

### **The Four Friends of the Study – a book project by Nel Pak**

The text is nearly complete and soon we'll be able to share with you the first few pages of a marvellous book. What we need to do next is to finalise the technical chapters of the book, eliminate any outstanding issues in relation to the text and images, and speak to artisans and other relevant people in Japan to make sure all our information is correct. With this purpose in mind we are planning a three week research trip. After our return to the Netherlands the printing press can start rolling once we've added the final touches to the book *The Four Friends of the Study*; Part 1 of 3: *Japan*, written and drawn by Nel Pak, artist, and designed by Steffen Maas, graphic designer. With illustrations of crafts that have been around for centuries.

### **The Four Friends – who are they?**

Brush, paper, ink and inkstone form the essential quartet of the Study. To cherish these precious materials and tools like dear friends is an ancient Chinese tradition; a tradition which Korean Buddhist monks brought to Japan.

### **A unique edition**

The book will be a travel blog, a study of materials used, and an artist's book, all in one. Between 2009 and 2014 I traced the Four Friends and their traditional makers in Japan. Telling me many stories, they gave me numerous insights into the tradition of the Four Friends that are well worth passing on to a wider public. For the last two years I have been working on the first volume about Japan with photographs and drawings of the people and things I encountered on my journey. It will contain technical descriptions of the production process of brushes, paper, ink and inkstone and include reproductions of several drawings by Japanese artists I was fortunate enough to meet. My own drawings are changing under the influence of the master classes I attended in Japan: the book will illustrate this development, showing several aspects of my drawing. The edition will include samples of Japanese paper and one of my original drawings. Steffen Maas is working on a beautiful book design that will draw together, in a lucid way, the various strands of the book. In other words, Part One of the planned trilogy *The Four Friends of the Study* promises to become a unique edition of lasting value which will offer an introduction into a fascinating aspect of Japanese culture.

Between 2017 and 2020 I intend to visit Korea and China, thus travelling back to the countries of origin of the Four Friends' tradition. My inspiring collaboration with Steffen Maas, who regularly teaches at Chinese art academies, will therefore continue to flourish. Volumes 2 and 3 about Korea and China are scheduled for future publication.

### **How are we going to spend your donations?**

Your donations will cover Steffen Maas' and my air tickets to Japan as well as our additional travel expenses and accommodation costs for a three week research trip (c. 10-30 June 2016). This period of close collaboration will be crucial to allow us to prepare volume one of *The Four Friends of the Study* for publication.

### **Our work schedule**

During our three week research trip we intend to do the following:  
-shoot additional photographs of relevant people, locations and any

other missing details;

- visit artisans such as brush, ink and inkstone makers and other professionals to ask advice about technical issues;
- liaise with artists to collate artwork to be used in the book;
- visit museums, book stores and libraries;
- visit a paper maker, factory and/or supplier to inspect Japanese types of paper;
- approach possible funders to finance certain aspects of the publication such as the inclusion of several paper samples in our book;
- visit a few printing offices;
- visit cultural institutions to promote, finance and distribute the book;
- make initial contact with a number of cultural institutions and art academies to explore possible future guest lecturing and exchange of ideas with the Netherlands.

### **Preliminary travel schedule**

- Tokyo: visits to experts in sumi e and suibokuga at Geidai University of the Arts, a visit to the Dutch Embassy, visits to several artists, museums, bookstores, libraries, printing offices and a paper supplier;
- Amehata: visit to an ink stone artisan and the Kenshoan suzuri museum;
- Kyoto: visit to several suppliers of specialised writing materials, visit to museums and temples;
- Nara: visit to ink factory Boku Undo;
- Kumano: visit to brush makers and a brush factory;
- Misumi: visit to papermakers of the Sekishu Washi Cooperative;
- possibly Nagasaki: visit to former Dutch trade agency/port Deshima.

### **When will the book be published?**

We intend to publish *The Four Friends of the Study*, Part 1 of 3, Japan around February 2017.

### **Thanks and next steps**

Thank you for your time. I hope this will interest you and you will be so kind as to support our book project. Of course we will want to do something in return. I have created a gift list from which you will be able to choose a present in relation to the level of your donation. Please have a look at the gift list below. You are welcome to collect your gift during our launch of the production phase of the book in August 2016; date to be confirmed. However, at your request I can also send the gift to your home address.

I intend to keep all our supporters informed about the progress we are making with the project. Of course you will all be invited to our book launch around February 2017; date to be confirmed.

At your request you can be mentioned as one of the supporters in the book. Those donating more than € 50 will be able to buy the book at a reduced price.

My sincere thanks, and thank you on behalf of the Four Friends.

**Gifts for those who donate to *The Four Friends of the Study*, a book project by Nel Pak**

10 euro or more: You receive a choice of a thank you card with a reproduction of an ink drawing by Nel Pak printed in offset or a digital greeting card

25 euro or more: You receive a thank you card with a reproduction of an ink drawing by Nel Pak printed in offset, signed and name stamped

50 euro or more: You receive a digital print, printed on Japanese paper, signed and name stamped, together with a little gift brought back from Japan

100 euro or more: You receive an original ink drawing of a Japanese happiness symbol whereby you have a choice of size of A4 or 10 x 15 cm (edition of 40)

250 euro or more: You are invited to partake in an ink drawing afternoon with green tea and cake in a group of maximum six people. The afternoon will be scheduled on a Saturday or Sunday in September 2016 with a maximum of twelve places. Alternatively, you receive a woodblock print (Japanese woodcut) . Choose one from six new year designs from the following list: rabbit (2011), dragon (2012), snake(2013), horse (2014), sheep (2015), monkey (2016). Maximum of twelve prints available.

500 euro or more: You are invited to my art studio to choose a drawing or printed work from a selection made for this campaign. Maximum of ten people.

1,000 euro or more: You receive a deluxe edition of the book *The Four Friends of the Study*, Part 1 of 3, Japan, which will include one of my original drawings and several samples of Japanese paper and which could be used as a corporate gift.