

Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley

Oral History Center  
The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

University History Series  
Department of History at Berkeley

Frederic E. Wakeman, Jr.

*Historian of Late Imperial and Modern China*  
*University of California, Berkeley, 1965-2006*

Interviews conducted by  
Ann Lage  
in 2005 and 2006

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Fred Wakeman  
Photo courtesy of Center for Chinese Studies

**Frederic E. Wakeman** was professor and scholar of Chinese history at the University of California, Berkeley from 1965-2006. Along with mentoring several generations of students at Berkeley, he wrote groundbreaking histories of late imperial and modern China, meticulously researched, deeply analytical, and written with the graceful narrative style of a master novelist. On the Berkeley campus Wakeman chaired the Center for Chinese Studies from 1973-1979 and was director of the Institute of East Asian Studies from 1990-2001. As vice chair of the US Committee on Scholarly Communication with China, he was instrumental in opening scholarly exchanges between the US and China to social scientists in the 1970s. In the 1980s he chaired the Social Science Research Council. His public service, coupled with his research, writing, and teaching, had a major impact on China studies in the US and internationally.

The oral history delves at length into Wakeman's unique early life and education guided by his father's ambitions for his elder son and his own wide-ranging interests. He discusses intellectual mentors and compatriots at Harvard, Berkeley, in China, and elsewhere who influenced his research interests and approaches. He describes the genesis, research, and writing of his major works and the impact of collaborative relationships with Chinese scholars, the opening of Chinese archives to US scholars, and the advantages of his "border runner" perspective on Chinese history.

Wakeman reflects on the all-male cohort hired in the Department of History at Berkeley in the late fifties and early sixties, a variegated group with tolerance for different historical approaches and insistence on rigorous standards for promotion to tenure. He contrasts the camaraderie of this group with the department's gender and cultural battles in the early and mid-1980s. He vividly describes campus protests of the Vietnam war era and the effect of campus political battles on the history department and the Center for Chinese Studies. Wakeman also traces hiring in the China area, making the Berkeley department a major US site for training historians of China.

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## The Department of History at Berkeley Oral History Series

The Department of History at Berkeley oral history series grew out of Gene Brucker's 1995 Faculty Research Lecture on "History at Berkeley." In developing his lecture on the transformations in the UC Berkeley Department of History in the latter half of the twentieth century, Brucker, whose tenure as professor of history from 1954 to 1991 spanned most of this period, realized how much of the story was undocumented.

Discussion with Carroll Brentano, coordinator of the University History Project at the Center for Studies in Higher Education, history department faculty wife, and a former graduate student in history, reinforced his perception that a great deal of the history of the University and its academic culture was not preserved for future generations. The Department of History, where one might expect to find an abiding interest in preserving a historical record, had discarded years of departmental files, and only a fraction of history faculty members had placed their personal papers in the Bancroft Library.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, many of the most interesting aspects of the history—the life experiences, cultural context, and personal perceptions—were only infrequently committed to paper.<sup>2</sup> They existed for the most part in the memories of the participants.

Carroll Brentano knew of the longtime work of the Regional Oral History Office (now the Oral History Center of the Bancroft Library) in recording and preserving the memories of participants in the history of California and the West and the special interest of the oral history office in University history. She and Gene Brucker then undertook to involve Ann Lage, who had conducted a number of oral histories in the University History Series and was herself a product of Berkeley's history department. In the course of a series of mutually enjoyable luncheon meetings, the project to document the history of the Department of History at Berkeley evolved.

In initial discussions about the parameters of the project, a crucial decision was made. Rather than conduct short oral histories focused on topics limited to departmental history, we determined to work with selected members of the department to conduct more lengthy biographical memoirs. We would record relevant personal background—family, education, career choices, marriage and children; discuss other institutional affiliations; explore the process of creating their historical works and changes in the discipline. A central topic for each would be, of course, the Department of History at Berkeley—its governance, the informal and formal relationships among colleagues, the connections with the broader campus, and curriculum and teaching.

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<sup>1</sup> Since the project began, additional history faculty papers have been given to the Bancroft Library. At latest count (in 2018), The Bancroft Library now holds papers from history professors Walton Bean, Woodbridge Bingham, Herbert Bolton, Woodrow Borah, William J. Bouwsma, George Guttridge, Roger Hahn, George Hammond, John Hicks, Eugene Irschick, David Keightley, Joseph Levenson, Martin Malia, Henry May, Thomas Metcalf, William Alfred Morris, Frederic Paxson, Franz Schurmann, Engel Sluiter, Raymond Sontag, Kenneth Stampf, Frederic Wakeman, and Reginald Zelnik. Miscellaneous files of the Department, 1915-1929, are also held in Bancroft's University Archives.

<sup>2</sup> Two published memoirs recall the Berkeley history department: John D. Hicks, *My Life with History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968) recalls his years as professor and dean, 1942-1957; Henry F. May reflects on his years as an undergraduate at Berkeley in the thirties in *Coming to Terms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

Using the Brucker lecture as a point of departure, it was decided that the project would first document the group of professors who came to the department in the immediate postwar years, the 1950s, and the early 1960s. This group, most of them retired, was the one whose distinguished teaching and publications initially earned the department its high national rating. They made the crucial hiring and promotion decisions that cemented the department's strength and expanded the curriculum to meet new academic interests. At the same time, they participated in campus governing bodies dealing with central social, political, and cultural issues of their times: challenges to civil liberties and academic freedom, the response to tumultuous student protests over free speech, civil rights and the Vietnam War, and the demands for equality of opportunity for women and minorities. And they benefited from the postwar years of demographic and economic growth in California, accompanied for the most part through the 1980s with expanding budgets for higher education.

Carroll Brentano and Gene Brucker committed themselves to facilitate project funding and to enlist the interest of potential participants. Members of the department responded with interest, joined the periodic lunch confabs, offered advice in planning, and helped find funding. In the spring of 1996, Brentano and Professor Sheldon Rothblatt organized a symposium, titled "Play It Again, Sam." There, Gene Brucker restaged his Faculty Research Lecture. Professor Henry F. May responded with his perceptions of events, followed by comments from other history faculty, all videotaped for posterity and the Bancroft Library.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, the oral history project got underway with interviews with Delmer Brown, professor of Japanese history, and Kenneth Stampp, American history, both of whom came to Berkeley in 1946. To date, we have completed a total of sixteen in-depth oral histories with this group, all but one with transcripts available online through the Oral History Center website. The interviewees represent a variety of subject fields and historical approaches. The series also includes one interview with a faculty wife.

Diverse in their personal backgrounds and scholarly interests, the faculty who came to the department in the postwar years had one thing in common: all but one were men.<sup>4</sup> In the 1970s and 1980s, as more women completed PhDs, women within the academy and the women's movement nationally worked to increase women in tenured faculty positions. The Department of History at Berkeley slowly began to add women to its faculty, beginning in 1971 with the appointment of Natalie Zemon Davis. By 1990, the department had two female full professors, five associate professors, and four assistant professors, of a total tenure-line faculty of sixty-two. During these years, women historians nationally were part of a broader critique of universalist assumptions about history and society that included significant contributions from Berkeley faculty. Feminist scholars, in particular, were integral to the radical changes in subject matter studied, methodology, and modes of discourse in the profession.<sup>5</sup> The new intellectual and

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<sup>3</sup>The Brucker lecture and May response, with an afterword by David Hollinger, are published in *History at Berkeley: A Dialog in Three Parts* (Chapters in the History of the University of California, Number Seven), Carroll Brentano and Sheldon Rothblatt, editors [Center for Studies in Higher Education and Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1998].

<sup>4</sup> Adrienne Koch was a faculty member, 1958-1965.

<sup>5</sup> Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History* (New York, London: W.W. Norton, 1994), 153. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: the "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical*

programmatic directions associated with an increase in female faculty were accompanied by sometimes contentious battles at Berkeley as elsewhere over the evaluation of academic work, teaching priorities, and curriculum development.

The second phase of the project on the Department of History at Berkeley focused on the women faculty who came to Berkeley in the 1970s and 1980s. In 2003, Natalie Davis was interviewed during a visit to the campus, followed by oral histories with Paula Fass and Lynn Hunt, two other early women faculty in the department. As in earlier interviews, we explored the faculty member's contribution to her scholarly field, examining the development of her intellectual project and working methods, and probed experiences relevant to understanding the development of the discipline and the department. In addition, we discussed challenges facing women in the academy over the course of their professional careers.

The organizers of this project are grateful to the Department of History and to the many individual donors that have made these interviews possible. The considerable interest in the fruits of our project to date confirms our initial premise that departmental histories and personal memoirs are essential to the unraveling of some knotty puzzles: What kind of a place is this University of California, Berkeley, to which we have committed much of our lives? What is this academic culture in which we are enmeshed? And what is this enterprise History, in which we all engage? As one of the project instigators reflected, "Knowing what was is essential; and as historians we know the value of sources, even if they are ourselves."

Carroll Brentano, Coordinator  
University History Project  
Center for Studies in Higher Education

Gene Brucker  
Shepard Professor of History Emeritus

Ann Lage, Project Director  
Regional Oral History Office  
Berkeley, California  
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**Series List—Department of History at Berkeley****September 2019**

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- Stampf, Kenneth M. *Historian of Slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction, University of California, Berkeley, 1946-1983*. 1998, 310 pp.
- Wakeman, Frederic E., *Historian of Late Imperial and Modern China, University of California, Berkeley, 1965-2006*. 2018, 384 pp.

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## **Interview History—Frederic E. Wakeman, Jr.**

Fred Wakeman spent his academic career at Berkeley, commencing when he began graduate studies here in far eastern history. Immediately after completing his PhD in 1965, he was appointed assistant professor of history, and he served in the Department of History at Berkeley for forty-one years, until his retirement in 2006. But despite his fealty to this place, he was very much a citizen of the world throughout his life. Born in 1937, the son of a novelist and screenwriter, he lived a peripatetic childhood in Bermuda, Mexico, Cuba, Spain, France, and the US Midwest, Northeast, and South, where he mastered several languages, read widely, and made himself at ease in many cultures. He studied European history and literature as an undergraduate at Harvard and Soviet studies and political theory at the Institut d'études politiques in Paris, before settling on pursuing a graduate degree in China studies at Berkeley.

Over his four-decade career, Wakeman wrote groundbreaking histories of late imperial and modern China, meticulously researched, deeply analytical, and written with the graceful narrative style of a master novelist. *Strangers at the Gate*, his doctoral dissertation, engaged in local history, a new departure in China studies. With *History and Will*, he examined Mao's intellectual roots in European and Chinese thinkers. Delving into newly discovered historical archives in China, he pursued his monumental work, twenty years in the making, on the Ming-Qing transition, the two-volume narrative history, *The Great Enterprise: the Manchu Reconstruction of the Imperial Order in 17<sup>th</sup> Century China*. Discovery of an incredible source of social and police history in the archives of the Shanghai Municipal Police led to his trilogy of books, *Policing Shanghai*, *Shanghai Badlands*, and *Red Star over Shanghai*, topics which also fed his fascination with the world of intrigue (a fascination that had him flirting with the idea of a career with the CIA before Berkeley and the Vietnam war shifted his political outlook).

On campus Wakeman chaired the Center for Chinese Studies from 1973-1979 and was director of the Institute of East Asian Studies from 1990-2001. He was instrumental in opening scholarly exchanges between the US and China in the 1970s, insuring that historians and social scientists would have research opportunities in China, in exchange for the US scientific and technical expertise that China craved. As chairman of the Social Science Research Council, he shut down the exchanges in reaction to the massacre at Tiananmen Square. His public service, coupled with his research, writing, and teaching, had a major impact on China studies in the US and internationally.

Knowing of Wakeman's impending retirement, in 2005 two of his long-time colleagues, Professors Irv Scheiner and Gene Brucker, persuaded him to undertake an oral history for our History at Berkeley series. We all met over lunch, where I was introduced to Fred's warm and expansive personality, and we began the process of mapping out a plan for the oral history interviews. Eleven interview sessions followed, conducted in the spring of 2005 and 2006. Ever the raconteur, Fred delves at length into his unique early life and education guided by his father's ambitions for his elder son and his own wide-ranging interests. Throughout he discusses intellectual mentors and compatriots at Harvard, Berkeley, in China, and elsewhere who influenced his research interests and approaches. He describes the genesis and writing of his major works and the impact of collaborative relationships with Chinese scholars, the opening of Chinese archives to US scholars, and the advantages of his "border runner" perspective on Chinese history.

In response to our project's interest in departmental history, Wakeman reflects on the all-male cohort hired at Berkeley in the late fifties and early sixties, a variegated group with tolerance for different historical approaches and insistence on rigorous standards for promotion to tenure. He contrasts the camaraderie of this group with the department's gender and cultural battles in the early and mid-1980s, resulting in sometimes bitter personnel fights. He vividly describes campus protests of the Vietnam war era and the effect of campus political battles on the department and the Center for Chinese Studies. Wakeman also traces hiring in the China area, making the Berkeley department a major site for training historians of China in the United States.

Our final interview took place in April 2006. Fred Wakeman retired in June and was awarded the Berkeley citation, the university's highest honor. He and his wife, He La Wakeman, moved to their home in Lake Oswego, Oregon. Within just a few months, Fred died of cancer, on September 14, 2006, at age 68. The processing of the interview tapes stalled, as we felt the loss of our narrator's participation in reviewing the transcript to provide some needed edits for his freewheeling conversational style and verify the many Chinese names, places, and phrases. Fortunately, the audiotapes had a skilled transcriber in Kathy Zvanovec-Higbee. Professor Wenhsin Yeh, his colleague, and former student, in the Department of History, reviewed the lengthy transcript to help us with the many challenges of transcribing Chinese names and phrases; we are deeply grateful for her help, and we take total ownership for the errors that no doubt remain. This interviewer retired from the office before processing was completed, again delaying our progress, but memories of the compelling conversations with Fred Wakeman drew me back to complete a light edit and final review of the transcript. I further verified spelling of names and removed many of the false starts inevitable in an exuberant conversation, keeping enough to be true to Fred's conversational style. Other than that, the transcript stands as spoken.

Audiotapes and the videotape of interview 9 (the only session videotaped) are available in The Bancroft Library. This oral history is one of twenty in-depth interviews on the Department of History at Berkeley; a description of the project and the list of completed oral histories are included in this volume. Most of the interviews can be found online on the Oral History Center website. The Oral History Center is a division of The Bancroft Library and is under the direction of Martin Meeker.

Ann Lage  
Interviewer emeritus  
Berkeley, California  
August 2018

Interview 1: March 30, 2005

Audiofile 1 Wakeman 01 03-30.05.wav

01-00:00:02

Lage: OK, we are on and today is March 30, 2005. I am interviewing Fred Wakeman for the Department of History Oral History Project. I'm Ann Lage. Now, Fred, this is our first interview.

01-00:00:18

Wakeman: Yes, it is.

01-00:00:19

Lage: And we're going to start at the beginning and get some sense of family, place, intellectual influences—

01-00:00:27

Wakeman: OK.

01-00:00:28

Lage: --which seem to start very early from what I've read.

01-00:00:30

Wakeman: True, true.

01-00:00:32

Lage: But just start by telling me something about your family.

01-00:00:33

Wakeman: Well, I'll just start with the genealogy, so to speak. I was born in December 1937 toward the end of the Depression, in Kansas City, Kansas. My father [Frederic Evans Wakeman, Sr.], my father was, let's see, how can I put it—my father's family, the Wakemans, originally had come over fairly early from Yorkshire, from England, and I guess their proudest ancestor was the Bishop of York. The family actually came from a place called Ripon where the town watchman is called the wakeman, and wakeman became—

01-00:01:17

Lage: That makes sense.

01-00:01:18

Wakeman: Makes good sense [chuckling]. But they settled at Fairfield in New York and Connecticut primarily.

01-00:01:27

Lage: And when was this that they came over?

01-00:01:30

Wakeman: This was the late seventeenth century. They were—the family—they were dissenters. There is a family genealogy, a very fancy looking thing that my father left me that I've lost track of, that if you read through it, you see that

they were mainly either seafaring people, ship owners and captains or soldiers or ministers, and most of them went to Yale if they were educated.

01-00:02:08

Lage: And were most of them educated?

01-00:02:10

Wakeman: Yes. They were all pretty well educated. They were sort of local gentry. Mostly when I meet a Wakeman it turns out that we are related. The name is fairly rare, yes. Rick Wakeman, for example, is the most famous Wakeman among younger people, but I wouldn't be surprised if there were some ancient affiliation. In any case, one branch of the family, my paternal, it would be, great-grandfather and great-grandmother, came out—the great-grandmother was the niece of a New York politician named Roscoe Conkling, who was a very corrupt politician, and who was sort of a Tammany Hall type.

01-00:03:02

Lage: Conkling?

01-00:03:03

Wakeman: C-O-N-K-L-I-N-G [spells]. In fact he was unseated eventually by Orville Schell, who used to be a student of mine before, and of course, he's now dean of Journalism, whose father was a reformist lawyer in New York then.

01-00:03:20

Lage: He was unseated by Orville Schell's father?

01-00:03:24

Wakeman: Oh no, I'm sorry, his great or grand, whatever, yes, I mean—

01-00:03:25

Lage: Yes, I was wondering about the generations—

01-00:03:26

Wakeman: Orville Schell's father actually debarred Richard Nixon. He was head of the New York Bar at the time and read him out of the bar after Watergate, so it's an old Dutch family. But in any case, yes, there is a statue of Conkling in New York. It's right near the Flatiron Building. And my father tells me, I don't know this, that he belonged to the Friar's Club and that one night he got drunk and walked out and fell onto a snowdrift and froze to death, which sounds very—[chuckles], anyway he was a very powerful and not very uncorrupt person, and he gave his niece, who had—there was some family scandal, I'm not sure what it was, but she was, of course, not a Wakeman, she married a Wakeman, but he gave her, or got her appointed the Indian agent for part of Kansas.

01-00:04:20

Lage: A woman!

01-00:04:21

Wakeman:

Yes, very rare at the time. So they went out to Kansas and my grandfather settled in a town called Scranton, Kansas, which was named after Scranton, Pennsylvania. It was a coal mining town, and he was the owner and editor of the local newspaper.

01-00:04:38

Lage:

This is your grandfather.

01-00:04:39

Wakeman:

My paternal grandfather. My paternal grandmother was a local school superintendent.

01-00:04:45

Lage:

Well, there's another woman in a high position.

01-00:04:47

Wakeman:

Yes, she was and sort of a local music person. My father was very musical. He played French horn, and trumpet—all of the horn instruments, also the oboe, and during the Depression he played in several jazz bands in Kansas City, Kansas City jazz stuff. In any case, he went to college during the Depression years, which meant the family went broke with the town.

01-00:05:19

Lage:

His parents.

01-00:05:20

Wakeman:

The coal mines flooded, the owners declared bankruptcy, they never pumped out the mines, and so the town turned into a ghost town, in effect. I only visited it once when I was about eleven. My father took me there on our way across the country, and I visited with my grandfather—I saw very little of him. In fact, that was the only time I saw him. He was by then a very old man and this, sort of, very strange kind of—

01-00:05:53

Lage:

So your father wasn't terribly close to them, it seems.

01-00:05:56

Wakeman:

Well, no, no, he wasn't. I think his brother, his older brother Don, who was a doctor in Topeka, was very close to him, and my aunt Irma, my father's younger sister, was also close to him. My father traveled so much. During the Depression years he would go to school for a year, and then he would go try to get a job and go on, follow the harvest, ride the rails. He worked as a teletype operator in Santa Fe and bummed around. He was a very, evidently, bright young man, went to the University of Kansas, initially on a football scholarship, and then he ended up at a little college up in Northwestern Missouri called Park College, near Platte City, near St. Joe [St. Joseph], across the border from Kansas, and he met my mother there. She was the daughter of a mill owner.

01-00:06:57

Lage: Daughter of—

01-00:06:58

Wakeman: A man who owned flour mills. And she, of course, that was powerful stuff in those days. She was a rich girl.

01-00:07:05

Lage: Oh! Even though the Depression was—

01-00:07:07

Wakeman: Yes, mill owners still were mill owners. And, he, my father was, obviously the bright guy on campus. I won't go into all of that, but it was a funny school. It was sort of a missionary school. A lot of Koreans went there, Korean Christians. In fact, my father met the crown prince of Korea—of course, the government was overthrown by then. But he was the editor of the school newspaper, and so forth and so on, they eventually got married. I won't regale you with all of the tales of those years, it's—.

01-00:07:49

Lage: Well, if something is pertinent, you should regale me! If it's something that affects—

01-00:07:52

Wakeman: Well, in a sense, in that my father was a novelist, of course. He wrote one novel, and I remember spending one summer—I used to type for him, for money. I would earn my allowances that way. He wrote a novel which was called *Fault of the Apple*, which was—that novel was never published, actually. There was a *Fault of the Apple*, which he published, but it was another topic altogether. He loved the title. It wasn't the fault of Adam, it wasn't the fault of Eve, it was the fault of the apple, you know.

01-00:08:25

Lage: That's a good viewpoint! It says something about an attitude. [laughs]

01-00:08:27

Wakeman: [laughs] Yes, it does, yes! Well, it *does*, because he was a very ardent atheist, as was his father, who was to be ordained for the ministry, actually, and then declared at the moment of ordination that he didn't believe in God anymore, so that was a big scandal for the family. But in any case, after graduation, there he was. It had taken him a good many years to get through college because of all the working in between, and I think his first job in the Depression was as a—he was trying to sell Ford cars. He wrote a novel about it.

01-00:09:05

Lage: Selling Fords?

01-00:09:05

Wakeman: Selling Fords in the Depression. He wrote a novel called the *The Fabulous Train*, which was a very, very plaintive small novel I like very much, many years later. Then, after I was born, he at that time had—my father was a very good advertising man. I mean, he had—

01-00:09:27

Lage: Did he work as an advertising man?

01-00:09:28

Wakeman: Oh, yes, yes. He was—

01-00:09:29

Lage: Did that become his profession alongside being a novelist, or before?

01-00:09:33

Wakeman: Well, he wasn't a novelist then.

01-00:09:35

Lage: I see.

01-00:09:35

Wakeman: No, no, he was—he actually had moved from being a failed car salesman to becoming an advertising director for a department store in Kansas City. I don't remember the name of it, but it was one of the local, sort of like a Burdines. It had a local flavor to it, and desperate to get out of the Midwest, he sent a—he made these little bottles up and put, you know, the sort of bottles that have ships in them—that you'd throw overboard with a note in them. He put a note in them, a clever note about being shipwrecked in Kansas and he had to get out of there, and he sent it to all the major ad agencies in New York City, and several of them responded, and so he went East, taking his bride to the East, a couple of months after I was born, so I had no memory at all of Kansas.

01-00:10:29

Lage: So Kansas is not an imprint at all on you—

01-00:10:31

Wakeman: No, not really.

01-00:10:32

Lage: Just the place where you were born.

01-00:10:32

Wakeman: Yes, and I've only been back—

01-00:10:35

Lage: But then, your family's roots were there, so that must have had some—

01-00:10:38

Wakeman: Yes, and my mother is very much a Missourian. She's a distant relative of Harry Truman and has certain Missouri traits, let me say.

01-00:10:49

Lage: Stubborn? [chuckling]

01-00:10:51

Wakeman: Yes, that's what I was thinking of—a Missouri mule, we used to call her. She was very—and suddenly I guess their lives must have changed very dramatically because he was very good at what he did, and he went to work for an advertising firm called Foote, Cone, and Belding, which he later became a vice president of and he got some very big accounts—American Tobacco, oh, I don't know, Procter and Gamble, a whole bunch of very, very big accounts. He was always very good at slogans, cute tricky things. He loved words, as a novelist should, I suppose.

And then the war broke out. My sister was born in May of 1941, so she was really just a child when Pearl Harbor occurred. And that's really one of the first memories I have as a child. I was just four and I mention that in several things you may have read. It still is as vivid in my mind as the day it happened. A wintry Sunday morning, playing in the sand lot at this place we lived at called Castle Village, which was up across from the Palisades, across from New Jersey. And Bill [William P.] Rogers, who was then the assistant to Tom Dewey, who was district attorney of New York, leaning out the window in this apartment complex, and shouting out at my father that they had just bombed Pearl Harbor, which I didn't know what it meant, but it obviously was very serious, and as one's memory will do, suddenly time telescoped and the next thing I knew he was in a naval officer's uniform and off he went, you know.

01-00:12:48

Lage: Now, did you stay in New York during that time?

01-00:12:50

Wakeman: No, we didn't. We moved down to Washington Square for a while and lived on Washington Square, and then my uncle, who was a colonel in the medical corps, came back. He had been at—well, he was eventually at Normandy, at the landings, but he came back and I remember his having just been promoted from major to colonel and giving me his major's cap with the little rosette on it. And then he took us back to the Midwest. I think my maternal grandfather, my mother's father, the mill owner, had fallen ill, partly by accident and I'm very confused about this—I was at the time. As he traveled around to visit his mills, he carried a Mason jar of distilled water to drink. And in one visit to one of his mills, he put the jar on a shelf and pulled it down to drink and took a slug of it and as soon as it got into his throat he realized that it was not water he had drunk. I don't know whether it was hydrochloric or sulfuric acid that they used to test grain, and it burned out his stomach linings. I don't think that

killed him. I think it probably was compounded by cancer, but that was all very vague to me. But his death was a very big occasion for me, because we were living with my grandmother on my aunt and uncle's—well, it's hardly a farm—my uncle was a very, very big landowner in Missouri. This was in Platte City, where I went to the first grade. And it was in some ways very idyllic—wartime victory gardens, all those things, but farms and those hot Midwestern summers.

01-00:14:45

Lage: And you must remember this pretty well.

01-00:14:48

Wakeman: Oh, I do, very vividly.

01-00:14:49

Lage: Being a boy there—

01-00:14:49

Wakeman: Boyhood there, the leafy trees, and the swinging porch seats, and all of that. And my mother took over the mills, which—she was always a very plucky person. I remember her in the middle of one of those terrible winters where the snow was piled up over the kitchen door, practically, coming back from the beauty parlor. I was in the kitchen with my sister and our housekeeper, and Mother came in, and she'd gone to a beauty parlor and her hair had been dyed blonde—peroxided blonde and I was terrified! I didn't-- [laughing]. But she drove around in a pickup truck, or Plymouth coupé, handling these mills and actually sold the mills out as my grandfather proceeded to die. It was a long death, and in some way I felt terribly responsible for it.

01-00:15:51

Lage: Now what—

01-00:15:52

Wakeman: Well, I was sort of a, like many kids, fascinated by fire. I wouldn't say I was a pyromaniac, but I was constantly setting fires here and there. One vivid childhood memory is burning twenty-dollar bills. I'm sure it must have been some deep pique at my parents, who in the New York days were making an awful lot of money. In any case, I was setting a fire outside the front door of this house we lived in; it was a very nice brick house, and we never used the front door, as was common in the Midwest. It was summer, and there were two evergreens. I thought of them as Christmas trees, and I set one of them on fire by mistake. Fortunately, neighbors saw the smoke, and they came and put it out, but my grandfather's bedroom, his death room, was right next to that, and I somehow thought, or I connected in my mind—

01-00:16:46

Lage: The smoke—

01-00:16:47

Wakeman:

That this had influenced him, because shortly after that he passed away. He passed away in the afternoon. My mother came back from whatever she was doing by way of business, and she and my grandmother sat in this room as the sun began to set, and the room darkened, and I sneaked into the death room. The doctor had come, but they hadn't taken the corpse away, and I dared to pull aside the sheet to look at his stomach. And his stomach was all brown and discolored, and I didn't know whether that was the cancer or the acid, but it was a terribly taboo thing to look at it, for me, then, to look at a dead body. And I somehow felt as though I'd done something terribly—

01-00:17:37

Lage:

As kids do—

01-00:17:38

Wakeman:

--awful and impious, as they do, and I went back out and I was quite frightened and then the neighbors began coming around with food, as they will in those parts when a person dies. But that was very, very disturbing to me and a very vivid memory of those years.

The other vivid memory is when my father came home on his only leave. He was in air combat intelligence during the Pacific war, and he'd been at the Battle of Midway, and so forth. And he came back. He must have had about a week there. It was a wonderful time, because I remember going squirrel hunting with him. He was a hunter and trapper as a kid. He and his brother had also made money during the Depression years by selling furs and trapping. My father was an absolutely fabulous shot. He had very, very good eyesight. He could literally, I've seen him do this, drive a three-penny nail into a fence post, twenty-five feet away with a twenty-two rifle. Just "boom, boom, boom, boom."

01-00:18:48

Lage:

Was he a larger-than-life figure for a kid?

01-00:18:51

Wakeman:

Oh, yes. Well, I mean, for me at that point, he was, yes, he was a very strikingly handsome man, and of course he loomed large in his naval uniform. He actually had a sword.

01-00:19:05

Lage:

Oh—wonder what he used that for!

01-00:19:08

Wakeman:

Nothing, of course! [chuckling] In any case, he went back out, and there was some kind of an airplane incident. I think he was shot down in a PBX or PBM, and his lungs collapsed. He was sent back to San Diego Naval Hospital where he spent close to a year. And during that time he wrote a novel.

01-00:19:37

Lage:

Oh! Was that his first novel?

01-00:19:38

Wakeman: That was his first novel. He may have written something before that but I never knew of it, other than—

01-00:19:44

Lage: Did you join him there? The family? You stayed—

01-00:19:46

Wakeman: No, no, no—we stayed in the Midwest. It was unclear whether he would stay in the service. Eventually, he was medically discharged, and he was very ardently involved in—he was very upset about being discharged. And he went to work for the governments in exile in New York—with Lord Halifax. His main assignment was Czechoslovakia. He knew Jan Masaryk very well. Then we moved back to New York, and as the war ground to a halt, he went back to his advertising firm, and those were very interesting years for him, I suppose. He ran something called the Hit Parade radio show that Lucky Strike, the cigarette company—the American Tobacco cigarette brand, Lucky Strike—

01-00:20:41

Lage: I remember that.

01-00:20:43

Wakeman: Hit Parade.

01-00:20:43

Lage: Now when you say he ran it—he did the ads for it? Or he actually ran the whole—

01-00:20:46

Wakeman: Yes, well, he was the account executive, and he did a lot of the hiring. He hired Frank Sinatra for it, Peggy Lee, Tommy Dorsey, he knew all the—

01-00:20:56

Lage: So the ad company was sort of managing the show.

01-00:20:59

Wakeman: Yes, oh, yes. He frequently went out to Hollywood on the Santa Fe and the Twentieth Century Limited, which became the backdrop for a novel he wrote then. Actually, by then, *Shore Leave* had come out, and it was a bestseller.

01-00:21:13

Lage: And what was the theme of that? It must have been something war related.

01-00:21:18

Wakeman: It was, yes—it was about a group of navy fliers who ended up on shore leave in San Francisco at the Mark Hopkins Hotel. The hero of it is a man named Crewson, Andy Crewson, who just died a few years ago. His grand-nephew—

01-00:21:35

Lage: Oh, so this is a real person.

01-00:21:36

Wakeman:

Yes. He was a bona fide war hero. He shot down more zeros than anybody else at the Battle of Midway, and he bombed one of the Yamato-class cruisers, a big deal—they brought him back for a war bond drive and to try to give talks at factories, and he—they just wanted to come back here and have a good time, these guys. And I don't know how my father got involved with them. I don't know whether he knew them from Midway, or whatever, but he was a very close friend of his, and he wrote it about Crewson. It's a—it's, I read [the novel], I think I have a copy around here somewhere. Now and then—I bought the movie the other day. They made a Hollywood play out of it—I'm sorry—a Broadway play, which starred Judy Holliday and ran for a year on Broadway. It was called "Kiss Them for Me." Later it was made into a movie with Cary Grant and Suzy Parker, who was one of those supermodels turned, not a very good movie actress, and Jayne Mansfield, the breasty blonde—

01-00:22:51

Lage:

The successor to Marilyn Monroe, basically—

01-00:22:54

Wakeman:

Yes, exactly, yes.

