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Original Article
Bildung and the Significance of Place

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Strolling to Nothingness: Japanese tea gardens and the initiation of *Bildung*

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ABSTRACT

Although the alienating journey into the unknown as the fundamental element of transformative education may have gained a paradigmatic expression in the German concept of *Bildungsreise*, it is neither a solely German or even European concept, nor is it a child of the 18th century: the transformative power of travelling has been acknowledged at least since antiquity in Europe, and comparable reflections and practices have evolved in other parts of the world. This article will introduce one of those examples that may, only on first view though, look quite distinct from what is suggested as *Bildungsreise*: the strolling on the *roji* (露地), the path through the tea garden, before entering the *chashitsu* (茶室), the tea room, to participate in *chanoyu* (茶の湯), the tea ceremony, as it found its classic form in 16th-century Japan. Discussing this Japanese practice will not only support an intercultural perspective on the educative nature of travel and the relevance of space for the theory and practice of transformative education or *Bildung*, but also—more relevant from a philosophical point of view—enable an analysis of the conceptual core of the idea of a transformative journey. As will be shown, far from being a special case of education or *Bildung*, this conceptual structure lies at the very heart of both.

KEYWORDS: philosophy of education, history of education, theory of education, continental pedagogy, systematic pedagogy, Japan, Japanese education, theory of *Bildung*

INTRODUCTION: TEA FOR ETERNITY

Over the past 600 years the Japanese tea ceremony *chanoyu* (茶の湯) has developed from a medicinal practice originating in China to a highly codified cultural phenomenon that is deeply embedded in Japanese culture and therefore serves

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as an emblematic expression of this very culture. For someone travelling to Japan or maybe even just being interested in Japan, it seems impossible to avoid an encounter with this practice and its related utensils; much like anime or manga, the tea bowl of matcha has not only become an emblem of Japan abroad but has found its way into the everyday life of quite a few foreigners.

Despite this ubiquity of the tea ceremony in at least thoughts about Japan, comparatively few people have ever attended a real tea ceremony. While a bastardized version is pushed on basically every tourist who visits Japan on an organized trip, not even the majority of Japanese citizens have attended a full ceremony, which can take up to four hours. Despite the unending efforts of the great tea ceremony schools and their grand masters to present their aesthetic sensibilities and practices as the essence of 'Japaneseness' (Surak 2013)—which is exactly the reason why the tea ceremony is such a standing feature of all official Japanese tourism—the ceremony itself remains a somewhat arcane pleasure.

This is not the place to discuss the problematic marriage of the tea ceremony with cultural and political power that was established since the time of (arguably) the first grand master, Sen (no) Rikyū (千利休, 1522–91). This marriage saw the tea ceremony and its official representatives not only in close proximity to whoever was ruling the country, but also in service of whatever political goals the rulers were espousing: just like the devotees of Zen Buddhism (Victoria 2006)—arguably one of the foundational philosophies of the tea ceremony (Hirota 1995)—tea masters and disciples called for war, patriotic nationalism, and sacrifice in times of Japanese imperialist campaigns (Cross 2009); and they call for peace and international conviviality whenever that is the spirit embraced officially in Japan. And we can also not further discuss the somewhat problematic and essentializing views that defend the identification of the tea ceremony with the essence of Japaneseness or see in the tea ceremony the perfect expression of the Japanese mind and soul. It is, however, relevant to keep those discussions in mind when engaging with the following text, as the argument will unfold a position that stands somewhat queerly in relation to such perceptions of cultural essentialism and exceptionalism. The claim will be that the tea ceremony as a practice represents a universal and eternal truth—a truth that is not genuinely Japanese and that therefore is accessible to everyone, a truth that is generally pedagogical.

