

Journey of Worlds

Bô Yin Râ

Joseph Anton Schneiderfranken
1876–1943

Teaching and biography

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Introduction

"The world is profound, much more profound than you ever imagined."

After almost 200 years of European Enlightenment, which propagated a worldly mindset committed to "pure science," prominent natural scientists and psychologists are beginning to recognize that the visible world cannot be grasped as rationally as a naïve belief in progress would have us imagine.

One need only recall C. F. Gauss, A. Portmann, and C. G. Jung, or the statement by A. Einstein: "Anyone who seriously engages with the sciences comes to the conviction that a spirit manifests itself in the laws of the universe – a spirit that is far superior to that of humans and in the face of which we, with our limited powers, must feel humble." In today's intellectually-driven age, it is tempting to equate this "spirit" with intellect. In the past, it would probably have been referred to as "God." The psychologist C. G. Jung may have come even closer to reality than the physicist Einstein with his assumption of a "transmundane world," an idea that can already be found in Plato and in all major religions. Today's competent scientists admit that the mathematical and physical understanding of new phenomena such as superconductivity, the findings of space telescopes, the course of bio-

logical evolution, etc., always lags behind or reveals chaotic structures. (For those interested: New Challenges in Scientific American, or Spektrum der Wissenschaft, Dec. 1992.) It is becoming increasingly apparent that our environment cannot be fully understood purely intellectually.

Is it even possible to find a credible link between scientific knowledge and religion, which most people today consider irrational? Is there really a work among the almost overwhelming flood of esoteric writings that does justice not only to the scientifically trained intellect, but also to the innermost feelings?

Anyone who seriously immerses themselves in the books and pictures of Bô Yin Râ can answer this question with an honest "yes." They do not need to sacrifice sober thinking. This will still find its place where it naturally belongs: in the head of an otherwise defenseless earthly body, which it must ensure survives.

It is very difficult to classify the content of his work within existing literary or philosophical classifications because it transcends the usual dimensions. In the following, I will undertake the almost hopeless attempt to describe the teachings written by Bô Yin Râ from personal experience from our "modern" worldview. However, the reader must be willing to accept a previously unimagined expansion of this view. The reader is assumed to have received the usual

rational Western education. The positive side of this education is that it teaches us to approach knowledge without prejudice.

In contrast to animals, which bluntly accept the situation presented to them, ideas and feelings arise in every human being who is not completely degenerate, which seem to originate from spheres where there is no earthly gravity and a benevolent light shines above everything, impressions that go far beyond what would be expected from a computer-like structure that, according to scientific opinion, represents the brain.

In almost all religions, memories are preserved of a higher world inhabited by one or more gods, by spirit beings who remain forever in the bright regions, and by others who leave them and return only after one or many earthly lives. Anyone who delves into the history of the various forms of belief can hardly doubt that there have indeed been people who, even in their earthly lives, have recognized what is hidden from others. For a long time now, there has also been a widespread belief that, for the sake of this inner world glimpsed within, one must renounce earthly life and can only find it in solitude or in the company of like-minded people.

Unlike the intellectually influenced theories of modern theologians, Bô Yin Râ's work is rooted in completely different depths of feeling. His artistic

talent and inclination were ideally suited to the task he had taken on, but once he became fully aware of spiritual life, they became merely the instrument through which it was communicated. Every human being is rooted in the same depths, but most have lost touch with the innermost core of all being and now need a mediator to find their way home again.

Since there are already some very good writings that primarily appreciate the artistic aspect of Bô Yin Râ's work (R. Schott, F. Weingartner, M. Wollwerth), I would like to attempt – imperfectly, I am sure – to consider the physically verifiable, scientific, so to speak, side of his books, even though they were by no means written to propagate or support any cosmological, historical, or biological hypotheses.

The work

The books

In thirty-two individual volumes and subsequent writings, Bô Yin Râ introduces the reader to the world of the living Spirit, taking into account the different characters and mental states of the reader with empathy. An integral part of the written textbook are the twenty "world pictures," which depict the spiritual-cosmic path of human beings.

They are, as it were, "travel books" that tell of countries that normally

remain inaccessible to earthly human beings and can only occasionally be sensed or felt, hidden behind dark veils. Anyone interested in geographical travelogues will soon notice whether the author describes his experiences truthfully and objectively or whether he is more concerned with promoting himself. This is where the evaluation can begin that so clearly distinguishes Bô Yin Râ's work from the numerous publications written by self-appointed authors driven by a desire for recognition. Bô Yin Râ's sober manner, which was averse to any public appearance, will be referred to later in the biography.

A truthful account of things that are not perceptible to our earthly senses should not contain any logical contradictions, and statements about earthly events should be compatible with the known laws of nature. Furthermore, it can be assumed that the "teaching" should correspond in meaning with authentic statements made by others in the transmundane world – in Spirit – who are conscious, such as Jesus of Nazareth or Lao Tzu, taking into account the differences in culture and language and the often inadequate traditions.

Every good book imparts knowledge to the reader by comparing the unknown with the known. People who have attended Western schools are primarily familiar with the physically and mathematically comprehensible worldview, which is

constantly being expanded by research driven mainly by curiosity and prestige. Bô Yin Râ wrote primarily for Europeans who had stayed at home and those who had emigrated, as he was a modern European in terms of his earthly origins, education, and environment, and was also interested in science and technology. He witnessed the discoveries and inventions that so strongly determine our lives today, such as the theory of relativity, galactic space, radio, television, cars, and airplanes, and had no objection to the sensible use of technology.

In terms of conventional literary understanding, the books can also be described as linguistic works of art. However, due to their extraordinary and timeless content, they are difficult to classify within the framework of traditional literary history, and often pose a challenge for those working in this field, including professional critics, who usually do not have the time to delve deeper into the work. On the other hand, people of all ages and professions feel immediately addressed and can uncover the hidden treasures.

Almost more important than the "factual" content, for which the author had only the masterfully handled but rather cumbersome language of the Earth at his disposal, is the "inner attitude" of the writer expressed in a book. When reading any text – even a profane one – with concentration, one is consciously or unconsciously forced to place oneself on

the author's level, whether this is at the height of a basement window or a mountain peak.

Those who take the trouble to collect and read Bô Yin Râ's books without prejudice begin – at first almost unconsciously – to view earthly things from above, as it were. Step by step, the reader who works on himself is lifted to higher levels until his individual position in the Spirit manifests itself in secure feeling and inner clarity.

Patience, perseverance, and above all love are the most necessary qualities on this path. There are no crash courses in spirituality. On the contrary, even those who have known the books for a long time will, to their surprise, always find something new and deeper in them. They cannot be read in one earthly lifetime. With each page, a new view opens up into the living, inexhaustibly deep landscape of Eternity that every human being cherishes in one's innermost being.

The paintings

In terms of his artistic disposition, Bô Yin Râ felt primarily called to be a freelance painter, while his written work arose from a heavy obligation weighing on him.

When we speak of "landscapes of Eternity," this applies above all to the paintings of Bô Yin Râ. With the exception of the twenty world pictures,

these are not illustrations for the various books of the teaching material, but independent representations that lead the viewer into the depths of creation, which the written word can only describe with difficulty.

This refers to the paintings that the artist described as "spiritual" and which appear "abstract" to an art connoisseur. In contrast to abstract painting, which is created from creative imagination, the "spiritual" paintings depict objective spiritual events, comparable to an artistic but true-to-life landscape painting. Similarities between Bô Yin Râ's paintings and contemporary abstract works are therefore largely coincidental, insofar as one can describe the influences of the spiritual forces that determine the spirit of the times as coincidence.