01-00:22:55

Lage:

And was that called *Shore Leave*?

01-00:22:57

Wakeman:

That was called *Kiss Them for Me*, also.

01-00:22:58

Lage:

Oh, that was *Kiss Them for Me*.

01-00:22:58

Wakeman:

I just saw it the other night—I was looking through a video catalog, and they had a copy of it, which I enjoyed seeing. It was very much a period piece. Cary Grant was fairly good as Crewson, this tormented guy who was—the theme of the book and of the movie and the play was the jaded war veteran who comes back to this hoopla and patriotic BS, and he's just sickened of death, and at the same time he has an affair with this woman, and his wife is back in Florida, and on and on. But it captured the fancy, particularly of people who were navy wives. I remember this one time—

01-00:23:41

Lage:

Of the wives more than the husbands.

01-00:23:42

Wakeman:

Well, because they thought this was what their husbands did, I think. I remember one time when I first came out to Berkeley in the sixties, sitting in the bar at the Mark Hopkins, and four older women came in. I overheard them—they all were wives of navy airmen, and they started talking about *Shore Leave*. This is where—the Mark Hopkins—where Crewson drank his

stingers. I thought Crewson was a made-up character until his nephew, or grandnephew, saw my name somewhere and said, “Are you the son of Fred Wakeman?” And Crewson, whose real name is—and he passed away last year or so and he would have loved to have known—because my father actually was living very close to him in his last years—of course, they didn’t know that they were within this distance.

01-00:24:30

Lage:

Oh, that’s too bad. Did your father write the screen play or the Broadway play?

01-00:24:34

Wakeman:

No, Luther—what’s this guy’s name?—very well known—I can’t think of the name right now [Luther Davis]. No, the play itself was an adaptation written by Luther [Davis], but Dad was very much involved in that, and in fact—I guess I can say this—he fell in love with Judy Holliday. A very, very big deal for the family. The marriage held together, but it was very tough on my mother.

01-00:25:05

Lage:

And you were aware of this at the time?

01-00:25:07

Wakeman:

No. I had no idea, no. The only thing I was aware of was my father got involved with a man named Jed Harris, who was a very notorious producer, sort of the David Merrick of his day, a very neurotic man who became sort of a godfather to me, and my father wrote a novel about him called *The Saxon Charm*, which also was made into a movie, starring Ray Milland, and who was it, John Garfield may have played the—they wanted to cast my father in the movie itself. He was a strikingly handsome man, but he wasn’t photogenic enough. But part of my youth was going to film sets, going behind the scenes in Broadway, and all of this stuff was very interesting, and my dad was making a bundle of money then. It was a big thing to walk away from that job. They bought a—

01-00:26:06

Lage:

To walk away from his advertising job?

01-00:26:08

Wakeman:

Yes.

01-00:26:09

Lage:

He eventually left that, or—

01-00:26:10

Wakeman:

He left because he was a successful writer. They bought an apartment right on Fifth Avenue at 83<sup>rd</sup> right across from the Metropolitan Museum, so a lot of my youth—they bought up there because it was in the same school district—the school was P.S. 6, which is a school for gifted children, or whatever they call them—they had some other euphemism—and very hard to get into, and

he wanted me to go to that school. So they bought this apartment. I remember years later when my stepmother was dying in New York, taking the Fifth Avenue bus by there—it was right two apartment houses down from Nixon’s apartment. And my father saying, “You know I sold that goddamn place for \$25,000 dollars. It’s probably worth—two and a half—it’s probably worth \$10 million now. It was actually two floors—it was a duplex.

01-00:27:06

Lage:

Now what age were you when you were hanging out there?

01-00:27:09

Wakeman:

Oh, well, we were there until—let’s see, we left in ’46—’46, ’47.

01-00:27:15

Lage:

You left—

01-00:27:17

Wakeman:

New York.

01-00:27:21

Lage:

Oh! So you weren’t there too long.

01-00:27:21

Wakeman:

So I was nine, I was eight, nine.

01-00:27:22

Lage:

And when did you move there?

01-00:27:24

Wakeman:

I moved there—oh, to that apartment?

01-00:27:25

Lage:

To that apartment—the Fifth Avenue scene.

01-00:27:27

Wakeman:

When he came back in ’44 from the navy. Before that we’d lived in Castle Village and then Washington Heights. And there was one other place I vaguely remember on Lexington. But then we bought that place. That’s where my most vivid New York childhood memories are of the school—

01-00:27:48

Lage:

So you were like seven to nine.

01-00:27:50

Wakeman:

Seven to nine—at first, second—second, third grade.

01-00:27:56

Lage:

So your father had ambitions for you intellectually, it sounds like.

01-00:28:00

Wakeman:

Well, I discovered later that he’d been very deeply influenced by Rousseau’s *Emile*. And he wanted to do this, and I was furious at him when I discovered

this. He was going to create—whatever, he wasn't—but it was mandatory that one read all the time. I was an early reader. And I'll get to that, actually, probably best maybe obliquely through a back door. After the war was over, he had this reimmersion in the world of advertising and bought this very fancy apartment, making a lot of money for those days, and then he wrote a novel. We used to summer, first in Fire Island and then in Nantucket. And he wrote a novel one summer in Nantucket about the advertising business. The novel was called *The Hucksters*.

01-00:29:04

Lage: That's probably his best known.

01-00:29:05

Wakeman: That's his best known one. Yes, that was the one that—when it was in press he decided to go to Mexico and to quit the advertising business at least temporarily. They wanted him to stay on and be a president of—Emerson Foote wanted him to come back, and they held all of this open for him, but he decided he would take something like a leave and just go off. I think he was waiting to see what happened to—he was very, very much aware of the danger of writing one good book or one popular book coming out of the war. This had happened to the guy who wrote *Mr. Roberts*, you know, who committed suicide. What do you follow that up with? And he was hanging around then with people like Charlie Jackson, Phil Wylie, and so forth. And the *New Yorker* crowd, Dorothy Parker and—

01-00:30:13

Lage: Did they—were they at your home?

01-00:30:16

Wakeman: Yes. They would come to the home or more often than not, my mother or my grandmother, after my grandfather's death she moved in with us and had a major influence on me.

01-00:30:28

Lage: OK. Well, we'll talk about that.

01-00:30:30

Wakeman: She was a very devout Presbyterian. And I was very devout, or at least thought I was, at that age. And you could see the tension there—my father, the atheist, and my—

01-00:30:42

Lage: Missouri and New York.

01-00:30:43

Wakeman: Yes. Missouri and New York, and my grandmother, this very religious, pious woman who would—I'd seem to be going to church three and four times on a Sunday, partly because she would fall in love with every minister, at a distance, of course, after Sam, her husband, died, and she just wanted to attend

as many of the church gatherings as there were on a Sunday, but of course, I had to go to Sunday school and read the Bible many times over.

01-00:31:10

Lage: Did your father object to that?

01-00:31:11

Wakeman: No. That was very—he would make mild fun of my grandmother, and she was a wonderfully sweet woman. I really have to attribute my own nicer side to her. She really was a wonderful woman.

01-00:31:26

Lage: Do you have a nicer side than your father had? Is that what I'm hearing?  
[laughs]

01-00:31:30

Wakeman: Yes, yes, yes. My father was a very egocentric, difficult, selfish man. A womanizer, very vain, absolutely brilliant, photographic memory, extraordinarily well read to his dying day, and one of these people who had perfect pitch and a fabulous musical memory, which I do not have! Give a few notes and he'll tell you what the song is—it's like a—

01-00:32:03

Lage: Did he ever write a musical?

01-00:32:07

Wakeman: No. He never—I did! But he didn't [laughs.] A botched musical. No, he never wrote a musical. He did become deeply involved in the production of the movies, and he had, well, three or four, five major movies. But the key one was *The Hucksters*. So we decided, he decided, to pack everything up. My mother dutifully complied. I think she thought that would get him away from—I realized later—from his mistress.

01-00:32:36

Lage: Judy Holliday.

01-00:32:37

Wakeman: Yes. And they bought—I remember it was very hard to get an automobile in those days. They bought a prewar, four-door Cadillac convertible. One of those things with wheel guards and fenders, the whole thing. A great big black convertible, and I was left, in fact we were left, I was left on Nantucket with my grandmother—deep into the fall when all of the summer people had left. My main memory then is having my scalp split open by a neighbor kid—I don't still understand why he did it. He sunk a hoe and just [making a sound and motioning with his hands]—they had to rush me to New Bedford by boat, the Coast Guard, to get stitched up and so forth and somewhere around that time—all of this now starts to melt and merge—it was time for us to go to Mexico.

So my father showed up with this car, and he loaded everything. They put all their furniture in storage, and off we went to Mexico, and of course, Mexico was very wild and wooly in those days. And they had—my father had never been outside the country other than his wartime service, which was in the Pacific, and no country to speak of there. And I remember we got to Monterrey. There were some local beggars, urchins, who were clamoring for money and offering to guard the car. My father dismissed them, and we went into a restaurant for some dinner and came out and the car was up on bricks. Not just the tires, but the wheels were taken! Well, try to get a wheel in 1946 and '47, when you could barely get gasoline! I remember spending weeks waiting for wheels to come. But we made our way on down and settled at Mexico City, but then that turned out to be a mistake because—because of my father's lung injuries he couldn't really—

01-00:34:38

Lage:

Now, what were his lung injuries?

01-00:34:39

Wakeman:

He had a collapsed lung and it turned out that he'd had—

01-00:34:40

Lage:

Oh, that's right. In the navy.

01-00:34:42

Wakeman:

In the navy, yes, and it turned out that he had a fairly rare condition, which they thought at first was miliary tuberculosis. But—it's a scarification of the lungs, which comes from the water, which is very common in that part of Kansas. I don't know whether it's an alkaline water supply or whatever. So he didn't have very—there was an oxygen saturation problem. And if you got over a certain height, 7500 feet being about the limit, then he developed terrible migraine headaches. But he hadn't really realized that until we got there, and Mexico City is about 7500 feet.

01-00:35:19

Lage:

Now, that wasn't a good choice.

01-00:35:20

Wakeman:

It was not a good choice, so we moved to Cuernavaca instead, which is 5,000 feet and rented a house there. That was a very interesting period for me.

01-00:35:28

Lage:

You must have been around ten then?

01-00:35:30

Wakeman:

Yes. I was put in an Austrian school. Cuernavaca was a crazy town because there were all of these Nazi refugees—or not refugees—people on the run and a lot of Communists, including a lot of American Communists and then people like Malcolm Lowry, the novelist. It was a very, very strange place then. I was put in the school, and this woman who was very, very authoritarian—the school was conducted half in German and half in Spanish.

And I was the only day student. The rest were all boarders. But when I came to school in the morning, I had to make the beds. It was a very small school, with about twelve students, and I was supposed to make up the beds. Which I could not tell my parents about this.

01-00:36:18

Lage: And why?

01-00:36:20

Wakeman: I don't know why!

01-00:36:21

Lage: Was this to sort of put you in your place?

01-00:36:23

Wakeman: I think she just wanted to put me in my place. She didn't like Americans. I suspect she was a Nazi. And she got free bed-making! [laughs] And so for the longest time I wouldn't talk about that. The memory of that school is intimately tied up with a minor incident where one day we were out walking in this group of a dozen or so students with her. We passed by a house on the outskirts of Cuernavaca, and the owner had a monkey with a chain around its—and a cuff around the ankle. And then a spike in the yard. I daringly got too close to the monkey. We were all sort of taunting it, you know. And the monkey, suddenly, with amazing speed rushed out and grabbed me by the ankle and wouldn't let go, and was trying to bite my ankle. I was just terrified. I can still feel the clutch of that—well, when they finally pried him loose, I mean, I had, they were afraid of rabies or infection, septicemia. There were scratch marks—he had clamped down so hard! Whooo! I still remember the damn monkey!

01-00:37:31

Lage: So that's Cuernavaca for you.

01-00:37:32

Wakeman: Well, Cuernavaca turned out to be, in fact, much more—it was a very bizarre period for me in my memory. I said I'd come at this reading thing obliquely. When we first got there we stayed in a casino called La Selva—I mean a gambling casino. Gambling had been legalized by Alemán [Miguel Alemán Valdés], the president, and then sort of rescinded, and this place was a kind of miniature Las Vegas, but nobody was there. And we were staying there with a vast crew of servants who had nothing better to do than to stand around our table and stare at these foreigners, this little gringo kid.

01-00:38:10

Lage: Not too many people were staying there.

01-00:38:11

Wakeman: No. I think we may have been the only guests. And then we found this very nice house.

01-00:38:18

Lage: You could probably live pretty cheaply there.

01-00:38:19

Wakeman: Oh, yes. Of course. Very cheaply. It was a grand house with guest houses, totally walled, terraced, with beautiful gardens. Next-door neighbor was a man named Matt Helm, who was married to a woman named Hammond, one of the Hammonds of Boston. And just to give you an example, one day—I used to go over and play tennis, or practice tennis on their jai-alai court. They had their own jai-alai court—you know, those are huge things! And I was there, and I heard somebody playing the piano—beautiful! I walked over and the French doors were opened into their living room and I looked and there was this old man, older man, playing the piano. And he spotted me and, you know, I wasn't supposed to be there, and he motioned to me and I came in and he said, it was very nice, said some nice words to me, tickled the keys a little bit and then he said, something or other—"Maybe we'll see you again." And then I scurried out. The next night or so, the Helms invited my parents and me over, because this man had said I'd seen him. We went over—it was Arthur Rubenstein! I saw him later, in later years at music festivals in Lucerne and in Boston; he often performed in Boston when I was in college. We'd always greet each other, remembering that little kid who came in to listen to Rubenstein.

01-00:39:42

Lage: That must have had an impact.

01-00:39:43

Wakeman: It did. It really did. That's why I have a seven-foot Bösendorfer sitting in my goddamn living room.

01-00:39:51

Lage: And do you play it?

01-00:39:52

Wakeman: Yes, yes. My sister really plays well; that's a problem. I mean that's why I never really got—I always felt that she was—she had to choose between going to Juilliard or going to a regular college and finally decided to go to a regular college—went to Sweet Briar.

But anyway—there was one tragedy, a neighborhood kid named Emilio climbed over the wall to steal oranges, and I went down to take a noon swim, and I saw this body in the water floating, face up, about three feet under the water and I thought he was dead. But it turned out he was still alive, and they managed to pull him out. But in the meantime, a very surly crowd had gathered in the street outside. The street outside was not paved—open sewers and I was not supposed to play with the kids, but I did. I would go out and play with the neighborhood kids, who were peasants. And my parents were worried about the sanitation. Of course, it was terrible. We would play

bandits, and they were always Pancho Villa, and I was always Pershing, or the damn American.

01-00:41:01

Lage: You always played the American.

01-00:41:02

Wakeman: I didn't want to—I wanted to be Pancho Villa, or Zapata or somebody—but Zapata was not so important as Pancho Villa. And I caught—I supposed I must have drunk some water or something—amoebic dysentery, which they didn't diagnose at first. They thought it was malaria, and I damn near died. I had lost all this weight. I got so weak that I couldn't walk. And I couldn't hold any food—melba toast, perhaps and some tea, but I was bedridden and my parents would drive up to Mexico City where there was a store/restaurant called Sanborn's. The only sort of Americanized place in the city then, which I think is still there—where they had an American bookstore. And they would buy books and bring them back down. Of course, at that age I was reading—I loved the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew and they'd get four—

01-00:41:58

Lage: Nancy Drew—I didn't know boys read Nancy Drew!

01-00:42:01

Wakeman: Oh, yes. I read all of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys. But they'd bring the books down, and they'd give them to me. My problem was to make them last a week, because I'd read them all the first day or two—I would just *gobble* them up! So I developed this incredible reading speed, because I had nothing else to do, I was so completely weak.

01-00:42:19

Lage: You were out of the school.

01-00:42:20

Wakeman: I couldn't go to school, no. And they were hoping I would get better and recuperate, but that didn't seem to be happening. So I would just read a lot and developed this great love of reading. And finally it got to the point where the doctors said, "Look, you should probably get him back to the States." So I remember they had to change the passports around to get me a passport on my end. They sent me back to the Midwest to stay with my aunt and uncle.

01-00:42:45

Lage: By yourself?

01-00:42:46

Wakeman: Yes. I was put on the airplane but then met at the other end.

01-00:42:50

Lage: Was your grandmother with you? In Mexico?

01-00:42:53

Wakeman: Oh, yes, yes.

01-00:42:54

Lage: She came with you.

01-00:42:55

Wakeman: She was with us, yes. She was with us until—the mid-fifties. And so—anyway—that was this Mexican interlude that is part of this reading—but of course, I learned Spanish and became fluent in Spanish.

01-00:43:18

Lage: How about German?

01-00:43:19

Wakeman: My German has never—I've never really gotten—I speak German, but not like Spanish.

01-00:43:24

Lage: Do you have any other memories of that school? Political? Did your father or mother object to the Nazi overlay?

01-00:43:31

Wakeman: I think they were very troubled about that. Most of their friends were Communists.

01-00:43:36

Lage: In Mexico? Or in general...

01-00:43:39

Wakeman: No, no. These were American Communists, German Communists, British Communists—people who were just there—

01-00:43:45

Lage: But down there.

01-00:43:45

Wakeman: But down there. I remember one woman—Freddie something or other—she was English and I can still remember that house. It was completely filled with books—everything—alcoves, bathroom—I had never seen so many books! She and her husband just read and read and read. I really loved Mexico and hated to leave. But there I found myself in the Midwest. The next thing I knew—

01-00:44:15

Lage: By yourself—your parents didn't come back?

01-00:44:16

Wakeman: Yes. That was a nice time. I had a cousin there, an older cousin—Tommy, on my mother's—my aunt's side, who was very kind to me, and I was just about old enough to drive a tractor.

01-00:44:31

Lage: So you became a farm boy.

01-00:44:35

Wakeman: For a brief period of time I did, yes. It was a very nice little—

01-00:44:38

Lage: What a varied youth!

01-00:44:39

Wakeman: It was fairly varied. Because from there, they came—of course, they came to get me—we moved to Bermuda. Oh, the other thing—

01-00:44:50

Lage: Did you get well quickly? Did you have better treatment?

01-00:44:53

Wakeman: Yes, I had medical treatment, but above all my appetite returned. And I was stuffed with fried chicken and mashed potatoes and—

01-00:45:02

Lage: All those good Midwestern foods.

01-00:45:03

Wakeman: All those good Midwestern calories—I was going to say that while we were there, I remember one day sitting by the pool with my mother and my father coming out of the house with a telegram. And he just received news from his agent that *The Hucksters* had been selected, was in the Book-of-the-Month Club, was being condensed for *Reader's Digest*, had been on the *New York Times* book list, top of the list for three or four weeks, and that they wanted to make a movie of it. So, at that time it was, next to *Gone with the Wind*, the largest grossing novel that had been published since the war, or since the last years before the war.

01-00:45:42

Lage: Your father really seemed to key into the feelings of the times, that postwar era.

01-00:45:47

Wakeman: Yes, he did. I think one of the great problems for him as a writer was eventually becoming an exile or an émigré himself. He lived abroad for too long, so he lost that ear. He had a wonderful ear, and he also had—*The Hucksters* is a snappy, it's a wonderful character, the villain, so to speak, Evan Llewellyn Evans, was played by Sydney Greenstreet. Vic Norman, the hero, was played by Clark Gable, and Deborah Kerr was the wife and Ava Gardner was the mistress, so it was an all-star cast. God, he must have lived off those royalties for years. So suddenly, he was big time, really big time.

01-00:46:35

Lage: And were you—did that have meaning for you?

01-00:46:38

Wakeman:

I didn't really realize that, so much, until we got to Bermuda. Then suddenly, people began coming to stay with us. Famous people—that I knew because I'd read them. For example, Thurber came and stayed with us.

01-00:46:51

Lage:

And you were old enough to be part of the conversation?

01-00:46:54

Wakeman:

Oh, yes. I remember when Steinbeck came to stay with us, my father was telling Steinbeck that I really enjoyed reading his stuff. So Steinbeck turned to me, I was just a kid, ten or eleven, something like that, and he said, "Well, have you read *Red Pony*? I said, "Yes." He said, "What did you think of it?" I said, "Well, it was a little young for me." [laughter] But this was, by then, I sort of had to report on books every night. The dinner table ritual was, "What did you read today?" And I was reading *Brothers Karamazov* at that point.

01-00:47:29

Lage:

That's amazing, and was your mother involved in all this reading?

01-00:47:35

Wakeman:

She had been a school teacher, reasonably well educated, played the piano, and so forth. I think New York, for her, was a terrible threat at first, coming from the Midwest into this heady—New York in the late forties—that *was* the Big Apple and it was a very exhilarating life. My father's anecdotes about that period—and he knew everybody in Hollywood—Sam Goldwyn, all these guys. And she was a very attractive woman, but I think she was always a little bit nervous about this, and you could see it in her—for example, she loved languages, but she would never speak them. She would study them. She would be studying French, or German, or Spanish, but I could never get her to say anything. I'd say, "Mom, just get out and talk." "I haven't got my conjugations, or declinations the right way." So—and she absolutely idolized my father.

Later on when I rebelled, which was when after my first year in college, I suddenly felt I'd been had.

01-00:48:53

Lage:

In terms of being this Emile thing?

01-00:48:56

Wakeman:

Yes, being Emile—I resented it—what is this guy doing? I didn't blame him for anything, I was thankful for the languages that I'd picked up or that I'd been—I went to thirteen schools!

01-00:49:08

Lage:

Wow, you've counted them!

01-00:49:11

Wakeman:

Between K-12. Yes.

01-00:49:13

Lage: So you traveled around, you went to thirteen schools, you read adult literature.

01-00:49:19

Wakeman: I read adult literature, yes.

01-00:49:21

Lage: And what else was his program?

01-00:49:24

Wakeman: Well, it was, of course, languages, that was a very big thing for him. So essentially, it was—because we soon went to France—was English, French, and English [means Spanish]—I was trilingual in those languages, but I learned Italian, and of course German I'd already had a start on, and then in college I continued to learn languages, Portuguese and so on. But anyway, my father, I think for him—he was a lousy linguist in spite of being a good musician. Yes, he was just a lousy linguist.

01-00:49:55

Lage: So it wasn't easy for him to learn all these languages.

01-00:49:57

Wakeman: No, no. He spoke a lot of languages but always terribly, and he could never get them quite right. He'd think he'd have them right, and he was constantly getting into hot water. I found that it was impossible to save him from himself. For example, one time when we were living on our boat, we were sailing along the north coast of Cuba, we stopped in Caibarién, I think, Sagua la Grande, I think, or we were going to the next town down the way, which was called Naranjos, and we docked, and typically then when you came into a Cuban harbor, the customs house closed down, because you'd have to go and pay for them to open it up and you couldn't get off the boat until they cleared you for quarantine, so he went ashore and he came back having gotten our papers chopped or stamped by the authorities—the authority there. This was under [Carlos] Prío Socarrás—before Batista. This peasant comes up with his wife and a kid, and they have a goat, and so forth, and he asked my father if he'll take him to Naranjos. My father said, "Sí, sí, muy bien." And the guy said, "Fine, I'll be right back." And I said, "Dad, what have you done!" And he said, "I just told him I wanted to buy some oranges—naranjas." And I said, "No, that's not—"

01-00:51:26

Lage: I sympathize with your father. [laughter]

01-00:51:29

Wakeman: But then I would have to get him out of the stew! Because I would have to explain to this man, "No, he misunderstood you." Or getting on a train in Paris and the conductor told him this and the other, and I'd say, "Dad, this is not going to Aix-en-Provence. This is going to Auxelles {?} or someplace like that. And he said, "No, no..." And of course we'd end up at the wrong place. I remember another time we were in Italy. This was when I was a teenager, and

we were waiting for a freighter, to pick up a freighter in Venice to go back to the States, and it was early autumn and I was late for school, and so forth. But, we had a car, we'd bought a car, an Alfa Romeo, and the polio epidemic had hit Venice—that was before Salk and all that—and so first we had gone to the Lido to try to escape the city's miasmic heat and—

01-00:52:35

Lage: And also the polio, were you thinking?

01-00:52:38

Wakeman: Oh, the polio, yes. I remember everybody was frightened of polio in those days.

01-00:52:41

Lage: Sort of like the plague.

01-00:52:43

Wakeman: Yes, sure, one of my aunts had gotten it and she was very badly crippled. It was like the plague, and we did exactly what Boccaccio did—we headed for the hills. We went up to the Dolomites. But anyway, before we went up to the Dolomites to wait out the weeks until the freighter actually showed up, we were out staying at the Lido, and we went to an outdoor restaurant and my father—we were sitting around. I was completely, just—thinking of nothing. My father called for the waiter and instead of saying *camariere*, he said *camariero* [FW speaks with an exaggerated American accent]. And I just started laughing, it was so funny. And he got furious and he said, “You little bastard, I teach you all these languages so you can mock me!” He got up. He had a terrible temper and started chasing me down the street! Of course I just went running away—he got winded and stopped. But I had to wait a good hour before I could—

01-00:53:35

Lage: He had the lung problems.

01-00:53:37

Wakeman: Yes, right, exactly. The lungs wouldn't hold up. So he was never—and when he lived in Greece, he had the same problem—he could speak perfectly decent kitchen Greek, but above a certain level, it just wasn't getting through to him. So, I think partly it was to compensate for that that he wanted me to do all those things.

01-00:53:53

Lage: He wanted that, and then it sounds as if you read a lot of history early on.

01-00:53:58

Wakeman: Yes, I did, yes.

01-00:53:59

Lage: Did that start at this young age?

01-00:54:00

Wakeman: Oh, yes. It did. I think the first thing he gave me was probably Herodotus.

01-00:54:08

Lage: That's pretty ambitious.

01-00:54:10

Wakeman: Yes, oh, yes. No—you know the first thing he gave me was the condensation of [Arnold Joseph] Toynbee—that one volume version of Toynbee's grand history. And I couldn't—that was really—I didn't understand what Toynbee was getting at—why was he making such a big deal about this climatic stuff? It didn't—

01-00:54:34

Lage: It didn't grab you.

01-00:54:34

Wakeman: It didn't grab me. It still doesn't grab me to this day. Later Toynbee asked me to collaborate with him on something and I just couldn't. I thought, no, no, no. By then Toynbee was in his mystical, Oriental religion phase where the Cao Dai was going to be the religion of the future. But anyway—I started with history at a very early age.

01-00:54:54

Lage: And did your father present this as what an educated man must read? Or, how did he get you onto it, or did you just like it?

01-00:55:04

Wakeman: No, I liked it, but also what a well-educated man must read. He knew Latin and Greek and he knew German—German was his one modern language that he could speak and read very well. And because of this phenomenal—he majored in English and he loved Beowulf and Chaucer and so forth, and he would recite it in Middle English. And as I say he had a phenomenal memory until his death. One time, when I was about fifteen, we were again living in Mexico for the summer, I became—he told me that Alfred Noyes, the poet who wrote *The Highwayman*, had gone blind. But one of the things that kept Noyes spiritually alive was he had memorized a lot of poetry. And I was in a very romantic mood then, and I was pining for some person—I had puppy love, well, more than puppy, I guess, but in any case—staring at the stars and all this—and I decided I would memorize a poem a night, which I did. And I still have those poems—they are still there—

01-00:56:11

Lage: You still have them in your memory—

01-00:56:12

Wakeman: I still remember—still in my memory. My father, though, he had this really phenomenal memory.

01-00:56:17

Lage: Better than your memory?

01-00:56:18

Wakeman: Oh, yes! Unbelievable. He literally could look at a page and turn away and give it to you. One of the great crises of his life was—he was really a stunning student. From what his peers told me. He was nominated for a Rhodes scholarship and he had to go to Chicago for the interview, and he was very nervous about that. He later wrote a very interesting short story about this, sort of roads not taken—and he got to the hotel the night before. Of course, he didn't have much money.

01-00:56:52

Lage: And this was really the big city for him.

01-00:56:54

Wakeman: This was really the big city for him. And very, very nervous, and he developed a migraine, which for him always was accompanied by nausea. In fact, when he got these migraines, he usually would just go to bed for three days. We had to creep, tiptoe around the house. He didn't stop having them until he hit his fifties, later in life. And he felt terrible, but yet this was a very important thing. He went into the room and sat down and there were three people there to interview him and they asked him a question, and he opened his mouth, and he simply vomited on the table. And when he recovered enough to wipe his mouth off, he realized, so he took his handkerchief and wiped up his own vomit, "Excuse me," and left the room.

01-00:57:43

Lage: Oh, that must have been devastating.

01-00:57:45

Wakeman: Oh it was, because it would have been a totally different life for him. In some ways I'm glad that happened. He would have made a wonderful college professor, which is probably what he would have ended up doing. But, in some ways—this other life—he ended up as a very wise man. A man who realized that—he never cared much about money actually. He spent it wildly.

01-00:58:13

Lage: He liked the good life, it sounds like.

01-00:58:15

Wakeman: Well, that's the one bad thing I inherited from him. I could easily spend money, but not earn it! And we lived very high, because—the taxes you paid then, well you still do—but the taxes now favor the rich, but at that time you were paying terribly high taxes on these kinds of massive royalty incomes.

01-00:58:35

Lage: You were paying?

01-00:58:37

Wakeman:

We were paying incredibly high taxes. So you try to write everything off. Rent a house and use the house as the background for a movie or for a novel. Buy a boat, use the boat as—and then try—the only guy who could really incorporate himself successfully was [James] Michener. My father tried, the IRS wouldn't permit it by then, but otherwise you were paying personal income tax on these things. You couldn't treat it as a corporate income. But in any case, his, I think his life would have been very different. He did write a very interesting short story about the experience, what he would have been like had that been the road he took, but he didn't do that.

01-00:59:26

Lage:

So was he trying to make you into that person that he might have been?

01-00:59:30

Wakeman:

I think so. I think that was part of it. I think that was part of it. I think his ultimate ambition, which was kind of crazy, was he wanted me to become secretary of state.

01-00:59:38

Lage:

He had very specific goals for you!

01-00:59:41

Wakeman:

Very specific.

01-00:59:42

Lage:

And did he discuss this with you?

01-00:59:44

Wakeman:

At first sort of jokingly, but then he talked about the diplomatic—and I assumed I was going to have a diplomatic career—I just took it for granted.

01-00:59:53

Lage:

So that was sort of what had in mind as you were heading through school.

01-00:59:56

Wakeman:

Yes, I just assumed—and we lived in many foreign capitals and I knew a lot of, went to school with diplomats' kids, so that that seemed quite natural to me. I thought that was probably—it still had a certain allure then and—we can get into this later—because it involves some delicate and sensitive material, but anyway—

01-01:00:18

Lage:

The question of whether you would become a diplomat does?

01-01:00:22

Wakeman:

Yes. But sure, that seemed to make sense to me, and while I never really learned Greek, I learned to speak Greek, but I never learned—I don't read classical Greek. He was always touting the well-rounded education for a gentleman. And cultivating a sort of sense of intellectual superiority—I didn't like that part of it, but—

01-01:00:50

Lage: As opposed to—

01-01:00:52

Wakeman: Well, as opposed to the hoi polloi, the people who don't understand these things. Actually he was very down to earth, much more so than I am—I'm rather aloof with people and I have problems dealing with lower-class people—I can do it, but I have to fake it. The great common language of American culture—I think I may have mentioned this at lunch the other day—is baseball. And I don't know anything about baseball.

01-01:01:20

Lage: Or other sports, too—

01-01:01:22

Wakeman: If I go into a barber shop and the guy starts talking to me—I have to fake it—oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. My Chinese wife knows more about basketball than I do.

01-01:01:30

Lage: So if you don't have sports, it's hard to talk across social or economic borders.