For this argument to unfold, it is necessary to construct the object of analysis. Some 600 years of history has, of course, left its traces, and the interested scholar and practitioner is facing not only a myriad of modern schools of tea ceremony, but also an abundance of historic positions and practices (Hennemann 1994). It may not be an exaggeration to claim that most modern schools refer to (their constructed vision of) Sen no Rikyū as founding father of the modern tea ceremony—some seeing him as the founding father in spirit, and some placing him in an apparently uninterrupted line of ancestry (as in most Japanese traditional arts, a hereditary system of succession, the *iemoto* (家元) Grand Master system, fortifies, and occasionally ossifies, the transmission of knowledge and power). However, each of the schools interprets or constructs the lore slightly differently so, depending

on which details provide the material for an analysis, one has to be aware that such details may vary amongst practitioners of new and old times (e.g. should one take four or six steps to cross a *tatami* (畳), i.e. one of the straw mats covering the floor of a traditional Japanese house and tea room?). And, of course, I as author am writing as a student within one specific school, *Omotesenke* (表千家), and my own perception is influenced by the teaching I received and continue to receive. The situation is made even more complicated through the abundance of texts claiming to represent the original tea ceremony (Plutschow 2003: 5ff.). As in other origin stories, the mythically constructed founder Rikyū is existent only in accounts originating in times after his demise, and the guardians of tradition—especially the houses of Sen (千)—have done much to present their ancestors in the kind of light deemed to be relatable (or, as a cynic would say, saleable) to the wider public of contemporary society. For example, while Rikyū is nowadays usually presented as a pure aesthete who devoted his life to the development of the tea ceremony, he was by no means a character detached from political life. On the contrary, as (one of the) tea master(s) of two of the most influential *daimyō* (大名, feudal lords) Oda Nobunaga (織田 信長, 1534–82) and Hideyoshi Toyotomi (豊臣 秀吉, 1537–98), he was placed at the heart of political power, provided munitions as arms dealer for his master's military campaigns, advised on political and military matters, outstayed his welcome and his lord's patience, and was eventually ordered by Hideyoshi to commit suicide. It was a gruesome ending (that saw his severed head being exposed for public ridicule), the depiction of which remains a taboo for those official accounts that desire to garner the support of the bearers of tradition, that is, the houses of Sen, which represent the three biggest tea ceremony schools' respective styles; nobody wishes to be reminded of the close proximity of tea and power, not only in the past but also still in the present. What the tea ceremony is, how it was established, and by whom, is a complex story that is comprised of many myths and that is heavily guarded by those who nowadays represent this tradition.

However, what will be discussed here is hopefully beyond the intricate differences characterizing the schools and styles. What will be analysed is the relation the *roji* (露地), the tea garden path, has to the *chashitsu* (茶室), the tea house or room, into which the guest of a ceremony enters after having passed through the garden. With only a fleeting glimpse at the ceremony itself, it will, I hope, be possible to show that the stroll through the garden can be understood as a *Bildungsreise*, a (hopefully) formative journey, and can therefore serve as a paradigmatic example to shed some more light on the characteristic features of such a formative journey. However, before the walk through the garden comes into view, a little more light needs to be shed on the whole ceremony.

For both—the abbreviated discussion of the ceremony itself and of the tea garden and path—some texts will be consulted that represent important parts of the general lore of the tea ceremony. There is neither the space nor the need here to engage with the discussions around the authenticity of those texts regarding whether they express the 'real' thoughts of Sen no Rikyū. It can be taken for granted

that those texts represent a shared understanding (at least in a very general form) with regard to the questions we are engaging with here, and little is won for our discussions by claiming or rejecting their authenticity as expressions of Rikyū's thoughts.