With great skill, Bô Yin Râ also painted numerous "concrete" pictures, especially landscapes. Nature is rendered very objectively but generously. The conclusion is obvious that the "spiritual" pictures also represent concrete spiritual realities. After all, earthly landscapes are not dead structures, but colorful forms shaped by the powerful forces of the earth's interior and living nature. The primal forces of spiritual origin, which can also find expression here, are particularly noticeable in the magnificent Greek landscapes. It was then only a small step to the spiritual images that depict similar events on a higher level. Both earthly and otherworldly landscapes represent moments of spiritual reality, whereby

the spiritual energies at work in the beyond radiate far more intensely and vividly than the comparatively sluggish and dull forces of nature and humanity that shape the planet Earth.

The insight into spiritual worlds, freed from linguistic barriers, must not lead us to see the colorful and geometric forms of the images as freely invented construction elements, as they appear in contemporary images, for example, but must allow us to feel, in complete calm and concentration, the mood that emanates from spiritual images, but also from most concrete images, like spherical music. Those who have retained the natural childhood feeling for color and form are already halfway into the inner world of these images. Ultimately, they are "images of home," representations of the eternal home of humankind. Everyone knows from their circle of acquaintances how differently the earthly sense of home is shaped, and one can imagine that the richness of the spiritual worlds shapes even more individual homes. Therefore, the images will remind each person of their personal origins in the spirit. For these reasons, Bô Yin Râ did not want interpretations of his images that often strayed far from their true content. An exception to this are the notes in R. Schott's books on painting, which Bô Yin Râ discussed with the author, a friend of his, before they went to press, and the twenty images interwoven with

text, "Weltenbilder" (Images of Worlds).

Here, the author himself provides an authentic explanation of the depictions. It is easy to understand that this also provides a key to a deeper understanding of the other paintings.

Among Bô Yin Râ's many paintings, one stands out in particular: the portrait of Jesus. The best way to understand the origins of this unique painting is to read the book "Aus meiner Malerwerkstatt" (From My Painting Studio). Anyone who begins to comprehend the structures of the Universe expressed in the work will find the explanation surprising but understandable.

After reading this explanation, it comes as no surprise that these paintings are ideally suited for "meditation" in the positive sense of the word – allowing oneself to be influenced without the intrusive interference of one's own or someone else's intellect.

The teaching

The textbook is not a scientific, systematic guide to "learning," but rather an artistically sophisticated description of spiritual life and spiritual reality. The advice given ultimately aims to open oneself to spiritual influences through a serious, honest, and cheerful way of life. Those who expect strange exercises or eccentric "secret teachings" would be better off

putting the books aside. The following explanations serve only to build bridges to a higher understanding for "modern" thinking, which is strongly influenced by the natural sciences.

The All-inclusive Cosmos

In order to avoid confusion in the following, two areas of being must be clearly distinguished:

- The world of matter with its visible and invisible things, which we experience as reality in our physical bodies.
- The world of the Spirit, inaccessible to our present earthly senses, which can sometimes only be felt in our innermost being. This world is the true home of the spiritual core of every human being, from which he came at birth and to which he will return at death.

Both worlds interpenetrate each other. The senses of the earthly body can only perceive material things, and in special cases, exceptionally, also the occult realms that are invisible to other people but also belong to matter. Human beings, as spiritual beings at their core, normally only regain conscious use of the senses of their spiritual body with the loss of their animal body, which are blinded by incarnation in an animal body. The material world – and thus also the occult world – disappears at death and is replaced by the reality of

the spiritual world. Only the memories and soul impressions absorbed into the imperishable consciousness during earthly life remain. Since every human being, unlike the animals around them, is essentially a spiritual being even during their earthly life, their spiritual body is perceived as reality by the deceased.

There is no universally valid term for the totality of being, within which the world of matter, the universe, represents only a marginal area. In the following, the term "All" is understood to mean the incomprehensible fullness of eternal and infinite being, while the Latin "universe" is to stand for the ever-changing starry space with all its animate and inanimate, visible and invisible phenomena. The Universe is, as it were, the "outer" boundary of the far richer spiritual world, whose innermost core is the kingdom of God's Light.

Bô Yin Râ was an artist and not a philosopher in the academic sense, and so he often used these terms – including "cosmos" – as synonyms in his books. The respective meaning is always clearly recognizable from the context.

In space, humans occupy what could almost be described as an unnatural hybrid position. They are the only living beings that can break through the razor-sharp boundary between the higher realm, the spiritual world, and its material periphery, the Universe. The fall into matter is the ultimate consequence of a self-

imposed, arrogant turning away from God. The price demanded for the experience of the earthly, the approach to nothingness, is extraordinarily high for the spiritual human being. Fear, illness, pain, hardship, and limited resources constantly threaten his vulnerable body, which consists of elements of the Earth and whose life functions are bound by harsh laws of nature. For the formerly almost limitlessly free spiritual human being, who knew neither fear nor misery, earthly birth means a fall into darkness, into the almost complete extinction of his spiritual senses, into the narrow shackles of space and time, into the experience of limitation, whose certain end seems to be predetermined by the decay of the earthly body, which the animal soul instinctively fears.

The visible part of the Universe, the world of the outer senses, "reality" science has advanced in the universe to objects that may be embryos of galaxies many billions of light years away from Earth. Both the age and distances of these structures are beyond human imagination. Our sun has existed for barely a third of this time. Despite enormous technical research efforts, astronomers have not yet reached the limits of "space." The universe is not a rigid structure. Since the "Big Bang," the assumed, as yet unproven origin from a small sphere, it has been expanding at the speed of light. Whether this expansion will continue for eternity or

eventually reverse cannot be determined with certainty based on current astronomical knowledge. The reversal, which ultimately leads to the destruction but also to the rebirth of the universe, seems more likely from a physical point of view and would also correspond more closely to the eternal becoming and passing away of the material worlds. In this case, space would be curved, which is consistent with the statement in the book "Welten" (Worlds): "We are like inside an incomprehensibly enormous sphere (the cosmos), whose outer boundary (the universe) is formed by myriads of world systems...". There are also astronomers who believe that our universe was created by the separation of a much larger material space. Anyone who has followed the history of astronomy in recent decades cannot help but feel that the collected facts are gradually overwhelming the human intellect.

About three billion years ago, the first primitive single-celled organisms emerged in the primordial oceans of planet Earth. At that time, the air did not yet contain oxygen. Experiments have shown that in a mixture of seawater and an oxygen-free atmosphere, electrical discharges—imitating thunderstorms—can produce quite complex organic compounds. The mathematical probability that such molecules will begin to multiply and ultimately develop into enormously complex structures, such as

an elephant, is practically zero, despite the vast amounts of time available. Aristotle coined the term "entelechy" to describe the invisible creative force that gives shape and life to plants and animals. Even though science is now better able to track the slow development of the biosphere, Aristotle's view does not seem outdated. Teilhard de Chardin expressed similar views from a Christian perspective, and A. Portmann postulated them based on his own observations.

Modern brain researchers have concluded that the development of humans' current intellectual capacity cannot be explained by natural selection alone: it takes only a little abstract thinking and certainly no artistic talent to prevail over other mammals. However, it is easy to understand that spiritual humans need a highly differentiated organism as a carrier of consciousness in the material world. That is why the evolution from primitive single-celled organisms to *Homo sapiens*, who were able to connect with spiritual consciousness, took billions of years. Driven by mysterious forces, new plant and animal forms were repeatedly developed and tested until species emerged that corresponded to a certain extent to the spiritual blueprints. The biological implementation, hampered by the physical laws of nature, was extremely lengthy, but in the spiritual origins, the time factor seems to play a minor role. Eternity is timeless.