01-01:01:33

Wakeman: It's very hard to talk—yes, that's right. It transcends those income and status differentiations.

01-01:01:40

Lage: And here you are, right by the athletic field. [His office on the campus was next to Edwards track stadium.]

01-01:01:42

Wakeman: Yes [laughs]. I hear the announcer talking about, "Sacramento just beat the record." It comes across the broadcasting. So I think that was certainly part of his image of this—but it went along with the *Emile* notion of creating this well-rounded, well-read person. And I was going to go to Harvard.

01-01:02:05

Lage: He told you that from the get-go.

01-01:02:07

Wakeman: That's all there was to it. Why wouldn't I go to Harvard? That was just simply a given. And when I applied to college, I only applied to Harvard.

01-01:02:17

Lage: [laughs] And you got in!

01-01:02:20

Wakeman: If I didn't get in—I was in Europe then, and I had made my own plans. If I didn't go to Harvard, I'd go to the Sorbonne; I mean, I could get into that! But toward the end I got a little edgy. I thought, "Oh, I don't know about this." But I did receive such a superior education by dint of going to schools abroad.

Our primary and secondary education is terrible in this country. It's really terrible. And I would come back—I'd be three or four grades ahead of everybody. It was just—I was terribly bored.

01-01:02:51

Lage:

Was this because of your formal education or your family education?

01-01:02:54

Wakeman:

Both. For example, I went to a public school in Bermuda—an English public school—a private school called Saltus Grammar School, and that was in the fourth grade, and I came back and went to a private school in Santa Barbara, in Montecito, called Crane Country Day and that only went up through the sixth grade and there was nothing—the math—there was nothing I didn't—there was nothing to do! Except take shop! [laughs]

01-01:03:29

Lage:

Which you hadn't had before.

01-01:03:30

Wakeman:

Which I hadn't had before. But this was a very posh, expensive school. But American education—well, you know this—a lycee graduate or a gymnasium graduate is equivalent to a sophomore, junior in college in this country. It's a wonder that we have the greatest higher education system in the world—the university—

01-01:03:49

Lage:

It is because what comes to it is—

01-01:03:52

Wakeman:

—but at that level it's just so deucedly hard. So that was—and then of course, you have to learn how to dissimulate. That was another thing.

01-01:04:01

Lage:

Now, what do you mean? Dissimulate—

01-01:04:04

Wakeman:

Well, pass. In every situation. If you go, if you live in as many countries as I did, and go to as many schools where you simply flop down and you sink or swim, and that doesn't work with everybody. My brother—

01-01:04:18

Lage:

Oh, you have a brother, too. I've only heard about the sister.

01-01:04:21

Wakeman:

No, he died very young.

01-01:04:22

Lage:

Was he older, younger?

01-01:04:24

Wakeman:

Younger. He was the youngest of us all. He died at the age of thirty-seven. But Donny just couldn't do it. He refused to do it. He refused to follow my father's directions. And he would go to a Spanish school and just sit there and completely turn off. And then he would just not—French school—he went to the International School in Geneva, and it was as though he'd never been in the door.

01-01:04:49

Lage:

Do you think it was that he had trouble with languages?

01-01:04:51

Wakeman:

It could have been. I don't really think so, because when he was younger, before he developed this kind of truculence, he was certainly able to speak then at that childhood level. I think it was just simply stubbornness, and also I was always being held up to him as—your brother did this, your brother did that—it's a terrible thing for a younger brother to hear that all the time. And he was of a different era—he was of the Vietnam War era. He was in the services during Vietnam. He served in Vietnam.

01-01:05:23

Lage:

Oh, he was. When was he born, then?

01-01:05:27

Wakeman:

He was born in 1948.

01-01:05:33

Lage:

And how about your sister, how did she fare under this regime, and how was she treated differently?

01-01:05:36

Wakeman:

Sue fared very well. In a sense, although she's a very, to this day she's very—oh, it's very hard to describe her—it's very hard for me to think of her as being anything other than about fourteen or fifteen years old, and she's a sixty-odd-year-old woman now! She was very dutifully obedient. She's a wonderful pianist—particularly as she got older and actually started playing for herself. But my father would trot us out, you see, to be sort of on display.

01-01:06:09

Lage:

When his famous friends were there.

01-01:06:11

Wakeman:

Yeah. We'd come out and have to do something. I'd have to recite "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," or something like that to impress them. And Sue would play a Chopin etude, which she dutifully did. But she had her own refuge from that. She would simply tune out. We'd go through—I remember going—I forget where we were going, but it was somewhere in France. My father explaining what a mansard roof was, and she was lost in some comic book, and he would always quiz you afterwards.

And I'll end with an anecdote on that score as we draw to the end of this session in just a moment. But, Sue—mansard roof, she'd never heard of it! I remember one time we had this house in Cuernavaca which was on a hill, and we had this old Lincoln Continental, which had a V-12 engine but very little torque. So to get up the hill, you had to really rev the car and back out fast—back up the hill. My father got in the car one day, and I wasn't in the car, and my sister got in reading some novel or other. She was always reading novels, and he said, "Is everything ready?" He was looking out, to back out. She said, "Fine, fine." And she had left the door open [laughs with gusto], so not only did the door get ripped off, but those '48 Continentals had—one of the first to have them along with the Cadillac—the automatic windows, so all the hydraulic fluid shot along the car, well, you know the car paint just started bleeding away. In Mexico, what do you do with that!

01-01:07:45

Lage:

You had car problems [chuckling].

01-01:07:47

Wakeman:

Oh, God, but Sue—Sue's salvation was language. Her French is absolutely wonderful. And she's a French professor. She's a chairman of her department, the French Department at the Virginia School of Technology, where she's taught for a number of years. She got a PhD at Hopkins, but she went to school in France, and she's one of the best—I think she's very good at {Proust and Montaigne?}. She studied with Donald Frame and { Jiras?} and the stuff she's writing now amazes us—"God, Sue, can you write this stuff?" I still think of her as this little girl.

01-01:08:26

Lage:

Well, was not as much expected of her as a girl?

01-01:08:30

Wakeman:

Oh, definitely different expectations. Absolutely, yes. I mean the fact that she went to Sweet Briar instead of Radcliffe is very telling. There still was that sort of girls' school, Southern girls' school stuff. And her husband-to-be is also Washington and Lee, that kind of—

01-01:08:50

Lage:

Was that what your mother wanted for her, do you think?

01-01:08:53

Wakeman:

My mother always wanted her to be happy. My mother just didn't have that—

01-01:08:56

Lage:

She wasn't pushy.

01-01:08:58

Wakeman:

No, never. She just—she made one feel as though whatever you do, it's fine with me. The only time I felt really upset with her in that regard was—I mentioned this crisis when I was a freshman, the summer after my freshman year of being furious at my father. My parents were living in Mexico then, and

I went down for the summer, and I finally, one day, my father was swimming in the pool and I was sitting with my mother on the—the main house, and I just exploded—I said to him—I was furious at him because he had—partly because he had given me a mistranslation or misunderstanding of Aristotle's notion of *intellegit*, and I thought it was a lot of bullshit, and how dare he bullshit me on this stuff. Because he was capable of that too!

01-01:09:48

Lage: Now, I'm not getting this.

01-01:09:52

Wakeman: Well, I was just furious at that, and then somehow that rage at his deceiving me, letting me think that he knew what he was talking about, extended to his trying to put me in this mold, and goddamn it, didn't she see that I had been prepped and cultivated and pruned all for this, and she turned to me, and I expected her to be sympathetic. It was clear if she had to choose between him and me, then she was not going to—and of course, henceforth they got divorced—what a terrible thing it was for her.

01-01:10:25

Lage: Oh, it must have been devastating.

01-01:10:26

Wakeman: Really terrible.

01-01:10:27

Lage: And how long after this period did they get divorced?

01-01:10:31

Wakeman: Four years later. Four years later.

01-01:10:34

Lage: That's what you get for choosing your husband over your son.

01-01:10:37

Wakeman: [laughter] I didn't think so at the time, but maybe so. The anecdote is—this again is—I went my last year of high school to a small southern prep school called Pine Crest, really a goofy place. I wrote a novel about it. And my parents were living in Spain then, so I joined them—

01-01:11:02

Lage: I have to stop you just a minute to change the tape.

01-01:11:05

Wakeman: Well, listen--we've reached the end—

Interview 2: April 13, 2005

Audiofile 2 Wakeman 02 04-13-05.wav

02-00:00:40

Lage: Today is April 13, 2005, and it's the second interview with Fred Wakeman.

02-00:00:47

Wakeman: OK. Well, let me start with Bermuda to where we moved after we had been living in Mexico. My father by then was a well-established novelist so that we had a series of houseguests. At the time I didn't really recognize who they all were, but they were very well-known writers.

02-00:01:14

Lage: You told me about John Steinbeck and the *Red Pony*.

02-00:01:16

Wakeman: I told you the Steinbeck story, yes.

02-00:01:18

Lage: And Thurber—was it Thurber you mentioned?

02-00:01:19

Wakeman: Thurber came to stay with us also. And then also, David Selznick came—the *Gone with the Wind* man, who brought his new bride—Jennifer Jones. He had just done this, actually not a very good movie, but a movie called *Duel in the Sun* with Gregory Peck, and she starred in it as the Mexican temptress. She was a very sweet woman, and they stayed with us for quite a while, but it was—I didn't really know—although they happened to show the movie in Bermuda when I was there and so I realized, it began to dawn on me that these people were making films.

02-00:02:00

Lage: Yes, this is what I'm wondering. You were about what age at that time? Eleven? Twelve?

02-00:02:04

Wakeman: Well, at that point I was about, let's see, about eleven, yes.

02-00:02:10

Lage: And what kind of impact would this have had on you, this Hollywood scene and writers—

02-00:02:14

Wakeman: Well, that did—the movie made—Steinbeck I didn't pay much attention to. I think I didn't really realize what this kind of life, the life for a successful author, was until my father took me to New York one time on a trip. We took the boat from, I forget, Fort something or other, from Hamilton to New York, and his friends were people like Philip Wylie, the *New Yorker* crowd, Dorothy Parker, Charlie Jackson, you know, the guy who wrote about *Lost Weekend*, that kind of thing—Norman Mailer—and I still have very vivid memories of

sitting outside on the sidewalk, because I was too young to go into the bars on 57<sup>th</sup> Street on a winter afternoon. All these guys in there were talking very animatedly about this, that, and the other—a colossal group of egos.

02-00:03:09

Lage:

And you're sitting outside like the pet dog!

02-00:03:10

Wakeman:

And I'm sitting outside. I was sort of tethered like the dog outside waiting, very impatient, would they please get ON with it! Anyway, Bermuda was a wonderful time for me in terms of boyhood because it—of course, it's a lovely place to live. We lived in two different houses that were quite grand because my father was making so much money then. This was in Southampton, the end of the island, away from Hamilton. And one of them was a very nice large Bermuda-style house, nothing especially striking about the architecture. The other was just a HUGE place called Buckingham, I suppose named after Buckingham Palace, but I don't know who had built the damn thing, but it had a ballroom, just a huge, huge place with docking facilities. Both of them were on the water, and that's where I really learned how to sail well. My father got me a sailboat and I—but it was—my memories are of school, of course, I went to a school called Saltus Grammar School, which was in Hamilton. We must have been about a dozen miles from there, so we took the train in every day, my sister and I, and we weren't boarding students. We came home every day, but it was a typical British school with uniforms, sports, of course, modeled after rugby, or something, God knows.

02-00:04:46

Lage:

How did you fit in there?

02-00:04:49

Wakeman:

OK. I liked the school because it was very challenging and the readings were interesting in English. I started studying art. Sports were very important. I learned how to play soccer pretty well and cricket. The kids were OK. It was a typical British public school and they were mainly the elite of Bermuda that went to it; in fact, they were the elite of Bermuda. Later on a few of them showed up in my college class, and we moved in the same clubs, final clubs, circuit at Harvard, partly because I had known these guys.

But it was very—[laughs]—I just have these memories of athletics. I remember the one thing I really didn't like very much was boxing. And of course, everybody had to box in their weight. And one of the fellows who ended up in my class at Harvard, {Colin Curtis?}, and I were paired off, I think we were in super flyweight, featherweight, something or other division, and of course they put these huge sixteen-ounce gloves on you so you can't possibly—it's like hitting somebody with a pillow—and we had little helmets. Some of the senior men were very, very good. But we had everything. My parents came to watch, and I was boxing and he really could box much better than I could. It was a three-round match, and he was clearly getting the

advantage of me, and I knew I was losing. So the third round came and I was sitting there thinking, “Oh, I’m just—,” and he, by then, had his blood aroused. He was going to finish me off, and he got up and he just came rushing across the ring from his corner, and I held up my arm, like this, just to ward him off and he ran right into it! And it knocked him cold! [laughter] There was no one more surprised than I was. My parents—my mother thought it was a joke, but—anyway, it was that kind of a school.

02-00:06:51

Lage:

Now, what does boxing have to do with the British public school?

02-00:06:54

Wakeman:

Oh, it’s part of the manly arts that you have to—

02-00:06:56

Lage:

Is it?

02-00:06:57

Wakeman:

Yes. At least at this school. The headmaster was Bobby Booker, very—I think he was a Cambridge man, I’m not sure. One person who had a deep influence on me was a man named Constantine FitzGibbon, who was a nephew of Norman Douglas, the British writer, and he himself was—he was my chemistry teacher, although he also tutored me in English literature, and at the time he and his wife Theo became very close friends of my parents, and he was a novelist. He had written a novel called, *The Arabian Bird*, which he gave to my father to see if my father could help get it published, which he did. It was published, I think by Rinehart, to considerably good reviews. He dedicated the book to my parents—to both my parents, but especially to my mother. And they were typical British, English bohemians. Here he was teaching in the secondary school. He struck me somewhat romantically because he had been an intelligence officer in the British army during the Second World War and partly because he was such a good linguist. He had gone to university—he went to Heidelberg, the Sorbonne, and of course, he went to Cambridge, but I think those were the three main universities and his German was excellent. So he was one of the officers who interrogated after the war, after they captured them, the officers who were involved in the July 20<sup>th</sup> plot to kill Hitler, and wrote a book about that as well. But he went on to become a very prominent novelist in London. He wrote a book that in fact, I thought of the other day because I was reading Philip Roth’s *The Plot against America*, and Connie wrote a book called, *When the Kissing Had to Stop*, which is much better than Len Deighton’s book about had the Nazis won the Battle of Britain, what it would have been like, that kind of thing. Later on he became sort of a Bill Buckley type and very conservative figure, but he was a terrible drinker.

02-00:09:13

Lage:

This is your teacher we’re talking of.

02-00:09:15

Wakeman:

My teacher, yes, he was a terrible drinker. And we were so friendly with him that we actually one summer went to England, spent the summer in England, in this little village where he and his wife had a house. We rented an old cottage—it was Tudor style and it had a thatched roof and everything—called Rose Cottage in this little, little English village in Hertfordshire, and that was another magical summer for me. It was the first time I really got to go up to Cambridge to visit. I was fifteen or so, and I also had my first real love affair at that age, which was, oh, the local barmaid. But Connie was just, we'd go up to Cambridge, he was a very close friend of Noel Annan, and we'd go up to Cambridge to see Noel Annan, and he didn't like to go on the train because he wanted to be drinking all the time. But if you took a car, if you hired a car, that was after the war, it was very hard to get petrol—things were rationed. If you hired a car, he would stop the car here and there and try to bully these pub owners into opening up the pubs so that he could have a couple of gins or whiskeys and get back in.

All of this was very amusing, and my parents were living in a very bohemian fashion then, but—and I'm jumping ahead of myself. A year or two later we were living in France, at Cap d'Antibes, in a villa that my father had rented from a singer named Tino Rossi, very popular Italian, Corsican singer. "Santa Lucia" was his great hit. Out of the blue they showed up, Theo and Connie—they had taken the train from Spain. I don't know what they were doing in Spain. But they showed up, and they sort of moved in. My father was shooting a movie in Rome at Cinecittà then, and he and my mother had to go to Rome, so they left me, my sister, and my brother, in this villa, along with my brother's nanny, who was a young Dutch woman, and the FitzGibbons. And Connie just sort of took over the house. It was winter, very cold, we had terrible heat, a little, slightly warm with a radiator, and Connie would sit there and drink all day long. He was drinking through my father's wine cellar, in effect. And when he got too drunk, he would get very surly, and actually, he never struck us, but very mean and insulting to the kids, particularly my sister. And I didn't know how to reach my parents; I was very upset.

02-00:11:55

Lage:

And how old were you by this time?

02-00:11:57

Wakeman:

I was fifteen then, fifteen or sixteen. Yes. I didn't know how to reach my parents. I was very upset, and they finally came back, and I, with great relief, I said, "Connie is really impossible, he's just drunk all day. He gets up and starts drinking before breakfast and by nightfall he's impossible, and he's been very abusive to us." My father had quite a temper, got very angry, and ordered him out of the house, gave him his marching orders, said, "You've got to leave by the next morning." And so the next morning they got up and they left, but a couple of days later my father got a bill from the travel agent in Antibes or Juan-les-Pins, one of those places, which charged him for a ticket around the world for Connie and Theo! He had gone down and I don't know

how he managed to—but he was a con man. He sponged off of people all the time! And people like that became part of the cast of characters of people in my life. Of course the first thing—

02-00:12:56

Lage:

Then if you had become a novelist they would have appeared.

02-00:12:58

Wakeman:

I think so, yes. I think they would have. The tail end of that story is that when he next published a new edition of *The Arabian Bird*, it was no longer dedicated to my parents, obviously. That was the last we saw of them. But another character from those days in Bermuda, who lived next door to us was a much more interesting person in other ways, his name was Hamish Mitchell and he was married to a Mott—one of the General Motors Motts—an heiress, an American heiress. And I took him, and my father did too, I think, as well, as simply being an adventurer. He was a very handsome fellow who claimed to have been head of British intelligence in Bermuda during the war. And my father thought this was absolutely rank nonsense, but Hamish was always playing sort of cloak and dagger—the mysterious this and that. It turned out, my father discovered, that he had been in charge of the passport office. And I really dismissed this as a bunch of nonsense, but again, they liked him. They left me with my grandmother, my sister—my brother wasn't born yet—with my grandmother on Bermuda to go back to Europe to spend money that was blocked that had come from the sale of my father's novels, so they'd go to Italy and spend all the lire they had or go to Sweden and spend all the kroner, you know, country to country.

02-00:14:29

Lage:

This was quite a life!

02-00:14:31

Wakeman:

Oh, yes, it really was.

02-00:14:33

Lage:

It wasn't just that you went to thirteen different schools, you must have lived in twenty different places or more!

02-00:14:37

Wakeman:

Yes, we lived all—and my father would decide—

02-00:14:40

Lage:

And two places in Bermuda.

02-00:14:41

Wakeman:

Yes. My father just said, "Well, it's time to go somewhere else," and he would, and my mother was very compliant—she'd say, "Fine. Let's pack the house up, sell the furniture," whatever, and off we'd go. Very, very footloose and fancy—

- 02-00:14:54  
Lage: Was it all disturbing? Did you feel a lack of roots?
- 02-00:14:57  
Wakeman: Oh, no. I think that the biggest effect that it had on me was this feeling of wanting to pass.
- 02-00:15:07  
Lage: Pass?
- 02-00:15:08  
Wakeman: To pass as a native.
- 02-00:15:11  
Lage: Wherever you were.
- 02-00:15:11  
Wakeman: Wherever I was, yes.
- 02-00:15:13  
Lage: Did you try to be a British schoolboy in Bermuda?
- 02-00:15:17  
Wakeman: I think so, yes. It was a sort of a kind of a public schoolboy mentality, reading these silly books that English kids read about these boys—a little bit like a kind of pre-Harry Potter sort of thing. And I naturally adopted an English accent because that's what I heard around me. But the education was really excellent.
- 02-00:15:42  
Lage: So wanting to pass in terms of learning the language, the lingo.
- 02-00:15:49  
Wakeman: Yes, yes, very much so. And I think it became more acute for me when we moved to France, and during that period I was just describing where I—my French became very fluent, but I learned how to avoid certain words where a mistake would trip you up, like r's—very hard.
- 02-00:16:13  
Lage: Hard to—the sound made in—
- 02-00:16:15  
Wakeman: Hard to pronounce deep in the throat that way.
- 02-00:16:18  
Lage: It's so hard to say too many sentences without an "r."
- 02-00:16:21  
Wakeman: Well, you can say—or sounds—instead of saying en peu, say pas beaucoup. In other words, because, less likely to be a slight sign there. And people later—people and they still do—take me for a Belgian, or at best, a Swiss. But I do speak French with a sort of Niçoise accent, because this was the Alpes-

Maritimes—very heavy Italian influence there, and it's not as bad as a kind of Toulouse accent—you know, [imitates Toulouse accent]—but you can still catch it in my French. When I was in college, when I was being interviewed for a fellowship to go to France, I remember the professor saying, “Where did you study French?” “Where did you learn your French?” I said, “In Nice.” He said, “Oh, well, that's why you sound like you're speaking Niçoise.” But the desire to pass was not to stand out and be noticed as not being French, and I think that taught me a lot of lessons about how to learn languages.

02-00:17:29

Lage: Lessons that you applied—since we're getting to China at some point, did all these qualities coalesce when you became a historian of China?

02-00:17:35

Wakeman: Well, China, yes and no. China was attractive to me because I could never pass for Chinese.

02-00:17:42

Lage: [chuckling] Right!

02-00:17:44

Wakeman: So, it—I really mean that. I've always been sort of a border runner when it comes to—I've often felt I was standing on a ladder looking over a wall into some other country or culture. But in the case of China, it's just you're never Chinese, although people tell me when they hear me speaking, and don't see me, they think I'm a native, but—

02-00:18:07

Lage: It's a giveaway.

02-00:18:13

Wakeman: Well, you look at me and you can tell. I remember one time in Taipei with my older son—it was Chiang Kai-shek's birthday and we were watching a military procession of tanks go by, the usual sort of jackbooted, goose-stepping soldiers, and there was an old grandfather with his grandson on the same park bench. Freddy was just rattling away—“Look at the tank, Dad, oh, see the airplane.” And they looked at him, and finally the little boy, who was a little older than Freddy, came over and took his hand and ran it around his eye and his nose. How could this round eye and big nose, as they call us, be speaking Chinese like this. And there was something odd about it, very strange. So I think that was one reason why China appealed to me, because it was a tremendous linguistic challenge, but that was, in a certain sense, my foible; it took many years, long before I started studying China, I think. In college, perhaps. When I went to college, I realized that I just didn't sort of fit in with any standard model. There was a difference there.

But to go back to Bermuda and—I can't resist telling you about Hamish, because Hamish popped up in my life time and again.

02-00:19:33

Lage: The passport officer.

02-00:19:35

Wakeman: Well, he was actually in charge of intelligence.

02-00:19:38

Lage: Oh, he was!

02-00:19:38

Wakeman: It wasn't until I read the biography of a man named William Stephenson, who was a British businessman who was part of the leadership of the Special Operations Executive that Churchill set up, who had been sent to Canada. He was a Canadian, actually, not British, sent back to Canada then and set up an office in New York City in Rockefeller Center, where before we entered the war, he was already—the British were very eager to propagandize the Americans to get them into the war, all of this stuff you know. But—and it says, and his man in Bermuda, Hamish Mitchell, who was in charge of this effort. Stephenson went on to set up the early, he befriended William Donovan and set up some of the training programs. He recommended, for example, that the OSS bring in SOE instructors to learn the unarmed combat that the special operations people were being trained in, and that interestingly enough—you sort of swing back full circle. Many years later when I started working on Shanghai, a man whose name to me was legendary, William Fairbairn, who had been the deputy inspector of police in the Shanghai police, was the man who perfected these techniques. I still have—I even have it here. You know, I was a martial arts buff—

02-00:21:09

Lage: We haven't gotten to that, but I did read it.

02-00:21:11

Wakeman: We haven't gotten—yes, I don't think, I think it's at home. There's a man in the Australian special forces who's befriended me by email over the years, and he sends me, he collects these things—Fairbairn's work, and in fact I actually stabbed myself by mistake with a Fairbairn—Fairbairn designed a special dagger [the Fairbairn-Sykes dagger] that was extremely narrow, about eleven inches long, so that if you penetrated here, you could reach the heart. And the standard way of killing a German sentry was to turn the head and just drive it down between the clavicle and the shoulder bone, and drive it right down. It was instantly fatal. And I was fooling around with this damn thing and it caught on—I was wearing white duck trousers. It caught on my trousers, and the blade, this very sharp blade, double edged turned in, and, "Pook!" Three-and-a-half inches, right into the bone. It was just, and of course, instantly, the trousers [phhht] turned red. My father was furious. I just remember, my mother was, "My God." I still have the scar. But Fairbairn was this legendary figure who perfected all these things and became part of this world of intrigue that I've always been interested in, I write about it.

*Spymaster*

02-00:22:28

Lage: Yes, you really do focus on intrigue. And your father was in the intelligence service too.

02-00:22:33

Wakeman: That's right. And Mitchell was, and he just would show up like a bad penny all the time. He was always the same sort of thing. He'd show up, wherever we were and he'd say, "I say, old chap, the currency's blocked, take care of the cab, will you?" And he would have taken a cab from an airport a hundred miles away and you'd have this cab bill. When we were living in Cuba, he came and gave a party. We had this incredible house in Cuba and a party which was very—people like Hemingway came, Tunney the boxer—just a whole bunch of celebrities. And again, the same thing! My father must have been very vulnerable to this! [laughing] The same thing as with Connie. After Hamish left town, they presented the bill for all the cutlery he'd bought, and the bands, and all of this he insisted was being paid for with—

02-00:23:30

Lage: And your father just—

02-00:23:31

Wakeman: —my father had to pay—he'd skipped town, there was no way of getting back at him. But so Hamish was another character of that time, but actually, the day-to-day living in Bermuda was very—I think when I came back to the States I was very unhappy.

02-00:23:44

Lage: So after Bermuda you were back to the States?

02-00:23:47

Wakeman: We went from Bermuda—my father and I drove across the country alone. We picked up a car in White Plains, New York. This was a 1948 Lincoln Continental and we drove across, partly to go back to his—well, just to drive across the country. He felt I should get to know America because I'd been out of the country. And it was a wonderful trip.

02-00:24:12

Lage: Is that when you visited his family in Kansas?

02-00:24:14

Wakeman: That's right, exactly. That's exactly right, you have a good memory. And we moved to California. He had some kind of a contract then with MGM, so he rented a house up in Santa Barbara, in Montecito. Another one of these incredible mansions. It was called Constantia, and it was a replica of Cecil Rhodes's house in Rhodesia. It had a driveway about three miles long. It was just—I've driven by there since then. It's near the convent, the nunnery up there. But you can't see anything, because it's just this huge—Oh! It belonged to a man named Arthur Meeker who had just died, a very rich Bostonian. He died intestate and the will was still in probate. So the son, the heir, was living in the garage—the mews over the garage. They had a thirteen-car garage, a

staff of gardeners that would start in the morning on one day and finish up a week later, and then go back and start all over again. This kind of formal, sculptured hedges and shrubbery. But that sort of thing was—again, I didn't focus so much upon that as upon school, and when I got there, my mother, who was then pregnant—she gave birth in—yes, she was already pregnant.

02-00:25:45

Lage: So what year would this have been?

02-00:25:46

Wakeman: This would be the end of '48. Flew with my sister, flew out to California, and we moved into this party-giving mansion, and I went to a little school called Crane Country Day. I think I was going into the sixth grade then, something like that. And it was ludicrous! I mean there was nothing—I couldn't believe it—I'd already studied Latin and I was reading adult novels and history—American education, as you know, it's a platitude. That was so terrible.

02-00:26:24

Lage: And this was sort of an upper-class establishment?

02-00:26:26

Wakeman: Yes—the Procter and Gamble heir was there, all these very rich kids. So I had a very distorted sense of that because I didn't understand that this wasn't the life that most people led. It was sort of—

02-00:26:36

Lage: But you weren't being educated as other people—aside from all the parties and mansions.

02-00:26:41

Wakeman: Well, I wasn't—no, I was completely thrown on my own as far as learning much of anything, and so I took to reading a lot.

02-00:26:49

Lage: So how did they deal with you in that school? Just let you be bored?

02-00:26:55

Wakeman: They—no, they—they regarded me as—I don't even know what the word is now—advantaged kid—high IQ, something like that. I did have a very high IQ on the Stanford-Binet tests—and they sort of—the teachers were very nice to me and they would assign me special assignments, or if I—I was very, very—I was pretty good at drawing, and particularly pastels, but I also did watercolors then. So I spent a lot of time painting or drawing. And the art teacher was very, very nice. There was also a music class. I played the piano by then and that was—I remember those more than anything else. I just remember being very bored in English, because the English—English literature, I mean. It was just—

02-00:27:42

Lage: Sixth grade!

02-00:27:44

Wakeman: Yes, sixth grade. I mean, it was—

02-00:27:46

Lage: And how were your fellow students? How would you deal with the southern California scene?

02-00:27:52

Wakeman: Well, first of all they were, in some ways as foreign to Santa Barbara itself. Life was the club, the beach club, which we would go to, my father complaining about the dues. Horseback riding—I learned how to horseback ride there—formally I mean. My sister and I would go to—had horseback riding lessons and we used to ride on the trails in the Santa Ynez Mountains, English style. But the kids were, I realized, when we had—if you were a sixth grader, there was a touch football team. We didn't play tackle. And you played other private schools, and I was on the football team. And it was all very—it was fun. And then they had one event at the end of the season with a junior high school down in Santa Barbara proper, and that was a massacre! [laughter] I mean, I don't know how I got through that. I was playing center and they would just cream me. Two of my teammates had broken arms, as they were thrust against goalposts and their arm was—oh, it was—and they were terrified of these townies. It was clear that this was a far cry from Montecito. There still is this very vivid sense of the difference between life in the hills and life below. So, but at the same time I thought, well, I don't know if I told you this story or not—but, the Dewey election, the Dewey-Truman election was coming up. And we had sort of a straw vote in the classroom, and I came back that night to dinner, and I think the national election was one or two or three days away, and my mother was distantly related to Truman. I'm still not quite clear how that worked. But—she had some—

02-00:29:47

Lage: Oh, from Missouri.

02-00:29:49

Wakeman: Yes—some connection. But of course my father was a lifelong Democrat, so I said, “Well, I guess Harry Truman isn't going to win. My father said, “Where did you get that feeling?” And I said, “Well, they polled my class and there were fifteen votes for Dewey, and one vote for Truman. I voted for Truman.” So for me—that was, I mean, this was reality! [laughter]

02-00:30:09

Lage: This was the world!

02-00:30:11

Wakeman: Right, right! It was really very—and my father told me a story then, he said, “Well, I want to give you a word of warning about this.” And I said, “What is it?” “Well,” he said, “there's the great Hungarian playwright, Molnar one time got into trouble. Now, Molnar was a man of the theater, so he went to bed every night about three o'clock after a late supper and he would get up at

noon. And he got involved in a lawsuit, which meant he had to present himself at court at eight in the morning. So he got a friend, he asked a friend to come pick him up. He had never really gotten up at that hour before. And the friend came by to pick him up to take him to court and they got out, it was a busy, typical morning in Vienna. People were rushing hither and to, so my father said, and he said, “At that point Molnar turned to his friend and said, “Are all these people coming to my trial?” [laughter] It took a moment for it to—oh, yes, I see, I see, this is not typical.

02-00:31:09

Lage: So how long were you in Santa Barbara?

02-00:31:11

Wakeman: Not long, not long. We were there about six months and then my father decided he wanted to move to Cuba. So again, he and I drove across the country. My brother had just been born. And we went to Florida, we drove to Florida, where my father had some cousins living. In fact, my only—I think it’s about my only cousin—yes, I just talked with the other day, lives in Coral Gables, and we stayed with them. I had a big crush on my cousin who ended up going to Wellesley when I went to Harvard, and of course she was my cousin, so that was incestuous—you couldn’t pursue that. But anyway, Elizabeth was a very nice girl whose son now, by the way, is the legal attaché in Beijing. She just came back from Beijing; she had never been to China before.

