

Refuge in Buddhism and Literature

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Gino Leineweber, that name could be a clever chosen pseudonym, not far away from Tonio Kröger, as a suggestion of the combination of Roman creativity with Nordic pragmatics. However, it was already on his door sign, when he was still sorting through economic and fiscal problems of his clients, with plain short hair, and wearing adequate reputable suits. Meanwhile he has been grown into the illustrious name outwardly as well: with a silver mane that reminiscent of Franz Liszt or the Brothers Grimm, and the outfit subtly picturesque, sometimes with stand-up collar or leather pants (long, of course!)

Now he is chairman of the Hamburg Writers Association and a lot more.

For example, a member of the Board of Trustees of Hamburg Cultural Foundation, or - and this also explains why he wears a small wooden chain around his wrist and why his friendly cat-like face, with broad cheekbones, looks usually unclouded serene - Chairman of the Buddhist Vihara Hamburg.

And Gino is now weaving stories, short stories for various anthologies, a book of mystical stories and a novella about the conquistador of Peru, Pizarro. Gino also likes to read a lot, not only self-written, with his calm, dry, and north German voice, and a timbre like Frisian tea. Plus, he is writing poetry - but we'll get more of it later.

What occurs to a very successful tax consultant whom one day sells his own practice to change into a freelance artist, and kind out of the blue, became a Buddhist simultaneously? 1998 - he was already in his mid 50 - his life took this sudden sharp change.

"Well, that wasn't so suddenly!" protested Gino. "I was interested in literature my whole life. Yes, and in philosophy. The part, which I liked best, was stoicism that is related to Buddhism somehow, although without that spiritual aspect of course. However, the goal for

both is in equanimity. Starting with meditation practice, I came to the teaching of Buddha, and have been involved in studying since. Some day in 2001 I was ready to call myself a follower of the teaching of Buddha, so to say a Buddhist.

Dagmar Seifert (DS): Why since then? What had happened to say: “now I am one...”?

Gino Leineweber (GL): Well, there is no baptism or such kind. But there is something that is called “taking refuge”. Refuge to the Buddha, the teaching (Dhama), and to the community of Buddhists (Sangha). One can do certain rituals in front of a teacher but there is no need – actually, I did not do it. I got myself into in the way, the noble eightfold path, which implies to live different virtues. And just like that, you can say, I embarked on the path of a writer a couple of years before. The need for writing, the desire, actually was always in my mind. As a young man I already have written this and that. Nevertheless, there was never really time for it, because I was extremely professionally hold tightly.

DS: How did you actually come in the department of taxes, which appears as dry and uncreative, as opposed to an artist's existence?

GL: Oh, that has even always fascinated me. I love numbers; I have a special relationship to numbers, although I might be not so outstanding in mathematics in school. But I am good in arrange and structure something. As a tax consultant you are capable to help other people enormously, which is also kind of beautiful. I really succeeded and could get a lot for my clients who praised for it generally. Yet, the longing for the writing was always there, stood waiting in the background. I always knew that I would do it one day. This has been prophesied to me, kind of from my horoscope quite early: that I would live out the outer world in the first half of my life and make an appearance to the inner world in the second half. Later, when I was involved in researching astrology I approved myself this tendency based on the data of my horoscope.

Perhaps he considered a certain sense of obligation, to start quite solid, and without fun

ambulation? Little Gino, born 1944 in Hamburg, came exclusively from a merchant family. Leineweber's grandfather owned a grocery store in the suburb of Hamm, which Leineweber's father took over later. Perhaps they would have liked to see the grandson would have followed this tradition? He made much larger career, his practice was in the fine address Johnsalle in Hamburg and he employed in the end still eight employees. They were allowed to take part in the decision who would be the successor eventually:

GL: "The colleagues were near to my heart, they were partly working a long time with me. Actually, I wanted to quit when I turned fifty, two years later there was a proper buyer, but my staff were not happy with him, so I continued searching until 1998, in which year my longtime assistant has finishing his studies and became a tax consultant. Than he took over the practice, which still belongs to him."

There are freelance artists, like Richard Wagner, or others not quite so brilliant, who expected, the others are supposed to support any way of their financial situation, so that they could be fully creatively active.

Gino Leineweber, through hard work and dedication, has brought his sheep to dry land, sitting merrily on a mountain of high quality wool - or rather in a picturesque and beautifully decorated apartment with a fine address - and can now start creatively, as unsuccessful or glory as the fate like, without anyone on the bag or their nerves.

Leineweber likes to connect his writing with journeys. Recently he was invited to an international writers conference in Islamabad, and he has participated at a book project "And not to forget Bosnia..." '(edited by C. Emina Camber), which was created from a writer's workshop in Bosnia that has been deeply impressing for him:

GL: "It was the first time that I participated in something like that and it was pleasing in every way and with high standards. First, I had to overcome, however, to present myself with ideas and first lines. But I realized quickly how very fairly, objectively, and constructively it was. Besides, I could just say about what the others had written."

DS: That was about four years ago?

GL: "Yes, and fortunately, we do it again this year. We are going in June on the peninsula Peljeschatz. Incidentally, this is in the form of writing that would interest me more and more, even and especially in relation to my duty for the Hamburg Writers Association. We are intending to travel to Turkey next year. The Writers Association is even the right forum for workshops, to travel somewhere, meet and working with colleagues from abroad. Even in reading events we should try to let people participate in our working process, what means to read from manuscripts and talk about instead only reading finished and published books. This might be much livelier and more meaningful than mere readings and an excellent way to bring literature back to where it belongs, into the literary. "

Yes, and then Gino Leineweber makes also just poetry. There is a CD in a soft blue white dune grass on the cover, with 52 poems of the cycles: "Seasons" and "From me, from you, and from all", that he is reading by himself with his quiet, dry, north German voice. He was, like he says regretfully, been said by others from the literary world, his poetry was not timely, because narrative and not so "scarce", as it has to be nowadays.

It must be my fault or my lack of understanding of contemporary art. One might forgive me, but to me, recent poetry is often too flabby and takes itself terribly seriously. Poems by Gino Leineweber I like. I don't mind whether it is the old-fashioned – I almost was reminded by some verses to Wilhelm Busch and Heinz Erhardt, impish lyrics:

If water
met
with water,

what would
think

the sea,

when it rains?

Then again, the texts contain small landscapes and portraits of weather in which you get a hint to a taste of Detlev Liliencron, sensual poetry:

No wind.

Almost summerly heat.

Fog rises slightly.

From the plains of the march.

A peculiar glee.

Rests on the earth.

A contemplative eve -

Must be an autumn day.

Ultimately, here Gino builds a bridge to Leineweber, from the artistic-Sensitive to hand-tight-practical. Here the Buddhist meets the merchant son, sympathetic Poetry:

Just be.

A being in being.

Oneness.

I am human.

Must move.

Only being

Is me no life.

So, I cannot help myself, I like that!