

Obituary

WOLFGANG BAUER (1930–1997)

Two years ago, Wolfgang Bauer, as full of zest for living as ever, celebrated his 65th birthday in Munich. Inconceivably for all of us who were privileged to study or work with him, cancer took his life on 14 January, 1997. Far too soon, a stimulating teacher, colleague, and friend has departed.

Wolfgang Leander Bauer was born in Halle/Thuringia on 23 February 1930. Having lost his parents at an early age, he grew up with relatives in Munich where he finished grammar school in 1948 and took up his studies at Ludwig Maximilian University (LMU) the same year. He read Sinology (only established as an independent discipline two years earlier) with E. Haensch, W. Fuchs, and H. Franke; Japanology; Mongolistics; as well as philosophy, Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Manchurian. In 1953 he received his doctorate, whereupon he joined in a project supervised by Haensch. Research assistant from 1954 to 1958, Bauer completed his *Habilitation* in 1958 with a thesis on Chinese personal names. He remained at LMU as a *Privatdozent* (reader) until 1960 when he left for the USA on a visiting professorship to the University of Michigan. Subsequently, he did research in the US, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan, supported by scholarships from the Carnegie and Ford Foundations. Full professor at Heidelberg since 1962, he returned to his alma mater in 1966 after Franke had offered him the new, second chair of Sinology at Munich. This is where Bauer remained, despite various offers from elsewhere, for more than thirty years.

In 1968/69 and again in 1977, Bauer returned to Ann Arbor as a visiting professor of Chinese philosophy. Over the years, he was invited to the Universities of California, Berkeley, and Washington, Seattle; visited at Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia; in 1984, he taught at the Australian National University, Canberra, and the Institute of Philosophy, Tsukuba University, Tokyo. He paid more than one visit to mainland China, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan. He attended conferences and committee meetings all over the globe. Among the academic associations he was affiliated with were Deutsche Morgenlaendische Gesellschaft (since 1953); Association of Asian Studies (since 1961); Gesellschaft fuer Asienkunde (since 1965); Nihon Dokyo Gakkai (since 1975); European Association of Chinese Studies (since 1981). Since 1970, he served the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German research council) and other administrative bodies and was among the European representatives to the Committee for Chinese Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies. Among other honors, he was made a fellow of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences in 1985 and a corresponding member of the Rhenish-Westphalian Academy in 1991.

Bauer's main obligations rested of course with his teaching, research, and administrative tasks at Munich LMU. He was Dean of its Faculty of Classical and Culture Sciences (1981–1983) and belonged to the University Senate (1983–1984). His research centred on the “other China”: atypical personalities, outsiders, excentrics, recluses. In his attempt to question stereotypes—both in Western perceptions of China and in Chinese images of the West—he opened new vistas. Although many of his publications focus on classical China, he was also, notably in his classroom work, keenly interested in modern and contemporary Chinese ideas, again with an emphasis on contrary individuals, reform movements, etc. His unconventional approach and genial teaching style won him the devotion of many of his students.

Wolfgang Bauer's earlier magnum opus (Munich 1971) came out in an English translation as *China and the Search for Happiness* (New York 1976). His scholarly testament as we must now sadly call it—a summary of thirty years of his quest for the individual, the “other” China—is his recent colossal monograph *Das Antlitz Chinas* (*The Face of China: Autobiographical Self-representation in Chinese Literature from its Beginnings to the Present*; Munich 1990). One can only hope that it, too, will eventually appear in English.

URSULA BALLIN
Academia Sinica