"Modern" humans, indistinguishable from those found today, have existed on Earth for about 40,000 years. They were contemporaries of the Neanderthals. We do not know exactly when the union between spiritual humans striving for earthly experience and highly developed hominids first took place. In view of the immense periods of time that preceded it, this question is also insignificant. Despite the unfortunately morally weak development of *Homo sapiens*, the Earth seems to be a very popular destination for spiritual humans. While an estimated 5 million people populated the Earth in 8000 BC, today there are more than 6 billion.

We have now arrived where we currently find ourselves: in the sphere of influence of the densely populated planet Earth, equipped with a body that differs only slightly from that of higher animals. The limited sensory organs of this body allow only a small part of the environment to enter our consciousness. Contact with our counterparts in other parts of the universe and—even more significantly—with the spiritual world has been largely severed.

Between birth and death, we spend our existence on this small planet, which is illuminated and warmed by one of the billions of suns in the Milky Way. When we look at the night sky with its countless stars and galaxies, the tiny optics of our eyes allow us to perceive the blackness of the immense abyss in which light and life

have contracted into tiny points in space. The terrible emptiness of space, which for biological and physical reasons will always be insurmountable for humans living on other planets – despite all technological fantasies – borders very closely on nothingness, the total opposite of the abundance of light and life in the higher spiritual worlds, where love removes all separation. Who, as a child still holding memories of the light of Eternity within them, has not feared the darkness of the earthly night when they first became aware of it? A fear that animals do not know because they lack ideas of spiritual origin.

On the other hand, a restless urge to explore is venturing ever deeper into the microcosm. It has long been recognized that the components of atoms are themselves composed of even smaller particles. Further division seems to be only a question of technical effort. Unintentionally, physicists thus confirm what is written in the "Book of the Living God": "...everything that is split will continue to split into infinity, everything that is fragmented will continue to fragment into infinity, and again and again you will discover that new fibers can be separated from what you believe to be split into its final fibers..." The latest results from CERN actually only reveal complicated force fields whose apparent ultimate cause eludes physical detection.

For someone who deals strictly mathematically and physically with

the laws of dead matter, which at least statistically seem to proceed with rigid causality, the origin of our Earth and the life that later developed on it pose almost unsolvable mysteries. The constantly changing "cosmic" theories and attempts to explain the leap from chemical compounds to living organisms speak for themselves.

Some modern researchers are already expressing doubts about a mathematically complete world view. Computer calculations indicate that, for example, the planetary orbits would have ended chaotically long ago in purely mathematical terms. They actually seem to be constantly corrected by invisible intelligences.

The invisible part of the universe, the "occult" world

In fact, the powers and their effects that originate in the deeper realms of matter, that part of the Universe called "occult" and of interest to parapsychology, are hardly physically comprehensible, as serious researchers openly admit. People with special predispositions may be more or less accessible to this realm of nature, regardless of their moral stance. Even the most intelligent of the beings operating there, who secretly control and guide the visible world of the living, are never able to recognize the spiritual worlds and feel true love. In contrast to eternal human beings, they, like all material things, are subject to the laws of nature, which cre-

ate constant change and are themselves subject to constant change, albeit over enormous periods of time.

The few who have already awakened to the true Spirit in their earthly life must also learn to control these forces so that they are not disturbed by them in the performance of their spiritual tasks. They alone know with certainty how to distinguish between what belongs to the spiritual world, which is invisible to most people, and what belongs to the occult world.

The roots of evil also reach much deeper than is usually assumed. Even more than in the visible realm, the wickedness of fallen spiritual beings has taken root in the invisible realm of the universe, beings who have arrogantly and consciously turned away from God. Lucifer, originally the bringer of light, who out of love and radiance wilfully plunged into hatred and darkness, tries to drag into the abyss whoever and whatever comes his way. The Bible's vivid description comes very close to reality. The only difference is in the continuity of events. Every now and then, one of the "light bearers" succumbs to the spirit of darkness and, in hateful powerlessness, joins the ranks of evil until, after eons, he himself becomes nothing. In our day, when tens of thousands of researchers and engineers are engaged in the planning and manufacture of ever more terrible means of destruction, the seeds of darkness seem to be blooming morbidly.

The last regions of the universe are so far removed from the Spirit and forsaken by God that even the innermost core of the spiritual human being can fall prey to dissolution, the only true death that a human being can die when he succumbs to his own will to destroy.

The body

Of all the invisible and visible things that surround us on Earth, the earthly body is most familiar to our currently very limited consciousness. Physically speaking, it is an almost unbelievable marvel—we share it with higher animals—and serves the Spirit as a diving suit into a world that would otherwise be inaccessible to it. The connection between eternal consciousness and the "suit" is very intimate, and we experience the tight bonds of our earthly body every day. How tight these bonds actually are often only becomes apparent to us in times of illness or distress. The examples of identical twins who grew up separately show how much our "character traits," which we believe to be shaped by our spirit soul, are still rooted in the biological structures of our body. Despite completely different upbringings, they exhibit similar behaviors, give their children the same names, dress similarly, or work in comparable professions. Since the eternal individuality of the earthly human being can be almost completely covered by his physical genetic makeup, finding the boundary

between physical and spiritual individuality is one of the most essential tasks of a seeker, whereby that which belongs to the Spirit cannot be overestimated.

Behind man's efforts to use his technical intelligence to manufacture devices that expand the freedom of movement and the capabilities of the eye and ear lies, not least, a vague memory of a state of almost limitless freedom. In the spiritual worlds, this freedom can lead to a fall into the depths of the Universe, its final impulses—misdirected—leading to the destruction of the environment on Earth. The frantic attempts to make travel ever faster and more convenient, to expand communication without gaps, and to extend the life of the Earth as long as possible spring from the conscious or unconscious desire to create a spiritual state – paradise – on Earth. Judged by the inexorable laws of nature that apply in the universe, this attempt is doomed to failure from the outset.

However, the help that our earthly existence receives through the sensible and moderate use of technology and medicine is by no means to be despised, as it gives us the leisure to occupy ourselves with things other than the mere search for food.

The future of the Earth

Although helpers of the kind of Bô Yin Râ will voluntarily remain in the sphere of influence of the Earth until the last human being is saved, and

are thus personally affected by the future fate of the inhabited planet, during the hard times of their spiritual training they had to free themselves from fearful questions and worries about the future that are unworthy of a free spirit. Likewise, everyone who has transcended the occult realm has consciously renounced "clairvoyance" and "predictions of the future." Eternal life is above all eternal presence and far removed from curiosity and fear of past and future events. Both emotions arise only from the time-bound existential fear of the animal soul. If there are passages in the books of Bô Yin Râ that concern the future, they refer to the effects of his work on human society from a spiritual point of view without specifying any particular time frame.

The hope for a supernatural power or a messiah who could arrange political and moral conditions to everyone's satisfaction is certainly very romantic and convenient. Realistically speaking, however, an improvement in earthly existence will depend on how many people have awakened to active love for their fellow human beings and for the wonderful creation that surrounds us, or in other words, on whether the "children of light" or the "children of darkness" will have more influence on earthly events.

We believe that the sun, which provides our naturally beautiful earth with light and warmth, is only in the middle of its life. It can continue to

shine on the people of Earth for billions of years. But we also know that the raw materials considered "indispensable" will be exhausted in a few centuries. Humanity will therefore have no choice but to re-align itself with the laws of living nature and adapt. This can be done in a reasonable and peaceful manner, or in decimating wars of conquest for the last arable land and the last ore deposits.

