

MUNICH, JUNE 2021

DREAMS OF JAPAN. A TRAVELOGUE BY THE ARTIST WILHELM HEINE 16.7.21-9.1.22

160 years after the conclusion of the first German-Japanese friendship and trade treaty, the Museum Fünf Kontinente is presenting the exhibition 'Dreams of Japan. A travelogue in pictures by the artist Wilhelm Heine.' For the first time in over 100 years, paintings based on eyewitness impressions of the agreement process will be on display in a special exhibition in Munich.

Bernhard Peter Wilhelm Heine (1827-1885), who was born in Dresden, studied architecture and painting. His professors included Gottfried Semper, and Richard Wagner was one of his father's closest friends. The appointment of the young Heine as scene painter at the court theatre was of only short duration, as after the crushing of the Uprising in Dresden in 1849 he fled into exile in America as a suspected revolutionary. Here he successfully applied to participate as the official artist in the American Japanese expedition of 1853-1854 under Commodore Matthew Perry, which forced the Japanese to open up economically and put an end to centuries of greatly restricted contact with the outside world.

In 1860 Heine travelled again to Japan: this time with a Prussian delegation led by Count Friedrich zu Eulenburg, which arrived in Edo (today Tokyo) in September 1860 and in 1861 concluded a 'Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation' between Japan and Prussia.

During his time there, Heine explored Edo and its surroundings, took photos and made sketches. He published his memoirs between 1873 and 1875 in a lavishly illustrated folio entitled 'Japan. Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Landes und seiner Bewohner' ('Japan. An aid to the understanding of the land and its people').

For the illustrations he drew on sketches and photos from his second visit to Japan. Weakened by a stroke, he brought in artist friends to help. Coloured pictures could not yet be reproduced, so he

and his helpers created 50 paintings in grisaille technique, which were then photographed and glued into the book.

28 of these 50 paintings, which present an idealized picture of traditional Japan, together with Heine's own copy of the folio volume and a panoramic painting of old Edo, are being displayed in a special exhibition in the Museum Fünf Kontinente to mark 160 years of German-Japanese relations.

DREAMS OF JAPAN

A TRAVELOGUE BY THE ARTIST WILHELM HEINE

16.07.2021-09.01.2022

Opening hours

Di-So, 9.30 am-5.30pm

Entrance fee

Please see <https://www.museum-fuenf-kontinente.de/services/english-summary.html>

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