

to the *Great Chinese Revolution* ended with the statement that "I alone can hardly claim to be responsible for all the judgments made in this book, but I can't really tell you who is." But readers who followed his series of reviews of China literature in the *New York Review of Books* noted a decreasingly optimistic tone about China and indeed the larger Chinese political tradition. Mao was more an oppressor and less a liberator, but in becoming so he was, Fairbank felt, following a tradition deeply rooted in the Chinese past. Old battles of the 1950s, in which Wittfogel's *Oriental Despotism* had been disowned, seemed resolved, and the Chinese revolution less revolutionary. June 4 sealed that march to the Chinese past. Once again, JKF showed that he never stopped reading, thinking, and writing. On the morning of the day he entered the hospital for the last time, he and Wilma delivered the corrected copy of his final book to Harvard University Press. *China: A New History* will provide the distillation of his thought on the course of Chinese history, his final contribution to a dialogue which, as much as any single scholar can, he helped to shape and nurture.

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ANNA KATHARINA SEIDEL
(1938–1991)

With Anna Seidel, who passed away in San Francisco on September 29, 1991, at the age of fifty-three, the international community of China scholars has lost one of its most remarkable and original minds. During her twenty-two years at the Institut du Hōbōgirin of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient in Kyōto, Anna Seidel had become the center of gravity for the many Western scholars from all walks of East Asian studies who yearly descend on the ancient Japanese capital to do their research. She was a source of both intellectual and emotional help to many, earning the special gratitude of many junior colleagues to whom she offered invaluable stimulus, guidance, and constructive criticism. Anyone who attended the many lectures, discussion meetings, and receptions Anna Seidel organized at the beautiful temple surroundings of her Institute will remember the warm interest she took in all manner of intellectual pursuits, the sparkling wit of her conversation, and her uncanny sense for crosscultural incongruities. In her last years, her recurring sickness, forcing upon her extended stays in the hospital and a strict diet, in no way reduced her *joie de vivre*, which she most generously shared with others.

Born in Berlin in 1938 as the youngest of three siblings, Anna Seidel spent most of her youth in Munich. During the Nazi era, her father, an aviation engineer, courageously stood by her mother, who was descended from a distinguished German-Jewish family; they sheltered a Jewish friend at their home throughout World War II. Her parents early encouraged Anna to pursue intellectual interests. Having been trained in the basics of Sinology at the universities of Munich (1958–1960) and Hamburg (1961), Anna Seidel specialized in the study of Chinese religions in Paris, where she studied from 1961 to 1968 under two eminent fellow expatriates, Maxime Kaltenmark and Rolf A. Stein. Her doctoral thesis, *La divinisation de Lao-tseu dans le taoïsme des Han* (Publications de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient No. 71, 1969) stands as a pathbreaking study. In 1969, Anna Seidel was elected a member of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient and sent to Kyōto, where she resided until the

time of her death. Here her work was centered upon the compilation of the *Hōbōgirin*, a multivolume encyclopedic dictionary of Buddhism. At the same time, she had ample opportunity to continue her own work on religious Taoism, becoming one of the world's foremost authorities in this field.

After a short-lived marriage to the Bostonian gentleman scholar Holmes Welch, with whom she co-edited *Facets of Taoism* (Yale University Press, 1979), Anna Seidel devoted her life singlemindedly to her scholarship and to the Hōbōgirin Institute. She taught Chinese religion as a visiting professor at the University of Hawaii in 1978, and at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in 1988; it is no secret that she repeatedly refused attractive offers from leading American universities. In 1985, she launched the bilingual journal *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie*, which has since become an important voice in the study of East Asian religions. It was the avowed purpose of this journal to draw scholars in Europe, America, and East Asia closer together; in Kyōto, Anna Seidel was in a unique position to serve as a link between these various communities of scholars. Indeed, she embodied the idea of an international scholar: German in upbringing and cultural identity, French by training and citizenship, living and working in Japan, and wooed by the English-speaking world. No matter in what language they are written, her published works convey her thoughts with the unequalled clarity she achieved by steering clear of stylistic niceties and by making no concessions to fashionable theoretical *jargon*.

Anna Seidel's view of Chinese religion as pioneered in her article "Taoism," written for the 15th edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1975), was highly original. While her work was centered upon early religious texts, which she subjected to the most rigorous philological scrutiny, her analysis of religion extended to all aspects of culture. In a reversal of previous priorities, she placed her main emphasis on religious practice in its historical context, never becoming entangled in doctrinal speculations. Anna Seidel was not a religious practitioner, least of all of Taoism; but she approached religious phenomena with a rare sense of empathy. Although she did not undertake long-term systematic fieldwork on Chinese religion, she paid close attention to contemporary religious phenomena, which she saw in a continuum with the ancient textual traditions. She had very much of a comparative perspective on religion, and she made good use of the opportunity to observe and record the religious life wherever she traveled, especially in Japan. Her important collections remain with the Hōbōgirin Institute.

Anna Seidel did not live to write a major synthesis of her field of research, though there are some initial attempts in such a direction (the booklet *Taoismus, Die inoffizielle Hochreligion Chinas*, Tōkyō, OAG aktuell 41, 1990, and her magisterial "Chronicle of Taoist Studies in the West, 1950–1990," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 5[1989/90]:223–347). Her work stands unfinished; it is up to the younger scholars she helped so much to follow her lead and bring out the rich vision of religion in culture that was hers. Without her advice, this will be a difficult task.

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