwards, take three steps during the one ring of the bell, forward and back. You are stepping three times as fast.

With the next ring, take four steps.

Continue with five, then with six, and finally with seven. That is to say, you will take seven very quick and agile steps, while still making one slow, steady and beautiful ring of the bell with the arms, in the same speed that you began with.

Be sure to keep practicing stepping with threefold walking, even as you move faster and faster. Each of these steps, even the quick ones, contains “lift, carry and place.” Each time you place, be sure to touch with the toes first, and then roll your weight onto the heels.

This beautiful technique allows you to continue to carry your consciousness in your heart, and not in your hips. **Your feet will wake up** in their beautiful conversation with the ground.

Now reverse the process and begin taking fewer steps.

After you have taken seven steps forwards and back, take six steps forward and back.

Follow with five steps forward and back. Continue with four, three and two. Finally, complete your cycle with one slow step onto the front (right) foot, and back onto the other (left foot). Then place your feet together. Stand quietly.

You can imagine how this kind of fluidity is necessary for a eurythmist when s/he presents different pieces of poetry or music that move more or less quickly. For you in your daily personal practice, this begins to harmonize you in other ways. It serves to create balance in your willing (the movements of your feet), your feeling (the open hearted gestures of your arms), and your thinking (the quiet and noble consciousness in your head). This balance is essential foundation for your health and harmony in body, soul and spirit.

Integrate this entire sequence daily for at least a week, becoming increasingly agile and graceful in the alternation between slow and quick stepping.

The Journal Box

Journal on your experiences doing threefold walking at different speeds.

Have you been able to return to the same place you began?

Were you able to keep the arms moving at the same pace throughout the whole exercise?

Were you able to use threefold walking each time. stepping onto the toes each time you placed your foot??

Were you able to keep a regular rhythm with your feet?

Did you feel the difference in moving forward and backwards? Could you feel how you press into the front of your body as you move forwards and into the back, unseen space, as you move backwards?

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