ROJI (露地)—THE PATH TO NOTHINGNESS

For those unfamiliar with the tea ceremony, it is probably of benefit to gain a general idea of the process, especially the first part that involves strolling through the garden on the *roji*. On the invitation of the tea master, the guests arrive at the outer gate of the garden, where they find a place to change their clothes and a lavatory; here they wait on a specifically provided roofed bench until being greeted and called forward by the tea master; while they wait, they look at a symbolic dust pit in the ground where some seemingly discarded fallen leaves suggest meticulous cleaning preceding the ceremony. Once called, they walk through the outer garden, crossing the inner gate into the inner garden. Here, the *roji*, the path, paved with carefully selected and arranged stepping stones, winds its way to the tea house—forever hindering any direct view either forward to the house or back towards the gates through which they came in, allowing mere glimpses of what was and what is to come. On the way, there is another waiting bench to be used for waiting between the different parts of the ceremony, another dust pit, some stone lanterns, and finally a stone basin at which all guests crouch one after the other to ritually rinse their hands and mouth, clearing away the dust of the world. Once cleansed, the guests step forward to the tea house, which they are to enter through the *nijiriguchi* (躙口), a small entrance covered by a sliding door of ancient wood. The entrance is famously small, and to enter, after having relieved themselves of their shoes or sandals (and swords), which are neatly arranged along the side of the house, they have to crouch and go into the tea room on their knees. Once all guests are in the house, the sliding door is shut, and a small hook secures the door from inside. The shutting and locking of the door signals to the host that they can now enter the room from the other side and begin the actual tea ceremony (Tanaka and Tanaka 2000: 108ff.).

It is important, in general, to understand that there are three separate spaces involved in the whole ceremony: the space outside the tea garden, the space of the tea garden with the garden path, and the tea room itself (which can, but does not have to be a standalone hut). The guest of a tea ceremony therefore crosses two boundaries before they enter the tea room: first, the guest crosses from the normal world into the tea garden (which in itself is divided into an outer and an inner garden), and second, after traversing the garden on the outlined path, the guest has to cross the threshold into the tea room where the actual ceremony takes place. Both crossings are marked and relevant, and both are part of the intentional pedagogical setting that constitutes the tea ceremony.

To recognize the relevance of the garden, a brief look into its history can be of help. Japanese houses have traditionally been connected to gardens. That is especially true for the houses of those strata of society in which the tea ceremony

originated: the nobility and clergy. Enjoying tea in various forms inevitably included some use of the garden as pleasure ground, as a place for celebration and enjoyment. So, even in those times when tea rooms were part of the general house, using the garden was already included in the tea gatherings in some form. The increasing popularity of *renga* (連歌) and *waka* (和歌, linked collaborative poetry and its parts) and its aesthetics—as expressed especially by Shinkei (心敬, 1406–75)—brought some of the tea connoisseurs closer to what later became famous as *wabi* (侘) aesthetics, a celebration of the beauty of the simple, imperfect, and austere (Kōshirō 1989). It seems that Sanjonishi Sanetaka (三条西実隆, 1455–1537) was the first to build a separated hut in his garden to imitate the environment of the wild mountains in his own dwelling (Plutschow 2003: 43ff.). The hut, now separated from the main house by a garden, was supposed to provide a sense of solitude and loneliness and quietness: while Kamo no Chōmei (鴨 長明, 1153 or 1155–1216) and Yoshida Kenkō (吉田 兼好, 1283–1350) indeed retired to small cabins in the mountains to achieve the Buddhist separation from the world, as described in *Hōjōki* (方丈記) and *Tsurezuregusa* (徒然草), the aesthetes of the 16th century erected their retreats in their own backyards, using the garden to clearly separate the urban space of the house from the reclusive space of the mountain hut. While those garden huts were at first seemingly places of poetic enjoyment, they gradually developed into places for the tea ceremony. And together with the ceremony itself, the garden one had to traverse before attending the ceremony became more and more elaborate in its design and interpretation. In this way, the tea garden and the path leading through it so much became an inextricable part of the ceremony that to enter even those tea rooms that are not standalone huts but part of a bigger house, one has to stroll through a tea garden and enter the room from outside, that is, from the garden, leaving it solely to the host to enter the tea room from the house to which the room is attached.

To better understand what the passage on the *roji* means within *chanoyu*, we need to look at some of the interpretations given by tea masters and practitioners. As Inaji (1998: 62) points out, a poem of the 12th-century ascetic poet-monk Saigyō Hōshi (西行法師, 1118–90) perfectly expresses the atmosphere of a *roji*:

> Leaves of the *kashi* trees,
> Even before they were tinged
> All are scattered
> Along the path to the mountain monastery
> Lone and desolate.