But anyway, and my father went out, and this is typical—I was quite admiring—he decided to buy a boat. Now, we had sailed boats a lot, but they were day sailers, they were racers, they were not yachts in that sense. And as I say, he had money to burn and he went down and shopped around there for a bit and he bought a 56-foot ketch, which is a pretty big boat. It had a big motor—it had a 175-horsepower Chrysler royal marine engine, so you could motor with it quite readily. And it already had a captain, a guy called Cappie Cappie. And he bought it, but it was a *beautiful* boat. It had been designed and built by a man named Sorensen, who had been the chief engineer at GM or at Ford, and the boat was incredible, a wonderful boat. It finally sank, alas.

02-00:33:01

Lage: How long did you have it?

02-00:33:02

Wakeman: We had it for about, let’s see, when did Dad sail that—we had it for about seven or eight years, and we initially planned—well, he didn’t plan to live on the boat, but—we bought this boat, he decided to keep Cappie Cappie on—this guy was another of these [laughs] terrible luses. And I remember him most because he put ketchup on everything, including applesauce. I mean it was just unbelievable. And then my godfather showed up. Now my godfather is another story! I’m really getting into these anecdotes too much, I fear, but

Sammy Hawes was his name, and he was a racketeer, or he was a lawyer who was also a racketeer. He was a friend of Meyer Lansky.

02-00:33:52

Lage: And how did that connection come about?

02-00:33:55

Wakeman: Through the world of entertainment, primarily.

02-00:33:57

Lage: In New York.

02-00:33:58

Wakeman: In New York, and also in Europe. My parents had gotten to know a woman named Cinda Glenn when they were in Paris during this time when they were spending his royalties. Cinda Glenn was a dancer with the Folies Bergère. She was a big, very statuesque, great-headed woman. Very, one of these—she was also a contortionist.

02-00:34:16

Lage: This is an incredible tale that you tell!

02-00:34:17

Wakeman: Yes, she was an amazing woman. Sammy was about my mother's height. About 5'2. Very slight, who had—I think he had actually testified before the Kefauver Commission. Or he did later. And was in the rackets in Cleveland. I forget the details. It was a man named Major somebody or another. And he was accused of killing several people. He had a big house in Shaker Heights, which I visited frequently and it was very—it had secret passageways, a very mysterious place.

02-00:34:53

Lage: Now this is the man that was your godfather.

02-00:34:54

Wakeman: Yes. He was my godfather.

02-00:34:54

Lage: So he must have been a close friend or someone that they felt they could entrust you to.

02-00:34:57

Wakeman: Oh, yes. He was a very close friend, yes, he was. I don't know when Dad first met him, I have no idea. He just—they suddenly became very close because Cinda was his mistress. So they made quite a sight, this short guy and this big—Cinda was about six-feet tall. She was very—and so Sammy decided he would sail down with us. Well, Sammy is not an outdoorsman. And I just remember, we got to Key West, and the same sort of thing that had happened in New York happened there. Namely, they wanted to go into a bar, and I wasn't old enough. And I remember the guy saying as we came up—the three

of us, [in a tough guy voice] “The kid can’t come in.” And that became a big joke for Sammy—“The kid can’t...” So I had to again sit outside while they drank their martinis inside.

But the trip to Havana was really quite an adventure because we set out from Key West before dawn, after a northeaster had been blowing for about five days so the seas had built up enormously. I had had a lot of sailing experience but not on a boat that big, but I took to it immediately. I loved that boat, and I was very good on the helm in sensing the way the boat was moving. But as we got out in the Gulf Stream, it’s only about ninety miles, you know—it’s not very far—and we wanted to make it by that next evening. We got into this—the wind wasn’t that bad but the seas were just horrendous. The sea was following us so we’d go along like this and every six or seventh wave would break over the back of the boat, and I was actually strapped down at the wheel steering most of the way. Sammy had gone below, he was seasick, and by the time we got to Havana he was a battered man. He’d been flung from bunk to bunk and here and there—the canned goods we’d bought. My father had spent days buying provisions for the Caribbean, so canned goods scattered everywhere. And then we sailed into the Almendares River and Cuba began as another kind of adventure.

02-00:37:11

Lage:

And how did Cappie Cappie do on the trip? He let you steer—

02-00:37:15

Wakeman:

Cappie Cappie didn’t do very well on the trip. He mainly tended the engine. He was really more of an engineer than a good—we had another captain later on named {Felino} who was really very good. A professional fisherman. But Cappie then, sort of lived—the kind of life Cappie liked was like living in a yacht marina getting his daily supply of beer and ketchup. [laughs] I’m getting way off the track here—

02-00:37:41

Lage:

So here you are in Cuba—

02-00:37:42

Wakeman:

Here we are in Cuba, and now I spoke Spanish from early childhood. My father wanted me to really learn Spanish well. So first he sent me to a school that was really a school mainly for diplomats’ kids, or for wealthy Cubans’ kids, called Ralston. And it was the kind of school where you did English half the day and Spanish the other half, which was OK. I liked it, it was fine, but my father decided after the first term that I wasn’t getting enough Spanish, so he put me into a military school.

02-00:38:17

Lage:

This is during Batista’s time?

02-00:38:21

Wakeman:

Actually Prío Socarrás was still President, just before Batista. Batista overthrew Prío Socarrás. We had a house—we had rented a house that had belonged to Vázquez Bello, who was the vice president under Machado, and he was assassinated at the house. It was copied after a Cuban bohío, so it was a huge, huge house with guest houses and all these things. But it was again, a thatched roof with, I think they really were sort of marble, they may have been a kind of terrazzo, but they were green marble-looking floors, and the walls were made out of the trunks of palm trees—the trunks of course, not the whole thing. They were hollow and filled with rats and at night, strange things would drop out of the thatch, like tarantulas. Huge tarantula spiders, scorpions everywhere. I mean, it was really—

02-00:39:22

Lage:

So you have the marble and then you have the rats and the tarantulas.

02-00:39:25

Wakeman:

Yes, yes. My mother was, I remember one time sitting there—it was a very, very large living room—sitting there and reading a book, and hearing this plop, and looking over and there was a tarantula the size of a dinner plate. And I shouted out—my mother got up and without blinking ran, dashed off into the kitchen, she came back with a broom and whacked it. Those things can jump about sixteen feet! She was really very good when it came to things like that! But the Cuban military academy was traumatic, absolutely traumatic.

02-00:39:58

Lage:

Now, and why was that?

02-00:40:00

Wakeman:

Well, first of all, I was as far as I knew, the only American in the school. Cubans are intensely nationalistic and they are intensely anti-Yankee, anti-North American. So I was the only North American, and it was an urban military school; it wasn't out in the country. Again, an elite school.

02-00:40:20

Lage:

And were you just a day student again?

02-00:40:22

Wakeman:

I again was a day student. So I would be picked up by a small bus and taken to school and then take the bus home at the end of the day. Usually there was an interval between school being out. It was a Catholic school also, which had happened to me before. That wasn't unusual, where I had to go through catechism, and all those things every morning. But that made me a Black Protestant, which further singled me out, so that whenever the priest was doing catechism, he would say now, he would turn to me for illustration and say, "Federico, isn't it true that the Protestants can never get together and there are all these sects." I'd say, "Yes, it's true." And he'd say, "See, see, see!" And then he'd come up with things—I didn't know how to react—he'd

say, “Well, the proof of the existence of the soul is the following...” And he would describe how a man was sick and they weighed him in the hospital and he died and they weighed him again and he was two kilos less. So the soul weighed two kilos. I thought, “What the...” I didn’t know what to say! But the worst thing was the—we would march out every afternoon and have an hour in this brutal sunlight hearing these veterans from the Battle of Camagüey talk about how the great man Jose Martí was and this and that. It was just an immense and intense Cuban patriotism, and we’d sing the national anthem. I joined the Cuban boy scouts.

02-00:41:44

Lage: Were you trying to pass?

02-00:41:47

Wakeman: Of course! Of course, I was trying to pass. But that was not very successful because they knew I was an American and every day after school they’d be waiting outside the school.

02-00:41:57

Lage: For you.

02-00:41:59

Wakeman: For me. And five or six, seven. After school we used to play with the equivalent of baseball cards. They were cards that came with candy or with cigarettes and they had illustrations on them, and we’d gamble with them. We wouldn’t gamble money, but we’d play, sort of like, go fish. So there were always a bunch of kids hanging around until the day—the day kids waiting for their parents to pick them up or their chauffeurs to come. And I had to wait for the bus and it was invariably, almost every day, at some point they’d turn on me and beat me up. And it was OK if I just lay there, but if I got up again it would keep on going and it was really very—I developed this terrible, terrible sort of psychological, literally, diarrhea. I would soil my pants on the way home, I’d be embarrassed about that—

02-00:42:55

Lage: What did your parents say?

02-00:42:57

Wakeman: Oh, my mother was very sympathetic. My father was, “You’ve got to be a man,” kind of thing. You’ve got to toughen yourself up. And that’s one reason why at a fairly early age I began to study martial arts. I was resolved never to go through that again.

02-00:43:09

Lage: Did you study it there in Cuba?

02-00:43:10

Wakeman: No. No.

02-00:43:11

Lage: So you had no recourse—

02-00:43:12

Wakeman: Well, I did, I did, because I'd sent away for—you know, there are all these books that kids get—how to study jiu-jitsu in three easy lessons—you learn nothing. No, I didn't start taking up judo seriously until I was back in the States for a year. And then from there it went on, then I took—the main period of all this was when I was a student on Taiwan where I studied karate for a couple of years and also Shaolin boxing and became quite good at it.

02-00:43:44

Lage: Did you keep it up here?

02-00:43:45

Wakeman: Yes, until my accident. Yes, sure. I have a very close friend who has a big gym down in southern California and makes a lot of money off of it, but I didn't continue sparring, but I kept up the forms. I haven't been in a fight in God knows how long. But you were getting a European education, but in Cuba, very Catholic, the classes were informative.

But I felt as though I was living under constant traumatic stress. To give you an idea—the last day, we were going to move out of this house and get on our boat and just go off and retrace this voyage of Columbus. And I was so eager to do that. The last day—I was cleaning out my desk and the guy who was seated next to me was named Carlos. I never got his last name. I guess because the teachers all called us by our first name. I was clearing it out, and he was still there. The rest of the people had filed out of the classroom, and he said in English, he said, “Well, good luck to you.” Or something like that, and in an American accent. I said, “Are you American?” He said, “Yes, well, I'm half Cuban, half American, my father's name is {Dunaway} and he's the Standard Oil representative here.” And I said, “Jesus, Carlos, how could you sit around all these months and let them whop the hell out of me and not do anything about it, and not identify yourself as an American?” He said, “I'm not stupid, you know.” [laughter] I thought, no, the guy lives here.

02-00:45:33

Lage: Yes. And has to continue.

02-00:45:34

Wakeman: And has to continue. He's not taking off on his boat.

02-00:45:36

Lage: So he passed successfully.

02-00:45:38

Wakeman: He passed, yes. Of course, having a mother who was Cuban, I think, made—and as far as I could tell he was absolutely—you know Cuban is a very different accent than the Mexican Spanish or even the Spanish I sort of glossed over later with going to school in Madrid.

But anyway, Cuba was, so a mixture of this—and again a sense of—it was so different from an American upbringing. Cuba was very violent then. They had these police that they called the gray pests, *peste gris*, who were the political police, and they were all over the place. They were all armed with submachine guns and you had this sense of constantly—you'd hear gunshots, and it was a dictatorship. We were living near a suburb where the main political prison was, and that's where they actually had Batista after he had this failed Sergeant's Revolt that he later repeated successfully.

But one time a political prisoner got out, and I don't remember his name, but I remember that he had red hair, which I found rather remarkable for Cuba. And he escaped into our area. The prison was in Marianal and our place was called Country Club. It was a kind of—these big houses and very opulent estates. Our house looked over a *barranca*. You know what that is [a steep river gorge]—and I was out in the driveway; we had a male chef, and he came running out to me and he said, “Get inside, get inside.” And I looked out and I could see six or seven machine-gun-toting policemen coming up, and I said, “What, what?” And he said, “Just get inside.” So I ran inside and he closed the door, and I didn't really know what was going on. Then you began hearing machine gun shots [imitates sound of machine gun, brrrrt, brrrrt], you know. Well, they left and it turned out they had killed four laundrywomen in our *barranca*. They just did—

02-00:47:57

Lage: In the search for this—

02-00:47:58

Wakeman: They saw somebody, anybody down there, they were just spraying these machine gun bullets—they just went away. Nobody buried the bodies. They wounded several others. It was just—

02-00:48:07

Lage: Now what kind of impact did this kind of thing have on you? The violence of the state and the violence of your fellow students.

02-00:48:15

Wakeman: Whoa, well—it's hard to—obviously I had a very different view of life and of the nature of the beast in terms of human beings. I think one thing I did is I tended to idealize America as a place of—as far as I could tell from books and magazines and things like that—it was a place of suburban houses and children playing on lawns and riding bikes in the street and things like that, and that wasn't what Cuba was all about. I became absolutely fascinated by films.

02-00:48:55

Lage: In Cuba.

02-00:48:56

Wakeman:

In Cuba. But they were mainly Hollywood films. And I would, I just, the movies for me were a tremendous outlet. Reading continued to be extremely important. Anything I could get my hands on. I enjoyed the experience of it, not in some exotic way, but I just felt I was learning a lot. It was my first real exposure to China. Havana then had a very large Chinese population. And many of them were waiting to be smuggled into the States. Every Sunday night when the cook was off, we would go downtown to the Chinatown. There was a wonderful Cantonese restaurant called El Pacífico on top of about a five-story building. It was a rooftop restaurant. And you'd go up to it in a freight elevator. On the way up, I don't remember exactly which floor, was an opium divan. There were all these guys in there lying around smoking opium. That very sweet odor is very distinct. I didn't really know what that was at first. My father finally explained what opium was, and it seemed to me to be so strange and mysterious and just, I was fascinated. How did these people get here, what were they—and furthermore, to make the whole thing seem even more mysterious, in the Almendares river where we moored our boat, there was a PT boat, dating, of course, from the war, but they had not removed the old Packard engines. They still had them. Of course, those things burn about a barrel of gasoline a minute, you know. But they still had these super powerful engines. A lot of those converted ones had put in modern diesel, so they weren't so—and the reason they kept those engines is they were running Chinese into the Florida Keys. The guy and his crew were cutthroats. In fact, later on it turned out that on several occasions—first of all, when they got up to the Keys, as often as not they would call the immigration service or whatever and turn them over for reward.

02-00:51:09

Lage:

Now how did you find all this out? Later? Or—

02-00:51:12

Wakeman:

Oh, no, well, there was an exposé about it after the guy's death, because the Cuban coast guard was trying to stop this, at American urging. There were other cases, I don't know if this is true, or if it's a memory, of the slave trade, that they would chain them together and throw them overboard rather than be discovered by US Coast Guard. But, one time, I didn't see this, but I saw the wreckage the next day. Apparently, the guy decided to make a run for it and thought that he could slip into the Almendares and drop out of the sight of the Coast Guard, and he came into the Almendares at full speed and miscalculated and hit the jetty. And the boat splintered. It didn't blow up, but it splintered. And at that point it was a big deal. Everybody knew this large sixty-eight foot, or whatever it was, PT boat had crashed in the Almendares River and that this guy was smuggling. And there were things in the press about it, of course. I don't think I ever saw anything—there was an article in *Collier's Magazine* about smuggling, but I don't know if it mentioned this particular crew. But I would see them and the Chinese coming aboard, and again it was part of this—

02-00:52:21

Lage: So it created a certain air of mystery.

02-00:52:24

Wakeman: It did. It created an air of mystery. Then the other part of it was really much more, I suppose, ethereal or cerebral. When I would sit there at the restaurant eating this wonderful food I would see over the bathroom they would have, “*damas*,” and then “*caballeros*,” or whatever it was and above them they’d have a Chinese character. Now the Chinese character for woman is one, two, three, four—four strokes, very efficient. And for man, it’s one, two, three, four, five, six, seven—seven strokes. And I’d think, how do you get such a big word, “*caballeros*,” into such a tiny little thing. So the script fascinated me, and I remember reading in the encyclopedia, I looked up Chinese and read the article about it—but it didn’t, that influence slipped away. It wasn’t until years later—

02-00:53:18

Lage: It probably wasn’t something your father knew about, so he couldn’t explicate it, or make you read about it, or—

02-00:53:23

Wakeman: He couldn’t tell me anything about it. And that’s the other reason, I think why I chose Chinese, because he didn’t know anything about it. [chuckling] So Cuba was a—but it all sort of melds into the boating experience, the time on it, because we actually went all the way around Cuba in the first trip and stopping off at ports along the way, and we had a friend who lived down on the southeastern tip of the island which is a place you cannot get to except by boat. There are no roads into it. A little bit like something out of a Conrad novel. It was just this white plantation owner surrounded by Indians, or whatever the population was—they were actually Indians, I’m sure they weren’t Carib Indians.

02-00:54:16

Lage: And was he Cuban?

02-00:54:17

Wakeman: No, no, he was an American.

02-00:54:18

Lage: He was American.

02-00:54:19

Wakeman: We were very friendly with Hemingway then and also with a man named Bronson, who was the, I think he was the station chief of the CIA then.

02-00:54:31

Lage: Another intelligence—

02-00:54:32

Wakeman: Another intelligence guy.

02-00:54:34

Lage:

Now how friendly with Hemingway? Did you get to know him?

02-00:54:37

Wakeman:

Oh, well, my father used to drink with him a lot, but he was a very difficult man to be around. You know, he was terribly aggressive. We used to fish in a place called Cayo Paraiso, which is a little cay west of Havana, about, oh, I don't know, maybe fifty miles, forty miles. A cay that's so small that during hurricanes, it's completely overrun with water. You can't build on there. But there was a fisherman, and his, I think it must have been his little grandson, so later when I read *The Old Man and the Sea*, I instantly thought of this grizzled fisherman. But Hemingway had a motor fishing boat that was a fancy motorboat with two Black crewmen, and they would come in from, out from sportfishing. The place teemed with fish; you could throw over a trot line, or put down a trot line and pull up a hundred fish. Many of them would be eaten because the barracudas would get them, but you that, the fishing—

02-00:55:38

Lage:

So did you fish? And your father fish?

02-00:55:40

Wakeman:

Oh, yes, yes. Wherever we'd sail, we were always running a trawl and picking up, and we usually ate nothing but fish—we'd have snapper or what they called dolphin there, which is mahi mahi, or they call them dorados, or mackerel. I don't like mackerel very much, but bonefish, bonefish are much harder to catch. But Hemingway would come out, and he was fishing for marlin and tuna, and I guess he needed these big guys to help him get it aboard. But he would get drunk at night, and you would hear this tremendous ruckus, and he'd be over there beating these guys up. Throwing them overboard, just like a madman. And I guess they let him do it and got back on again because he was paying them for it.

02-00:56:22

Lage:

Sort of like your school boys.

02-00:56:25

Wakeman:

Yes, like the school boys, exactly, exactly.

02-00:56:26

Lage:

Just a routine thing.

02-00:56:28

Wakeman:

I mentioned this party with Mitchell, that Hamish Mitchell gave for himself. Hemingway came to that, and Tunney fascinated him because he was a boxer. And I actually saw this, because I was fascinated by this party, screwing around underfoot looking at all these guests. We had two bands playing. And Hemingway, as usual, got pretty loaded, pretty looped, and he started making comments to Tunney about this, that, and the other. And Tunney was a very gentlemanly fellow, didn't pay him much mind. And Hemingway kept saying, "You think you're such a...", you know, like, "You think you're such a tough

guy, I could take you...,” all that kind of strutting around. And finally, he was standing, he came up behind Tunney. Tunney was talking to my father and someone else, I don’t remember who it was and he came behind Tunney and he put his hand on Tunney’s shoulder as though he was going to swing him around and hit him, and Tunney started to turn and when he got partly turned, Hemingway was standing right there, and he hit him. Tunney hit Hemingway with a punch that can’t have been more than that long [makes a punching sound]—very short punch. Hemingway was—it’s a wonder he didn’t break his nose, but he struck him on the side where the knockout point is—and Hemingway went down like a load of bricks. And I was kind of disappointed, [laughter] because Hemingway was sort of a hero! I loved Hemingway, I loved his novels, the ones that I’d read by then, you know, *Farewell to Arms*—

02-00:58:00

Lage:

So he’s your hero, but at the same time, at least in retrospect you see that he—

02-00:58:04

Wakeman:

I see that, yes—

02-00:58:06

Lage:

But at the time did he disturb you as a person?

02-00:58:08

Wakeman:

At the time, no, no, he was so famous.

02-00:58:12

Lage:

It was hard to overlook that.

02-00:58:14

Wakeman:

It was hard to overlook that, in fact, on my first honeymoon, my father insisted, which was—I’ll tell you about that sometime. My father said, “You must stay at the best hotel in Havana.” And I had visions of going to the Hotel Nacional. This was before Castro. In fact it was just on the eve of Castro’s taking over—of going to the Hotel Nacional or some fancy place run by the mob, where they had the casinos. But he said, *Ambos Mundos* is great. And, well, it turned out to be a dump. But that’s where Hemingway, the point was, this is where Hemingway stays and I thought, “Oh, Jesus Christ.” When I actually got in there, I thought, what am I doing! I’ll tell you the story some time. It was very amusing. Oh! But, no, I was sort of shocked and upset about Hemingway. They had to carry him out, and I wondered if he was going to be OK. And I continued to love him as a writer. He’s one of my models as far as writing went. I mean, of course, like everybody, I love to read parodies of it, but the Michigan stories, the Nick stories, I loved. I really liked him a lot. And when I finally did read *Old Man and the Sea* I thought of that again. But when he finally blew his brains out, I thought, well, what a bad thing to do. Couldn’t he have killed himself some other way than go out and shoot himself in the yard with a shotgun? What must his wife have felt?

02-00:59:36

Lage: Yes, yes. More violence.

02-00:59:38

Wakeman: So Cuba was, Cuba was a very interesting—now after that was over I went back to the States and that was the point at which—

02-00:59:46

Lage: Back to where?

02-00:59:47

Wakeman: Back to, we went to Florida. Again, living on a boat then. We moved into a marina named Vallemar, which was very new then; it was considered to be very revolutionary, so to speak, in Fort Lauderdale. I went, I think I must have been in the seventh grade, eighth grade? And I went to, I was bused to a school in a nearby town called Dania. And at that point I realized that I just had to do something about my accent because I was—I had to get the English out of my accent. I had to sort of dumb down, because this was not going to work in this Florida junior high school. And I think the racism really upset me. We had a woman who worked for us who was, her name was Olga, and we brought her to the States from Cuba. She was Cuban but she was, let's say, I don't know what her mix actually was, but I think her father was from Jamaica and her mother was from Cuba, but she was very light skinned. But in Florida that was Negro, that was Black, and that was before the civil rights movement, and these people had to live on the other side of town after sunset, although she lived in our house in the servants' quarters after we moved ashore, and during the time we were on the boat she lived on the boat with us. She took care of Donny, my brother. She was a wonderful woman, wonderful, wonderful woman. Giving and warm and Caribbean in that sense, but it was strange because I liked her so much and suddenly to see her, she got involved with some man who was abusive, an African American man, who was very abusive. And it was kind of breaking her heart, and suddenly she found herself in this society where the racial discrimination was so intense.

02-01:01:58

Lage: And that hadn't been the case in Cuba?

02-01:02:00

Wakeman: Oh, no, oh, no. Of course there is a distinction between the Cuban elite, which is white skinned mainly, but I never really got the sense there of there being such a clear color line. Things were vaguer somehow. And the glimpse of the elite itself was—I think a lot of my sense of class and race and status and exploitation and these things that many people only read about came from places like Cuba. One time, for example, we went down the coast to visit a friend of my father whom I'd never met before, who was a sugar plantation owner. And you docked your boat in this place. There was nothing around except sugar cane and a little railroad track and then a dock, a loading dock. So we docked the boat and this train appears, it's a private train. We get on the train and we're toodling along and I remember going by these little—it was

after the harvest—by these little shacks. These people were just so poor, many of them couldn't afford trousers, squatting in the dust. And then getting to this huge, huge plantation.

02-01:03:15

Lage: So the gulf.

02-01:03:18

Wakeman: The gulf was immense.

02-01:03:20

Lage: Even though you'd seen it in Montecito, but it wasn't as apparent?

02-01:03:23

Wakeman: But it was, it was not, no, I mean, it was something about—I mean, these people were *latifundistas*. And they had the power of life and death over people. They all had armed guards, and they were surrounded with such people. The plantation house was immense. People served you drinks, and those ceiling fans that people had to move back and forth. And outside there were the peons picking up whatever they could in the way of bits and remnants of sugar cane to use as fuel, but it's just something that's still a very vivid memory for me. So that when the revolution did come, it was certainly easy to understand why it did. And in fact, a lot of the people who joined the revolution in the early stages, before Che and Raul [Castro] got so powerful, were ones who were in the July 26<sup>th</sup> movement with Robles, Socialists in other words, were people that we knew, because—and they were mainly professionals. We had friends down in Cienfuegos, a doctor and his friends who were very sympathetic to Castro after he began his operations, and they were members of the elite, and they certainly lived a very privileged life, but they were also socially—they had a social conscience, they were concerned about this incredible gap between the poor and the rich in Cuba, and how could it go on and the brutal militaristic rule of Batista, and the way the American gangsters were taking over.

02-01:04:54

Lage: And then did those people later leave Cuba? Do you know?

02-01:04:58

Wakeman: Many of them were killed or put in jail. Many of them were boat people, ended up in Miami, very conservative. I still know some of them in Miami. Most of them are dead now. But they were, in fact, when I first came to Berkeley, I joined the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. And I had a huge fight with the two leaders of it, who were Maurice Zeitlin, who is a sociologist at Princeton now, and Robert Scheer, who is now a columnist. You probably read his stuff. Bob had gone to the Maxwell School at Syracuse, I think. But he was sort of a red schoolhouse kid. I don't know if his parents were actually members of the CP or not, but he decided he wanted to learn about China. The problem with Bob was he was totally tone deaf, and he just couldn't hear the tones. And I remember sitting there with the tutors; they were tutoring us. We

were considered very promising, we had all this money. The tutors would just try so hard—can you hear a difference? And after about two or three months Bob realized that China was not for him. But they were deeply involved in politics then. It was after the city hall riots, and they were just really—and Cuba was the big deal. And I was very upset. I must say that Scheer had very good intelligence himself. He had very good connections with Stanford and the Stanford Latin American people who knew about the training camps in the Bay of Pigs. But I knew nothing of that. I was completely ignorant. So when Robles was killed, we had to debate out—the only place [on the Berkeley campus] you could debate then was by that tree in front of Wheeler, you know?

02-01:06:41

Lage: Yes, that oak tree.

02-01:06:42

Wakeman: So we had our debate there, and I got up and in great indignation, “I am sick and tired of hearing you guys blame everything on this bugaboo the CIA and claim there’s going to be an invasion of Cuba.” And I went on and on in that vein. “The Communist Party, which was fist and glove with Batista for all those years, now they’re taking over Castro, and poor Castro is being beguiled by his brother,” blah, blah, blah, on and on. And of course three days later the Bay of Pigs happened [laughter].

02-01:07:17

Lage: So then what, how did you handle that?

02-01:07:19

Wakeman: Well, I resigned from the committee, for one. I didn’t stay on the committee very long, and then I got pissed off at Scheer because we had our offices at the Center for Chinese Studies then down over this what is now a candy store. Maybe they’ve changed it, down on Shattuck, See’s Candies. And they assigned us all to this large room, we each had a desk. And I came in one morning, I used to stay up very late studying. But I came in one morning, we each had a little hot plate to make coffee and things, and the head of the center, who was an economist named [Walter] Galenson then, called me in and very stern, he said, “We’re going to have to charge you for the vandalism.” I said, “What vandalism?” He said, “The vandalism that you carried out last night, you know you destroyed that desk.” I said, “What are you talking about?” He took me into the room where the scholars, the fellows, had their desks, and there was my desk and there was a huge scorched hole in the desk. Obviously, the thing had, I don’t know if it turned over or what, but the hot plate had burned a hole in the desk. And I was mortified. I said, “Well, of course, take it out of my fellowship, I’m sorry, I don’t know anything about this, I didn’t have anything to do with this.” I don’t know if they ever did charge me for it or not, but as I looked at the desk it looked a little bit different from mine, and I looked and I realized that Scheer had shifted—that it was Scheer’s desk and he had shifted it for mine! And I thought, “That son of a

gun!” [laughter] I mean, you know, he’s really, oh, but he, but he, well, I’ll tell you another story about him later. About the CIA and—

02-01:08:59

Lage: When we get to Berkeley in the sixties. OK. Let’s not forget that.

02-01:09:03

Wakeman: Let’s not forget that.

02-01:09:04

Lage: Now, we really need to move through this a little bit, I think. I don’t know how much energy you have right now. We haven’t had Paris and your education in Paris.

02-01:09:15

Wakeman: OK, I’ll just keep on moving rapidly then. After this early exposure to South Florida we went back to Europe. First to England and then this episode that I told you about in Antibes when I went to school there.

02-01:09:36

Lage: And that was when you were about fifteen.

02-01:09:38

Wakeman: Yes, fifteen going on sixteen. That was punctuated with a long summer in Italy where I tried to pick up Italian and then—

02-01:09:51

Lage: Was the French schooling important in—?

02-01:09:54

Wakeman: Oh, yes. But you know it was essentially, although I was already in high school, at high school level, because my French was not very good, I was sent to a school, a Catholic school, a parochial school, the students in which were mainly studying for the CEP, which is the certificate, the primary certificate to get you into a lycee and so that was the level. It was still fairly high for me, but I was fighting to get French under control. And the teachers were very good, they were very understanding and they really taught me proper French. Again, it was a Catholic school; the head of the school was a Benedictine from Belgium, an old guy with a long white beard who had spent his missionary years in the Congo. {Very saintly?}. And I actually served as an acolyte at that time, as an altar boy in that school.

02-01:11:03

Lage: Did you entertain the thought of being Catholic?

02-01:11:08

Wakeman: The summer in Italy I did, I had read Thomas Merton and I so easily get carried away in a church, that sort of emotional, I suppose, I don’t know, but stained glass windows—I’ll leave it at that. And I thought about it, but no, I didn’t, I think my Protestant instincts were too strong. So I didn’t and there

again I was singled out frequently for one example or another of how bad Protestants were. But that was a curious experience because I was the largest kid in the school. There were a lot of peasant kids in the school and many of them were Communists. Their fathers were Communists. It's a communist voting area which had fought in the resistance as Communist guerrillas and they didn't like Americans much either. But that really wasn't much of a problem for me. That was quickly diverted by the arrival of two English kids who just couldn't get on with anybody and couldn't pick up the language. My sister on the other hand, who is now completely bilingual in French—she teaches it, I mean, that's her profession—studied very hard and she was always a very, very good student. But that was when I was getting into adolescence, I spent half my time at local bookstores reading travelers' editions of pornography that you couldn't get here, you know, *Tropic of Cancer*, whatever it was—and mooning about—

02-01:12:40

Lage: Not just reading the famous historians.

02-01:12:43

Wakeman: No, no, not just reading the famous historians. No, I had—

02-01:12:46

Lage: [chuckling] Because that's what you've written about, is all the reading that you—

02-01:12:50

Wakeman: [laughs] Well, I don't talk about that other stuff!! I can turn to that if you want me to start—

02-01:12:54

Lage: No, no. I want you to tell me what you haven't written about!

02-01:12:56

Wakeman: [laughs] I did write a short story about this called "Mademoiselle Champignon," which was published in a literary journal [*Audience*] when I was in college.

