

## Arriving in Copenhagen

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It was a revolutionary day in my life 20 September 1968 when I arrived in Copenhagen. I came from California via Tokyo and Moscow, and revolutionary it was to stand there: It could as well have been on the moon. It was as overwhelming as it was exhausting and this might have added to my feeling of having landed on the moon.

Especially the night before in Moscow added to the surreal feeling of having landed at the wrong place. A friend of mine had convinced me in Tokyo to re-route my ticket over Moscow and go via Moscow to Copenhagen. It was a re-route never to be forgotten. The Friendship Flight that was promised by Inturist had not much friendship to offer upon arrival at Sherebestbo. The Inturist Hotlel that

I had written on a slip of paper turned out to be a place far away God knows where. There I sat on my Gepäck for three hours at the airport waiting for a transportation to the hotel located in a forest area with nailed windows for safety's sake. I was promised both wakening and taxi to my 8-oclock plane to Copenhagen. When I by chance woke by myself by 6 I found the babushka sleeping on her table. The whole hotel was in dark. I came somehow to the entrance where I met a person in my own situation who had ordered a taxi from the city the night before he came.

I came on the 8-o'clock plane as tired-looking as as the Russians who sat around me. It was a gloomy atmosphere, no one uttering a word to a neighbour, that is, before the take-off. As soon as the plane went up, however, a new atmosphere erupted. Gloom was gone and people spoke gayly about whatever. I was so surprised that I could not help mentioning it to the waitress serving me my first morning coffee. She told me that this happened every time. When the plane left the ground, the

passengers felt safe and you could see it. It had happened, she said, that a passenger had been arrested just before take off.

There I was in the midst of Copenhagen, on Kejsergade 2 to be more precise, feeling at the end of the world, and could not dream that this would be my official stay for the next 20 (!) years. Professor Søren Egerod was on his way to a new position in New York the following day and just told me at a farewell party the same evening that I should forget about Danish and Greenlandic and concentrate on the Institute. Danish was not necessary for a Swede and Greenlandic was absolutely not necessary! Och rektor Mogens Fog bedyrade att Danish was not necessary - we Scandinavians understood each other! They had Dr. Martha Boyer employed as Forstander and Chairman. Next year I became the Forstander and remained as such through most of the 70s, thus also after Professor Egerod's return from the USA.

To establish a Japanese programme was hard

work and to be the Forstander was harder but hardest was certainly the fact that the university was under constant attack by the Maoist student movement. This was the great challenge that I had already witnessed at Berkeley where it had started with the Free Speech Movement in 1964. Now I was directly involved and on the wrong side. Anyone with a professorial standing was suspect, especially if he defended democratic values and reason and good sense. And I did. I told the students that Mao Tse-Tung was at best a Legalist, the same kind of Legalist as Shih Huang Ti in the 3rd century BC. Ten years later it was announced that Mao Tse-tung was declared officially a Legalist in Chinese thought. It is tough to be right at the wrong time. At the time I suffered for it.

Incredible incidents took place. Rector Fogh was pushed away by a young elegant student who wanted to spread his message about a Mao future. Here was the liberal and friendly Rector accosted by a student who showed his social high background. And the Rector just

stepped back and let have his pulpit. I was lost and asked my friend Else Glahn what was wrong with the Rector the former Resistance Man, the Shell house prisoner and member of the Communist Party. From her came the dry answer, "He is not left enough!" He was also a true believer I understood. The irony of the matter is that I later met Else who had been forced out of her job at Aarhus and I asked her what went wrong and I got the same dry answer (only with a new pronoun): "I was not left enough" (Jeg var ikke venster nok). She was probably still a believer. Seeing my incredulity, she added a while later. "This is difficult to understand for a conservative like you!" I could have murdered her!

In an attempt to understand the students, I began to have my lunch in the institute kitchen when the students, most of them women, told me about their studies and activities. It amazed me how grown up they were, in comparison with the college students I was used to deal with at Berkeley. They were all of them politically conscious, upper-class

and naive and thought they would do something good in the world. Mao was their ideal, but they had seldom read anything by him. During the preceding summer they had visited places where they had presented the Mao truth to the workers, but they had not associated with them because they talked different languages. I realized that I was back in Europe with distinct social classes. They looked down on the masses, felt superior and wanted to be their teachers. I soon stopped to use the kitchen. During ten classless years in California I had forgotten that classes and class snobbery existed in Europe - even among Mao-believers.