Gradually winding away from the urban world, the path leads to a utopian space, a space of a different kind, which is detached from the tribulations of everyday life. The atmosphere of austerity and the clarity of the mountains, the desolation and rugged beauty of the hermit's hut, this is what the tea house is to represent. And it is due to the meticulous planning of the path leading to it that this can be achieved in the midst of urbanity; the design of the garden path alone allows for this atmosphere to manifest itself. Rikyū himself perceived the path as a way into a different world:

Since the Dewy Path (*roji*)
Is a way that lies outside
This most impure world
Shall we not on entering it
Cleanse our hearts from earthly mire? (Inaji 1998: 66)

With this in mind, the different design features of the garden path become comprehensible. The symbolic gates that the guests have to step through signify a cutting-off from the world; the dust pit as the place where the baggage of the outside is discarded, the winding path that creates a sense of disorientation and detachment through refusing clear vistas forward or backward, the water basin in which symbolically the dust of the world is rinsed away, and the *nijiriguchi*, the crawling entrance, which demands that one liberate oneself not only from all baggage (formerly, e.g. samurai swords) but also from all preconceptions of one's status: inside, everybody is the same. The symbolic locking of the door shuts out the world as we know it; the path has led into a different world, and it is the features of the path that create the sense of the difference of the world into which one has entered when one enters the tea room.

It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss what happens in the tea house itself (see Kenklies 2025). Two last quotations of Rikyū should suffice to point towards a specific tradition in which the tea ceremony itself and its materiality—the tea house/tea room and the utensils used during the ceremony, and, of course, the *roji*—are to be placed: the aesthetic tradition of *wabi* and its Buddhist interpretation:

> The tea ceremony is first of all a matter of religious discipline and attainment of salvation according to the Law of the Buddha. In mundane life, luxurious living and dainty food are considered the source of comfort. However, if a person has shelter enough to protect him from the rain, and a supply of food just enough to keep him from hunger, that is sufficient. This is the essential meaning of the Buddha's teaching, as well as of the tea ceremony. Carrying water, taking firewood, boiling water, making tea, offering it to the Buddha, offering it to people, drinking it oneself, arranging flowers, lighting incense—this is learning the legacy of all the Buddhist patriarchs. (Ludwig 1974: 49)

> The essential intention of *wabi* is to manifest the Buddhaland of purity free from defilements. In this garden path and in this thatched hut, every speck of dust is cleared out. When master and visitor together commune direct from the heart, no ordinary measures of proportion or ceremonial rules are followed. A fire is made, water is boiled, and tea is drunk—that is all! For here we experience the disclosure of the Buddha-mind. (p. 48)

In short, while the ceremony itself is about nothing but boiling water, preparing and drinking tea, it is indeed about a transformational experience that leads to enlightenment. And it is also the path that leads to the tea house, and on which the guest is strolling before entering the tea room, that enables such an experience. The path that leads in the Buddhist sense to Nowhere, to the realm of Nothingness from where Everything of relevance emerges.

From a more pedagogical point of view, how can the stroll along the path to the tea house be understood?

WALKING THE *ROJI* (露地)—FROM A PEDAGOGICAL POINT OF VIEW

First of all, we would need to understand what 'pedagogical' means in the context of this article. Following a more continental understanding (Friesen and Kenklies 2022), pedagogy is theoretically and practically concerned with education, that is, with the influence that someone exerts on someone (else) in order to change and improve a relation that this person is engaged in. In other words: Everybody constantly stands in relation to, for example, other people, objects of the world, or even oneself—and sometimes we envision those relations to look different, to be better, somehow improved, and we devise strategies for changing those relations (e.g. to be more patient with others, to know more about a topic, or to be a stronger master of our own fears). This change is deliberate, and education is the aspiration to induce, support, and guide this change. In this sense, education is therefore not just learning, or transformation, or experience: it is the planned attempt to initiate learning, to bring forth transformation, to generate formative experiences. Analysing the *roji* from a pedagogical view does therefore mean seeing how it is part of an educational setting, and how its design is deliberately chosen to support the education aspired to here.

