



Wolfram Schwenk – Seeing Water in a New Way

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“Attention is the beginning of devotion.”

(Mary Oliver, contemporary American poet)

In order to study water, to come to know it on its own terms, one needs to become more fully human, to awaken inner capacities that are not unlike the very nature of water itself: to become inwardly mobile, open, flexible, selfless and true to purpose, to task. To work in this way is to develop exact observation skills of something that is not static, but rather, is evermoving, everchanging. Finding the higher principles at work in water, or through water, that serve life: this was Wolfram’s goal. The wisdom of movement in water and the everchanging forming capacities of water demonstrated by his father Theodor Schwenk, in the classic *Sensitive Chaos*, was at the heart of Wolfram’s work. From this foundation questions arose: “What is “good water”? Beyond the removal of impurities, what makes good water “good”? What is the nature of “quality” as it pertains to water? What are the constituents of “quality” in water? How do these qualities

serve life? How does water behave? How does the behavior of water affect quality ultimately? We have all had the experience of drinking a glass of pristine water and feeling nurtured by it. And we have also experienced water that has had all the contaminating constituents taken out and is labeled “acceptable for drinking” (as is the case with many municipal water sources) but the water tastes downright awful. So “seeing water in a new way” becomes part of our field of inquiry.

These major research questions stood before Wolfram’s soul. In addition to looking at these questions scientifically, he also had enormous skills in seeing water’s physical phenomena as “footprints” of spiritual activity. He strove to see in water its highest existence, which he penetrated with his thinking not for the purpose of knowledge alone, but to serve water itself; he dedicated himself to this, with all his sense of wonder and all his love. And in so doing, the wealth of his insights has given us pathways towards developing a new consciousness of water.

Wolfram was a true “reader of the Book of Nature”, always alert to her slightest changes. He loved beauty, in Nature, in art, in music, in the discovery of yet another facet of a water phenomenon that revealed water’s being. And he was allowed to see some of Nature’s hidden secrets – ones seen only by those who have grown in capacity to see them. There was a Grail quality to the way Wolfram observed water, and when one journeyed with him on this sacred path, one also became a servant to water. There was a priestly quality in this approach.

Wolfram took up the task of supporting the DropPicture Method invented by his father Theodor, with scientific inquiry. Thus a diagnostic technique for determining water quality through “its capacity to move” could be developed as a methodology of “water quality” testing that augmented the existing biological and chemical analyses. Basic research was conducted on the DropPicture Method; every parameter was tested. Classification of DropPicture forms, as they “pictured” degrees of water quality through changes in morphology were determined. Fluid dynamics of the DropPicture Method were investigated and documented. Steps in the evaluating methods themselves were standardized. Wolfram brought a team together to do this important work. Theodor Schwenk’s magnificent realizations now had a broadened, holistic, and documentable scientific basis.

Although, since 1983, I had met and had many conversations with Wolfram, it was in 1993 at the completion of this research at the Institute for Flow Sciences in Herrischried that I trained in the DropPicture Method. Wolfram was the senior research scientist at the Institute at this time.

In the US, the Water Research Institute in Blue Hill, Maine had been