

Note to our guests and readers:

Our common language is English. It is the language that most of us understand (more or less) and that gives us the opportunity to exchange our ideas. However, since very few of us are native speakers, we often fight for words. The summaries of our guest evenings are prepared by the sisters who moderated these evenings. We make these summaries available uncensored to give our readers an impression of the issues that concern us. Since we unfortunately lack the resources to have all of our sisters' texts edited professionally, we apologize to the readers for any language deficits. We hope that the summary of our guest evening themes, regardless of their linguistic presentation, will spark your interest in visiting us on one of our guest evenings.

The theme of the guest evening: “Travelling as a Methaphor”

There are many types of travelling: holiday trips, educational tours, business trips, expeditions, travels of conquerors, adventure holidays and much more. We know short trips for just few days or a weekend as well as long-haul journeys and voyages. We travel with various vehicles, with planes and ships and on foot. Some of us like to book well organized package tours, others prefer independent travel and others start their journey without a return ticket

Depending on the way of travelling: Travelling can be funny or relaxing. It can be expensive or cheap. Travelling is sometimes simply necessary and sometimes a challenge or learning by doing. Travelling can be a lot but first and foremost: Travelling means movement. To travel means to go from point A to point B. It means to change your location, your position, your perspective, your view and in certain cases travelling can change your mind.

In German language we often use the proverb “der Weg ist das Ziel” but it is not easy to find a proper translation in English. For any reason we think this was said by Buddha himself; some are thinking that Gandhi said it, but there is no proof of evidence that anyone had said it exactly in this way or how it came to this special German translation.

In English there are several translations to express what the German sentence might say. In a lot of translations that can be found on the internet we can read: “the journey is the reward”, The many hits on the web might be influenced by a book about the life of Apple boss Steve Jobs. In many other hits you can read “The way is the goal” and the search results often point towards a link with Gandhi.

Sometimes it helps to understand something when you search for sentences written by any important person. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe for example said: “We do not travel in order to arrive; we travel in order to travel”. And in the same century the poet and novelist Robert Louis Stevenson said: “to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive!” Does the phrase from Stevenson mean that hope and anticipation are sometimes better than reality?

Let us record that travelling means moving -might be walking, might be running, might be creeping or driving; It is the opposite of standing, so it is the opposite of stagnation. This makes it a wonderful metaphor for what we call in German “Lebensreise”: in this linguistic unit the life itself becomes a travel, a journey. Ralph Waldo Emerson found a good expression when he said: Life is a journey not a destination

The most important point is: It depends on us whether we learn something by travelling, if we increase our horizon by moving forwards, if we change our perspective by turning around and if we

change our mind while we become acquainted with foreign countries, cultures, languages and people. Travelling is an opportunity to learn something and to change our mind, but not a warranty.

Travelling as a Metaphor in Freemason Rituals

We already learned from Emerson that life is a journey and not a destination. So, does it mean we are always restless? No. Like in the black and white pavement (that is an important symbol in freemasonry, too) and like in the change of light and darkness of day and night or life and death there is a never-ending interplay between action and break. Of course, according to the travelling metaphor we also have symbols that stand for having a rest. But today we are talking about travelling. And one symbolical convention for each Freemason in the 2nd degree who has completed his/her apprenticeship, is: setting off, travelling, going on a journey.... That's why they are called journeymen.

Travelling – brainstorm with ideas and questions

After the short introduction above we started gathering more and more ideas and questions around the topic. Our multicultural backgrounds led to an enrichment of our point of views and while we were talking about travelling and its meanings we opened up our horizons again and had a wonderful exchange. Some of our thoughts are listed below:

We compared the meanings of several words which are in use for travelling: Trip, Journey, Travel: We asked for their etymological backgrounds and in which sense we use them in German. We also reflected the German words "Reise" and "Er-fahrung" with regard to travelling.

We discussed how the travelling of humans changed during the centuries: What did travelling mean in former times and what does it mean, today.

We asked why people do travel and what their motivations are.

We considered the consequences of different ways of travelling (and here we found a close connection to what was meant with the idea / proverb "Der Weg ist das Ziel"). The question was: Does the way of travelling influence the target or aim? Or more concrete: what happens when you use another way of travelling, another route or another means of locomotion? Which difference does it make if you know that you have a return ticket.

We discussed if it was possible not to carry with you all your "that's me"-stuff, all your prejudices, your attitudes, your points of view.

At the end of our evening we could sum up some of our thoughts in one long sentence:

Life is a journey, curiosity is the engine to press on with moving, learning and looking for new challenges and for new points of view..... and communication is the vehicle with which we experience our way of life. But we just didn't find any sufficient translation in English for the German sentence: "Kommunikation ist das Vehikel, mit dem wir unseren Lebensweg erfahren".