In the meantime came the Kejsergade affair. I noticed how the students from the kitchen were spying regularly with a pair of binoculars. When I asked about it, they told me that that there were military personnel coming and leaving the entrance of the building and they were convinced that some sinister spying took place down there. Something sinister was going on down in the

basement. They invited me to watch and they were right, there was really military going up and down a stairs every hour on the hour. They were convinced that the telephones in the house were taped - or worse! I decided to find about things and simply walked down and found out what was happening in the basement. There were some machines down there and I found to my surprise that they were probably doing what I had done in my military service in Sweden. They listened in on the air traffic much higher up than our building. If they took some interest in the telephones in our house, I could not see. There was only two telephones in our institute then. One for the professor and one in the corridor for everyone else. There could not have been much to listen in on. When the Kejsergade affair blew up and became hot news, the military quietly moved away. I felt that exemplified Denmark. To place a listening unit in the basement of a city building showed Danish innocence. In Sweden the same listening took place under 30 meters of granite. The bottom line is that the students were spying on their own country.

Thereupon I was honoured to set up the first study committee (studienævn) at the Institute. The students had asked for it and I thought myself that democratic meetings with the students was a fine idea. Teachers and students in mutual and democratic discussions about institute matter. I did not directly understand that what was behind the demand from the students was desire for power. The professor power should be broken and student power should come in. The first meetings were also not inspiring. There were only Dr. Martha Boyer and myself on the teacher side and often more than ten students on the student side. More often than not it turned out to be a Polish parliament with little say for the minority, that is, Martha Boyer and me. Some order came first in 1973, when a decree (bekendtgørelse) came from the ministry saying that teachers and students should be of even number. Then I decided that there should be three teachers since we were really only three full teachers, Søren Egerod, Martha Boyer and me, and that there should be



equally three students. So it has been since with the change that inflation has taken place about who is a teacher.

The democratization that took place as a result of the 1968 revolt led via the establishment of the studienævn and other reforms from the professor-dominated university to a new university on the gymnasium level - a “lower gymnasium university” as one old professor put it. From having been a university on a high level where studies on the doctoral level and research on an international level has become a university where lecturers on a lower level basically offer routine teaching and less emphasis on research on an international level. The bar has been lowered and the inflated so-called PhD degree is on a level that cannot compete with doctoral degrees from other universities.

It was a new life. It was a challenge. This might have been what made me decide to stay on. There were other reasons. After ten years in the USA, this was homecoming. I was on a

two-year leave-of absence from University of California and I could have returned to another kind of life in 1970. It could have been Rector Fogh who made up my mind. He promised me a full professorship if I stayed on. He only wanted to know whether it would be a Springbrett for a professorship in Sweden. This has happened before. I made my promise, I kept my promise and I had my professorship in 1972. And I stayed on - for better or worse. God knows that I have had second thoughts.

Two days after my arrival I had a visitor at my office who would affect my life until his death in November 2014. He was Carl Trolle Steenstrup. At once I took him for another student and I advised him to attend my classes which would begin the following week. He came but was not satisfied with the speed and I allowed him full freedom. He finished his Danish M.A in 1971 and continued at Harvard for a PhD in 1977 which he doubled with a Danish Doctor of Philosophy in 1979. He published *Hôjô Shigetoki (1198-1261) and his Role in the*

History of Japanese Political and Ethical Ideas (1979) and other works.

Three other students who achieved the doctoral degree in the Japanese programme were :

1. Kirsten Refsing. The Ainu Language. 1986

2. Lone Takeuchi. A Study of Classical Japanese Tense and Aspect. 1987

3. Margaret Dorothea Mehl. History and the State in Nineteenth-century Japan. 1998

Other evaluated doctoral dissertations:

Berentsen, Jan-Martin, Grave and Gospel, Oslo, 1981.

Bieda, Wanda: Nakae Tôju: Founder of the Wang Yang-ming School in Japan, 1980,

Blomberg, Catharina, Samurai Religion, Some Aspects of Warrior Manners and Customs in Feudal Japan, Uppsala, 1976

Børdahl, Vibeke, The Oral Tradition of Yangzhou Storytelling, Copenhagen, 1996

Haglund, Åke, Contact and Conflict, Studies in Contemporary Religious Attitudes among Chinese People, Lund, 1972

Kracht, Klaus, Studien zur Geschichte des Denkens im Japan des 17. bis 19. Jahrhunderts: Chu-Hsi-Confuzianische Geistdiskurse, Bochum, 1985 (Habilitation)

Leinss, Gerhard, Japanische Anthropologie, Die Natur des Menschen in der konfuzianischen Neoklassik am Anfang des 18. Jahrhunderts Jinsai und Sorai, Wiesbaden, 1995

Sjöholm, Gunnar, Readings in MO TI, Chapters XXVI - XXVIII on the Will of

Heaven, Lund, 1982.

