



HOMECOMINGS AND DEPARTURES MELANIE TREDE

Melanie Trede grew up, studied and took her degrees, taught and again teaches now in Heidelberg, Germany, a town she managed to escape from on a few occasions – but these proved formative. She was an undergraduate at the Freie Universität, Berlin (1984–88); did research at Waseda and Gakushūin Universities in Tokyo (1988–89, 1994–96, 2003); and taught at Columbia University (1999), and the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University (1999–2004). Her field is the history of Japanese art (pictorial narratives, history painting, gender issues, art historical narratives, and art in the service of political diplomacies, among other things); her most important teachers were Lothar Ledderose, Doris Croissant, and the late Chino Kaori; her partner of twenty years and husband is the Sinologist, gourmet, and life enhancer Lorenz Bichler. Highlights include daughter Klara Kaori (5), son Noah Paul (2), the publication of her books, *Image, Text and Audience*, *The Arts of Japan*, and *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, and the Wiko year 2007/08. – Address: Institut für Kunstgeschichte Ostasiens, Universität Heidelberg, Seminarstraße 4, 69117 Heidelberg. E-mail: trede@sino.uni-heidelberg.de

The End

Sitting in the train from Berlin to Heidelberg, it dawned on me that indeed doomsday, the thirty-first of July had arrived. Should I be sad or should I look forward to life after Wiko?

It is only now that I can begin writing a report on this wonderfully exciting year. Nowhere was there a moment to look back and to sum up all that was happening: The excitement of the various beginnings last fall (that memorable, rather intimidating first

lunch, with Catriona MacCallum and Peter Jones, Chris and Martin Laughlin, the latter then turning out to be my esteemed office neighbor), the occasionally turbulent times in spring, and the crescendo toward the finale where our emotions resembled the compulsive draw to the repetitive exclamation marks in a Bruckner symphony (yes, Sascha Somek!).

So, let's start with the end. The farewell party scheduled on July 19th turned out to be the magic and synaesthetic climax of oneness. To have been part of the "entertainment group" with Heiner Goebbels, Barbara Rendtorff, Susanne Muth, Gesine Krüger, Hans Biesalski, Raphael Rosenberg, and various changing members was one of the many special and rewarding experiences at Wiko: "the most democratic farewell party" as Christine von Arnim generously labeled it.

The multi-media entertainments were conceived during meetings and rehearsals that were immensely enjoyable and eye-openers in experiencing Heiner's egalitarian approach to "directing" collectively: The reinvented Wiko Hymn originally composed by Hanns Eisler with an adapted text by Gesine and Alva Noë; the newly created "litany" (of thanks) inspired by less classical music genres by Heiner with improvisations by Hans and Frances Loughlin, structured by Antjie Krog and others' poetic condensation of disparate contributions by Fellows, and finally performed by Alva, who will be remembered as "the rapping philosopher" [not only by Pat Kitcher, Pat!]; against the backdrop of converging powerpoint presentations excerpted by Petra Dobner from our colloquia's images and texts: "Blessed be the farewell parties!" (This line should be added to the litany).

This long-prepared-for event was followed by daily departures of the ones that actually had to leave, such as Ruth Leys and Michael Fried with Anna, who lived in the apartment above us in Villa Walther and patiently endured our kids' noisiness; others escaped into secluded solitude (Salman "the peaceful" Bashier), or geared up in intensity of engagement (Susanne gave something like six guided tours to the Pergamon for groups of Fellows, kids, and staff within less than two weeks), and yet others felt the need to exploit the last occasions to talk and discover unnoticed aspects of Fellows and partners, such as: did you know that the only "fault" in Karl Marx alias Dhruv Raina was his wonderful wife Raji, who turns out to be also an accomplished singer in the tradition of Indian classical music called Carnatic; or that Salman helped me vis-à-vis a sudden death by showing me ravishing poems by Rumi and Omar Khayyam; or who on earth could have guessed that Peter Schäfer was born on the same day as I (although he, unsurprisingly, is a sheep; I am a rabbit), and upon discovery of this revelation we fixed a date on the 29th of June next year; all this triggered by my daughter Klara's admiration (during our last Thursday family dinner) for

Moira Gatens' beautiful lapis lazuli necklace presented to her by Paul, her partner, on the occasion of her birthday on June 30th. With an ending such as this, how, I ask, am I to continue a meaningful life beyond this magic year guarded by Wiko angels (by the way: there should be a plural to The One)?

Reminiscences

So many moments and insights, intellectual as well as sensual, individual as well as social, were replete with recollections that it felt as though things had fallen into place. For example:

Opening that heavy white-framed glass door, walking up the brownish-tiled stairs in growing expectation, entering the door to the first floor: the enticing fragrance of paper and flowers; on the shelves to the left the fulfillment of academic cravings: books, articles, CDs, notices, and stylish angels in the guise of Frau Bottomley, Frau Rein, Frau Graupner, and all the other heavenly beings who attend ever smilingly to whatever impossible requests or trivial matters that need to be addressed: heaven on earth! I saw myself forty years ago, dressed in Sunday clothes, climbing the tall beige, stony staircase, the smell of candles; singing Christmas carols, the glass door opened, and there they were: mountains of presents!