As we have already seen, every single aspect of the path is designed for a certain reason (usually, the tea room and the *roji* are both designed by the tea master themselves). It works both on a symbolic level and on an affective level (Kraftl and Adey 2008). Symbolically, it creates difference between spaces and establishes a discontinuity between the tea world and the mundane world: the space created is utopian, a *u-topos*, in which different regimes of status, purity, and time exist. The gate boundaries one has to transgress, the dust pits filled with worldly remains, the water in the basin that washes away the dust of the world, and the experience at the end of being cut off from the world as one enters the tea room through the *nijiriguchi*—all these aspects symbolize the existence of a utopian realm that one is about to enter. And the same is also achieved at the level of affect: the design of the path makes this utopian realm experienceable—the wearing of different clothes, with the gates opened and closed behind oneself, the crossing of several thresholds, the cleaning with fresh water, the meandering of the stepping stones that allows no glimpses into the distance, the sliding into the shadowy tea room through a narrow entrance (almost as a reversal of birth)—all this creates a feeling of otherworldliness, and the path that one walks is experienced as a path into a different world. This is deliberate, as it is part of the pedagogical arrangement of the tea room itself that whatever transformation is aspired to here depends on the awareness of the tea room as a utopian space. 'The man entering the tea ceremony room does so as an individual, shedding as far as possible all symbols of social rank and role' (Kato 1981: 157).

The relevance of space and the characteristics of the pedagogical or educational space as generally heterotopian (Foucault 1984), and particularly utopian, space has been acknowledged in a variety of ways, theoretically and practically. Theoretically speaking, not only are heterotopicality as well as heterochronicity aspects already of the internal logic of a notion of *education* in general (Kenklies 2012), but also

spatiality governs the metaphors used to express theories of educational or pedagogical processes (Priem 2004); practically considered, educational or pedagogical endeavours were often situated in deliberately designed utopian heterotopoi—created either through deliberate distancing (e.g. removal of the pedagogical process to an apparently more suitable environment, such as a village, camp, forest) or separating (e.g. through the erecting of walls around pedagogical institutions such as boarding schools or colleges) (Oelkers 1993). This logic of education and pedagogy as being bound to and understood as heterotopian space (and heterochronical time) still underlies modern pedagogical visions of schools, as, for example, presented by Masschelein and Simons (2014). However, as can be seen with regard to the tea ceremony, the consideration of educational and pedagogical spaces as utopian spaces that are deliberately detached from normal space is not new. The *roji* deliberately attempts to detach the guests from the world and in doing so prepares them to enter and perceive the tea room as a utopian space, so that the ceremony within the tea room can achieve what it is supposed to achieve: an event of *Bildung*, of self-(trans)formation (Kenklies 2018; Herdt 2019).

What is important here from a pedagogical point of view is that the *roji* prepares the guests for a transformational experience in the tea room itself—it neither provides nor creates the transformational experience the ceremony wishes to induce. As such, the path and the stroll along the path is a preparation for transformation, not the transformative experience itself: by design, it creates the frame of mind in which the guests are more likely to have a transformative experience in the tea ceremony proper. Strolling along the garden path is perceived to be the didactic *conditio sine qua non* of the enlightening experience of the tea ceremony. Rikyū was very aware of the didactic importance of the tea room and the garden path: while he perceived it as possible to stage an open-air tea ceremony, he very much discouraged everybody from attempting it, claiming that only the greatest masters would be able to create an atmosphere for the ceremony in which the desired transformational effect would manifest itself. The reasons for those difficulties are indeed pedagogical reasons: without the garden path and without the tea room, the imaginative creation of a transformational utopian space is just so much harder for both hosts and guests as there simply is too much distraction through the surrounding environment (Treml 1982; Lewin 2019); achieving the right frame of mind that allows for transformation without the help of the detaching path and the otherworldly atmosphere of the tea room is too difficult for most, and so it does need the pedagogical help of both to make educational transformation possible.