02-01:13:07

Lage: You wrote it at this time or in college?

02-01:13:08

Wakeman: No, in college, when I was a junior in college, that won some national award, I forget what it was, best college short story or something, about this childish, well, adolescent affair with another one of our nannies, whom I called Mademoiselle Champignon; maybe someday you'll want to read the story, it's very short. But it was sort of a moony period, but again very much affected by the sea. We almost always lived on the seacoast or—

02-01:13:41

Lage: Did you have your yacht? Did you sail over?

02-01:13:44

Wakeman: No, no, no, we left that in the States—no, that would have been—

02-01:13:50

Lage: That would have been quite a journey.

02-01:13:51

Wakeman: Whoo! We used to use the boat then to— we lived on the boat for a while and then used it after we got back from France to go to the Bahamas. At almost every available moment, vacations, holidays, things like that—

02-01:14:09

Lage: We have to stop here because—

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03-00:00:01

Lage: OK. Now we're on again.

03-00:00:05

Wakeman: OK. Well, I think, France—I mean, that's when I really began to affirm my love of French history and also to read pretty widely in French literature.

03-00:00:13

Lage: Now was this reading through school or at home, or your father—

03-00:00:18

Wakeman: Mainly at home, just, well, I just, how did I, well, I just sort of started, started reading. I actually went back and read the *Chanson de Roland*. So it was kind of, I think I was trying to—we had a textbook in that school that was a—I can just remember how it feels. It was an anthology that had excerpts from the great works of French literature in a very sort of classical way. You started with Roland; you read people like Musset, and De Vigny, and so on. All the way down into the twentieth century, though not very much of the twentieth century; it was after all, a Catholic school. But taking my cue from that I would go—and my parents were always very happy to buy books for me, and buy books, so in addition, I didn't dare ask them to buy Frank Harris or Miller, but in addition, to reading those in the little foreign language bookstore that sold the *Herald Tribune*, we'd go to the local bookstores, usually in Antibes and buy the books and read them and that's why later when I went to Harvard I could take advanced placement in French literature, because I'd read all that stuff. Of course, I had to refresh my memory. So it was really learning—and I really loved France, I loved—not so much the school, but my parents were, in spite of arguments, fairly happy then. And they were treating me more and more as a kind of equal, so we would go to cafes together and sit and drink coffee or whatever—they would drink something else perhaps and talk. And my father was constantly full of curiosity himself. He didn't know a great deal about French literature. His strength was German literature. But—

03-00:01:02

Lage: Did he have you give book reports?

03-00:02:16

Wakeman: Oh, yes. Those still went on. Those still—[laughs] those continued. The history I was reading then was Michelet mainly. Yes, Michelet had the greatest influence on me in those years. But I was reading things that had little to do with conventional history. For example, a lot of things on wartime France, so the people like Jean Moulin. I also started reading Sartre and Camus, the post-war existentialists, not that—

03-00:02:44

Lage: That was not assigned at school.

Wakeman:

Oh, no, no, no, no no! And I didn't—I couldn't tackle the really heavy stuff like *Being and Nothingness*. But *Huis-clos* [*No Exit*], things like that and then some of Sartre's lighter things were very interesting to me, and I thought, very—and where I really wanted to be was in Paris. But that was not to come for a while. I never actually went to lycee in Paris. I didn't really have my Paris years—I spent nearly a summer in Paris between graduating from high school and college, but I didn't spend a student year there until I went to the Institute of Political Studies after I graduated from college.

03-00:03:36

Lage: And yet you ended up graduating from high school in Florida.

03-00:03:39

Wakeman: Yes. We went back and—

03-00:03:49

Lage: Did you get consulted about any of these moves? Or were you happy or unhappy?

03-00:03:47

Wakeman: We would talk about it. There would be discussions: "What do you think about going here? I'm sort of thinking of going there. And, "Oh, God, Dad, I don't think so! That sounds crazy to me." But basically it was pretty much a—I don't really know quite how the decision was reached. Very often it was done without any real consultation. Then suddenly we're going to be going there, and we'll be leaving then. And at times, when these decisions were made I would be curious, usually because of girlfriends. How could I leave Peggy or whatever her name was—Melissa, behind. This is just the end of the world for me. We went back, for part of what had been my junior year in high school; we got back late. And I was a swimmer then. I went to the public high school, Florida High School, which is having its fiftieth reunion this year, which I certainly will not attend. But they happened to have one of the best swimming teams in the country. Their main rival was Santa Clara out here. But our coach, a man named [Tom] Lamar was the coach for the Pan American Games. A very, very demanding coach. And I was an OK swimmer.

Something like that is very instructive for you because you learn that there are limitations. You can't will yourself to be what you're not physically—I happen to have small hands, for example. And there's no way I can be a really good butterfly swimmer, which is what my stroke was, with small hands and small feet.

03-00:05:32

Lage: Because you get so much power from your hands?

03-00:05:36

Wakeman: Yes. I had fairly big shoulders, but again—somebody like Phil Drake or Jack Nelson—these were guys who won gold medals at the Olympics. I held the national speed record for about three minutes—

03-00:05:52

Lage: Oh! Well, that's—

03-00:05:53

Wakeman: —in the Junior Olympics, but [laughs] then the next heat was run and that was that! My not even fifteen minutes of fame. And the coach was very tolerant of me. I was a sort of second-rung swimmer, but I earned a letter in it and I was very proud of that. It was a very, very demanding sport because of the conditioning. I would come back from four or five hours of swimming and just have to sleep before I could even do any homework at night. And then my senior year, I dropped off the swimming team, which was a hard thing for me to do, but the idea again was that I wasn't going to spend the entire year there and the idea was could I get through quickly and prepare for college. So my father and I went to see the headmistress of a private school that was really very little known then called Pine Crest. And it was mainly, its main source of students was Latin America. Very wealthy kids from Colombia, Venezuela—oil kids who were kids from fairly well-to-do families who'd lived in or retired to Florida. And it was both a boarding school and a day school. I went to the day—I didn't board there. And the deal that was made with her was that they would give me special attention, including extra courses. I wanted to get advanced standing in American history, French literature, English literature, and chemistry.

03-00:05:53

Lage: In order to enter Harvard.

03-00:07:27

Wakeman: Yes. Well, I mean, that was when advanced standing was first—AP was first coming into effect and I wanted—I actually flew up to Cambridge to talk to the guy in charge of it and it was, I was treated like an experimental thing. “We haven't done this before, we're going to see how this works.” The guy—it was a very personal thing. “And what we'll do is give you the freshman course syllabi then you can study those. That's essentially what I took back and gave to my instructors at Pine Crest. So I did organic chemistry, for example in high school. The guy, the chemistry teacher, was very nice to do

this—I imagine he was being prodded by the headmistress—he would give me an hour a day of organic chemistry, in addition to whatever else I was taking at the time. But I had a different teacher for that. And in English literature, I essentially did a senior paper, I may have mentioned that—on Lord Byron.

03-00:08:15

Lage: You did not mention it on the tape.

03-00:08:25

Wakeman: Oh, I didn't, OK.

03-00:08:28

Lage: It was after.

03-00:08:30

Wakeman: Oh, OK. I did a senior paper on Byron and the Greek independence movement and so on, which was actually—I enjoyed writing that very much. It was one of my first real research efforts, and I found I enjoyed doing research, and then ditto for all the other courses, American history—

03-00:08:46

Lage: So they were all sort of independent study.

03-00:08:54

Wakeman: Yes, they were. I took regular courses, and there were other requirements I had to fulfill. In order to, in other words, I would take the regular senior English class, but after class or after school, I'd stay and Mrs. {Demotte?} would spend an extra hour with me going over whatever the next part of the course was.

03-00:08:54

Lage: Wow, and did you say you were also completing the year in less than a year?

03-00:09:18

Wakeman: Yes.

03-00:09:20

Lage: Because you were going off somewhere?

03-00:09:22

Wakeman: Yes. I graduated in January, or late December, however they figured it, and my parents actually—oh, then I *did* board. My parents again decided rather suddenly because of my mother's health—they thought that she had tuberculosis and that a good place to go would be Madrid, because they knew of or—I don't know, my father had some contacts—they were intelligence people. But they knew of a very good doctor who, a man named {Galonza?}, who was a friend of another friend of ours {Antonucci?}, who was sort of a society doctor in New York. So given the doctor and the dry climate, Madrid seemed a good place to go. And they left early leaving me up at Pine Crest

where I boarded, and boarding was fun. My roommate was a guy named Steve Cohen who you've probably seen on television. Not the Steve Cohen who does India or whatever, but the fellow at Princeton who does the Soviet Union. He's written a lot of books and we keep in pretty close touch. Neither one of us realized we would end up doing Russia and China respectively, but—.

03-00:10:37

Lage: Did you fit in at that school?

03-00:10:39

Wakeman: Oh, yes.

03-00:10:39

Lage: Did you have to try to pass, or did it—

03-00:10:41

Wakeman: Oh, no, no, by then I was pretty confident.

03-00:10:42

Lage: Pretty adept at all this.

03-00:10:43

Wakeman: Pretty adept, and another thing, which I'll just simply put it frankly. As someone who went to school abroad or I also went abroad, even though we think of Americans as being preternaturally or prematurely sexual, usually your sexual experience is much more, much more extensive—

03-00:11:09

Lage: Abroad.

03-00:11:10

Wakeman: In Europe, yes. I mean I was just, so I was very successful with girls. And many of them older. Usually a year older. Usually they were seniors, and I was a junior or whatever. I think just because American boys were still fumbling around and not quite sure what to do. And that's the fifties, remember.

03-00:11:25

Lage: [chuckling] Yes.

03-00:11:31

Wakeman: A different era. And I'd seen quite a different slice of life. So—I, you know, I just—it's just silly?—I mean, I went about doing all of this extra work quite faithfully. And I just simply took it for granted that I would get into Harvard. I didn't know if I'd get the advanced placement thing. So I applied for that, I applied to go to Harvard, took the College Boards—

03-00:11:59

Lage: Because that was the only place you were considering, if I remember.

03-00:11:56

Wakeman:

That's right. I didn't apply anywhere else. And then after exams, there was a sort of a breathing space before the end of the term and I'd just—well, the night before, two nights before I had left to go to Madrid, we snuck out of the dormitory and went to a local beer place and using fake IDs, I, Steve, and one other guy drank a lot of beer and came back, and we were coming back up the fire escape and—the faculty head of the dorm was a man named Munsey who was the football coach. And there was Coach Munsey standing there waiting for us. Well, these two guys had to pay the price—

03-00:12:35

Lage:

Because you were leaving!

03-00:12:47

Wakeman:

I was leaving [laughs], "They can't touch me!" So I just kind of thought that was a wonderful time to make my escape. Then I went to Harvard again to check in with them, and I got to Boston Logan Airport and I didn't have very much money left, and they wanted to charge me a lot of overweight baggage and I just couldn't do it. So I remember going into a lavatory and taking all my clothing and throwing it away, and I'd bought a lot of books in Cambridge that I wanted to take with me to Madrid to read. I mean, I was so excited about going to Harvard. I thought, now, for the first time in my life I'll really be with people I can talk to, and so I threw out everything but my books away and my little typewriter—

03-00:13:29

Lage:

You threw all of these away?

03-00:13:31

Wakeman:

I didn't throw the books away, I threw my clothing away and I kept the typewriter and got on—

03-00:13:39

Lage:

All the heavy things you kept.

03-00:13:38

Wakeman:

All the heavy things, yes. And paid a little bit of overweight and then got on, I think it was TWA or something, to Madrid. When I got into Madrid I think I had about twenty dollars in my pocket. Maybe thirty, let's say thirty because I think the bus in from the airport to downtown is like seven dollars. And the customs man looked at the typewriter and—first of all he looked at the books and they confiscated about half of them because they were on the index.

03-00:13:39

Lage:

Oh, no, on Franco—

03-00:14:09

Wakeman:

Because Franco was—you know, the whole thing. And then they said, "What is that?" I said, "It's a typewriter." And they said, "Well, we'll look at this." They took me over to a room, they looked at it, and they said, "Well, how

much money do you have?" And I told them foolishly I had twenty-three dollars or something. "Well, as a matter of fact it's going to cost," I told them thirty—"it's going to cost twenty-three or twenty-two dollars that you have to pay us because you're importing a typewriter. And this is a controlled item. Now we'll give you the money back when you leave the country," which of course, even I knew was not going to happen.

I could have said keep the typewriter but I couldn't beat to part from this Olivetti, so I gave them the money and got on the bus. In fact, I didn't have my parents' address. I didn't know where they lived in the city. I had no idea what to do, so I went out, I got out at the downtown office of TWA, walked out on the sidewalk, it was Avenida José Antonio and I sat down, and I had enough money for a cup of coffee. I was thinking, Jesus, I'm going to have to go to the embassy and get Travelers Aid or something, to get the consuls to help me. And at that point I heard, "Oh, Freddy!" It was my sister and father walking down—

03-00:15:17

Lage: Oh! Just by chance!

03-00:15:21

Wakeman: They hardly ever went to that part of town, and I thought well, that's great. So—

03-00:15:22

Lage: There is a God.

03-00:15:27

Wakeman: I was out of high school and the rest of that nine months really was—

03-00:15:31

Lage: In Madrid.

03-00:15:33

Wakeman: Well, no. When I was in Madrid, I attended classes at the university, which was very politically under control then, and I took tutorials with a young graduate student, I suppose he was, whose brother was in the civil guards; his brother was a member of the regime. He was a Basque and I, just, we would meet and talk about things. I was reading Unamuno then and started reading in the Spanish Enlightenment—Jovellanos, Espronceda—to get a good sense of Spanish literature. And then we went to Mallorca. My mother turned out to be fine, so my father said again, "Well, let's go somewhere nice, let's go to Mallorca." We hadn't been to Mallorca.

Now I wanted to go to Mallorca because Robert Graves lived on Mallorca, and I just had read all of Robert Graves's stuff. I thought he was fabulous. *Count Belisarius, I, Claudius*, to name but a few. And I thought that would be wonderful to get to meet him because I knew my father knew somebody who knew him. So we got ourselves all together. My father, as usual, was

completely confused as to which train to take, and I remember sitting in the train with all of our worldly goods, practically, with my little brother and my parents, my father with typical sort of great kind of “Well, I’m going to get a cup of coffee.” I said, “But Dad, the damn train is leaving in seven minutes.” “Oh, there’s plenty of time.” And I was sitting [nervously chuckling], and I think, No! I don’t even have my passport. My mother’s carrying my passport. And the train—

03-00:17:21

Lage: Does he go with your mother to get the coffee?

03-00:17:26

Wakeman: Yes, my father, my mother, my sister all went to get coffee leaving me and my little brother and this luggage. And I realized I had no money, I had no passport—what if they, well, they almost missed the train. Anyway, we got to Mallorca and I was by then, I was spending far too much time in nightclubs with Gypsy dancers.

03-00:17:43

Lage: In Madrid or Mallorca?

03-00:17:53

Wakeman: Both places—[laughs]—both places! Ahh, my.

03-00:18:00

Lage: And your parents never commented on that?

03-00:18:02

Wakeman: Well, the only time, I think, well, no it was OK. My mother was very realistic about those things. One night I went out on the town; you know Madrid then was a city of prostitutes. You couldn’t date a woman who was not a professional sex worker, as they now say. And I—my evenings were very, I worked very hard during the day and then in the evenings dined late as they do in Madrid, would go to a musical or a movie or a performance, symphony, and then end up going to night clubs, and these women all got to know me, and they were all very fond of me and so, [I was] sort of moving around this demimonde. One night my father came with me, he wanted to find—he was writing a book called *The Deluxe Tour* and he wanted to do some research. So I had this one girlfriend who was very—she looked like a young Barbara Stanwyck. And a long evening. I almost got killed that evening because I foolishly drew a knife on someone, but luckily my father got us out of that. But, in any case, halfway through the evening I didn’t have any money, and I knew if I spent the night with this young woman I’d have to give her something in the morning, so I went back to the apartment. My father by then realized he’d better bow out, and I went into the bedroom. My mother always kept her money in a foot locker at the foot of the bed. I said, “Mom, I’m taking,” she was asleep, “Mom, I’m taking some money.” And she said, “What are you taking money for, I just gave you some.” I said, “Well, I have a

young woman.” And then she just said, “Well, OK, take the money but be sure to take precautions.” And I said, “Yes, mother,” and left.

So it was very—casual about that, and in any event, during that summer I fell in love with a wealthy Canadian heiress who was—she and her sister were visiting Mallorca and they were from Montreal, and they persuaded me to go to Paris, where the sister had a boyfriend and where her mother, who was quite a flamboyant woman, was coming with her own—well, essentially she was the mistress of a very famous international lawyer, a Canadian. And we went up there; I had a certain amount of money, but it was a very, very, lost, lost summer. And this woman became very attached, so to speak. And I got very sick.

03-00:19:58

Lage: She became attached to you. You became sick. [chuckles]

03-00:20:41

Wakeman: Well, I was worn out, from the nightclubbing, you know, all that stuff. And I had realized I was not, I was getting sick. I'd always been having trouble with strep throats and matters were made worse, again, by the fact that I had no money when I got back to Barcelona and had to sleep steerage, which meant sleeping on the deck all the way across to the Iberian Islands. Yes, because my parents were still there.

03-00:20:55

Lage: In Mallorca.

03-00:21:11

Wakeman: And when I got to Palma, I had developed a tremendously bad tonsillitis and eventually—that was still—people were nervous about tonsillectomies and polio. So I had to wait and wait and finally had my tonsils removed and then in that sort of daze, got on the airplane, leaving my parents there, and flew back to Boston.

03-00:21:36

Lage: To go to Harvard!

03-00:21:37

Wakeman: To go to school, yes.

03-00:21:37

Lage: And that's where we'll start next time.

03-00:21:38

Wakeman: We'll start there next time.

03-00:21:41

Lage: That's a very unusual entry to Harvard, I would say.

03-00:21:45

Wakeman: Yes, it was.

03-00:21:45

Lage: Your fellow students weren't coming from the same milieu.

03-00:21:48

Wakeman: No—yes, that's true.

03-00:21:51

Lage: So that'll be a good starting place.

## Interview 3: April 20, 2005

Audiofile 4 Wakeman 04 04-20-05.wav

04-00:00:00

Lage: Now we're on and today is April 20, 2005, and this is the third interview with Fred Wakeman. We were just looking over kind of a general outline for where we're going so we have a good sense of that, I hope. But today—let's see, last time we finished your peripatetic youth, and started your unusual education.

04-00:00:26

Wakeman: I was sort of leaving, getting on an airplane to fly back to the States and still somewhat weak from my tonsillectomy.

04-00:00:39

Lage: Right, so that's where we are, we're on Harvard's doorstep.

04-00:00:42

Wakeman: On Harvard's doorstep, yes.

04-00:00:44

Lage: And I made you promise that at some point along the way here you're going to reflect on the impact of that unusual upbringing.

04-00:00:51

Wakeman: Yes.

04-00:00:51

Lage: —on your evolution.

04-00:00:52

Wakeman: Which I will do. I'd rather put that off for a minute, though, and just kind of continue chronologically. Well, I mean, Harvard was—I was—it was both sort of coming back to the States in a way but also, I think that I had felt, and perhaps this was part of the impact of my earlier youthful experiences, something of an outsider and that this was, that somehow I would find at Harvard people like myself—which of course is never the case. But I—

04-00:01:27

Lage: Yes, you thought you'd find people who'd read the way you'd read—

04-00:01:32

Wakeman: Well, yes, and who'd—and certainly there were people who read a lot, it wasn't that I mean—but that somehow I would find, I don't know if the word soul mate is appropriate in that sense, but people who could understand what I was saying or that I could speak with, with whom I could speak, who would be responsive and interesting and we could have genuine—and I did make friends of that sort at Harvard. But Harvard then was a very—it was—sort of hard to find words to put this in—but it was—there was one part of Harvard that was pretty well closed to most people, which was the final club side, and that was very, very closed to all but a—much more so then than now—

04-00:02:28

Lage: What is the final—

04-00:02:29

Wakeman: The final club—eating clubs. Harvard then about 8 or 9 percent of the undergraduates were members of final clubs, and you sort of knew about them. If you were just a regular undergraduate you knew that was where PC— [Porcellian Club] was and there was the Fly Club and so forth, but you didn't quite—because some of them had rather very imposing buildings. But it was just another world. You'd see people going in and out in tuxedos for their dinners and assumed that they were Cabots or Lodges or Peabodys or whatever. So I didn't even know that was there. I certainly had no wish to get involved in all of that, but I came to Harvard without any kind of typed or easily typeable social background, so one of the advantages to that I discovered was that I could move across various lines. I wasn't pigeonholed so readily.

04-00:03:30

Lage: And you were used to moving across lines.

04-00:03:32

Wakeman: And I was used to moving across lines, exactly. And I found that I was—first of all, I went to Harvard as an honorary national scholar, a Harvard Scholar, there are six of them.

04-00:03:43

Lage: And how does one become that?

04-00:03:45

Wakeman: Well, that's when you apply, your local Harvard Club recommends you, and they pick the six best, but it's regionally done. They are not all from Boston or whatever. And I was flattered when I was told I had been given that. It was honorary because there were Harvard scholars, national scholars who got stipends, but my parents were well off so I could be an honorary one; they didn't have to pay me any money. And almost instantly you were greeted by the president and at that time it was [Nathan] Pusey, whose son I later became very close to, and I remember it was Pusey and Demos, who was a professor of philosophy, whose son John is now, again, a person I got to know quite well, who is now a major American historian—wrote a wonderful book on the Salem witch trials. So here you were with five other people, and obviously it wasn't just meeting a bunch of valedictorians. These were very interesting people; they had something, you know. They all had different interests and hobbies and some played the cello. The sort of thing that you get used to thinking about particularly in this day and age. Of course, well then, you try to prepare kids for that but I don't think I had any conception of being prepared in that sense. But that was pretty heady, and also the main requirement for your first year under that old system, prior to the [Henry] Rosovsky change in the undergraduate—

04-00:05:19

Lage: This would have been '55 right?

04-00:05:21

Wakeman: Fifty-five, yes. Prior to Rosovsky's change of the curriculum, you had to take a number of general education courses in natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences at the lower division, freshman, sophomore level, and then as juniors and seniors. And then also something called Subject A, or Gen Ed A, or something like that, I can't remember the exact title, but it was essentially composition and writing. And you could test out of that. It was a dreary sort of course to take if you—a little bit like Subject A here, I mean, you went and you handed in a paper each week and the instructor who was some graduate student in the English department would [makes marking motions on paper]—you know, the usual thing.

04-00:06:08

Lage: You'd taken all these advanced placement tests. Did you test out of any of these?

04-00:06:10

Wakeman: Yes, that wasn't one of the advanced placement tests, but they did give it to you. You took a test and a small handful of people passed that, so you didn't have to do this what I felt was nonsense. Everybody had the same little red textbook, and I would feel pity for my roommates because they had to do this.

04-00:06:30

Lage: But you didn't have to do it.

04-00:06:32

Wakeman: No, no. We just met and we had a wonderful, I just wrote a lot of papers on things that interested me. I wrote on—I was very much fascinated by Jung then and I was also very much interested in French poetry, modern French poetry. And that wasn't really modern, but Verlaine and Rimbaud and so forth. I wrote a paper on Rimbaud, I remember, another one on cybernetics and Norbert Wiener, which most people didn't even know about then. So it was an interesting, interesting course to take. But the point I guess I'm making is that I met all kinds of interesting people in that course. And I also got to know people in the sort of Harvard literary world, because I joined the *Advocate* for a while and Hasty Pudding and all that stuff. But the editor of the *Crimson* was a very close friend. So that was—the first year—well, all the years were wonderful, but it was very heady stuff. I was meeting people that I—

04-00:07:32

Lage: You weren't disappointed.

04-00:07:34

Wakeman: No, not with them. I was disappointed, I think with the social stratification in the place. My roommates were all Exeter boys. They had, usually freshmen

had suites, and you had two bedrooms to the suite, and each bedroom had two beds in it or bunk beds, and initially three of my roommates were from Exeter.

04-00:08:05

Lage: Just by chance.

04-00:08:06

Wakeman: Well, they admit about seventy people from Exeter, and then another fifty from Andover, or something. At least they did then. And they were—it was funny to observe them because they were pretty well educated, but they were socially very, very young. They had no contact with women. Harvard wasn't coeducational, and of course Exeter wasn't either, so they were completely—but they could skate along that first year. They were sufficiently well prepared so that the first year, the freshman year courses were not very difficult for them unless they were taking organic chemistry or one of the backbreaking statistic courses or second-year physics, or whatever, but basically they could live off of their accumulated reserves. They were on battery—

04-00:08:54

Lage: They had time on their hands.

04-00:08:55

Wakeman: Time on their hands! And it was very, very, some sort of high jinks kind of thing. This was, after all, the fifties. I unfortunately, or fortunately, I don't know what's better to say, quickly got this reputation of being different in the sense that I seemed to know a lot about young women. And two young women that I'd had relationships with before showed up, sort of, unannounced. I had broken up with both of them; they showed up unannounced in tremendous anger in the case of one and despair in the case of the other, and they came—one stood outside my college dorm window shouting in the snow and people saying, "What is with this? What, who is this?"

04-00:09:44

Lage: Were they people you'd known at Harvard?

04-00:09:47

Wakeman: No, no, these were—

04-00:09:48

Lage: From your past.

04-00:09:48

Wakeman: These were people from my past.

04-00:09:49

Lage: From various parts of the world?

04-00:09:52

Wakeman:

Well, one was from Canada. This woman I mentioned before, and she came down, and she tried to throw herself out of the Ritz Hotel, which I prevented her from doing. The other one was a young woman I'd dated, well, dated—I was having an affair with her, who was going to a southern girls' school, young women's school. The language of the time, the language of the time, the lingo of the time creeps in. So, and then a very embarrassing thing occurred. When I went in for my physical—my physical was OK—also I had joined the Harvard swimming team, which I didn't intend to do, but I was down in the pool one day, and I'd had a year off from competitive swimming, and sometimes if you've had a year off from a sport that you've trained in, you'll get very good times when you first start up again.

04-00:10:49

Lage:

Initially.

04-00:10:50

Wakeman:

Yes. And so I was down there and swimming my stroke; I did individual medley and butterfly mainly. I also did freestyle and sprints and things like that. But the coach of the team saw me swimming and he said, "Where did you learn how to"—"have you swum competitively? You seem to have swum com[petitively]"—"I said, "Yes, yes." He said, "Who was your coach?" And I told him, and of course he knew this man Lamar, Tom Lamar, who was a very famous swimming coach. And he said, "Well, why don't you give me a hundred meters?" And I did and I turned in a fantastic time. But I knew, he didn't know, *I knew* that that was NOT to be repeated! And so I swam for a year. It was fun, although, the big meet—I still remember the big meet with Yale where in the *Crimson* they had a cartoon of four or five Harvard geeks poised to dive in, and then just down the starting block from them were four Yale students who looked like the creature from the black lagoon—they had gills and fins [chuckling]. They obviously were much more piscine than we were, and that's the way I felt when I swam against them. So, this was all part of—and I could sort of coast too, although I had some wonderful courses that year. I think I was—

04-00:12:11

Lage:

Now you said you were disturbed by the social stratification, but you didn't continue with that.

04-00:12:14

Wakeman:

Oh, I'm sorry—yes. And these Exeter kids could be very cruel. They could—the art of the insult was highly developed there, and I didn't have any problem with that but other people I saw just terribly hurt by them.

04-00:12:34

Lage:

And did they turn this against religious, race, social class—

04-00:12:41

Wakeman:

Well, in one case, homophobia. I had—one of my roommates—I guess they must have known about this from Exeter, but one of my roommates, who is still a very dear friend—he became a foreign service officer eventually. He's now retired. One night we were lying in our bunks, he was on the top bunk and I was on the bottom. He started talking to me about Gide—André Gide and *Les Faux-monnayeurs* which, as you know, is about a homosexual relationship, and of course, I understood what he was alluding to, and I asked several questions which let him know that I knew that he was gay and that didn't trouble—my parents had so many homosexual friends in artistic circles that it didn't strike me as being at all odd or bizarre. But these two other guys—you know, the suite is there, and you've got these two bedrooms and the doors were open, it was early in the year, so it was still Indian summer—heard every word of it, and they were so cutting to him that eventually he had to go to another room. He couldn't stay, my roommate, he just told me I can't stay around these fellows. And then later he actually fell in love with a young man, and the young guy, who was a very naïve kid from Kansas, went to the head of Adams House, and you know, he'd been approached, and in those days those things were very sotto voce and my friend came to me and said, "I have to leave for a year and I've got to seek therapy," and so forth. And I don't think he's ever actually—well, I know he hasn't come out of the closet, but I don't think he actually even ever experimented. He got married.

04-00:14:32

Lage:

He was in the foreign service, so I'm sure at that time—

04-00:14:34

Wakeman:

Well, it would, no, that was the worst thing in the world. That would have—if you were a homosexual—I think [Walter Scott] McLeod then was the security chief. It was just terrible and furthermore he was terribly embarrassed. In that era in America, in the United States, was just impossible. But he married as a senior and they're still happily married. They are very devout Episcopalians. He has some big lay role in the church as does his wife. And I see him almost every year. He comes out here. He travels for the church now.

04-00:15:09

Lage:

Is it ever discussed?

04-00:15:10

Wakeman:

He wrote me a letter once many years later when he was serving in Haiti and he talked about—he had a metaphor for it—it was like living, walking around the rim of a bowl of some delicious food and you just couldn't afford to fall in. It was clear what he was talking about and I sensed a—but I think that's part of the religiosity. I think he found his faith and believes, and he has wonderful kids who are now adults. But I had seen that and it disturbed me. I thought, "My God, these people can be so petty."

And then partly through these Bermuda friends, I suddenly found myself being tapped for these various clubs. In the meantime, because I was angry with my Exeter roommates, I more or less sort of moved in—I didn't move out, but I spent an awful lot of time with the kids across the hall. In those days, it was stupid—the feuds you would get into. And at the end of the year you had to pay for this because they would send around the authorities and they would see what damages the room had, and I remember one cartoon in the *Crimson* also of a guy driving—you were never supposed to drive a nail in the wall for pictures—driving a nail in the wall and the wall goes and the next wall, the next wall, and at the end of the cartoon you're being asked to build a new house for Harvard. And that was sort of the feeling one had—that they would come and get you. We did things like, oh, I don't know, set fires, pour lighter fluid under the door, just absolutely nutty stuff. In fact—I'm getting off on this—in fact, I actually organized a riot. There had been a riot the year before when they ended maid service.

04-00:16:59

Lage:

Oh, OK. So it did have a purpose.

04-00:17:02

Wakeman:

Well, yes. We just wanted to have a riot. It wasn't really a riot—well, it was a riot, I guess. We were very envious of the sophomore class because they'd had their riot over—they'd been given brooms in place of maids, and they'd gone out and burned them in the Harvard yard. Well, we couldn't repeat that, so at that time there was a Cambridge city councilman, assemblyman, named [Al] Vellucci, and he was one of these representing sort of the town versus gown sentiment. A little bit like now with taxing [UC] Berkeley. They wanted to tax Harvard, Harvard had too much land, control Harvard's expansion. So we decided to start a movement against Vellucci, which we did, and we actually got a *Time Magazine* local Boston stringer to come over to be told about this. We told him that we were organizing this movement. I remember we actually met him at the Harvard Square MTA and blindfolded this guy and took him around the yard into our room like some sort of secret society and told him—he said, “Well, there might be a story in that, if there actually were some sort of demonstration.”

