

Selfless Hospitality Sensed in the Stachels

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1 Stay in Wien and Dresden

From September 2002 to August 2003, I was with the Technische Universität Wien and Technische Universität Dresden as a guest professor.



Figure 1: Prof. Stachel in the laboratory

2 Gentle Feelings

When I arrived in Wien, a large number of Kampo products that I had sent from Japan were detained at the customs department. These products were necessary for me to recover from the illness I had. During this crisis, Prof. Stachel took me to customs and nicely described my health condition. Thus, I safely received the medicines without paying any customs duties.

At that time, I recalled that when I was young, I gave an oral presentation at an international conference. After the presentation, I got stuck with a question from the audience. It was kind of Prof. Stachel to translate the question into simple English for me. I was very

impressed with and grateful to the professor for his caring attitude. After coming to Wien, I was reminded of that gratitude. He has always taken care of me.

Prof. Stachel is a sensitive person. He understands almost 100% of my terrible English. When people in the same room did not understand what I said, he explained to them by saying, “She put it this way” or “No, it’s the Japanese pronunciation of R.” He knew very well what *Japanese* English is all about.

3 Commemorative Colloquium on the Occasion of Prof. Stachel’s 60th Birthday

In mid-October 2002, a commemorative colloquium on the occasion of Prof. Stachel’s 60th birthday was held. During the coffee break, homemade cakes made by Riki, Prof. Stachel’s wife, were served. This reminded me of the third ICGG (the former ICEGDG) that was held in Wien in 1988. At the welcome desk, Riki pinned a dry herb brooch, which seemed to be handmade, on the jacket of each female participant. I remember being very impressed with the heartfelt hospitality. After the lecture at the colloquium, we went to Schloss Wilhelminenberg for the birthday celebration of Hellmuth. The lab members prepared attractive gifts for him. It was a week-long ski trip and a list of the names of teachers who could cover Hellmuth’s classwork during his trip. I want to reaffirm that he was loved by everyone.



Figure 2: 60th birthday party in Schloss Wilhelminenberg

4 Advanced Training Conference for Geometry in Strobl

When I was in Japan, I was told to give a workshop titled “Evaluation of spatial abilities for students in Japan.” at the “Fortbildungstagung für Geometrie” (the advanced training conference for geometry) in Strobl.

A spatial test (Mental Cutting Test) was conducted on the participants in my workshop. They seemed to think that they could not make any mistakes because they were the geometry teacher. Not a few participants had a hard time detecting correct answers. When the answers were checked, I sometimes heard a strange voice like “Ungh, . . .”; I wondered what happened.

The day before the workshop, Riki took me sightseeing in Salzkammergut. It was a wonderful experience. On the way back from Strobl, Hellmuth stopped at Gmunden to show me Schloss Ort, a castle protruding into the lake Traunsee. He was wearing a *Loden*’s compressed wool jacket (a nice outfit!). He always seemed to take care of his appearance.

The beautiful lakes and mountains dusted with snow, clean air, friendly conference participants, and successful workshop were memorable souvenirs.



Figure 3: At the advanced training conferences for geometry in Strobl

5 Visit to the Residence of Hellmuth and Riki

I visited the residence of Hellmuth and Riki. They welcomed me with a bottle of wine and organized meals as well. Hellmuth and Riki seemed pleased to be helping each other in the kitchen. This collaborative process enhanced the food taste as well. Two types of dessert cakes, which they prepared were both delicious and not too sweet. When Hellmuth cut the cake into pieces, he crumbled it a bit. When he said, “It’s my share,” Riki interrupted immediately, “Don’t worry, I’ll eat these crumbs later.” (Although I didn’t understand German, of course, I imagined their reaction.) Wouldn’t that be great?

After dinner, the living room turned into a kimono-dressing class. I gifted Hellmuth a yukata (a summer kimono made of cotton) and obi (kimono sash) as gratitude that he invited me to Wien. I prepared an illustration-based manual of the obi (how to tie up the obi). After my first lesson, he correctly wore the kimono. I was struck again by his spatial cognitive ability because the kimono is made up of almost rectangular cloths sewn together, so one needs to make it three-dimensional so that it fits one’s body.



Figure 4: Time spent relaxing with family

6 Is He Really Prof. Stachel?

I used to think Prof. Stachel had a temperate personality. However, I have found another attractive aspect of him.

We went to Mayerling (a village that became famous owing to the film “Mayerling”) to enjoy the Christmas choir with his family and friends because Riki was part of the choir. Several soprano solos were performed by a female artist. One of the songs was beautiful and impressed those there at the time. After the song concluded, the applause did not stop for a while. At that moment, a man sitting near me applauded in a high tone at her superb performance, “Bravo!” I looked around to see who it was, and lo and behold! That was Hellmuth.

At the meal after the session, Hellmuth did not drink alcohol because he drove the car. Therefore, he ordered lemon tea and local specialty sweets. I knew he was partial to sweets; however, when I saw the sweets he ordered, I screamed, “Wow! What a surprise! The amount is amazing!” I asked him, “Do you eat that kind of sweet food every day?” He replied, “No, not every day.” Then, Riki laughed and said, “Oh, isn’t it every day?” Then he countered, “Emiko asked me whether I eat this kind of sweet cake every day. Firstly, I didn’t have whipped cream for teatime today.” Therefore, I was convinced once again that in most, if not all cases, there was something sweet on his table every day. Austrians really like sweetness!

7 How to Deal with Nature

In Wien, I went to the mountains several times. One day, we went on summer hiking, and another day, we went to a snowy mountain. In any case, we spend time wandering around nature, eating blueberries growing near the ground, or jumping over a stream flowing through a small crack on the ground. I felt a new experience owing to these people who simply enjoyed nature. Furthermore, I was moved by the habit that they often go hiking on holidays and during excursions at academic conferences and lab excursions; they consider these as simple ways to spend their weekends in nature.



Figure 5: Breathtaking setting of natural beauty

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