From what has been said so far, it can reasonably be inferred that indeed the stroll through the garden on the *roji*, the path towards the tea room, seems to be close to what is often called a *Bildungsreise*, a (trans)formative journey. And still there might be some discrepancy, especially in light of what has been emphasized at the end: that it is not the stroll itself that induces the fundamental transformation; it 'only' prepares the frame of mind to allow for such a transformation to happen in the tea room, during what is the tea ceremony proper. And while putting someone in such a frame of mind is indeed a welcome change of a person, it perhaps

cannot justifiably be termed 'education' as it may not be imagined to be of any permanence. However, the following discussions will take this as the starting point for exploring the systematic structure of such transformative journeys and the underlying notion of *Bildung*. This will help us to ascertain whether we are indeed looking at a genuine transformative journey here.

STEPPING ASIDE—THE LOGIC OF A TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY

The idea that travelling changes and maybe even educates people is neither new or modern, nor especially Western. Many cultures and societies have been, and many still are, aware of the effects travelling can have on people: from travelling apprentices of a craft in medieval (and indeed still modern) times, to different practices of ritualized pilgrimage along prescribed paths, to the traditional *Walkabout* of Aboriginal Australians or other tribal initiatory rites of passage, the *musha shugyō* (武者修行) of the Japanese samurai, and, of course, the Grand Tour of the distinguished Europeans: the demand to leave with the expectation to come back transformed, improved, seems almost as old as human culture. And although it may then have been the 18th-century German conceptualization as *Bildungsreise* in which such intuitions found their most theoretical expression (Kenklies 2020), this merely forged into a clear form what had existed before as more or less unsystematized knowledge.

While the general idea is indeed not new, it is worth having a brief look at one of those more theoretical accounts of the generally known practice to ask ourselves: how does the self-transformation that is *Bildung* relate to the journey? As I have explained elsewhere (Kenklies 2020), Goethe's *Italian Journey*, which provided the paradigm of the *Bildungsreise* in 18th-century Germany, lies at the heart of the theoretical account of the process of *Bildung*. To see this with more clarity, we can refer to Wilhelm von Humboldt, who by no means was the only person who offered an account of *Bildung* (theories of *Bildung* are legion and can be traced back to the 13th-century German mystic Meister Eckhart) but who is often referred to as providing a classic account.

For Humboldt, *Bildung* is the result of a voluntary alienation—that is, of a decision to leave the old and known behind and to venture out into the unknown of the world outside:

> [H]is [the human being's] nature drives him to reach beyond himself to the external objects, and here it is crucial that he should not lose himself in this alienation, but rather reflect back into his inner being the clarifying light and the comforting warmth of everything that he undertakes outside himself. To this end, however, he must bring the mass of objects closer to himself, impress his mind upon this matter, and create more of a resemblance between the two. (Humboldt (2000 [1793]): 59)

This encounter with the other results in the alienation of a person, who has to—at least temporarily—abandon their old truths, old convictions, and old self, only then to 'return' from the wilderness outside as a new, transformed, and elevated

self—enriched and expanded through connecting itself to the other that is the world outside. This then is *Bildung*: the personal transformation that is enabled by the encounter with the other in whatever form—be it on a bodily journey into strange countries, or on an intellectual journey into the world of thought of someone else, as Gadamer would describe the fundamental structure of a transformational conversation: 'To be in a conversation, however, means to be beyond oneself, to think with the other and to come back to oneself as if to another' (Gadamer 1985: 110). And with Humboldt in view, it becomes clear that the formative effect is a result not of the journey, the travel itself, but of the encounters it makes possible. Or, in other words, *Bildung* needs the temporary alienation caused by an encounter with an other—enabled by a journey—to manifest itself (Kenklies 2022). That neither every journey nor every encounter with an other automatically results in a transformation, however, can easily be seen by looking at our everyday experiences.

Many people travel in this age of tourism. Not only do people travel far away, but also over long periods of time. However, not all—and maybe even only very few—of those trips result in what we might call *Bildung*. The reason for that is that alienation does not happen, as people keep avoiding it if they can (due to its dangerous and sometimes painful nature). And the whole tourism industry could be described as an attempt to provide the experience of travel without the immediate experience of alienation: people wish and expect to find their homes in the distance; they expect the food to be only slightly different, they expect their native language to be spoken, they expect their housing standards to comply with their usual expectations; holiday clubs safeguard their guests with high fences and carefully selected exposure to 'native' life, while the international travel infrastructure has now reached a point of bland identity: all airports look the same, with the same shops, same brands, same procedures—Starbucks coming to the rescue in most countries to shield the traveller from overexposure to locality. The only aspect that is allowed or even required to be different is the natural environment: the weather, the sea, the snow, the white beach with palm trees—accepted signifiers of distance.