So we planned this demonstration, and it actually worked. We had people planted around, at 10:00 o'clock a certain evening they were all to come in to the rally in Harvard Yard, and we would have a big political rally and march on Vellucci's house. Well, that was fine, but we hadn't really thought it through very carefully. First, they closed the gates of the Yard, the Harvard police closed the gates, but then there was a gate open by Straus Hall, and we all streamed out of there, and once we got on the streets then the Cambridge police backed up by the Boston police came in, and that was really—those guys don't like Harvard [pronounces Hahvahd] kids anyway. So a lot of people were sent to hospitals.

04-00:19:02

Lage: They came in with clubs?

04-00:19:03

Wakeman: Oh, yes. And Black Marias—they were tossing people in them.

04-00:19:07

Lage: That was more than you'd bargained for.

04-00:19:09

Wakeman: Oh, absolutely. I was really horrified at what had happened, but it was all done in the spirit of high jinks and backfired. Anyway, the young men that I was spending most of the time with were very, very interesting people. My closest friend was an Italian American—Ted Riccardi, who later became—well, he is now retired, living in Kathmandu—he was a professor at Columbia and chairman of their Near Eastern languages department. And really he was one of the ones who got me pointed towards China in a certain way. But Ted is a wonderful man. He's a marvelous musician. If you can hum it, I'll play it. He didn't even use those prompt books. He could play anything. He looks today about the way he looked then. He looked fifty, sixty years old when he was fifteen. So his uncle was Petrillo's—the head of the musician's union—Petrillo's assistant—and that meant he got very good jobs or gigs. He used to play down on the Jersey shore in the summer. Normally you can't play in a bar if you're underage. But nobody thought to challenge that. He looked like he was at least—

04-00:20:37

Lage: Fifty or sixty!

04-00:20:37

Wakeman: —in his fifties, you know. And that's how he made his money. But he also was a very good classical pianist and just a wonderful man. We used to have this running joke about—we loved, at least I had—well, he did too, we loved Conan Doyle and we'd talk about various Sherlock Holmes adventures in great detail. There's one—I think it's in *The Speckled Band*, where Watson turns to Holmes and says, “Oh, Holmes, do you remember the giant white rat of Sumatra?” And Holmes says, “Oh, Watson, the world is not yet ready for that tale.” And damn it! This year, or last year, Ted sent me an email and he's now hovering in Kathmandu worrying about this uprising there, this Maoist thing, sent me an email saying I've just published a book, the untold stories, or *The Eastern Stories of Sherlock Holmes*, and Knopf has published this book [clarification: *The Oriental Casebook of Sherlock Holmes*]. It's actually very well written, and there is the giant white rat of Sumatra. In other words, he did—of course there was a famous thing where Moriarty supposedly kills him and then he returns. Conan Doyle had to revive him. Well, after, at the end of the Holmes series, actually Holmes escapes to the Orient and continues with his adventures, and Ted gets him back into England, and it's really—because Ted has spent so much time in India and in Tibet and Nepal, a lot of the adventures are set in the Himalayas, but this is the sort of thing—

04-00:22:16

Lage: So here's another kind of spy intelligence link to your life.

04-00:22:21

Wakeman: Well, that's—I can't talk about that very much. But, yes. That's interesting. In fact, both of us were going to go into the State Department, and then we decided that wasn't really where the action was. Anyway, Ted was a fantastic linguist, I mean really, he just could swallow a language or osmotically absorb a language in almost no time at all.

04-00:22:45

Lage: Did he know at the time he wanted to study Near Eastern—

04-00:22:48

Wakeman: No, he and I studied Russian together, and it was very depressing for me because I had to work so much harder than he did.

04-00:22:53

Lage: And here you were pretty fantastic a linguist yourself!

04-00:22:55

Wakeman: Yes, I thought I was pretty good. But Ted really is a genius. He was a wonderful ear and I suppose it's part of the musical—he has absolutely perfect pitch. He can't stand to hear a piano out of tune. It drives him nuts. But Ted—so we did languages together quite a lot. And he and I both started out in philosophy. He continued in philosophy. One time we decided to take—Reinhold Niebuhr was giving a course so we went to Niebuhr's office hours, and it was a graduate seminar and we were only, I think, sophomores, and we went there and asked him could we get into his seminar. He said—well, he talked to us a while and he said, "Yes, I would be willing to admit you into the seminar, but first you have to do a little bit of extra reading. And if you've read—do this in the next couple of weeks—you can start coming to the seminar." And we said, "Oh, fine." That sounded good to us. And he handed each of us the equivalent, I guess, of my PhD syllabus. I mean it would have taken—[laughing emphatically]

04-00:23:59

Lage: Had you read any of it?

04-00:24:00

Wakeman: Oh, yes, some of it sure, sure. We were taking a course with a man named John Wild on phenomenology at the time, so we had read Husserl and Heidegger and so forth. But this was—and I was taking a course with Quine on Kant, so it wasn't as though we were totally ignorant, but—it was, I mean, it would be more than you'd ask a PhD student to do! And I know he was pulling our leg. The other thing I remember from that year—

04-00:24:26

Lage: So you didn't go to that class. [laughing]

04-00:24:26

Wakeman:

No, no. The other thing I remember is, somewhat poignantly, was one of my other friends—{George Falwell?}, who later became a neurosurgeon and I—we were both writing a lot of poetry then—really lousy stuff, but that’s true for most young poets. And he said, “Let’s go see Robert Snow.” [means Frost] And I said, “No, we can’t do that.” He said, “Yes, he lives here in Cambridge. We’ll just go and talk to him.” And I guess that must have been the fall of my sophomore year—and we went over and it was just after we came back from summer vacation and so it was still very summery there and I remember going up to his house. I was very nervous and I didn’t think this was a good idea. But George was much more outgoing, went up, and there was just a screen door, the main wooden door was open. So he knocked on the screen door, on the frame of the screen door and there appeared Frost—you know he was quite a big, tall man—looking at us quizzically and he said, “Yes, yes.” And George said, he sort of stuttered, he said, “Wwwwwwe’re poets.” [laughter] And Frost considered that for a moment, and he said, “You know, you can’t just call yourself a poet.” And then he closed the wooden door very slowly. And we were so crestfallen! [laughing]. Oh, boy.

04-00:25:52

Lage:

It would make a good cartoon!

04-00:25:54

Wakeman:

Yes, you just can’t call yourself a poet. He was absolutely right! But those people knew nothing of this other world, this final club world.

04-00:26:05

Lage:

So you were in the club—

04-00:26:07

Wakeman:

Yes, I joined—

04-00:26:08

Lage:

—and also had all these friends who were, would we call them independents here?

04-00:26:12

Wakeman:

Well, no, they didn’t, they thought of the club society as being anti-intellectual, as being snobbish, as being the sort of people who took gentlemen’s C’s, they weren’t interesting intellectually. Who would want to spend any time around them? They were all drinking too much. And it’s true. That was very much the life of the club world. The way they, I suppose they still do it that way, they have a punching season where you are invited to parties, black-tie parties, only a few of which can actually take place in the club. A lot of them are at restaurants or roadhouses, and then at the end of the season—it’s all regulated—on a certain Sunday, early Sunday morning, you get slips under your door if a club wants you to join and you’re elected in the old blackball way. There is a box and you can reach in and pull out a white ball or black ball and drop it in and nobody can see how you vote. I got

several offers and I didn't—my parents, my father—I had somehow fooled my parents into believing, my mother anyway, into believing that the Harvard Coop was something to do with the university, so I was charging things right and left, you know! [laughing] And then at the end of my freshman year, my father, or when he was doing his taxes or something, his accountant noticed all of this. My father said—my father knew what the Harvard Coop was and he said, "What is this?" And he got very angry at me because he knew that I was fooling my mother. She thought she was paying tuition bills or something. And of course I was buying books right and left. And so he was very down, but my father was enough of a snob, let's see—they were living in London then, and he was a friend of T.S. Eliot, or Eliot was a friend. And he told T.S. Eliot about this, and Eliot, who's a snob—

04-00:28:14

Lage: About the Coop or about the eating club?

04-00:28:16

Wakeman: About the club, the eating club, because my father didn't want to pay for it. There was an initiation fee and then you had to pay—

04-00:28:22

Lage: And your father wasn't part of that world.

04-00:28:24

Wakeman: No, no. But I think he was impressed that Eliot knew all about it, and Eliot had not made it into a club. And so he thought, well, maybe it's—so he said, "Yes, well, OK, I'll pay for it." And so I decided to join a club which was—it really was—I felt as though I was living in a very bifurcated world.

04-00:28:43

Lage: Was this during your freshman year? Or at the end of it?

04-00:28:45

Wakeman: No, this was during my sophomore year.

04-00:28:46

Lage: Sophomore. You felt a tension between these two—

04-00:28:49

Wakeman: Yes, I sort of didn't want my other friends to know I belonged to this club, and they thought of them as a bunch of intellectuals, or Jews, or—and I got into a hu[ge], I finally resigned. It was the DU Club, which is now the Fly Club. And I finally resigned because this one, again, I guess, the stratification business, I suppose. This one fellow was, had been entertained for membership, and I liked him very much. He was the adopted son of Pearl Buck and Walsh—the publisher's name is Walsh, Ed Walsh. And Ed—I shouldn't be, this is probably, anyway, the fact that he was adopted and his pedigree was not certain—I'm putting it very delicately—led one snotty little kid who had just joined the club, this is when I was in my junior year, to black ball him. And he managed to drum up enough support to get two other black

balls. You couldn't challenge a black ball—no wait, he didn't get the other two—that's right. You couldn't challenge a black ball vote if there were three black balls. If there were two, you could ask who had put in the black balls. If there were one, the person had to explain why they did it, and there was only one so I said, "What is this?" And a furious argument broke out over this issue, which revolved around anti-Semitism. And I said, "Well, I'm sorry, I can't stay in this club." They were very upset, you just don't quit a club. And they said, "Well, we'll pay." My excuse was my parents were getting divorced, and I didn't have any money. But they said, that doesn't matter, you don't have to pay any money. And I'm still on their books.

04-00:30:39

Lage: But you said you wouldn't—you were going to quit—

04-00:30:42

Wakeman: I quit, yes.

04-00:30:43

Lage: But you were quitting over an issue, so how would paying the money have solved it?

04-00:30:48

Wakeman: No, no. They said, they thought, I was giving them—I had already—first I told them I didn't want to make it sound like I was quitting over the issue—I said, I simply can't afford to remain in the club.

04-00:30:59

Lage: Oh, I see, you didn't make it about the issue.

04-00:31:01

Wakeman: And then on the second round it was taken very seriously, the discussion was, well, there must be something more than that because we can take care of the money, that's not an issue. I said, "Yes, I'm quitting because of this argument and the fact that some people in the room seem to sympathize with this fellow." So I said, "I've had it." But they acted as though I hadn't done it. I didn't go to the club any more. You can dine there, they had squash courts, and it's a very cushy place. And in Massachusetts, which then had a drinking age of twenty-one, if you wanted to drink, that's where you got a drink, because there was a steward and a bar and all the rest of it. But I never got any more bills from them, but now, ever since I've graduated they still send me this stuff, you know, we're going to have this at the Harvard-Yale game, please come back, blah, blah—but—

04-00:31:58

Lage: It's very much like a fraternity, it seems.

04-00:32:00

Wakeman: Well, they were fraternities originally. The fraternities were outlawed at Harvard in, I think, 1932, for precisely that. And then there was—again, it's sort of terribly hypocritical. There was a Jewish club called Bat Club and

somehow they thought that was going to solve this problem, but it didn't. It obviously didn't. And I just felt terribly disloyal. Next to Ted Riccardi, my best friend was Jewish, from Ohio, really funny guy who was on the football team and an artist—he's an artist now. One of the ways I got involved in Chinese studies was also through him. But in the middle of all this, I was just really enjoying Harvard as an intellectual place to be. I made a terrible mistake in a way. I thought that all you had to do was read.

04-00:32:55

Lage: As opposed to writing?

04-00:32:59

Wakeman: To go to class. So, I'm fairly nocturnal anyway and I became completely nocturnal. I'd stay up all night reading and if there were a topic, instead of just reading the one book, I'd read six books about it. And I thought that would give me an edge up. I got—

04-00:33:19

Lage: Would you show up for the tests?

04-00:33:21

Wakeman: Oh, yes. I got straight A's so there was no problem about that, but I had to work very hard, and I can remember one night, for example when I was a freshman falling asleep in Lamont Library and being locked in the library all night. I was in the poetry reading room, which had very plush chairs like the Morrison Room here, and the janitor—I was that deep in a chair, the janitor didn't see me, and I woke up about—I must have been exhausted and going down and I couldn't—the damn thing was locked! I couldn't get out. I had to wait until they opened it up in the morning. But my image was sort of Eugene Gant, standing there in the stacks just reading, reading, reading and I would look at the course book and think, how could I take, maybe I should take an extra couple of years. I can't take all these courses, there isn't time! I've got—[chuckling] really, just—but the fellow who became a foreign service officer and who graduated a year later than I did because of this year off that he took, made equally good grades. He also graduated with highest honors, and I couldn't understand how he did that because he wasn't reading very much. And I said to him, "How did you—tell me the secret." He said, "Well, you go and listen to the professor and take notes." I said, "Really?" [laughter] Jesus, what a stupid fool!

04-00:34:41

Lage: So this was just something—

04-00:34:43

Wakeman: I would go to lectures, particularly with good—and I had some great professors. People I don't think you'd know, but a man named [Rene] Jasinski, who was a Polish intellectual who taught French novel. I was very interested in the nineteenth century novel then. And Morton White, I

mentioned in that essay about telling history<sup>6</sup>. I had a course with him. And so on—Clyde Kluckhohn, Henry Murray, these were people that—Kluckhohn really—I developed a very strong interest in anthropology as a result of that. I thought even of majoring in it.

04-00:35:26

Lage: So you did get some relationship or attend lectures—

04-00:35:29

Wakeman: Yes, I did, and of course there was the tutorial system. As a sophomore when you're supposed to declare your field of concentration, there's one field you can't just choose, you have to be chosen for. There's a, they have grades and interviews and so forth, which provides more concentrated tuition than—by tuition I mean being with a tutor more often—and that was history and literature, in which you could either take one culture or one nation as it was divided then, or three and do the history and literature of these three together. So I was selected for that major, which was wonderful because the tutorials were every week, several hours. I had wonderful tutors.

04-00:36:19

Lage: And which—did you pick the three—

04-00:36:22

Wakeman: Yes, France, England, and Spain. Spain including Latin America, so I took—in fact, I took more—

04-00:36:29

Lage: No wonder you had to read so much.

04-00:36:30

Wakeman: Yes, well, that's true, yes, that's true. And I was taking a lot of literature courses and mainly in Spanish or in French. It was really very interesting. From philosophy I thought I would do Romance languages. That was sort of the halfway turning point, and then history and lit, and that turned out to sort of steer me towards history, because I think the first history course I took was with William Langer and it was on essentially diplomatic history from the Congress of Vienna to World War I, bread and butter diplomatic history. And he would sit up there in that twang of his, and I think he was reading. He had notes in front of him, but it was all done in a kind of conversational tone of voice, and he'd just talk about how, this, that—it was just amazing to me, all of a sudden I could see connections, the connectedness of it all. It really excited me.

04-00:37:38

Lage: Did he make a story of it?

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<sup>6</sup> Wakeman, "Telling Chinese History," *Modern China*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (April 1998), 162-182.

04-00:37:40

Wakeman:

Well, yes, he was in narrative—although he’s mainly noted for his diplomatic histories, or studies of diplomatic crises, and probably best known for his presidential address to the AHA on history and psychoanalysis [1957]—he really was a storyteller. And I didn’t know it at the time, of course, but he had been head of the research division of the OSS [Office of Strategic Services].

04-00:38:04

Lage:

Intelligence.

04-00:38:06

Wakeman:

Almost all of my professors were OSS, I discovered later.

04-00:38:10

Lage:

The people in history.

04-00:38:11

Wakeman:

In history, yes. My major professor was H. Stuart Hughes, who had been head of the OSS in North Africa in Casablanca, and then during the Jedburg days when they were flying people in around the time of the Normandy invasion, he parachuted into France. He was a wonderful man. He was very hard to get to see. He had just come there. I think he’d been at Brown before, and he was—who was his—oh, Hughes was the chief justice at the time of Taft.

04-00:38:49

Lage:

This Hughes?

04-00:38:50

Wakeman:

No, not this Hughes. Oh, I’m sorry, his grandfather was the chief justice. Not this Hughes, no, no, no. But, he had just written a book called *Consciousness and Society*, which was an intellectual history, and he used that mainly as a text for this course, which—people were just sitting in the aisles. He was very, very popular, and I asked him if he could be my tutor, which was very unusual, usually they assign it to a younger assistant professor or a lecturer or a graduate student, and he agreed. He said I would have to have another tutor, but he would see me on the same basis. So I would go and spend an hour a week with him in his office in Widener [Library], which is much more private, and we just worked our way through this period of intellectual history, and it was under him that I wrote my bachelor’s, my honor’s thesis.

04-00:39:45

Lage:

On what topic?

04-00:39:47

Wakeman:

Well, I started out—again maybe I’ll go back just a step. After Langer, I decided that I—now that I knew the European diplomatic scene, I’d start off with British history, so I took a course with my housemaster, David Owen, who was the master of Winthrop House. And Owen, a wonderful man who has written mainly on eighteenth century philanthropy, gave this course which was in nineteenth century British history, which to me was just one factory act

after another, you know, and I didn't—I couldn't see any pattern in it. So finally I had this idea, knowing nothing about history, or how to do it—why of course, I'd read historians—but I had this idea, well, I'll get myself a large piece of cardboard, and I finally nosed around and found an empty refrigerator carton. So I cut out one of the panels, took it back, and very painfully and carefully measured off the years—this was again, probably 1850 to whatever, probably 1914, the years and the months. And then as I read, I would write in—

04-00:41:20

Lage: Which factory act—

04-00:41:20

Wakeman: Which factory act, the charter movement, Peterloo, or whatever, and my thought was that there would come a moment of epiphany when I would look at this chart and it would all make sense.

04-00:41:34

Lage: And you'd have a William Langer lecture. [chuckling]

04-00:41:36

Wakeman: And I'd have a William Langer lecture! But that's what I thought was going to be required. The act of synthesis would come in a blinding flash. Now by then, I was rooming with a guy who was the goalie of the Harvard hockey team. He was a great big man—six foot eight and he weighed about 280 pounds. And I used to go out hunting, or skeet shooting, at his family home out in Wellesley. But anyway, this guy had to go to bed about 9 o'clock at night. He *insisted* upon this—upon absolute silence. In fact, our room in Winthrop House was over the music practice room in the basement, and you could very faintly hear if someone were playing the piano. And I can remember several times his going down and accosting some proctor or other tutor in this and just—"You stop playing." It was—OK! [chuckling] and then he'd stomp back up, get in the bunk and the bunk would just sink down just about to my nose.

But it was very frustrating because I had this nocturnal habit, so I took to studying in the rooms of this friend Dick Leibowitz—this is a guy who was briefly on the football team and he had gone to Andover. His brother, Al Leibowitz, was getting a PhD in English at the time. Dick was a wonderful young guy. He did seem very young to me, but he was constantly falling in love. He was in those days, very few people did this, he was experimenting with peyote and hallucinogenic drugs. He thought of himself as a Bohemian. He had a lot of money. His father had a furniture factory in Youngstown, Ohio. I went out and stayed with the family part of one summer. So to help him along, the father made Dick the regional sales manager for New England. And he would occasionally go out. He had a car, and he would drive to Providence or somewhere and talk to some furniture stores and come back, but of course the business was really just [chuckling]—

04-00:43:56

Lage: Doesn't fit with the Bohemian image.

04-00:43:58

Wakeman: Well, that was the point. He was just going to use this to get the money out of it to pay for his next trip to Europe—his next hitchhiking trip to Europe. But he had enough money to be able to afford to rent a single-person suite. You have to pay more for that, and I would go over there at night and study. Then very often we'd go by one of the coffee shops on Massachusetts Avenue and go study in what was then the architecture building, which is what he was studying. He's a graphic artist now, but he was an architect then, in Robinson Hall. Now Robinson Hall is the history department, but then it was the architecture department. So the night before the exam for this Owen course, I had this wonderful tableau, and we walked across the Harvard Yard. It was in spring, and it was sort of, you know, that lovely sense of spring, misty rain, balmy evening, fresh, a feeling that you're out of that dreadful New England winter. We went into Robinson Hall, and we got into the graduate student study room, which nobody ever used apparently, and they had a Coke machine and one of those hanging lights. And he turned the light on and I set the thing up against the wall, and he sat down to do something or other and I started, I looked at the thing, and I thought—I didn't wear glasses then—I rubbed my eyes and I looked at it, and to my horror, all of the ink had run. [emphatic laugh]

04-00:45:28

Lage: In the misty walk over?

04-00:45:32

Wakeman: Yes, it had all run together! There was just a blue blob! It was just—what am I going to do? Well, I managed to rally myself through the night enough to take the exam, and I did OK on it. But I just said—

04-00:45:46

Lage: You probably had it all committed to memory.

04-00:45:48

Wakeman: Well, maybe, but I said to myself—this is *not* the way you study history. And in any case, the China connection there was that Al Leibowitz, the older brother, was married and his wife was very close to a woman, Andy, who was married to Paul Cohen, who is a historian of China. Paul was one of these wunderkinder who had graduated from Chicago at the age of thirteen as far as I can make out, and he was younger than most graduate students for that reason. He also, he and his wife were both—he was an heir and she was an heiress, each of them to department store fortunes, so they lived very well. Not ostentatious—with Paul you would never know this to look at him today. But we'd go over there on Sunday afternoons for a home-cooked meal, and she was a wonderful cook, and I'd ask him what he was doing. He was studying Chinese history, and I didn't really have any—I was curious about

this, and I asked him who he was studying with. He told me about [John King] Fairbank. I had not taken Fairbank's course, the famous rice paddies course.

04-00:47:02

Lage: Was that something that a lot of undergraduates took?

04-00:47:05

Wakeman: A lot of people took it—Soc Sci 116, which was taught by Reischauer and Fairbank, and it was a very popular course, a lot of people took it. I took it instead of a course taught by Sir Hamilton Gibb, who was a very, very famous Middle Eastern historian and a University Professor. And there were very few of those on the faculty. And that was for me, very eye opening. But my interests then were more in the Levant, and Palestinian, Syrian history, Egyptian history, and I didn't know anything about China. So hearing about Fairbank, the counterpart to Gibb, was to me, very interesting. And the thought was launched there, though it didn't really—the seed was there, it didn't germinate until later, but it was through Dick Leibowitz that I got to know Cohen, and he's been a very close friend ever since. He eventually ended up teaching at Wellesley for many, many years. He's an emeritus now, and the first book I professionally reviewed was written by him—a book on the anti-Christian movement in China in the nineteenth century. He also happens to be a very close friend of Irv [Irwin] Scheiner, my colleague in Japanese history. So that was the only real contact I had with, except that, in my senior year following this particular line, in my senior year, I had—how did that work—no, either the end of my junior or the start of my senior year, I took a course with a man named Emerson, who was a Southeast Asian political scientist. And my tutor was also working in Southeast Asian studies, which is unusual. Most of my tutors were in literature. I guess the one that had the most influence on me was a man named Charles Witke, who was—he was a classicist but he was in comparative literature and also did modern French poetry. I read modern French poetry, René Char, Saint-John Perce, and so forth with him, and to me—I had no thought then of anything academic, that was the last thing—

04-00:49:20

Lage: You weren't thinking of becoming an academic.

04-00:49:21

Wakeman: Oh, no—I can still remember—

04-00:49:22

Lage: You were just soaking up this—

04-00:49:24

Wakeman: Yes, just absolutely interested in all these things. In fact, I remember one afternoon, I was going to go skiing that weekend, and we were meeting over in a building attached to Radcliffe for the tutorial. I don't know why his office was there, but it was on the second floor and I had my skis and poles and boots and so forth parked outside his door because the people—we wanted to

get an early start, my tutorial was over at three, and we wanted just to head for—I forget where we went—Stowe, or someplace like that. Anyway, here we were going through this thing, and Charles was so dry and so—I mean here was the dessicated intellectual academic, you know, and his life seemed to be so placid and comfortable, and then—and I was already thinking about skiing—and then there was a honking outside. I looked out the window and there was one of my friends who owned a car and a couple of Radcliffe young women waiting for me, and so I said I had to go. And I remember as I ran out and picked up the skis—you know running downstairs looking forward to a glorious weekend at, this friend’s mother had a cabin up there—thinking poor, poor Witke, poor Charles, he never will, not ever will enjoy life to this extent. And then years later, maybe not that far away, but I had inherited a student after Levenson died whose name then was Roxane Heater. She was divorced, and she was very unusual. She was a very striking woman, very beautiful, and I think she may have been older than I was, I’m not sure; yes, I think she must have been, and she was a very nervous high-strung person. She had a terrible time getting through her exams here, but she was, had this amazing experience of going to—I’ll be very brief about this because it’s a long story in itself—she managed to meet the Chinese ambassador to the UN when they were staying at the Lincoln Hotel. The Chinese mission was at the Lincoln Hotel in Manhattan, and she somehow managed to sneak past the police guards guarding the mission and got in there—she spoke—

04-00:51:52

Lage: When would this have been?

04-00:51:53

Wakeman: This would have been about, let’s see—roughly 19—oh, well, I know what it was—it was just after the Shanghai—1972—and she had written her thesis on Chinese women revolutionaries. And she wanted to publish it, she wanted to revise it, and she managed to get in there and spoke to the ambassador, whose name was Huang Hua, and his wife. She persuaded them, particularly the wife, that she couldn’t really properly write about the revolutionary theme unless she went to China and interviewed Deng Yingchao, Zhou Enlai’s widow and so forth. And they took a liking to her; she was a very spirited person—

04-00:52:48

Lage: With good Chinese, I would think—

04-00:52:49

Wakeman: Her Chinese was quite good. And they said, OK; they got her a visa through Ottawa, you couldn’t get one in the States, of course. And off she went to China. And as far as I knew she dropped out of sight. The only other thing that happened just before she left was she—after a very, very tumultuous and passionate affair with a brilliant Chinese literatus here who died prematurely, wonderful man, whom I used to have lunch with when I was a graduate student every Tuesday—had married my tutor, my Harvard tutor.

04-00:53:34

Lage: This was the man that you thought was so desiccated.

04-00:53:36

Wakeman: Yes, Roxane Witke, her name was—

04-00:53:37

Lage: Oh, I wondered how this was going to come back!

04-00:53:38

Wakeman: Yes, and I was astounded! I couldn't somehow put them together. And they had some problems, I don't know what they were, but I do know that he was very upset because, and I heard this from him, I think, personally, later—shortly before her trip began to China, she had had him served divorce papers and she had served him, the papers were served while he was giving a public lecture at the University of Michigan. So here he is on the stage, and this process server comes in and slaps him with a summons. [laughing] And Roxane took great glee, and she was a very strong feminist. So she went to China, and I won't bore you with all this, but eventually she managed, she was, how can I say, permitted, invited to interview Jiang Qing—Madame Mao. And that was the story of the century, as far as we were concerned. The first I was aware of it, the head of our library here, the Chinese library said, "Have you seen the latest issue of *Guangming Daily*? I said, "No, no." And we'd get these things air mail—he said, "Look!" And he showed me, and there was Jiang Qing and Yao Wenyuan, two of the cultural revolutionary leaders and Roxane!

04-00:54:56

Lage: Your former student!

04-00:54:58

Wakeman: Yes, and another friend, who is an economist at Columbia, called me and said—you know, I was in—this guy is a radical, he was there with a group of American progressives. He said, "I was in this theater and all of a sudden out of the IP room came Madame Mao and Roxane. I can't believe it!" We were all—so she came back and I was having dinner with Chalmers Johnson who was on the faculty here then in Japanese studies and with Jack Service, the old China hand, and I got a phone call before I went to dinner, from Roxane. She was calling from the airport and she said, "I just got back, I just got back, I've got to talk to you." And I said, "Well, I've got to go to dinner, maybe I'm sure they'd love to see you—we know that you've been in China—do you want to come to dinner? I'll call ahead." She said, "All right, all right, OK, I'll take a limousine over and stay at the Durant, you can pick me up." So I picked her up and she was just running—she was completely hyped up. I think it was a combination of tranquilizers, valium, and alcohol—I don't know, but she was completely—and so we got, and everybody was interested to hear what her experiences were. She proceeded to tell us about this bizarre tale about Jiang Qing giving her these interviews, and this and that, and how close they were, and she had these tape recordings, and on and on, and I mean it was

unbelievable. I remembered at one point saying, “Well, did you talk to her at all about Lin Biao?” This was after Lin Biao had been killed. And she said, “Oh, yes, I talked to Jiang Qing about it.” I said, “Well, what was her relation with Lin Biao?” And she said to me—now, at that point we still didn’t really understand how Byzantine the Chinese Communist politics are—she said, “Oh, she didn’t like him at all, you know, he was poisoning her soup.” I remember going into the kitchen with Jack Service, and he said, “Is she crazy? Could all of this have happened?” And I said, “I don’t know.” Well it did, and she wrote a manuscript. Everybody wanted her then and Harvard gave her—

04-00:57:08

Lage: So she wrote up the interview.

04-00:57:10

Wakeman: She wrote up the interviews into a biography, which was very difficult to do because Jiang Qing was making all kinds of claims about what her role in the party had been, and most of us who know anything about it—

04-00:57:18

Lage: So this was a long interview, of her life—an oral history.

04-00:57:20

Wakeman: It was six days—oral history, done as oral history. She had two of the tapes and others were still in China and they were going to try to get them to her via Ottawa, but when she flew back—this was, let’s see, this was in ‘73, it was after Nixon’s visit, and TWA was trying to get the flight rights to China. Pan Am eventually did, but TWA was very eager to please the Chinese leadership, and after the interviews they, the Chinese Communists, were terrified that she would be snatched by the Nationalists. They took her to a safe house in Kowloon, and Zhou Enlai called up TWA and said, I want two first-class seats, one for her and the other for her luggage. So that she could keep it right. So, of course, the story made the rounds, and she was given this thing at Harvard. Now, this is really worth telling; I’m sorry, I just can’t resist it, because we keep coming back to espionage—and so, she said, “I want you to read this.”

04-00:58:25

Lage: This is after she has written it—

04-00:58:27

Wakeman: After she’d written it—she’d written it—because the problem was, did she herself want to say that Jiang Qing may have been lying? Because that would mean she’d never get a chance to go back to continue the rest of the story. The CIA was trying to debrief her—she refused that. The FBI tried to get to her—she refused that. And she also seemed slightly paranoid at this point. So I was, saying, oh God!, and she said, “I want you to read that, the only other person who has read the manuscript is Toni Morrison, my editor.”

04-00:58:58

Lage: And this is Toni Morrison—

04-00:58:59

Wakeman: Yes, yes. My editor has read it but she doesn't feel that she's sufficiently expert to know what's right and wrong. And I can't let anybody else read it. I'll send it out to you. I said, "Oh, OK, fine." So I kind of forgot about it. A couple of weeks went by and she called me and says, "Well, well?" I said, "Well, Oh, Roxane, you were going to send me your manuscript." She said, "Going to, I sent it to you by registered mail." And I said, "Well, it must have gotten lost." She said, "No, they must have taken it. They've already broken into my office twice here at Harvard at the center." I said, "Yes, sure. I said, well, I thought—[pffft]. Now I didn't know then about Cointelpro and that there were 40,000 packages in the San Francisco Post Office that had been just taken out.

04-00:59:42

Lage: Now, say, what was it you didn't know about?

04-00:59:44

Wakeman: The Cointelpro—Nixon's counterintelligence program that—where they were collecting, they were building up the national database of radicals to round up in case of God knows what. But it's all part of that Watergate, Gordon Liddy kind of stuff.

04-01:00:00

Lage: And she must have been on some list.

04-01:00:02

Wakeman: Well, anything that went through here that was going to Red China was obviously—and she must have been on somebody's list.

04-01:00:08

Lage: Because they were sending it to you—so not to Red China.