It is to be hoped that humans will become aware in time of their positive powers, which are rooted in love for the Earth and all fellow creatures. Animals and plants are not insensitive, computer-controlled automations, as genetic engineers would have us believe. Living beings react to moods and harmonies or disharmonies in their environment. Experiments have shown that plants thrive better with Mozart music than with hard rock.

What applies to plants and animals applies even more so to humans. Only when everyone sees in others – despite all their obvious weaknesses – their fellow human beings who originate from the light, will it be possible for peoples and races to coexist in a humane manner. There is no doubt that the teachings transmitted by Bô Yin Râ from the eternal Spirit will play an essential role in this process as soon as they have entered the general consciousness.

Measured in terms of eternal life and even in earthly geological time, a human being's existence on earth is

enormously short. The most important task during this short span of time on earth is to work on oneself, to find one's way back to one's own spiritual being, which, in contrast to what happens on earth, is not subject to the law of destruction and transformation. It would therefore be a useless waste of energy if a person were to devote all their physical and mental energy to eliminating the natural imperfections of earthly existence. Our earthly body is too fragile for this, and the Earth's habitat is too limited. A person who behaves in a spiritually appropriate manner will never want to cause suffering to fellow human beings or the environment, and for someone who has the prospect of emigrating to a land full of love and sunshine, it will be a matter of common decency to hand over their now unneeded residence to their descendants in good condition.

The spiritual world, the higher creation of the Cosmos (the world from which we come and to which we return)

Past lives

Almost everyone experiences moments or hours when the things of this Earth seem strangely foreign to them and trigger an inexplicable longing in their innermost feelings: homesickness at the sight of a magnificent landscape or when listening to sublime music, blown by a breath of memory of eternal beauty.

The fairy-tale world of all peoples, as a creation of the human spirit, knows different laws than those taught to us by reality, where evil seems to prevail over good. These premonitions flow unconsciously from spiritual worlds and are clearly distinct from intellectual wishful thinking. All these are almost vanished memories of the living reality of the spiritual world, which we experienced, felt, saw, and heard before our birth, far more intensely than in our Robinson Crusoe existence on the small planet Earth.

The fall from eternal Light into the night of matter was so profound, the separation from our true home has lasted so long, that for most people the Spirit is now only perceptible as a distant memory – perhaps most vividly in childhood or in a genuine love relationship between a woman and a man.

Normally, a person remains in the material realm of the universe for only the duration of their earthly body. Reincarnation, which is accepted as normal in some Eastern religions, occurs only in exceptional cases, such as death in early childhood, suicide, or complete animalization. In each of these cases, the spiritual "I" has not succeeded in finding or maintaining the connection with animal consciousness. It is easy to recognize in this the effect of divine love, which gives those who have failed completely, physically or psychologically, another opportunity to consciously master earthly life.

The fall of the spiritual human being into earthly life may ultimately be sudden and involuntary, but it is only the end of a very long journey, also in terms of time, which leads from closeness to God into ever denser and more distant regions of the universe, until it reaches the vicinity of nothingness. The turning away from God does not arise from a compelling law, but from the free will of the spiritual human being. It is, of course, easier to blame God or the devil for the earthly misery one has endured than to blame oneself.

Return

After the preceding explanations, it will be understandable that after death we enter the same world from which we came at birth. Our stay on Earth is only a short, albeit extremely important, stopover for the imperishable self-consciousness that constitutes the real human being. Having reached the lowest point of existence, this pause provides an opportunity to reverse the direction of the will that led away from God and to find our way back to our true origin.

The fear of the irrevocable destruction of the earthly body causes many people to repress the thought of death, which in reality is only a return to the realm of the Spirit. Time and again, Jesus, to whom the higher spiritual worlds were open, called out to people entangled in doubt and existential fears: "Fear not." The fact

that the Christian churches frightened their believers for a long time with scenes of judgment and hellfire had a great deal to do with earthly lust for power and very little to do with spiritual insight.

In his book "The Book of the Beyond," published in 1920, Bô Yin Râ describes life after death, which he knew from natural experience, in detail and objectively. The fact that his statements correspond to the reports of people who have actually died, collected much later by modern researchers into death, proves the truth of the teaching in an impressive way. The description of personal experiences of death was only made possible by modern medical technology, which can force the spirit soul, already separated from the body, back into the revived body – usually not to the delight of those affected. The experiences recounted by people of all levels of education are understandably very limited in time and are therefore also partly influenced by the usually not completely severed connection to the earthly body. As an objectively judging physician, Moody came to the conclusion that the statements of the respondents consistently reflect an objective state of affairs and are not figments of the imagination.

Compared to the contents of the "Book of the Beyond," the death experiences described in Moody's and Sabom's publications, for example, are only a fleeting glimpse through a narrow crack in the gate of heaven.

Those who linger longer in the afterlife cannot return. Only the very few "masters" such as Bô Yin Râ are capable of being conscious simultaneously in this world and in already high realms of the afterlife, whereby, in contrast to ecstatic mystics, their consciousness in this world is not obscured. This state cannot be achieved through exercises, hypnosis, strange lifestyles, or even drugs, but occurs quite naturally for those affected. It is a very rare exception, desired by the Spirit, which serves to bring the Light and Love of Eternity into the material world. The vanishingly few who possess this "mastery" in each generation naturally have no need for books or religious organizations, because all the things described there are real and present to them at all times. External ties are unnecessary. All members of this community are inseparably connected to each other through spiritual contact. However, they, the true helpers from the Spirit, require long and hard training until their earthly consciousness finds its way back to the spiritual home they voluntarily left out of love for their fallen fellow human beings. They are the few who "know where they come from and where they are going."

Even in the hereafter, which is actually only the other, far greater side of the imperishable Universe, only those who overcome hatred, greed, and selfishness and embrace everything outside and within themselves with love can be happy in the long run. People who loved each other on

Earth will unfailingly meet again in the hereafter if they both wish it.

Those who have reached the hereafter prepare "hell" for themselves if, due to a lack of love and reverence, they are unable to enter the higher, harmonious spiritual worlds and remain in the lowest realms of the hereafter in strife and discord with themselves and their fellow beings. In contrast to earthly life, where even the well-meaning are constantly exposed to the malice and lust for power of negative forces, the higher spiritual worlds are no longer accessible from the lower realms – Bô Yin Râ calls them "shoreline realms."

Even the people in the "shoreline realms" of the beyond find their way back to their origin in the high realms of the Spirit after unspeakably long periods of time with the help of eternal Love, but the experiences they had during their earthly life are lost to them in these periods spent in self-reproach and far from God. They have lived through the suffering, hardship, and joys of the Earth in vain. They will miss the valley experience of earthly existence, which makes the splendor of the spiritual world all the more blissful.

However, "bliss" is also unattainable without the regained unity of woman and man in their individual feelings of harmony and joy. The deepest longing of one sex for the other is conditioned by more or less clear memories of a pre-birth state of perfect union with the partner who

has belonged to them since Eternity. In the darkened earthly existence, it is usually no longer possible for the human being, who has become a single pole, to find and recognize his or her own opposite pole, since the earthly paths of the separated do not necessarily cross. Since only monogamy corresponds to the spiritual nature of human beings, the beloved partner in earthly marriage should also be seen as the eternal counterpart and lived with as if one were eternally united. Since all who love each other remain close in Spirit, true love will continue to exist even after union with one's own pole, just as two married couples on Earth can have a beautiful friendship with each other.