12:29. Stiff from sitting hours without moving, locking the door, anticipating the display of culinary delights, and then it's always so much more: the very "Liebe Frau Trede ..." kind of intonation by Frau Klöhn and Frau Speder, the acute attention to detailed wishes, and, of course: the discussions and exchanges of ideas, sharing of troubles and discoveries, or simply small talk. Cut. Stafford, school lunch in 1980/81: queuing along a narrow corridor, vile smells of something burnt, overcooked, and always the inedible meat; the British boarding school experience. While that diet at Abbotsholme resulted in a significant weight loss, the food carefully prepared by Frau Frühsammer et al. made me contribute substantially to the production of one more Fellow over the course of the year, as one Alt-Fellow famously observed (Gesine, did you join the club? But we'll probably be evened out by Hans, who claims to have lost some fifteen kilos).

The side effects of a closely-knit community that made me develop protective feelings apparent in immediately noticing if someone was missing (as if only as a whole would we be functional); the reactions against issues that challenged the *Gruppengeist*, which we had fairly quickly acquired; the time spent gossiping; and the development of various sub-

groups, such as the Fellows of non-European/North-American origin: all are phenomena that were hardly different from my experience twenty-seven years back. I arguably profited most in 1980/81 from the encounter with classmates from different cultures and social backgrounds: Stella, a Nigerian princess, who sometimes worked as a model for Yves Saint-Laurent; or my future brother-in-law Rick with his Chinese-Australian background who managed to convince me that Mao was a hero. Similarly, the impact of Antjie and Elizabeth Jelin, Dhruv and Salman; their experiences, questions, and approaches were important for me. I feel the Wiko should (and probably already aims at doing just this) incorporate a larger number of scholars with an Asian and African background to balance the mainstream Western discourse and to increase the diversity of scientific interests and social knowledge. The sometimes-voiced opinion that the Wiko is a Euro/American-centered institution is not altogether wrong.

Stimuli and Networks

At the same time, I benefited enormously from the Image Science Group (preferably referred to as the "Picture Girls"). Put together by Horst Bredekamp and Reinhart Meyer-Kalkus, the group included members of diverse disciplinary backgrounds, Rüdiger Campe, Luca Giuliani, John Krois, Alva, Raphael, Susanne, and the occasional visitor. The idea of a *Bildwissenschaft*, a philosophical as well as a rather German approach to visual arts, was expanded by reflections on the senses other than looking. This is a rather unexplored territory within the study of the history of Japanese art, and it works as a resourceful tool to open up new questions. Within this group and beyond, Susanne and I developed an academic as well as personal friendship that will last. Raphael had to serve as a frequent lunch partner when discussing matters concerning our institutes and the cluster of excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context" at the University of Heidelberg, which came through only three weeks after our Wiko year began. Although I considered myself lucky to get approval for such a large-scale project, it diverted me from my Wiko project.

There are, we are told, Fellows who pull their projects through; others who opt to reduce written productivity and indulge in other activities; and there are some who develop interests in different directions. I belong to the last type. Contrary to my proposed project on the political iconography of pictorial narratives in Japan, my Wiko time was largely spent exploring the mutual cultural diplomacies between Germany and Japan during the nineteen-thirties and forties seen through the lens of art exhibitions. The archives and li-

baries in Berlin are a treasure trove of fascinating documents that elucidate the degree to which the Nazis exploited the medium of exhibitions to enhance their cause on an international level. Although the respective Japanese archives need to be examined as far as they survived the March 1945 American bombings of Tokyo, it is arguably this time period that served as a pivot to shape the artistic canon of Japanese art history today. By now, I am even more convinced that the site where we do research shapes our work decisively. The composition of our Fellow group; the asymmetry between the more Jewish-Israeli focus at Wiko and its appended periphery, the EUME project; the oppressive Nazi history in the Grunewald district (Gleis 17, the *Stolpersteine*, the numerous villas of former Nazi leaders) and in Berlin at large; and my family background with a Jewish grandmother and the *émigré* past of my father urged me to continue research, which had been prompted by a paper given at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences at the invitation by Irmela Hijiya-Kirschnerit shortly after my arrival in October.

While the multi-disciplinary set-up at Wiko was refreshing, the divide between the natural sciences and the humanities was hard to bridge, even though some Fellows embodied this very bridge in their approaches or wide range of knowledge (Dhruv, Hans, Ruth, and Mark Thomas, to name but a few). Nevertheless, from time to time I was happy to interact with colleagues and friends in Japanese studies and art history at the Free and Humboldt universities, at the Museum of Asian Art (thanks, Alex Hofmann!), at the Japanese-German Center, and from Japan. They offered their expertise, involved me in their activities, and provided me with venues to discuss my research.

Koenigsallee

What would all of these inspirations be, though, without the enjoyment of living with my family in the communal residence, Villa Walther? Deprived of the tempting evening activities such as the film series put together by Miriam Hansen and Alex Nagel, Lorenz and I set up a reading group with our next-door neighbors, Alva Noë and Miriam Dym. Although we hardly went beyond Fontane's *Irrungen Wirungen* and an attempt at Benjamin's *Berliner Kindheit um Neunzehnhundert*, our exchanges extended to frequent whisky-drinking, shared health issues, and educational frenzies. Thanks to August, their elder boy, Klara used her kindergarten English, and Noah developed an intense attachment to Ulysses, the younger of the Noë boys. Likewise, Klara decided to marry Isidore (elder son of Denis Thouard and Fosca Mariani), with whom she shared the kindergarten class; and

while barbecuing on the premises of our lovely garden – illegally, I guess –, we made plans to spend vacations together in the future. Ron Rogowski and Karen Best were partners in car sharing and weekend outings as their two girls EmmaKlehr (Noah’s pronunciation) proved to be exceptional harmonizers of the usual sibling frictions. Klara summed it up one July evening: “Wir haben so ein Glück, in diesem Haus zu wohnen!” (We are so lucky to live in this building!).

No conclusions. Just *ewiger Dank*.