04-01:00:11

Wakeman: Yes, yes. They were sending it to me so it must have been her name. But of course, I didn't think any of this through at the time. I just thought—

04-01:00:17

Lage: You didn't have that kind of paranoid, conspiracy theory?

04-01:00:19

Wakeman: No, I thought she was just this high-strung person who just can't—so the upshot of it all was, the next thing I knew, Jack Service—she finally got it to me by messenger—a person brought it and I read it and told her I thought certain things should be changed. The next thing—I got a phone call from Jack Service from the coffee shop at the Fairmont Hotel. And he said, Fred, Huang Hua was a student leader who was in Yan'an, who became sort of the greeter for the various Americans that went up there to meet Mao, including

the Dixie Mission Service Reserves. Jack said, “I’ve got a funny request for you. I’m at the Fairmont with Huang Hua.” I’d met Huang Hua. I said, “Really? What’s Huang Hua doing at the Fairmont?” He said, “Well, either, he’s going to go back to be punished, or I think he’s going to go back to be the next foreign minister.” I knew that Qiao Guanhua, the previous foreign minister, had been purged. And I said, “Really.” He said, “But he’s very worried now about this Witke thing. This book is not out yet<sup>7</sup>, but I know you’ve read it. Is there anything in there”—because they got her the visa—

04-01:01:38

Lage: He had been responsible for getting it—

04-01:01:40

Wakeman: Yes, that would compromise him. I said, or Jack said, “He’s afraid to call you. He’s convinced the phones in his room are bugged.” And I said—well, my mind raced—I said, “No, I think he and his wife come across very well. I don’t think there’s anything that’s going to be compromising.” So he said, “Well, I’ll tell him that.” And of course three days later it’s announced that he’s the new foreign minister of China. So I thought, “Wow! This is pretty impressive.” In the meantime we’re all puzzled over certain events. I think that was the year I went to London and I was at the Contemporary China Institute, but I was also part of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, which is called Chatham House. It’s on St. James Square and it’s a place where—there’s nothing like it in this country. You have an intermingling of scholars, defense, intelligence, correspondents, diplomats coming together on China, and you discuss things so there’s a lot of information that I otherwise would never get as a regular scholar. And they get access to, or at least they hear opinions that they would never otherwise hear—very, very British in that sense. And we were all puzzled over a campaign that was then going on which was attacking a certain novel, *Water Margin*. None of us could figure out what that was about.

Lage: A Chinese novel?

Wakeman: A Chinese novel, yes. One of these Aesopian campaigns that completely—what is this all about? Later, a friend of mine who had worked in the writing group under Jiang Qing for which he was almost killed, had a Luce Fellowship at Harvard and came down to visit me in Connecticut—came down really to explain to me why he had worked for this writing group because it was a matter of some shame by then that Jiang Qing was in jail, the trial had been held, and people often ask, “Why didn’t” —well, that’s his calligraphy there [points to wall]. Why did you work for this Liangxiao, this writing group? So he wanted to explain himself to me—why he had done this and then, so I took the opportunity—we just sat out under an elm, believe it or

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<sup>7</sup> Published as *Comrade Chiang Ch’ing*, by Roxane Witke, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977).

not, there still are some left, in my yard, drinking iced tea or lemonade, and talked about this. And I said, “You know, Lao Tang, there are things I don’t understand about that period—this *Shui Hu*, this *Water Margin*, thing. What was that all about? He said, well, that was when, that had to do with Mao’s directive announcing to the party that Jiang Qing no longer spoke for him. And it was at that point that he moved out, or she moved out of his bed. In other words, they took up separate residences because they split. And I said, “Oh.” And he said, “And of course a lot of this was because she had divulged all these things to Roxane Witke.” And I said, “Divulged?” I began thinking about the tie. I said, “Well, gee, Lao Tang, Roxane Witke’s book wasn’t published then.” And he said, “Well, the intelligence service got a copy, which Zhou Enlai gave to Mao to read.” He had it translated into Chinese and gave it to Mao to read. Of course Zhou Enlai was quite capable of that. In fact, I think—I won’t go into all of it—but I think he may even have encouraged Jiang Qing to use Witke in this respect. And I said, “Good God! “Good God,” I said, “Lao Tang, I never thought about that—you have a very, the Chinese have a very effective intelligence service.” He said, “Oh, no, not our intelligence service, your intelligence service.” I thought—

04-01:05:37

Lage: There’s where your copy went!

04-01:05:38

Wakeman: —of course, of course. What a deucedly clever thing for them to do.

04-01:05:44

Lage: So our intelligence service gave it to their intelligence service knowing that it would—

04-01:05:49

Wakeman: Knowing that Zhou Enlai could use it as a weapon against Jiang Qing.  
[laughs]

04-01:05:55

Lage: This—so have you come to feel over the years that it’s more Byzantine and more reason for paranoia—

04-01:06:04

Wakeman: Ohhhhhhh, absolutely—

04-01:06:05

Lage: —than you used to?

04-01:06:06

Wakeman: Ohhhhhhh, absolutely. My wife used to work for the central committee’s liaison department, which is a very, very top level—she essentially was foreign policy advisor and translator for the top leaders, for the chairman, and she—a number of reasons for her quitting the job and fleeing China, but one of them was just sheer fear, and people operating in that world are constantly

aware that you can just disappear, to put it mildly. It's—or that somebody will shoot you in a dark alley. It happens all the time.

04-01:06:44

Lage: But then also, this intrigue with our intelligence—

04-01:06:47

Wakeman: Oh, yes, that too, that too.

04-01:06:49

Lage: —and thinking ahead and planning how—

04-01:06:50

Wakeman: Sure, sure, oh, yes. I don't know who engineered that one, but I have no idea. Anyway to get back to—

04-01:06:57

Lage: This took us a long way from Harvard—but it all—

04-01:06:58

Wakeman: Yes it did—so—

04-01:06:59

Lage: Now how did that relate to the Chatham House?

04-01:07:02

Wakeman: Witke.

04-01:07:04

Lage: But you'd mentioned England and the place where the British intelligence—

04-01:07:06

Wakeman: Oh, well, oh, yes, I left out one part. One of the people at Chatham House is a senior CIA officer who actually had been at Harvard and then was exposed by Harvard radicals as having been invited by Fairbank, which led to a huge brouhaha in the *Crimson*, and a number of our students here at Berkeley got involved in this—one of them, Joe Esherick, who now is a chair professor at San Diego, was then a graduate student here but had been an undergraduate with Fairbank, wrote a very famous piece called, "Harvard and the Apologetics of Imperialism." And the idea was how dare you bring these CIA people in, you're simply—this is while the war was still going on in Vietnam—you're simply legitimizing them. Fairbank's answer was, "Well, they're the most enlightened of any of the intelligence people operating in Vietnam. They're telling the truthful story. All this stuff that Westmoreland and the Pentagon is spewing out is just wrong. We have to educate these people." So it was the classic ethics event.

04-01:08:07

Lage: He wanted to something more like what Britain did—more interaction. It wasn't considered—

04-01:08:12

Wakeman: More interaction—that's exactly—that was always Fairbank's vision, more interaction. And unfortunately the one thing that you discover is that those people don't play the game very honestly. They—

04-01:08:30

Lage: Those people meaning—

04-01:08:31

Wakeman: The CIA.

04-01:08:32

Lage: Oh, the CIA.

04-01:08:33

Wakeman: That they take advantage of you, or they won't tell you that, something—I had a big problem in those years because these guys would show up here claiming to be from the Agency for International Development or the State Department and that they were sent back for a year of study, and they'd be in my seminars. And I would know from other sources that they were actually working for the Company, but I didn't—was I going to kick them out? The other students might not know it, but some suspected it—

04-01:09:01

Lage: Were they just trying to learn about China?

04-01:09:03

Wakeman: Yes.

04-01:09:03

Lage: Or were they seeing what you were spewing out?

04-01:09:05

Wakeman: No, I don't know. I think they just wanted to know about China—they'd come here and study economics and history, the current state of the art about contemporary Chinese studies, which is to say that there is a lot more in terms of the China field—this is a topic I'll get to later again—there's much more entanglement between even a historian and the government than is—that's partly true for the Soviet field too.

04-01:09:36

Lage: Well, we need to get into that.

04-01:09:38

Wakeman: Yes, we'll get into that later. So to get back to Harvard—but so I was set in this history and lit, and then I began to move more and more towards history. And in terms of my thesis, what started out as a work on French literature, on illuminism, which refers to the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment movements that were very closely associated with Rosicrucianism, cabalism, Swedenborgianism, Theosophy— all of those things can be traced very visibly in French poetry. It's sort of the same way that you can take cabalism

and trace it through [Giordano] Bruno to the Oxford School in the sixteenth century. All of a sudden, you're like, my God, Shakespeare was reading the Kabbalah, I had no idea, and that sort of thing— Gee, {Vini?} and [Stéphane] Mallarmé was influenced by this!

So I was really interested in this topic, I don't know why, maybe decoding it, something. Who knows, the mystery of it all, ah! the mystery of it all, ah! the horror of it all, I mean, who knows? Then I happened, the summer before I wrote my thesis, which was my junior year, the summer after my junior year, I was getting my stuff together. I was going to go, I had a job working as a roofer out in the Midwest in Wisconsin, and I was going to take along a bunch of books to read because obviously the library in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, is not filled with this and so I found this one book, which was a doctorat d'état—which is the big state doctorate. I don't have any copies of that sort of thing here; I don't think so anyway, no. But they'll often run 10,000 pages. They're just huge. They've abolished it now, it just takes too many years to write that, and supposedly if you wanted to become a professor under the old system, you had to write one of these things. So this was a truly exhaustive study by a man named {August Viat?} of the illuminist movement. And as I sat there in the evenings in Door County, Wisconsin, reading this thing, I thought, What's left to say? I mean, what am *I* going to say. This guy has spent his lifetime working on this. But it was still a powerful movement.

As I began reading and began, for example, to see that there were very strong connections with the utopian socialist movement, people like [Comte Henri de] Saint-Simon, and especially Saint-Simon, but [Charles] Fourier, and that got me into the role of socialism in the 1848 revolution, because the Saint-Simonians were very prominent in the very brief phase of {Cabet?} and so forth, so as I began to do research on that, to read on that—when I got back to school in the fall I stumbled on which was, I mean—Widener Library is wonderful that way—I stumbled on this collection of working-class songs from the 1848 revolution. And lo and behold there were many of the themes of the Illuminati. And when I began to look into Saint-Simonianism and realized that there was a utopian community outside of Paris then at a place called Ménilmontant, which was a Saint-Simonian community, which was a commune, it had many of the characteristics of these sectarian—Oh, I've got to go soon—

04-01:13:40

Lage:

We need to finish this, but there's only a minute left on this tape, shall we stop and—

04-01:13:43

Wakeman:

Well, why don't we pick it up next time?

04-01:13:45

Lage:

But we don't want to stop in the middle of this story.

04-01:13:47

Wakeman: OK, I'll finish this story.

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05-00:00:03

Lage: OK, now. We're on.

05-00:00:06

Wakeman: So—that—it had many of the trappings of any sectarian movement. In this case, one of the curious characteristics or qualities of this movement was a belief in an androgynous being—a mother-father that they called a {Mappa?}, whom they believed was a messianic figure who would be found in the Middle East. And they actually sent off several expeditions to the Levant to try to find this mysterious {Mappa?}, and of course it was accompanied with group sex, these sorts of things that would occur—

05-00:00:46

Lage: It sounds very modern.

05-00:00:47

Wakeman: Well, yes, and these things, really the things we have now are very ancient. But mysteries, all of that stuff. And that many of these people, including Saint-Simon, were influenced by this kind of millenarian ideology. And as I began to try to explain to myself, how did 1848 take place? Well, we do have the memoirs of a man named Lucien de la Hodde, who was a police agent, and it could very well be presented, although I would be loathe to do so in the face of somebody who's better read in French history than I am now, as something like some of the actions performed by agent provocateur in Russia, in Czarist Russia, where their effort to provoke something actually leads to something that is revolutionary. In this case, what began as a simple sort of riot against the national guard escalated. Partly because {Villat?} was running around provoking things, and they started picking up the pavé and throwing them, and the next thing you know you've got a revolution.

05-00:01:54

Lage: But there must have been some conditions, because *you* had the same thing at Harvard and there were—

05-00:02:00

Wakeman: Oh, yes. You've got the Paris mob. You've got a bunch of utopian Socialists who are expecting a messianic moment at any time and who know the revolution is going to come. And of course when it comes, it ends up in Napoleon the three. So, clearly all of that script seems to make perfect sense, but I became interested in how this movement worked, and that got me into—this is the big back door—I have many doors. One of the leaders of the movement later on was a man named Alain Kardec. And when I went to Paris to study, I became interested in Kardec. His influence was still there in theosophic movements. Sort of third wave stuff, Annie Besant,

transmigration, or Shirley MacLaine and all that—it's always with us. And sure enough there was a sect or whatever, devoted to Alain Kardec, and I began going to meetings. I felt very nervous about this because obviously I didn't believe in it. But it got me into looking at some of the manifestations of Kardecism if you like, including, and this got me back to my senior year—this is the year after that. As a senior, when I was doing this stuff on France, I was also, as I was saying much, much earlier, taking a course on Southeast Asia. And one of the interesting phenomena of the period, after the Bao Dai emperor falls and before [Ngo Dinh] Diem installs himself in Vietnam, was the importance of bandit churches, or churches that had their own armies, the most famous of which was called the Cao Dai, and it was very, very widely featured then around the world. It was a syncretic religion. It had a pantheon of deities that ranged from Krishna to Confucius to Buddha, Abraham Lincoln, Alain Kardec.

05-00:04:08

Lage:

All of these people they worshipped.

05-00:04:10

Wakeman:

There were statues of them; they built a kind of almost like a Disneyland temple. I've never been out there to look at it, but—outside of Saigon, which was guarded by their army and they played a pretty prominent role in the civil struggles of that period, so they were courted by a number of different camps, including our own, and that got me very interested in Taoism, because there were very strong elements of Taoism in it and of course, Kardec and all of this secret society activity that was going on then. And all of that would kind of surface when I got to Paris, and as a result I decided to try to learn more about Vietnam, and of course that got me into China. So my entry into China was—

05-00:05:01

Lage:

From France.

05-00:05:02

Wakeman:

From France, and in a very odd way through heterodox religious movements and secret societies.

05-00:05:09

Lage:

Fascinating.

05-00:05:12

Wakeman:

Yes. So that's--and I've written a lot on secret societies.

05-00:05:14

Lage:

Yes, I'm well aware of that. And that seems to be a theme almost. Well, that's good. So we did end up—

05-00:05:21

Wakeman:

We did end up—

05-00:05:22

Lage: —with how you got interested in China.

05-00:05:24

Wakeman: —in China, in the long term. But as I say, I didn't—to go back to the beginning as it were, Ted Riccardi really was the guy who—he was actually in law school or admitted to law school. He was going to go to the University of Pennsylvania Law School. I was admitted to Harvard Law School; I didn't want to go and so. And I was sort of—what the heck am I going to do next? And that was when this whole China thing came up, and I remembered Paul Cohen, as did Ted, and Ted said, "Listen, why don't you learn Chinese? That might be fun." He said, "Maybe I'll learn Chinese." I said, "Yes, that would be really interesting." I remember we were sitting in a café in, oh, I don't know—Piazza Navona or some place in Rome.

05-00:06:14

Lage: Now, what were you doing in Rome?

05-00:06:17

Wakeman: Visiting him. Escaping the Parisian winter. I had the grippe and became convinced that if I'd get some sun I would get over this terrible flu, so I went down to visit Ted. And Ted was then studying [Benedetto] Croce, or revising his thesis on Croce. And he did in fact go to law school, and that's where I'll finally end this. He did indeed go to law school, but after a semester at law he found it terribly boring, tedious, and trivial. And so he went to Derk Bodde, who is now passed away, very famous sinologist who wrote and translated a famous book on Chinese philosophy, and went in to see Professor Bodde and said, "I'd like to study Chinese." Bodde said, "Well, that's wonderful. You know what the trouble is—the first year of Chinese class has already started, but you can take another Asian language." And Ted said, "Sure, why not." So he took Pali—no, maybe it was just Hindi, I don't know. But as he was taking that, one of the instructors was a visitor from SOAS, the School of Oriental and African Studies, a man named Clark, who recognized this linguistic genius in Ted. Also, one of the world's greatest philologists and Buddhists is a man named [Giuseppe]Tucci—he's dead now too—who was a Calabrian, and that's where Ted's family came from, and Ted speaks fluent Calabrian.

05-00:07:48

Lage: Calabrian?

05-00:07:49

Wakeman: Yes, it's the province across from Sicily.

05-00:07:51

Lage: Oh, yes, Calabria.

05-00:07:54

Wakeman: And he used to teach me Calabrian. It was very [says a few words in Calabrian]. And Clark put that together and said, "Ted, this is very interesting." So Clark went to the Ford Foundation and said, "We need to train

people in Nepalese, and it's a difficult language to learn. I think this man is perfect. Send him—if you'll pay for him to come to London, I'll put him up—I have a Nepalese student there, and there aren't very many textbooks in Nepalese, and I'll put him up, and he can live with the student and learn Nepalese. And that's what happened. Ted went on to write the only dictionary in Nepalese—a lot of stuff. He knows, I don't know, I've given up counting, twenty, thirty languages.

05-00:08:36

Lage:

Amazing.

05-00:08:39

Wakeman:

It's amazing. So meanwhile I came—I decided to come—came out here and started painfully learning Chinese, and I'm still learning. [laughter]

05-00:08:48

Lage:

OK, well, that's a good place to stop since you have to get going.

## Interview 4: April 27, 2005

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06-00:00:02

Lage: OK. Today is April 27, 2005 and this is the fourth interview with Fred Wakeman, and we were just going to go back and pick up a little, finishing with Harvard and then move you into Paris.

06-00:00:15

Wakeman: Sure. Well, I guess I really first started reading Max Weber at Harvard as an undergraduate, and I don't remember what got me going on Weber, but it probably was—it certainly wasn't the relation to China, but maybe his essays on political authority. In any case I started reading him mainly through the edition that Reinhardt Bendix edited, and it dawned on me that Talcott Parsons was sort of the American Weber and that he'd had an overwhelming influence in framing the sociology that I was studying secondhand, as it were, and even the anthropology.

06-00:01:01

Lage: Were you taking classes in sociology and anthropology?

06-00:01:04

Wakeman: No, I took classes in anthropology but not in sociology. I don't think I had a single sociology course, but I had friends and I spent a lot of time in Sever Hall, with—partly because Henry Murray had an office there and I had taken a course with him and I heard about Parsons. It was very hard to get into his upper-division lecture courses, and I didn't really have enough room in my schedule because of this late decision to do history and literature, to meet all those requirements and take a lot of outside courses, and furthermore I decided that I was going to do economic theory rather than social theory of that sort. My interest in social theory really grew here later on particularly with the help of Neil Smelser. I can talk about that later, but—

06-00:02:00

Lage: But economic theory you were using as part of your history?

06-00:02:09

Wakeman: No. I was—I didn't know then that I was going to become a historian, obviously. In fact, at one point I toyed with the idea—I was toying with all kinds of things—with the idea of becoming a broker or banker.

06-00:02:21

Lage: Oh, you did!

06-00:02:22

Wakeman: Yes. And so I took several courses in economics. Of course I had taken [door is closed]—elementary economics but the courses I took at the upper-division level were more related to classical theory—[David] Ricardo and [Adam] Smith and so on, [Joseph] Schumpeter and [Karl] Marx—and then I actually took a course, or I audited a course on the stock market, which was

interesting. I had a job one summer that I was going to take. I had it all lined up to work on the New York Stock Exchange as a—I forget which house—maybe it was—I don't remember.

06-00:03:22

Lage: Do you remember what drew you in that direction? [I'm just fixing this microphone so it doesn't rub on your clothing.]

06-00:03:32

Wakeman: I was looking around—I didn't—I knew I had to earn a living somehow, particularly because by the time I was a junior, my parents were getting divorced, and it was clear to me that I was going to have to support myself thereafter.

06-00:03:48

Lage: Why did that change?

06-00:03:51

Wakeman: Well, my father was living abroad. He had lost all of his money in the movies.

06-00:03:56

Lage: Oh, he had; I didn't realize that.

06-00:03:58

Wakeman: Yes, he lost millions of dollars in one movie deal where he was—

06-00:04:03

Lage: He invested in a movie?

06-00:04:06

Wakeman: He was an independent producer, and he actually produced the movie eventually. It was called *The Wastrel*, and that was where he met the woman who became his second wife—my stepmother Lambeti, Ellie Lambeti. And in the process of falling in love with her, he also became terribly, deeply engaged in making this movie. She starred in the movie. In those days it was very difficult to get funding from the Boston bankers unless you had a big male lead. The years of the box office draw was the male lead and the way you could get funding from bankers was to get an option signed by someone like William Holden or whatever and then that option would be good for thirty days or sixty days and during that time you tried to negotiate the option into a bank deal. But one after another, the people he went to, that his agent went to, would sign the options and then dilly dally until the time period was up. First it was Charlton Heston, then Bill Holden, I forget—the whole raft of people. And it wasn't until later that he discovered that behind the scenes Spyros Skouras, who was the head of Twentieth-Century Fox then, had become alarmed by so many actors, actually, trying to become independent producers, Kirk Douglas and a lot of others, that he decided to try to stop this trend away from the big studios. And that he was arranging, it wasn't just my father, but he was arranging for—through [Lew] Wasserman and other people powerful, you know, the MCA and so forth, arranging to put pressure on the agents of

the actors to postpone the decision because to buy an option was two or three hundred thousand dollars. You buy a number of options and money just dribbles away. And my father finally, the end of the story I can tell very quickly, he finally ended up getting Van Heflin, I don't know if you know that actor—

06-00:06:11

Lage:

Yes. I knew his daughter very well! I still know his daughter.

06-00:06:13

Wakeman:

Oh, did you, really! Really! He got him to agree to make the movie, and he made the movie, but he made it in Italy at Cinecittà under, in a partnership with some Italian producers. And he made a terrible mistake of agreeing that the producer's gross would be paid through Italy, which meant that it could be tied up in the Italian courts, which it was for like twelve years. And the lawyer—well, it was a sad tale. But he sold all—

06-00:06:44

Lage:

Yes, a very sad tale for somebody who lived so high.

06-00:06:47

Wakeman:

Well, he just wasn't a very good businessman. That's the truth of the matter. His agent, Danny Winkler, told me one time after this fiasco had taken place that—your dad just shouldn't have gotten in with those—of course he felt the big mistake was to sign with the Italians, and he had a lot of nasty things to say about them, but my godfather, this Sammy Hawes, this organized crime fellow, was very, very upset because my father financed most of this with his AT&T stock, and he sold at a time when the stock market wasn't doing very well, so that was his—other than insurance policies, that was his big nest egg and he exhausted it more or less. Oh, he went on and—he had dribbles of money here and there to do more movies in Greece and so on, but this substantial amount of money had vanished, and in addition, he and my mother, who had moved from Switzerland back to Florida, were trying to get some sort of spousal support, alimony, worked out. He professed—in fact, he and I had a terrible fight over this—took me years to reconcile with him, but it was clear to me that I was going to have to become independent. I couldn't ask my mother to pay for this. She had to take care of my brother. And eventually I had to pay for part of my brother's education in college, and my sister was just married, and so—

06-00:08:16

Lage:

So this was a turnaround in the way you had been, had lived your younger life.

06-00:08:19

Wakeman:

Oh, yes, yes. I married very young. I married at twenty years old.

06-00:08:25

Lage:

Oh, you did! Now—

06-00:08:27

Wakeman: And I think in part—

06-00:08:28

Lage: That's while you at Harvard.

06-00:08:28

Wakeman: Yes, just as all of this was taking place. And it was very unusual then—marriages were much younger then, but it was quite unusual because you had to get permission of the dean.

06-00:08:41

Lage: And who did you marry?

06-00:08:43

Wakeman: I married a woman named Nancy Schuster, whose father was a Bohemian—I mean a Bohemian from Bohemia, whose parents had lived in Wisconsin and who was a very wealthy man. He was a machine tool manufacturer and had a lot of money. By that I don't mean—I knew—I wasn't marrying money; it was very clear to me that I wasn't going to get any money out of this, but—

06-00:09:09

Lage: But were you thinking more along business lines, with his influence?

06-00:09:12

Wakeman: I think he was very, particularly later on when it was clear I was veering towards an academic degree, he couldn't understand, "How could a guy as smart as you, Fred, do *this*?" And, "Why don't you come in with me on that?" There was always this sort of thing, so I felt I had to prepare myself for that, but I liked economic theory and it was somewhat—it seems odd now, but somewhat risqué then in the mid-fifties to be reading Marx, that was—I'd be sitting on the MTA reading [*Das*] *Kapital* and people—

06-00:09:46

Lage: Considered it a political statement.

06-00:09:48

Wakeman: A political statement—right. This is really silly at that age. So—

06-00:09:54

Lage: So that was one idea. Some place I read that you thought about going into intelligence.

06-00:09:58

Wakeman: Well, I did actually, for a brief while. I can't talk much about that, but I was recruited in college by one of these professors, and that was the other side to it—covers and all that sort of thing. I was saved from that—I went through the whole process, and I was saved from that disastrous career choice, actually by the uncle of very close friend of mine, who was a member of my eating club

at Harvard, who was the station chief for Sweden then. And who came to see me in Paris. I was already signed on and he—

06-00:10:35

Lage: Signed on to—

06-00:10:36

Wakeman: To work for the government.

06-00:10:38

Lage: Oh, you were signed on to work for the government! Oh.

06-00:10:40

Wakeman: Yes, yes. And he said, “You know, you’re crazy, you’re just, you have absolutely nothing to fall back on. You’ll end up doing whatever they want you to do. You don’t have any expertise; all you know is a lot of languages; you’ve got to do something else!” And he said—what did he say?—“You’ll just be a spear-carrier.” And I, in fact, had gone into the operational side of it, so I was keenly aware of that, and I was being told that probably my first assignment would be West Africa, which I wasn’t terribly excited about, so in fact, some of the courses I took in Paris were actually African courses. The African Institute is right across the street from the Sciences Po [Institut d’Études Politiques de Paris], so I would go to courses there.

06-00:11:27

Lage: Now all this [discussion] began with Talcott Parsons, so maybe we should [chuckling]—let’s go back to Talcott Parsons.

06-00:11:30

Wakeman: Going back to—part of the—and I began to—

06-00:11:32

Lage: Was this an influence on you?

06-00:11:34

Wakeman: Yes, it was. I tried to master his system, which was intriguingly Cubist—all these matrices—and it didn’t begin to dawn on me until later that it was a system that couldn’t account for change. It was perfect—it was a maintenance system.

06-00:11:58

Lage: So it wouldn’t be good for history.

06-00:12:00

Wakeman: It wasn’t very good for history, yes exactly, but it also made me very much aware of the way in which Parsons and his zone epigones had dominated American social theory, at least in sociology and in many parts of social theory. And in a way people have been trying to get away from that ever since. I’m—a very close friend of mine now, who is much older, is a sociologist named Shmuel Eisenstadt, who’s become almost—it seems funny,

well, at my age, he's much older—a kind of father figure. And I was just asked to write a review of one of his collected collections, which I'm having—I mean, Shmuel has been trying to—I have sort of—. This is parenthetic, but I suppose it's relevant. I have been involved for a number of years with a group of Weberians from around the world. We meet in various places, often in Sweden, sometimes in Germany, people like Wolfgang Schluchter, Eisenstadt, Björn Wittrock, and much of it, {Aronson?}, devoted to trying to reevaluate Weber. And Shmuel, who was such a great Weberian, I mean he IS a great Weberian, has in his later years sort of tried to accommodate the notion of there being multiple modernities that—this notion of a kind of—Weber's notion of economic rationalization and a sort of convergence with development theory doesn't explain Japan, for example, and he's written a very big book on Japan, and in fact, I just published something in one of his books on multiple modernities. So he's trying very hard in his later years to break loose from that or to reconceive it, mainly through the history of religion, which I find extremely interesting. Some Weberians like Schluchter will say, "OK, you want to find a Protestant ethic in China, go ahead. Bob [Robert N.] Bellah, you want to find a protestant ethic in Japan or an analog, go ahead." But it's done in this kind of benevolently contemptuous way. If the Japanese want to think they can be like us Europeans, who really follow the Weber template, let them think it, no skin off our teeth. So this sort of genial—

06-00:14:32

Lage: Wasn't Weber himself interested in China?

06-00:14:34

Wakeman: Yes, but he said that China was—China proved that lacking a Protestant ethic, China could never modernize.

06-00:14:44

Lage: I see, I see.

06-00:14:45

Wakeman: So if you looked at the literature that I was reading when I went to graduate school, the early postwar generation of Fairbank and Marion Levy and so forth—Marion Levy was a sociologist at Princeton—you would find that they were explaining why China wasn't able to modernize under the Nationalists and now was having trouble with the Communists, and to be poor is wonderful, and all the rest of it was because they had failed by Weberian standards. Now, of course, that doesn't work anymore, but that was the prevalent belief of the time, and I—

06-00:15:20

Lage: It was kind of a frame they were seeing through.

06-00:15:22

Wakeman: Absolutely! And I—I didn't, I was—until I became very aware of it, and I learned that at Berkeley, that's one of the things that I'll talk about in a

moment or so. I was very much taken by Parsons and the Parsonian system, so that was a major influence at that time, and it was a relatively conservative influence. Parsons himself was relatively conservative, which made the transition between undergraduate and graduate studies very difficult for me. Coming out to Berkeley was a big change. Anyway, this relationship with the agency—fortunately, just before I graduated I was given a fellowship to go to Paris, and as I say I met this gentleman and I began thinking, well, maybe I'd better think about something else.

The other part of it, frankly, was, when I was a senior—well, I was recruited as a junior—but when I was an upperclassman at Harvard, I still had political or official bureaucratic ambitions. I don't know what to call that but I joked about my father wanting me to be secretary of state. And I wanted to be where the action was, so to speak, and by then I had become convinced, I think many of us had, that the real force for change—I was also very anti-Communist—the real force for change in the US government was coming out of the CIA, not out of Foggy Bottom, that the diplomats were ineffectual, but the CIA guys got something done, and there was this sort of Allen Dulles leather elbow pad tweedy quality to it. The people who recruited me and whom I dealt with down there were very much of that ilk, in this kind of a pipe-smoking culture and very much the old OSS romanticism, which appealed to young men, I think.

06-00:17:31

Lage: And did your—you've mentioned that several of your professors had been in the OSS—

06-00:17:35

Wakeman: Oh, indeed.

06-00:17:35

Lage: Were they sort of fostering this idea too?

06-00:17:37

Wakeman: Yes, well, yes, of course. One of my professors here [at Berkeley], I won't say who it was, but his son was very important in the agency, and he knew. It's a very tight little network. You know who's sort of involved in it. And he knew me when I came out here, and we would talk about it, so—but my shift to Chinese and my attraction to history and to language and culture meant that I wasn't going to go out and start blowing up trains or something or conducting political assassinations. That was not—but the agency didn't want to let me go because their China section was so weak. The State Department had been purged of any real China specialists except a few, very conservative missionary kids who were still in there, and they were loathe to let me go, so they kept offering me better and better jobs.

06-00:18:36

Lage: Was this all while you were in Paris?

06-00:18:38

Wakeman: No, this was when I came out here—after I—

06-00:18:40

Lage: Oh, after you came out here—

06-00:18:41

Wakeman: Yes, because I—when I went to Paris, I took leave.

06-00:18:45

Lage: Oh, well, now wait, now let's—you left, you got the fellowship. Did you actually sign on with the CIA?

06-00:18:51

Wakeman: Oh, yes. I was already signed on with them.

06-00:18:53

Lage: Oh, OK. Now I'm clearer. Then you went to Paris.