Preparation for coexistence with one's former sexual counterpart is of great importance, which is why Bô Yin Râ has devoted an entire book to marriage. Even in ancient times, the myth handed down by Plato circulated that woman and man once formed a perfect unity. The permanent union of the two individual and completely equal poles is, as it were, the "normal form" of the spiritual human being before his fall into matter. Only with incarnation into an earthly body, which can only reproduce separately by gender, does the intimate connection break apart. There is no change between male and female. Each pole retains its gender for all eternity.

The highest and innermost realm of the Spirit, the realm of perfect fulfillment, is the ultimate goal of the returning human being. There he will also rediscover his individuality, his "name," given to him from eternity. From this perspective, it may be understandable why the more or less random name "Joseph Anton Schneiderfranken" played only a peripheral role for the creator of books and pictures, who lives in eternal consciousness.

"Reality" – the realm of the soul

The all-inclusive Cosmos in the broadest sense encompasses the infinity of the real spiritual worlds and the finiteness of the visible and invisible realms of the material world. The primal powers, willful creative powers from the source of the Cosmos, join them as "animators," so to speak, working in the highest as well as the lowest worlds. These "primal powers," which are blind in and of themselves, gather around centers of consciousness, either spiritual or animal, depending on their nature. Dull, instinctive, and mercilessly playful, they form the soul of an animal, only to fall apart again after its death and be re-entered into the chain of unconscious life. The "soul" of the body, which humans share with other animals, is also composed of these lower soul forces.

In contrast to animals, however, every human being also possesses an eternal individual consciousness in

their Spirit body, which is barely perceptible on Earth, around which the much higher eternal soul forces can form. The soul forces belonging to each human being are not rigid structures, but are in a state of constant change. These also include impulses left behind by people who did not find the time or opportunity to live out their individual soul forces in the earthly realm. It is therefore very important not to burden oneself on Earth with unfulfillable wishes and longings, which would hinder one's progression into the higher spiritual worlds and would have to wait to be fulfilled in the earthly lives of other people. (Since these "inherited" soul powers can also be connected with a recollection of the existence of the former bearer, a belief in a chain of earthly rebirths of the imperishable personal consciousness has arisen in the East.)

The patient and unwavering pursuit of high soul forces corresponding to the individuality of the spiritual "I" – despite all material obstacles – is the most noble and important task that earthly life presents. These are the treasures that "rust and moths cannot destroy." Escaping from everyday life is neither necessary nor conducive to this. Those who want to detach themselves from their family and professional duties in order to live entirely for their "soul" run the risk of becoming victims of fantasies or even occult powers that have always preyed on the lonely and the

weak. It is not distance, but closeness to people and to the Earth that corresponds to true spiritual life, which knows no selfish separation, but only all-encompassing love.

Bridges between the material and spiritual worlds

The "structure" of the Universe sharply separates the spiritual and material realms of experience. The exceptions already mentioned are very rare and strictly regulated. Between birth and death, after eons of wandering through worlds increasingly distant from God, the human being who has finally fallen to Earth remains inextricably bound to his earthly body and the material laws that govern it. There is a great danger of forgetting, denying, or laughing at the path to the Light in the twilight of brain consciousness, as is also characteristic of higher animals. Although eternal life cannot be lost, after death a person who is only interested in the material world awakens in the lower realms of the spiritual world and only finds his way back to his origin after periods of time that can hardly be expressed in earthly terms.

In the higher spiritual worlds, there is all-encompassing Love, which also wants to help those who have fallen into the depths through their own fault. Since human beings are, according to their spiritual origin, extremely free beings, only voluntary helpers can be considered, and the help they bring will never use

coercion or try to lead a person to "salvation" against their will.

This help can only be given by people who, out of compassion, have committed themselves at a high level in the spiritual world to helping their fellow human beings who have fallen to Earth. They too suffer the fate of those born on Earth, and it takes hard training before they regain their previous full consciousness in the high spiritual worlds. Once in a millennium, one of them is given the task of appearing before the public with words and teachings. In the intervening years, it is sufficient for the few "masters" living on Earth in a generation to maintain the connection with the divine origin and to transform the spiritual rays, so to speak, so that they can also be felt by other earthlings. All spiritual help and "enlightenment," whatever it may be called, comes from there.

The connection between the spiritual worlds and earthly humans never breaks completely. But the intensity changes. There are times when the focus is on the inner life of humans and times when the focus is on exploring or mastering the outer world. Jesus of Nazareth took on the heavy burden of proclaiming the freedom of the Spirit in a formally rigid Judaism and a brutally ruled Roman Empire. In the work of Bô Yin Râ, Jesus appears to us as the person he really was: connected to God and the Spirit, loving, gifted with tremendous spiritual power and humor, natural and not a despiser of earthly things.

He, the greatest of bridge builders, did not perform fakir miracles, even though he was given a certain gift of healing the sick, which, however, had nothing to do with his spiritual mission, but was based on the healing powers of his earthly body, as are sometimes found in other people. His words were intended to call his fellow human beings to repentance and reflection, to independent personal action, not to a sentimental "Just carry on as before, I will take everything upon myself." With his death on the cross, he did much more than the followers of the comfortable vicarious sacrificial death suppose. He reopened the way from evil to good for all people and made it unspeakably easier through his love, which even on the cross of torture allowed him to love his tormentors as himself. This is the good news for all people on Earth: that the kingdom of heaven—as Jesus calls the kingdom of the Spirit—has come near and the power of evil has been broken. Like his other "brothers," Jesus will not leave the sphere of influence of the Earth until the last person on Earth has found their way back to their home.

Only a few representatives of the churches that profess Christ have recognized that Bô Yin Râ's work has provided them with a completely new and incredibly profound foundation for the rebuilding that is so necessary today.

In all cultures and at different times, people have been more or less aware of this unique circle of "bridge

builders." Lao Tzu was also one of them and taught in the Eastern way. We no longer know the actual originator of the Grail legend, but it bears the stamp of an initiate. Buddha, one of the most distinguished figures in religious history, did not belong to this circle, but was at least close to it, just as India and Tibet are geographically closer to the spiritual center of the "Grail" than Europe.

After all that has been said, it should not be too difficult to understand Bô Yin Râ's position, even if it may seem absurd to most "European"-educated people that in the age of technology and "pure science" one of their own belonged to the fully conscious in Spirit. This skepticism is reinforced by an abundance of esoteric literature, which mostly draws uncritically from a wide variety of sources and mixes truth and fantasy in a motley fashion. Here, only a healthy spiritual sensibility will enable the reader to distinguish between genuine and falsified or fraudulent revelation. Anyone who seriously begins to delve into the books of Bô Yin Râ will realize that this man never attempted to found a church organization or gather followers around him. He strictly rejected any "adulation" of his person. His books are aimed at individuals who are freely and independently seeking God. However, they are not directed against any of the existing major religious communities. Every genuine religion strives to lead its followers away from purely materialistic pursuits in connection

with the "transmundane" world, ideally in a way that is adapted to the psychological and creative characteristics of the various cultures and races.

However, every person must walk the path to God on their own two feet. Religious cults can certainly be a starting point and a source of inspiration, but the path to God is different for every person, just as each person is different from their fellow human beings. In contrast to politics, "massification" only leads away from true religion and into the dark abyss of mass psychosis. The freedom of the higher spiritual worlds, which is bound only by selfless love, will forever remain incompatible with earthly claims to power, greed, and coercion.

Only love, faith, and hope will lead us further on the path to the Spirit, whose often quite steep stretches do not always appeal to the instincts of the earthly body. However, it would be wrong to weaken and undermine the inherently positive forces of the body and soul through excessive asceticism. Rather, it is a matter of directing these forces in a direction desired by the Spirit and God. Innate aggressiveness, for example, can be transformed into positive activity, the sexual drive into a deep spiritual-physical marital union, and the animalistic instinct for self-preservation into the pursuit of eternal life.