This is not the place for criticizing those travel practices: it is, however, the place to remind ourselves that the journey, the travelling itself, is not what changes people: it is the alienating encounter with the other that can induce the change of self. Such travel does make it easier to encounter the other: it creates opportunities for such life-changing meetings. It may offer the chance to meet someone or something along the way that is very different and therefore disrupts and calls into question our own ways of inhabiting the world, or it may be a path that leads to a space of difference where we become detached from our own world and with it our own selves. Such travel can be long or short: we can take a tour of the world, collecting alienating encounters along the way; we can take a bus to the deprived neighbourhoods of our own cities, venturing out from our own gentrified areas of town; we can walk to the school, which, as we enter it, announces itself as a space of different—that is, pedagogical—logic; or with one step we can cross the threshold into the martial arts *dōjō* (道場), which we must enter with a ritualized bow and which in this way is marked as a space of different, yet again pedagogical, logic. And, therefore, the

journey itself can be a physical or just a mental journey—it can mean moving one's body into a different sphere, or just moving one's mind. The alienating encounter can happen in the real or the fictional world: it can happen between two train stations or two book pages. The length of the journey, the distance travelled, the time spent—all of this is irrelevant as it is the preparedness of the traveller to encounter the other that makes this journey potentially a transformative journey. The path can be but one step or a tour of the world, it can last five seconds or five years—it is the right mind and the readiness to be alienated by what is encountered on the path that are the *sine qua non* for the journey's becoming a *Bildungsreise*. And what has been briefly mentioned above about the dangers of ossification of traditional practices (in Japan and elsewhere) becomes relevant here again. Just like the non-alienating practices of tourism, the walk through the tea garden on the *roji* can remain without any alienating consequence. Degenerated into a hollow ritual, into a dispirited stumbling across the stepping stones that indeed remains *geistlos* (to refer to the wonderful but untranslatable German word *Geist* that lies at the very core of a notion of *Bildung*), the passage through the garden is always in danger of losing its alienating potential, while the tea ceremony itself may then be nothing more than a lifeless imitation of an historical ritual. It may merely serve as a representation of a specific idea of a (specifically Japanese) cultural sophistication (and of the social status that accompanies it). But this will be one that has ceased to be a universal pedagogical path for transformation or, in Buddhist terms, for the transformative encounter with Nothingness. *Bildung* remains a potential for everyone, but its realization requires conscious submission, commitment, and effort: both, the tea ceremony itself and the preparatory stroll on the garden path, are deliberately designed by the tea master to allow for a transformation to happen, and both are therefore parts of a pedagogical arrangement. However, this can and always will be only an invitation to the guest, who has to allow for this transformation to happen, who has to commit to the alienation and has to deliver themselves over to the utopian space of the tea room. In this sense, *Bildung* here as elsewhere demands something active of the person who is supposed to transform. *Bildung* can never arise out of mere passivity but only out of a deliberate submission to the call voiced by this pedagogical arrangement.

At its core, the *Bildungsreise* is nothing but a simple *step aside* that brings before us—or brings us before—the other. That one step that allows us to encounter the other lies at the systematic heart of the formative journey, preparing for the transformation, making it possible and maybe even probable; but it is not yet the transformation itself. It is just like strolling on the *roji* towards the tea room, which is designed to prepare the submitting guest to leave the world of the mundane and to commit to the encounter with the other in the tea room during the tea ceremony. The path prepares (for) the event of *Bildung*, of self-transformation: it is a series of carefully curated experiences that, if all goes well, detach and sever those who walk on it from whatever connections they have to the world, connections that prevent the other from coming into view. And as such, strolling on the *roji* towards a possibly formative encounter is an expression of the very core of every transformative journey.

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