Steenstrup, Carl, Hôjô Shigetoki (1198-1261) and his Role in the History of Political and Ethical Ideas in Japan, Copenhagen, 1979.

Takahashi, Mutsuku, Tampere, Finland:

Tyler, Susan Smith, The Art and Cult of Kasuga, Oslo, 1985.

Vargö, Lars, Social and Economic Conditions for the Formation of the Early Japanese State, Stockholm, 1982.

Vidaeus, Kerstin, Miyazawa Kenji, his Stories, Characters and Worldview, Copenhagen, 1994.

Berentsen, Jan-Martin, Grave and Gospel, Oslo, 1981.

Bieda, Wanda: Nakae Tôju: Founder of the Wang Yang-ming School in Japan, 1980,

Blomberg, Catharina, Samurai Religion, Some

Aspects of Warrior Manners and Customs in Feudal Japan, Uppsala, 1976

Børdahl, Vibeke, The Oral Tradition of Yangzhou Storytelling, Copenhagen, 1996

Haglund, Åke, Contact and Conflict, Studies in Contemporary Religious Attitudes among Chinese People, Lund, 1972

Kracht, Klaus, Studien zur Geschichte des Denkens im Japan des 17. bis 19. Jahrhunderts: Chu-Hsi-Confuzianische Geistdiskurse, Bochum, 1985 (Habilitation)

Leinss, Gerhard, Japanische Anthropologie, Die Natur des Menschen in der konfuzianischen Neoklassik am Anfang des 18. Jahrhunderts Jinsai und Sorai, Wiesbaden, 1995

Refsing, Kirsten, The Ainu Language, Copenhagen, 1986

Sjöholm, Gunnar, Readings in MO TI,

Chapters XXVI - XXVIII on the Will of Heaven, Lund, 1982.

Steenstrup, Carl, Hôjô Shigetoki (1198-1261) and his Role in the History of Political and Ethical Ideas in Japan, Copenhagen, 1979.

Takahashi, Mutsuku, Tampere, Finland:

Takeuchi, Lone, A Study of Classical Japanese Tense and Aspect, Copenhagen, 1987.

Tyler, Susan Smith, The Art and Cult of Kasuga, Oslo, 1985.

Vargö, Lars, Social and Economic Conditions for the Formation of the Early Japanese State, Stockholm, 1982.

Vidaeus, Kerstin, Miyazawa Kenji, his Stories, Characters and Worldview, Copenhagen, 1994.

EVALUATION OF Ph.D.-DISSERTATION

Darling, Dennis. Uesugi Kenshin: A Study of the Military Career of a Sixteenth Century Warlord, Copenhagen, 2001

Frellesvig, Bjarke. A Case Study in Diachronic Phonology, Copenhagen, 1995

Nagashima, Yuichi. Iwano Hômeis litteraturteori, 1982

Among the students I have found those who studied for the love of it and those studied for career and power. Let me mention two who did for the love of it. Dr. Martha Boyer met me when I came and I was impressed by her energy . She published Lotus og drage in 1969 and it was not noticed at the Institute.

Similarly, Mette Brændgaard, later Laderrière, showed original love for research with her Onnagata in Kabuki, work that was discontinued because of illness and early death. Others could be mentioned but are



mostly of less interest. Descriptive research work, not based on a definite thesis and only for the sake of career, has never impressed me, but it apparently pays off.

Martha Boyer proved what Albert Einstein had said that the world is too dangerous to live in. Not because of the people who do evil but because of the people who stand beside and allow it. Einstein's conclusion was that *Zivilfeigheit*, civil cowardice, is characteristic of man, not civil courage. Therefore he left Germany in 1932 and Martha Boyer asked for early retirement in 1977.

To put things in perspective. My job in Copenhagen came in the middle of my positions, in California, at Berkeley and Davis, and my positions in Germany, at University of Tübingen and Humboldt University at Berlin. Together they spell more than 50 years of academic activities. 10 years first at Berkeley, 28 years at Copenhagen and last 12 years in Germany. It has been a rich university life, in the midst of some 5000 students, and a variety

of experiences and memories that could fill volumes to relate.

O.G. Lidin (2015)