For most people, the reversal of the direction of the will on Earth can only

be the beginning of a path, a tracking towards the imperishable goal, a preparation for the journey, which, however, can make it much easier to continue on the path after leaving the earthly body. Outward success and position, wealth or poverty, learning and education do not count; only good will and behavior toward one's fellow human beings and oneself. The stay in the material world, in the Universe, can give those who happily return to their Light-filled home a new feeling of spiritual wealth, such as only the royal child, who had been enslaved, experiences under the gate of his rediscovered home castle.

People who do not succeed in reaching the turning point on Earth, in reversing their downward striving will, and in seeking the way back to the Spirit despite all resistance, will remain stuck in the lower realms of the beyond, still close to the material world, after their death. After an almost infinitely long period of time, loving helpers will eventually guide them back to their spiritual home. But the arduous journey into the abysses of the Universe, far from God, will have been in vain. The memory of earthly existence, of life on a planet in an animal body, which can give spiritual life a new dimension, will be irretrievably lost in the long intervening period.

Conclusion

Every human being experiences an indestructible, eternal "I," whose "normal" sense of existence is a constant presence in one's own individuality and in the Light-filled, living reality of the spiritual world. The idea of birth and death, of beginning and end, which dominates everything on Earth, is taken from the narrowly limited sphere of experience of the earthly body. Spiritual life is rooted in the joyful spheres of eternal divine light, not in the black wastelands of the Universe. Love is not a sentimental feeling for brief moments, but the primal power of being that unites and connects everything positive, which has no beginning and no end.

All manifestations of being are full of life: fragile and in constant change in the material universe; perfect and imperishable in the highest spiritual worlds, most perfect in God. Life can only exist through contrast, but it is less the discrepancy between good and evil or the fullness of God and absolute nothingness, and more the tremendous tension between the equal poles of "male" and "female," which shapes all the worlds of the Universe and their inhabitants, from cherubim to ants.

The Bible actually expresses this reality very succinctly: "God created man in his own image. He created him as man and woman" (Genesis 1:27). The fact that power-intoxicated masculinity later attempted to reinterpret this succinct truth does not change the reality that the ancient Chinese symbolized with yin and

yang. Unfortunately, later male societies attributed negative characteristics to the female pole, characteristics that every oppressed person, whether female or male, develops as a survival strategy. The two poles are absolutely equal. They must be, otherwise the universe would lose its eternal balance.

Among the creatures of the universe, humans are the only ones whose existence does not end with death, because their innermost core—whether or not the respective bearer can recognize this in the darkness of the starry night—originates from the eternal Spirit and will return to its eternal home. What remains is the "imprint" of their spiritual form conferred by their earthly life, as well as the impulses of their good or bad deeds. The "judgment in the hereafter" conceived by the naive minds of all religions is nothing more than the effect of immutable spiritual laws that bring like-minded people together in isolated "circles." It is easy to imagine that heaven or hell depends on the prevailing attitude in each circle. Those united in love and joy in the higher circles remain untouched by the disturbing malice from the depths. Existence in divine infinity is no longer conceivable for an earthly human being, as it transcends all earthly parables and images.

Finally, it should be noted that this brief and overly sober summary of Bô Yin Râ's teachings from a more scientific perspective cannot do justice to

the inexhaustible content of his books and images. If this short text inspires you to pick up one of Bô Yin Râ's books, then it has fulfilled its purpose.

The Earthly Path of Bô Yin Râ

Introduction

Earthly destiny is only important for a helper from the Spirit world insofar as it must allow him to fulfill his task, whereby his earthly human inclinations are by no means indifferent to whether it leads him through the highs and lows of earthly life. Even a "master" loses the knowledge of his origin and his alert consciousness in the spiritual worlds for many years when he is born on earth and must be "awakened" again by his peers through hard training. The following short biography may be easier to understand from this point of view.

Biography

Joseph Anton Schneiderfranken was born on November 25, 1876, at two o'clock in the morning in Aschaffenburg, the son of Joseph Schneider from Bürgstadt near Miltenberg and Maria Anna, née Albert from Hösbach. In 1897, the house where he was born was moved—a sensation at the time—due to the expansion of the main railway station and is now known as "Glattbacher Überfahrt No.

13."

Joseph Anton, whose artistic talent was not inherited from any of his rural ancestors, spent only the first four years of his life in Aschaffenburg. However, he retained fond memories of this culturally and historically rich city throughout his life. One of his most famous landscape paintings depicts a motif from his Franconian homeland, a forest valley in the Spessart.

In 1880, the family moved to nearby Frankfurt, where Joseph attended the Merian School until 1890 after completing elementary school. His inclination and talent drew him irresistibly to the visual arts, although he also temporarily considered studying Catholic theology. Despite his parents' financial difficulties, which he helped alleviate by working hard in a factory, he was able to attend several semesters at the Städelschule Art Institute in Frankfurt between 1892 and 1895. After working as a stage painter at the local municipal theater, among other things, he completed his studies at the Städelschule Master Studio in 1899. During this time, he also met the amiable painter Hans Thoma, who gave him free lessons based on a mutual sympathy that arose from their shared penchant for sincerity and artistic clarity.

In the years that followed, Joseph Schneiderfranken's desire for further education and to deepen his knowledge led him to the Imperial

Academy of Fine Arts (General Painting School) in Vienna, the Munich Art Collections, and the Académie Julian in Paris. Repeated stays in Munich, Berlin, and Vienna, where artists such as Max Klinger and Adolf Loos—to name just two of the most important—entered his circle of friends, interrupted several shorter trips within Europe, including one to Sweden in the summer of 1908. The young painter signed his paintings early on with Schneider-Franken in order to distinguish himself from others with the same common surname.

In contrast to the bohemian artist's life so fondly depicted in contemporary literature, he took his profession extremely seriously. Even the paintings from his years of training and travel—if one can call them that—testify to his great strength and conscientiousness, even if they still reveal influences from Thoma, Boehle, and Klinger. In 1906, his extensive and diligent preparatory work began to bear fruit. In the spring, Berlin publishers released pen-and-ink drawings, and at the same time, the Leipzig Art Association exhibited original drawings and paintings by the artist, who was constantly working on his craft.

The threatening clouds of the First World War began to gather as the painter, who had now found his own personal style of expression, was offered the opportunity to spend a year in Greece, which brought his intellectual and artistic powers to their final

breakthrough. The landscapes created on the basis of the sketches he brought back with him are among the most perfect ever captured in form and color by the pictorial spirit of ancient Hellas. In 1915, Joseph Schneiderfranken exhibited a collection of Greek paintings at Schulte in Berlin, which was reviewed by the then highly respected art critic Fritz Stahl. The exhibition also aroused keen interest in Professor Theodor Wiegand, director of the antiquities department of the Berlin museums, who later founded the Pergamon Museum.

However, Joseph Schneiderfranken had brought back something even more important from Greece. His experiences there were the crowning glory of a development that had been in the making since his childhood and long before his birth, and which now increasingly shaped and determined his life. For someone described by his friends and acquaintances as always sober, humorous, and matter-of-fact, lacking any inclination toward world-denying asceticism and secrecy, his now fully committed devotion to the spiritual work and the accompanying images can only be seen as an expression of a commitment entered into with clear consciousness.

In 1916, the desperate efforts of warring Germany forced even this free-spirited artist, who was averse to all feelings of hatred, into uniform. Until the spring of 1917, he performed administrative duties in Königsberg, then, because of his

knowledge of Modern Greek, he was transferred to the Greek camp in Görlitz, Silesia, as an interpreter. The poor food he had to share with the internees—flour mixed with sawdust—was one of the causes of a gastrointestinal disorder that tormented him until the end of his life. After the war ended, his first wife, Irma Schönfeld, had died after twelve years of marriage from diabetes, which was incurable at the time, he entered into a new relationship with the widow Hélène Hoffmann, who brought two girls into the marriage. As chairman of the Oberlausitz Art Association, he took an active part in the cultural life of the city of Görlitz and founded the "Jakob Böhme Bund" in 1921, which other artists also joined. He later dedicated a separate chapter to the Silesian mystic Jakob Böhme in his book "Wegweiser" (Showing the Way).

The first spiritual writings appeared between 1913 and 1917 under the initials B.Y.R., which he later compiled and revised into the book *Die Königliche Kunst* (The Royal Art). In 1919, Kurt Wolff Verlag, also in Leipzig, published "Buch vom Lebendigen Gott" (The Book on the Living God), which laid the foundation for the spiritual teachings now published under the name *Bô Yin Râ*. Year after year, new volumes were added until the series was completed in 1936 with the thirty-second volume, "Hortus Conclusus." Writings closely related to the teachings appeared between 1923 and 1939, the last one entitled "Über die

Gottlosigkeit" (On Godlessness). Each volume formed a self-contained unit, taking into account the spiritual idiosyncrasies and moods of the various readers.

Surrounded by his happy family and working on his now clearly defined artistic and spiritual path, his life was now measured and calm. After a two-year stay in Horgen on Lake Zurich, he moved to the municipality of Massagno above Lugano in 1925, where he took up permanent residence and loved. He devoted himself almost entirely and unconditionally to spiritual teaching, to which he now also put his great skill as a painter. (Between 1920 and 1922, he had already created a cycle of spiritual paintings in Görlitz, which are included in the book "Welten" (Worlds).

Wherever he lived, his house was filled with conversations with visitors from all over the world, the laughter of his children and close friends, but also with the hidden, palpable power of the man who worked in silence. People from all walks of life, scholars and the uneducated, scientists and artists – among them the art historian and writer Rudolf Schott – gathered at his home. Of the musicians he knew personally, Eugen d'Albert (1864–1932), Egon Wellesz (1885–1974), and Felix Weingartner (1863–1942), he was particularly close to the latter. In 1927, he found an ideal publisher and friend in Dr. Alfred Kober from Basel.

The luminous abundance of the Ticino autumn seems kindred to the benevolent sage who offers comfort, advice, and help to countless people in words, letters, and inner devotion, showing severity when necessary and repeatedly urging self-education. His last books resonate with a primeval resonance and depth that has hardly been heard in the German-speaking world since the days of Goethe.

The regime that came to power in Germany in the 1930s (which also hindered the distribution of his books) met with decisive rejection from the artist, who was devoted to all noble human endeavors, and he recognized the dangers threatening his homeland at an early stage. Nevertheless, hoping for a turn for the better until the very end, as expressed in his "Book on Love," he was deeply shaken by the outbreak of World War II. Once again, the dark forces had gained the upper hand.

In 1938, he acquired citizenship of Massagno for himself and his family, now entwined with the beautiful, then still almost untouched landscape of Ceresio, its lively inhabitants, and the customs of Swiss democracy. With almost superhuman willpower, he fought against the pain and weakness caused by his suffering in the last years of his life. His condition allowed him to receive fewer and fewer guests. When he did, however, his cheerful impartiality and understanding kindness made visitors forget that they were in the

presence of a seriously ill person. According to consistent reports from acquaintances, there was no discrepancy between his teachings and his life, as is so often observed in talented minds, great and small.

Remaining fully conscious and in complete control of his mental faculties until the end, he wrote and painted as long as he was physically able. In the winter of 1943, on February 14, his long-overtaxed earthly body finally gave up the ghost.

Timeline

Bô Yin Râ's work did not arise from the "zeitgeist" and therefore has little in common with contemporary literature and painting in terms of content. Nevertheless, he naturally had to use the language and painting techniques of his time and was exposed to the political and technical events of the day. The following selection of external facts is quite arbitrary and is only intended to make the environment of his earthly experience more understandable, from which he was as unable to escape as his contemporaries.

1876 Joseph Anton Schneider is born in Aschaffenburg, Bavaria.

Queen Victoria becomes Empress of India, Otto designs the first four-stroke engine, Bell invents a usable telephone, Edison invents the phonograph, Mark Twain's "Tom Sawyer" is published, and the Bayreuth Festival Theatre is built.

1880 The Schneider family moves to Frankfurt.

Boer War in South Africa, the Duden dictionary is published.

1886–1890 Joseph Schneider attends the Merian School in Frankfurt.

In German East Africa, the natives rise up against the occupation, the Pope bans cremation, Benz and Daimler build the first automobiles, the first roll of film comes onto the market, May 1 becomes International Workers' Day, the importance of vitamins is discovered, Klinger: "Das Urteil des Paris" (The Judgment of Paris), Nietzsche: "Beyond Good and Evil."

1899 Joseph Anton Schneider completes his studies at the Städtel master studio in Frankfurt.

Rutherford distinguishes between alpha and beta radiation, Zeppelin builds an airship, artificial fertilizer production begins. Sibelius composes "Finlandia."

1903 Marriage to Irma Schönfeld (born 1876) from Vienna.

Jazz emerges in New Orleans, first Tour de France, first powered flight by the Wright brothers.

1906 J. A. Schneiderfranken publishes pen-and-ink drawings and exhibits graphic works in Berlin and Leipzig.

End of the unsuccessful Russian workers' and peasants' uprising.

Inventions up to 1906: sound recording, motor flight, ultramicroscope, quartz lamp, electron tube, radio broadcasting. In 1905, A. Einstein published his "Special Theory of Relativity."

1912 Bô Yin Râ stayed in Greece from September 1912 to August 1913.

Balkan Wars, Tibet becomes independent, sinking of the Titanic, Panama Canal completed, atomic model by N. Bohr, H. v. Hoffmannsthal: "Jedermann," W. Kandinsky: "The Spiritual in Art."

1913 The first publication with the initials B.Y.R.: "Light from Himavat" (later integrated into the "Book of Royal Art") appears.

1914 *Outbreak of World War I.*

1915 Mrs. Irma Schneiderfranken-Schönfeld dies of diabetes.

1917 J. A. Schneiderfranken serves as an interpreter in a Greek internment camp in Görlitz. *Russia becomes a workers' and peasants' republic, Lenin: "The State and Revolution."*

1918 Marriage to the widow Helene Hoffmann (born 1887) from Görlitz, who brings the children Ria (born 1909) and Ilse (born 1912) into the marriage.

Germany and Austria become republics, O. Spengler: "The Decline of the West," H. Mann: "The Subject."

1919 Birth of daughter Devadatti. The Book on the Living God is published by Kurt Wolff Verlag in Leipzig. *The Treaty of Versailles is signed, E. Rutherford observes atomic disintegration for the first time.*

1923 Bô Yin Râ settles in Horgen near Zurich.

Inflation in Germany, Hitler's attempted coup, B. Shaw: "Saint Joan."

1925 Bô Yin Râ takes up permanent residence in Massagno, Canton Ticino, Switzerland (mid-May).

Hindenburg becomes German Reich President, Ch. Chaplin: "The Gold Rush," W. Heisenberg: "Quantum Mechanics."

1936 The last volume of the textbook Hortus Conclusus is published.

Italy's war of aggression in Abyssinia, Egypt becomes independent, Th. Mitchell: "Gone with the Wind," C. G. Jung: "The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious."

1938 The J. A. Schneiderfranken family receives citizenship of the municipality of Massagno TI.

1939 Bô Yin Râ's last book, "On Godlessness," is published.

Outbreak of World War II, Germany and the USSR divide Poland, chain reaction of uranium 238 observed (O. Hahn).

1943 Joseph A. Schneiderfranken dies on the evening of February 14 in Massagno, Ticino.

Italy declares war on Germany, Tehran Conference, Saint Exupery: "Le petit prince," H. Hesse: "The Glass Bead Game," J. Huxley: "Evolution."

1974 Mrs. Helen Schneiderfranken and her three daughters establish the *Bô Yin Râ Foundation*.

1978 Death of Mrs. Helene Schneiderfranken-Hoffmann.

1993 50th anniversary of the death of J. A. Schneiderfranken

Bô Yin Râ's books enjoy steady sales in German-speaking countries. Since the author's death, translations of his work have continued and expanded into French, English, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Spanish, Portuguese, Polish, Romanian, Hungarian, Czech, Bulgarian, Finnish, and Russian.

Memories

Bô Yin Râ never turned visitors away if his other essential commitments allowed him to do so. The descriptions of visitors selected here correspond well with reports from other people.

"It was May 25, 1939, a bright, almost summery day. From Lake Como, where we were staying in a tiny lakeside cottage for a short time, we were allowed to come to Villa Gladiola in Lugano. 'Afternoon for a cup of coffee'.

My heart began to pound even before we stopped our little car in front of the house, walked through the small iron gate, and followed the path that I knew only from looking through

the fence. A maid dressed in black with a white apron opened the door, and we placed what we had brought with us in the entrance hall: a large hand-forged copper water jug filled with white roses. In the salon, the lady of the house welcomed us in her own quiet, loving way. When she saw that my eyes were fixed on a small oil painting, a coast and sea in semi-twilight, she explained that it was a sketch her husband had done in Greece.

*Very soon we heard footsteps, the door opened, and *Bô Yin Râ* came in, carrying the jug with both hands. He greeted us, delighting and embarrassing us at the same time, by praising the jug and showing his joy. He asked us to tell him how, on our journey, we had seen women in one of the small villages fetching water with such jugs at the well and how we had then bought this jug from the coppersmith, the last blacksmith still working in the village. The conversation turned right away to Tuscany, whose beauty had overwhelmed us and which *Bô Yin Râ* also called one of the most beautiful and harmonious landscapes, except for Greece. In the early morning hours, Tuscan workers often passed by Villa Gladiola, singing their songs, and he was always happy about that.*

His cheerful, fatherly kindness dispelled any shyness we might have felt. The conversation flowed easily and naturally, based on a feeling of inner familiarity; we felt welcomed like children returning home after a

long absence. At the same time, we were enveloped in a warmth comparable to that which one feels when approaching a huge, radiantly warm tiled stove after the cold of winter."

From Imma Bodmershof: Our Encounters with Bô Yin Râ, recorded in June 1970

"The steamboat approached the shore. A tall, dark-bearded man with two blonde daughters was standing at the landing stage. Joseph Anton Schneiderfranken with Annemarie and Ilse. He greeted us very warmly. Even now, 43 years later, I can still vividly remember the sparkle in his eyes. It was a loving, kind gaze that saw through everything. We climbed the mountain, engaged in lively conversation with the gentlemen, to the house surrounded by fir trees, where we were welcomed so warmly and kindly by his wife that my slight shyness immediately disappeared and I immediately felt at home in the warm atmosphere of love and kindness..."

"One small incident still stands out in my mind. Before lunch, Bô Yin Râ, whom I revered, came into the room where I was talking to his wife and explained to her exactly which wine she should serve and how it should be tempered. We were then treated to the most delightful hospitality and cheerful conversation, which I unfortunately cannot remember in detail. Although I was happy and reassured to find myself in such a natural, human atmosphere, I was overwhelmed by

too many emotions to be able to concentrate properly.

But subsequently, I was allowed to attend many family dinners, which always ended with the lovely custom of the host extending both arms in a friendly gesture, whereupon the entire table joined hands and wished each other a blessed meal. There were always exciting, enjoyable conversations going on. The father of the family often said something in the Frankfurt dialect, read a short story in his dialect during dessert, or told stories from his youth. We also enjoyed talking about Hans Thoma, whom he and we knew and admired. We were particularly delighted when Bô Yin Râ once sang Marian songs to us at the table ..."

He invited Maags and us to join them on the train. We were only too happy to accept this invitation and all four of us climbed into their compartment. A lively conversation immediately ensued. Unfortunately, it was too lively, because when someone looked at their watch, it turned out that the stopover time had been exceeded and the train should already have continued on to Germany, but the car we were in had stopped on the Swiss tracks. No one had told them that they should have changed trains. It was wonderful how graciously Mr. and Mrs. Schneiderfranken made the best of a bad situation, immediately deciding to spend the night in Basel and inviting us all to dine with them at the Zunfthaus zum Schlüssel. Maag

immediately arranged for us to be served in a small private room, and we spent a delightful and enjoyable evening together."

Memories of Mrs. Aenny Kober-Staehelin from the years 1923 to 1943

"Although I was somewhat nervous before my visit, all my nervousness disappeared after just a few words... Bô Yin Râ spoke in a very kind, simple, and humane manner, and his words had such a liberating effect that I felt at home in the cozy atmosphere, as if I were with a benevolent father..."

Harald Blum, after a visit to Massagno in 1936

"Bô Yin Râ was a cheerful and, moreover, the most natural and honest person I have ever met. I would say that he always omitted all embellishments, so that the pure form came to the fore, whether in his manner and conversation, which were often spiced with humor, or in his writing and pictures."

R. Schott, Symbolic Form and Reality in the Paintings of Bô Yin Râ, 1957

Despite his enormous workload, Bô Yin Râ always found time for his beloved family. His wife and three daughters fully understood his commitments, which required an unusual amount of time and concentration.

"Once, in late summer, we were returning from a hike in the evening when we saw a large rainbow over the fields, and Ria and I spontaneously asked, 'Please, Daddy, paint us a rainbow!' It didn't take long before a picture with a rainbow over the hilly, partly wooded landscape was created."

"From those difficult post-war years, I still remember his words, or at least the gist of them: 'If I had to, I would paint railroad cars to feed my family.'"

"Once in Horgen, representatives of the Swiss wrestling association came and asked Dad to put up decorations for the big wrestling festival – they knew he was an artist. He immediately agreed and had lots of pine branches brought to him, and so a colorful decoration was created; of course, my parents were given places of honor and were delighted to get to know this national sport."

"I was allowed to go to the cinema with Dad and Mom, where a film set in the circus world starring my mother's favorite actress was showing. Quite unexpectedly, the director was advised to take a sick animal to the "famous animal psychologist Bô Yin Râ." Dad was royally amused by this scene."

"I will also never forget the following comforting words when I had a stomach ache again and he let me rest on his small balcony: 'Go ahead and moan a little, it's good for you.'"

"The worst punishment for us was when he stopped talking to Ria and me for a while; we then realized that our behavior had been thoughtless or unkind (e.g., toward our little sister). But how forgiving he was of our clumsiness! When my glasses broke—not for the first time!—his words were something like, 'You've worn them out again.'"

Our childhood memories of our father can be summed up in a few words: the love with which he surrounded us three children; love and understanding – later, more and more, advice and guidance were added to this. But Dad never asked us, or even encouraged us, to read or look at one of his books. So it was left up to each of us to decide for ourselves whether we wanted to learn his teachings."

From the notes and stories of his three daughters Ria, Ilse, and Devadatti