06-00:18:56

Wakeman: And so then I got this fellowship. Then I told Washington that I was going to take this fellowship, and their attitude was, fine, this will be an opportunity for you to study things that will be useful to us. And I said, OK—I always maintained a certain connection in graduate school, partly because some of my classmates here worked for the agency or went back to work for the agency. And they touted me up to them, and I was gradually shifted from DDO to DDI, from operations to intelligence. And by the time I had passed my PhD exams, and again was going to go abroad, the inducements were immense. I mean, for a young man to be told that he was going to be briefing President Kennedy is a big deal, not to speak of the salaries. This was a GS-12 or 14 level, plus overtime for weekends when you're the duty officer, all this stuff. So I sort of kept them on the string, and finally my experience in Taiwan really changed all that. I can tell you more about that later.

06-00:20:15

Lage: OK, but while you were here studying for your PhD this was what you were thinking about.

06-00:20:20

Wakeman: Yes.

06-00:20:21

Lage: A career in intelligence.

06-00:20:23

Wakeman: Yes, I thought that's probably eventually where I would end up, but—

06-00:20:26

Lage: Did they help pay your way here?

06-00:20:29

Wakeman: No.

06-00:20:29

Lage: So that was all separate.

06-00:20:30

Wakeman: No, this was all completely on my own, no. They just sort of had me on their list, as it were, and periodically somebody would call me and say, “Could you meet me over in the federal building in the elevator, or in some unnamed place? We want to talk about your future with us.” And I used to get really angry at them because they would always call me about five in the morning, Washington time, I guess. I’d tell them, “Don’t you know it’s five or six in the morning out here?” And they’d brush that aside, so it was, oh, you know, I know it’s ridic[ulous].

06-00:21:03

Lage: This is quite a tale!! [laughs] So, let’s see, Paris.

06-00:21:12

Wakeman: Well, Paris—

06-00:21:18

Lage: Soviet studies? It was a fellowship for Soviet studies?

06-00:21:21

Wakeman: Really, it was actually in political theory, but I did Soviet studies, and of course some African studies, and then I took one course with a journalist named Tibor Mende [spells], who was very well known then in France. He was sort of a Ross Terrill or Philip Short type. He was a journalist, he wrote for *Le Monde* and I guess he also wrote for *Figaro*, but he had published a number of popular books on China, and he offered a course at Sciences Po which I took, which I found very, very interesting, but most of my work was in classical political theory. I was still very interested in political economy and the—what I did was enter this one-year program where you have a conference [said in French], you have a seminar along with the courses you were taking and a maître d’étude, you know, the guy in charge of the seminar, and you meet weekly and hand in papers. Part of it is, I think, a lot of the students were students who were simultaneously getting law degrees at the Sorbonne and were training themselves or planning to go on into the ENA—the École Nationale d’Administration, which is right next door which is the higher school for administration in the French government. And from there you catapult into the top of the French mandarinat, the Conseil d’État, or one of those really big jobs, foreign service.

06-00:23:01

Lage: So they were doing something like you had thought maybe you would do.

06-00:23:04

Wakeman:

Yes, exactly, exactly. And so the course content was very much directed. It was very—it was not a humanistic kind of study. The social science that was there was more operational, international relations, particularly, and a smattering of international law. Soviet studies was taught pretty much the way it is in this country, or was in this country then, and Chinese studies—well, the French have a peculiar view of China, which I absorbed at first and then I found it very—I mean, they sort of ranged from the kind of Sinophilia of the Enlightenment philosophers to a sort of bemusement at what they take as a sort of insanity or craziness in Chinese politics. But I developed a lot of friends there. And then I just—I frankly just screwed around a lot. I mean I—

06-00:24:01

Lage:

You wrote your book.

06-00:24:02

Wakeman:

I wrote a novel, I went to Italy as I told you, saw Ted there—

06-00:24:09

Lage:

And your wife was with you.

06-00:24:10

Wakeman:

My wife was with me. She was working then for the French version of *Mademoiselle* magazine, and I was making a little extra money on the side as a technical translator, trying to avoid their tax collectors, because there is sort of a constant worry that—I didn't have a proper work permit, but she managed to get a work permit, and we—it was a wonderful, it was a wonderful—we were there, actually we were abroad a year, but the first two months were in Switzerland with my mother. I mean I've always been a reader, so of course I just read a lot of things that interested me, and Paris is, I had read *so* much about Paris, so many novels about Paris—and the theater-going. It was an interesting time to be in Paris, again, politically very charged, because this was the time of the right-wing attack on de Gaulle that you see in that movie *Day of the Jackal*. General Massu, all these paratroopers from Algeria and from Vietnam that had come back and that were determined to try to put their group in power. I still remember so very, very vividly, there was a—evidently there was supposed to be a coup d'état. Tempers were very nervous in Paris then. [François] Mitterrand, who was then a deputy in the senate, and this may have been staged, I don't know—some people think he staged this. There was an attempt to assassinate Mitterrand, who of course was a socialist. I can remember walking by his car, near the Odéon, which was riddled with machine gun bullets that these assassins had used. Every—

06-00:26:13

Lage:

The car was riddled?

06-00:26:14

Wakeman:

The car was riddled, yes. He escaped with his life, but the Algerians were constantly being shot down. French police are very brutal, and if you walked

up to a police station a little bit too rapidly—outside of every police station was sort of a concrete guard post and, of course, all the Frenchmen were carrying these *mitraillette*, these machine guns. And they were very trigger happy. Meanwhile at Sciences Po, there was a whole kind of student movement swirling around it—right wing Jeune Nation, the Poujadistes, were out; the Communists were rioting against them. I had a lot of friends who were Communists. I remember one time being involved in a riot. I don't even remember what it was now, what it was about, but it was near, it was between Boulevard Saint-Michel and Saint-Surplice, and the riot police, the Republican Guards, maneuvered us around, and they finally got us in a little plaza, and you couldn't go any place and then they—we all sat down. There was nothing else you could do. At that point, this guy appeared looking to me like Jean Gabin in a, you know, in a third-rate mystery role, or Peter Falk, or something, in a kind of a brown, tattered raincoat and a hat, and he had a cigar. He was flanked by these guys with their lead-loaded capes and plainclothesmen, and he goes around and he'd just say, “{suis la?},” and these guys would suddenly dash and grab this guy—evidently he recognized them from photographs or—and throw them in the back of the paddy wagon. And he did that about ten or fifteen times and then nobody knew what to do. The mob was completely leaderless. I was very impressed with that, that sort of thing.

But anyway, at this time of this putsch, it was rumored that parachutists were going to land in Paris to attack de Gaulle, whose life had already been—they'd already tried to assassinate him once. And I had friends on both sides of the political spectrum. The Communists were saying that the workers at the Renault plant were arming themselves, and these Jeune Nation right-wingers were saying we still have arms that have been buried since the Nazi occupation. We're going to arm ourselves, you know—the revolution! And then an announcement came that everyone was to either be at a radio or go into a movie theater at 2 or 3 p.m. in the afternoon.

06-00:29:09

Lage:

The announcement came from the government?

06-00:29:10

Wakeman:

From the government, yes, everybody knew about it. I think it was announced in our classes, yes, I think it was. And I remember going to the movie theater, and it was a very well done short film that began with de Gaulle and the free French marching through the streets of Algiers and talking about the Algerian war and all the rest of it and giving a brief history and then how de Gaulle was the sort of savior of France, and it ended with de Gaulle giving this speech where he said if we let this happen, and if the Fifth Republic falls, France is going to descend into a group of warring fiefs, he said. And he ended the speech by saying, “Français, Française, Aidez-moi!” And I was [laughs] Whoa! And everything sort of calmed down then and the revolution was over.

06-00:30:10

Lage: That put it to an end?

06-00:30:11

Wakeman: Yes, but it reminded me of something Crane Brinton had said at Harvard when I took one of his history courses. He said, “You know, France”—we were talking—it was on the revolution, of course, and his remark to the class was, “France—the French are always prepared for revolution, particularly in Paris, which is where they always take place.” And he described being in Paris after VE Day. He was there with the OSS, I think, visiting a couple, and all of a sudden there was a big ruckus in the street below, outside the window, and he thought, “What’s that?”—maybe there was a truck accident or something, people shouting, and this elderly gentleman said, “La revolution!” I mean, the first thing you think of—It’s the revolution!! [laughter] I recalled that during this period. So I didn’t necessarily do a lot of studying. I did a lot—

06-00:31:05

Lage: Did living there and having this range of friends change your politics at all? You said you’d been very anti-Communist.

06-00:31:13

Wakeman: Yes, it did, it did, yes. It did, it did, it certainly did. My certainties about the role of America in the world, which is what I was—it’s—I know it sounds terribly atavistic today, and the contrast with someone like Larry Levine [fellow historian and the narrator of recent oral history] must be enormous, but in those days I was sort of convinced that we had entered into a period like the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries where you really had a war between Christianity and Islam, and this was what the Cold War was. And ordinary people—particularly democratic people—the Americans, I felt, were a great people. I also took very seriously in George Kennan’s little book on American diplomacy this image of America as a sleeping dragon or a sleeping beast that is just somnolent until you finally step on its tail and then it awakes and starts flailing around and destroying everything around it.

06-00:32:21

Lage: America?

06-00:32:22

Wakeman: America, yes. And that the American people probably didn’t realize this. They weren’t prepared for the long haul; you needed a kind of hardcore group of centurions out there, which is the way I think I probably viewed myself. It was very romantic and very silly.

06-00:32:37

Lage: You had said earlier that you had a romantic view of this country, partly from living away for so—

06-00:32:43

Wakeman: Precisely. I came back desperately here to be an American true and blue; I joined the Young Republicans in Harvard.

06-00:32:51

Lage: But your family was not—

06-00:32:53

Wakeman: My father was very, very staunchly anti-Republican, and—but he was also very anti-Communist. My mother was not highly political at all and took it all as you know—their friends—that didn't really matter much to her.

06-00:33:11

Lage: Had you—you were—when did Kennedy come in? While you were in Paris?

06-00:33:15

Wakeman: Oh, no, no. Kennedy came in when I was—actually when I went to Europe, at the same time I had applied for a Fulbright, which I wasn't sure I wanted to take, and oh, yes, and I had also applied to go to the School of Advanced International Studies in Bologna that Hopkins runs, or ran then, and I did get a Fulbright to go to Lyon, but I didn't really want to spend the year in Lyon.

06-00:33:45

Lage: You wanted to be in Paris.

06-00:33:46

Wakeman: I wanted to be in Paris, and so I saw this fellowship from Harvard as a wonderful—it really did keep me from—I would have gone marching merrily off to Africa, probably, if they told me to at that point I was so—I wasn't fanatic; I was just very caught up in this great historic—the energy of postwar America and even in the post-Korean War.

06-00:34:11

Lage: Well, you weren't the only one, of course. [chuckles]

06-00:34:13

Wakeman: No, I know that, but one always tends to look back with a certain, with a certain kind of hindsight that—in any case, when I got that Fulbright, Kennedy was still a senator. He sent me a pro forma telegram of congratulations and I was very—I probably still have it somewhere in my trunks of letters and things, but no—he was elected in November of 1960, he was elected and I was back in the States by then.

06-00:34:49

Lage: Oh, that's right, you were there in 1959-1960.

06-00:34:50

Wakeman: I was out here by then, but like so many young Americans I was very caught up in the mystique of Kennedy, and this “do what you can for your nation” sort of thing, but the Paris experience did certainly temper that. I found—I really enjoyed living in Paris, I—

06-00:35:12

Lage:

I would think the young intellectuals in Paris would have had a very different view of America.

06-00:35:19

Wakeman:

Oh, yes, yes, not only the young but the old. I mean, it's funny to find yourselves reified this way. I remember one class, the professor coming in and we were going to discuss the diplomacy of the Eisenhower years and talk turned to the three Dulleses, John Foster, Allen, and Eleanor Dulles, who was then head of the German desk in the State Department, and he said, the professor said—well, the Dulles family is very powerful and very typical, and he used the term *la haute-bourgeoisie Protestante*. And I thought—upper Protestant middle class—I mean, it just, it was so—I didn't think of Dulles that way of all, you know! [laughs]

Mind you, I didn't like Dulles. I remember one argument I had with my mother—oh, she *was* political at that point then. She was, it was in Geneva and it was just, I think shortly after this final effort at some kind of reconciliation had broken down with my father, and she was very, very upset, emotionally upset, drinking too much. My sister and brother were in school there, and I thought she should probably go back to the States. Geneva is a very funny, there is an international society there that's kind of *louche*, and I thought, that's not a good place for her to be. She had very good friends in Florida, so she decided she would give up her apartment there and I'd sell her furniture, which I did. I stayed behind and got rid of all her furniture and so on. The apartment was owned by Ali Khan, the guy, not the Aga Khan, but the one who died in the auto accident. And it was a sort of V-shaped complex with these two wings facing each other, which meant the acoustics were very echoing, and I remember one night we had a party with one of our neighbors, who was a refugee from Kenya, which was then—had had the Mau Mau business and all those white farmers outside of Nairobi had fled elsewhere if they could get any money for their holdings, and she had some money, and oh, well, of course, she was married to Herbert Hoover, Jr.; no wonder she had—that's right—he was in the freeze-dried food business then.

But they had had some kind of talk about Dulles and after the guests left I started talking with my mother, and Dulles could do no wrong as far as she was concerned. And I was—I had thought—I didn't like Dulles, didn't like the way he operated, I'd been particularly offended by his behavior at Geneva, when he refused to shake Zhou Enlai's hand and all that stuff, so I was arguing back and forth in a very spirited fashion, and finally it was getting so loud—the neighbors were shouting at us, but I couldn't even hear them. She was saying “I nha, nha, nha,” and I said, “Mother, you're absolutely wrong!” And then I heard this booming baritone, “You up there, you up there!” So I went to the balcony and looked over, and there was a policeman, a Swiss policeman, and he said something, “I'm coming up.” And so I went back in

and I said, “There is a policeman coming, Mother; I think you should go into the bedroom, I’ll deal with the policeman.”

So—knock at the door, I opened the door, there was this policeman—of course, there is no such thing as the need for a warrant to enter a home in Switzerland, and the guy just walks in. And he says, “What’s going on here? The neighbors have been complaining; is there a fight going on?” At that point my mother came out of the bedroom with her Missouri manner and said, “What are you doing in my home?” And I thought, “Oh, God.” And she said, “Don’t you know a man’s home is his castle?” And this guy—she was saying this in English—I suppose like most Swiss he understood English, but, and then she went up and she said, “I want you out of here instantly.” She started poking him in the chest. I could see him drawing out his summons book. I thought, “Oh, boy.” So I said to my mother in an absolutely steely tone of voice, “Go back to the bedroom.” And she looked at me, and she realized that this was—so the policeman, she went back, and I said, “Listen, I’m terribly sorry, my mother has just gotten divorced, and she has been drinking a lot; we’re having a lot of trouble with her drinking habit and—but she’s seeing medical help, and I assure you that we’ll keep things under control, and so on.” And he said, “Well, in that case.” Well, it turned out this was his beat, and I would see him every evening when I was going out for a walk or something. He’d be out there walking around, and he’d see, {“Eh, votre mère aujourd’hui, comment? le? { }—and I’d say, “Oh, she’s doing very well,” in this kind of charade that was carried on the whole summer.

So anyway, the summer was in Switzerland, and then I went to Paris and because so much of your life there is spent doing things with students, going to cafes, arguing politics all the time, in the middle of this super-charged political situation, and with a lot of people telling you that America was absolutely despised except by people like Raymond Aron and other members of the Congress for Cultural Freedom-sponsored organizations. And although Sciences Po was a conservative, statist place where you wouldn’t expect to hear a very radical message, nonetheless, this did start to give me a—Wait a minute, what am I letting myself in for? And so I realized that this Chinese thing was not just a matter of trying to get some sort of specialty that would give me more clout when I became—went on active duty, but also that it was a kind of escape.

And I—in a way—because at the time that I was graduating—actually, the last year, I didn’t know what to do. I had signed on with these people, had a little bit of training, and then I was—I had jobs from Morgan Guaranty Trust; I tested into Harvard Law School; there was the Grace Line—you know the Grace Company that has all these Central American sugar companies. I wanted to live and work abroad very much. I think that was part of the motivation for a job. Movies—

06-00:42:11

Lage: You'd had such a diverse set of models.

06-00:42:14

Wakeman: Yes, writing, becoming an advertising executive, all these things, but it never really occurred to me that I had the capability of becoming a professor. That didn't—and so when I came out to Berkeley—we left Paris, my wife and I, with her parents. They flew over. The habit of my father-in-law was to buy a new car every year in England, a Rolls-Royce, which he would pick up and take back. I don't know why you buy a Rolls-Royce and only keep it for one year, but this is—maybe, I don't know—he had American—

06-00:42:50

Lage: It was more the style how things were done then—

06-00:42:54

Wakeman: I guess so, and I remember we picked up this car at the factory and went down to Southampton, and it was the maiden voyage of the Rotterdam, the Holland American Line, which was on an around-the-world cruise, so we took that back to New York—traveling first class, they were paying for all this stuff—where we were met at the dock by some of my Harvard roommates and friends, and then I went down to Florida, and that's where I finished the novel. And the novel was—the first two novels, they were very—my wife just read the third novel, this *17 Royal Palms Drive* the other day and she liked it, I was kind of surprised. I find it very jejune, and good Lord, what did I know then? And the first two, they were too autobiographical.

06-00:43:59

Lage: Oh, they were?

06-00:44:00

Wakeman: Yes, and when I went to Random House with the second one, that was when Bob Gottlieb was just starting out as a young editor, and he was very—he was clearly a rising star, and he—he was very nice to me. He took the trouble to read the manuscript and maybe because of my father, I guess that was because of it, and invited me back. We had lunch, and he painfully, or painfully for me, not for him, explained the problems in the novel. He said, "Maybe you'll come back in four or five years," whatever. But he remembered enough of the novel, however feeble it was, to have it in mind when Jerry Wald, the producer, was trying to find someone to write a novel for a movie. Wald had just finished making *Peyton Place*, and he had the idea of doing a movie about Joan Crawford and her daughter. Of course that was later *Mommy Mine*—or whatever it is—

06-00:45:04

Lage: *Mommy Dearest*.

06-00:45:05

Wakeman: *Mommy Dearest*, you know, made a movie then, but in those days it was just Hollywood gossip. Nobody knew about it outside of the Hollywood circles,

and he told me, Wald told me eventually what he wanted. He'd been trying to get Budd Schulberg to write this, but Schulberg was too well known, he didn't want to fool around with this thing, and somehow Wald mentioned it to Gottlieb and Gottlieb said, "Well, I know a young guy who might be able to do something for you. If you center the novel on the young girl, on the daughter, it might work." So the deal that was worked out was that when the novel was published I would get a certain advance and royalties, which were not insignificant, but they weren't a great deal of money. It wasn't a huge publishing deal, but the key thing was the movie, and depending on the number of copies the novel sold, my movie percentage, the percentage of net that I would get from the movie rights—I've got this sentence backward—depended on the number of copies that the novel sold. So I wrote the novel. It was—

06-00:46:24

Lage:

Is this *17 Royal Palms Drive*?

06-00:46:25

Wakeman:

Yes.

06-00:46:26

Lage:

I see.

06-00:46:27

Wakeman:

It was submitted to a publisher named Julian Messmer.

06-00:46:33

Lage:

Did they give you sort of an outline of the plot then?

06-00:46:35

Wakeman:

No, not at all. He just, he told me the story, the Joan Crawford story, what was known about her daughter, their troubles, and I asked him—the only thing I asked was, "Well, does this have to be set in Hollywood?" He said, "No, no, you can do it any place, but people will know, at least my circle, will know what it's all about." So I set it in Florida, which I could write about with some familiarity and wrote the novel about a young woman I had known whose mother was very difficult and a little bit like Crawford although not as extravagant, and then it was sent to the publisher. The publisher said it wasn't pornographic enough, it needed to have a little bit—that *Peyton Place*, of course, had been lurid. So I tried to make it a little bit—added a few sexy touches to it, and it was at that point, I had just finished and Wald died.

06-00:47:33

Lage:

Your movie thing collapsed?

06-00:47:35

Wakeman:

My movie thing, yes, so what to do. Well, nobody wanted to make the movie then. And so it was published by Signet Books, and it sold well, it sold over a hundred thousand copies.

06-00:47:48

Lage: Did you keep the pornographic sections in?

06-00:47:51

Wakeman: No, I took those out, actually, I went back to my original novel. I didn't have to please Wald or the other publisher any more and so that—

06-00:48:00

Lage: Tell me again how much it sold.

06-00:48:02

Wakeman: Oh, 112,000 copies.

06-00:48:03

Lage: That's pretty good.

06-00:48:04

Wakeman: Yes, oh, yes. Next to my sales in China, it's the best I've ever done! And I got enough to buy a duplex here, that sort of thing—but I also learned that I wasn't a very good novelist. I mean, to me—

06-00:48:21

Lage: You mean it didn't satisfy you? Or feedback you'd gotten—

06-00:48:24

Wakeman: No, it's just—it's one thing to read Fitzgerald or read Hemingway, and another thing to think you can write like them. To try to write a *Great Gatsby*, or you think about writing that wonderful story of the waiters in the café where they're practicing when the bullfight is going on outside, and they're practicing with a chair, with the knives out and a guy gets—it's done with such economy—of course, Hemingway is famous for that and is parodied for that. But I realized, my father kept telling me, character is action, character is dialogue; you don't tell people what the person is doing—that was his mantra. So I tried to do that and I began to realize that—this is this very easy lesson, everybody learns this very quickly—that writing down what people say doesn't work, obviously. It just doesn't happen that way, but that it's very difficult to craft a very good novel, so although I did write another novel later, which I never showed to anybody. I realized, no, I'll never be very good at this.

06-00:49:39

Lage: Even though you did quite well.

06-00:49:41

Wakeman: Yes, but it was what it was. I wasn't embarrassed about it and I was happy with the reception. I got very few reviews, but I just knew for myself that that was not my *métier*. So when that summer finished—during that summer of writing it up, again on our uppers, or whatever, my wife worked as an accountant for a freezing company in Port Everglades, Florida, and I managed somehow—I tried to get a job as an accountant, too, so I went to one class in

Fort Lauderdale at the high school, a night class in accounting where they told you about the textbook, and I got the textbook, and I read the textbook, and the Sun Oil Company, which is headquartered there, had a position open for an accountant, and I went in and I showed the man my resume. And I didn't lie about—I didn't say I had had—I did suggest that one job might have involved some accounting, and his position was, "Well, you're overqualified for the job. I mean, I just want somebody to keep the books." And I said, "Well, try me." No, no, so he—and finally I said, "Yes, you're right." So I ended up as salesman, and it was one of the worst things I ever did. I started out as an encyclopedia salesman, and that is—

06-00:51:14

Lage: Oh, this is hilarious!

06-00:51:15

Wakeman: —the worst thing you can possibly imagine, selling *Collier's Encyclopedia*.

06-00:51:19

Lage: Is this while you're writing or after?

06-00:51:20

Wakeman: Yes, this is while I'm writing, yes. So I'd go out—and you know, it was really, you really had to be—

06-00:51:28

Lage: Door to door?

06-00:51:29

Wakeman: Door to door, oh, yes.

06-00:51:30

Lage: My brother did this over his summers, or a summer.

06-00:51:33

Wakeman: Oh, yes. It's a terrible job, because you're essentially conning people, and in my case I was working, because I knew Spanish, in Dade County, in the areas where the Cuban immigrant population, exiled population lived. And I'd go in; these families were very, very eager to have their children well educated, and I would give them some cock and bull story about how this would help them get into Harvard College, or something like that, and then there were—for example, the tricks you were taught—whether to aim the pitch at the woman—the wife or the husband. Things like—well, it's only going to cost you pennies a day. Here I'll show you. You put a little piggy bank, just put it on top of the TV set. Three pennies a day, or something like that. And then when you have the thing, you start filling the form out, then when you hold it over, you tilt it so the pencil rolls in toward the woman of the house, and she automatically grabs the pencil, so it's in her hand! [laughter] And it just was, and these people thought they were buying a great educational instrument. Well, maybe in a few cases, that's true, but in most cases—. And of course,

we'd go around in cars of salesmen. They'd drive us around; we'd be set loose like a bunch of rats in the suburbs.

06-00:52:51

Lage: How long did it take you to feel disgusted with yourself?

06-00:52:54

Wakeman: About three weeks. But I still had to earn some money, so I got a job as a vacuum cleaner salesman for Electrolux. That was more dignified.

06-00:53:04

Lage: My brother did that too! [laughter]

06-00:53:08

Wakeman: Oh! You know, I can spend hours telling you anecdotes about that because I got—

06-00:53:16

Lage: You dumped dirt on the floor—

06-00:53:17

Wakeman: Yes, that's right! [laughs] that's the one—or the time I tried to sell a—I had a partner in this thing who was a Marine, who had been a Marine, who was Section 8-ed out of the Marine Corps in Korea because he'd struck his—lucky he wasn't shot—struck his colonel or lieutenant colonel, and he was a psychopath, a real sociopath. Very nice man, I mean, on the surface. But just dangerous, you just knew he was dangerous. And he would, he would want us to quit work at noon and go get a beer or something. And then he'd get in a fight with somebody in the bar, or we'd do things like, well, it's just—the reason I got a partner is one time I went out with some new equipment, and I hadn't checked it out. It was a floor polisher which had three wheels, two of which rotated in one direction, and one in the other, which meant that there was an inherent skew to it, and I sort of futzed around with it in the shop, and then I went out with this thing and went into a newly built house in West Palm Beach, and this woman was from Boston, I remember. And she was very proud of her house. She'd been out in the front doing her garden when I came in. I managed to get her to the point of—"Let me just show you how this works." And she'd just had this floor finished, her new wooden floor. I said, "Let me show you how well this polishes." And she said, "Well, I've got to get back to my garden." So, "That's OK, I'll have it polished by the time you get back." So I pour the polish down, and I set this thing up, and the minute I put it on the floor, it went BOOM, BOOM; it just started [makes whirring noises] and every time it landed there was a gouge. Oh, my God. Well, the next thing I knew, the sheriff was there, and you know. Luckily you're bonded for that. But similar types of things with—it was just—it became comical to me.

06-00:55:08

Lage:

Well, it *is* comical when you think about it—this level of education you have and you find yourself—

06-00:55:14

Wakeman:

Well, the saving factor in all of this was selling these things to my mother's friends. But once I ran through the list of friends, then it was a matter of getting, of being bitten by dogs, but I did fairly well. By the time I was ready to leave for California, I went in and talked to my boss, who was from Atlanta. And I said, what was his name, Peterson, "Mr. Peterson," I said, "I've got to leave. I haven't told you this, but I've been admitted to graduate school." And he said, "Well, where's that." I said, "Out in California." "Out in California," he said, "Well," he said, "we've got plenty of branches out in California." He said, "The minute you get there you go and show my card and we'll get you bonded right away." And I said, "Of course." I didn't know what to say, but when I walked out of that Electrolux for the last time, his favorite line was, "You'd better believe it." Meaning, if you believe you can do it, you can do it, and then you'll win the free company trip to Honolulu next year for Christmas, or whatever. So I arrived in California with leaving that behind, very happy to be rid of it.

06-00:56:21

Lage:

Oh, this is quite a tale. Now, you told me last time how you entered the China field through Saint-Simonianism, Vietnam, but maybe tell a little more specifically about deciding to study China and then why you came to Berkeley.

06-00:56:44

Wakeman:

Well, it was like so many of those things a combination of impulses or motives, I suppose. One was the attractiveness of the language. I was intrigued by Chinese, frankly. I just really wondered what it was like to study it. Secondly, this interest in Orientalism, as it was called then, which came out of this interest in these utopian socialist cults in nineteenth century Europe and their manifestation in Vietnam, and the discovery that in the pantheon of their spirits were these Chinese spirits, and I became interested in it that way, so it was an intellectual—

06-00:57:27

Lage:

Is it also—when you say Orientalism, was there kind of that exotic attraction?

06-00:57:33

Wakeman:

Oh, of course, yes. Of course that was true, of course that was true. And I think it was even more, in some ways, more attractive because, well, because, in two senses: one was, China was inaccessible. Taiwan, of course, I didn't even know that then. I didn't even think of Taiwan as being an option for study, but China was inaccessible, it was the mysterious, there was a bamboo curtain and all the rest of it.

06-00:58:00

Lage: And it was Communist.

06-00:58:02

Wakeman: And it was Communist, and given my cold warrior beliefs of that era, you know, the old joke was, if you're an optimist you learn Russian; if you're a pessimist you learn Chinese. These were after all, these were the blue ants, these were the ones in the Korean War, who with their trumpets drove back our boys from the Yalu River. This is the real enemy, the Manchurian candidate. All of that kind of nonsense was rolling around in my head. And part of it was—I'm not being facetious when I say my father hadn't studied it. I thought that was an area that I could really make my own, and the—and it was anything else—well, I think again, this image of China and the French Enlightenment. I'd read a lot of the philosophes [said in French] on France, also on Turkey, for that matter, and Persia, but for some reason, China seemed to be more, more entrancing. And then the other thing—so I applied to go to graduate school.

06-00:59:11

Lage: But why, I mean, where.

06-00:59:13

Wakeman: I applied two places. I applied to go back to Harvard. I had been told when I left Harvard, the Dean had called me in and said, because I'd been this Harvard National Scholar, had this Harvard National Scholar status, and I had done very well there, he said, "If you ever want to come back to graduate school, just let us know, you'll get a free ride, and we'll be very happy to have you come back." So I knew that was where, and—why Berkeley? Well—I remember going to the Benjamin Franklin Library in Paris and looking at university catalogues, and suddenly the University of California—now at that time, this sounds silly, I was reading a lot of the Beats and particularly Kerouac, *On the Road*, which my friends and I at Harvard would often have in mind as we drove to New York at night. You know, [making noises], which is ridiculous.

06-01:00:13

Lage: You were quite a romantic! [chuckling]

06-01:00:14

Wakeman: Yes, totally so! And *Dharma Bums* and the description—I had been in Monterey as a child, we had driven through there, but the descriptions of Big Sur and all that, I thought, oh, the Sierra—oh, California—maybe it would be fun to go out there. The other part of it was kind of a truculence. There was a sort of little Cambridge-on-the-Seine quality to Paris. There was a group of people, I didn't go around very much, because I thought they were just silly. My friends were almost entirely French. These were Radcliffe and Harvard graduates in Paris for their wander year, or whatever, and they all seemed to hang around the same hotel on Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, have the same parties,

and you could be sitting in somebody's suite in Adams House on a Sunday afternoon without any change whatsoever except—

06-01:01:13

Lage: Just like the eating clubs.

06-01:01:15

Wakeman: Like the eating club except the wine was better. A few of them trying to learn French, seriously, but not many, just having the year, and I remember one of them, actually a very, very gifted person who became a professor at some ridiculously young age like twenty-six at Princeton. His name was Pierre Stone, he was an astronomer. And I told him—he said, “Are you going to graduate school?” I said, “Yes, I’m going to go.” He said, “Well, you’re going to go back to Harvard, aren’t you?” I said, “I don’t know, I’m thinking of going to California.” And you know, there’s that wonderful cartoon of—I forget the name of the *New Yorker* cartoonist—the view from New York west—it’s sort of like that. He said, “Out in California, Berkeley,” he said, “Well, you can probably get a PhD in a third or half the time there.” [laughter]

So I thought, “What is with this guy?” It was so parochial and I went, when I was up in London, on one trip at that time, and I went to—not Blackwell’s, the other big bookstore, in any case—and was browsing through the shelf of books on China, and I saw this book, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate* by Joseph Levenson. It was just out or recently just out. And I bought it, and I took it home and read it, and it was an immensely wonderful book, very thick, very dense intellectually, but it just—it was stunningly good. And I don’t know if I did that, frankly I don’t remember well enough whether I did that before I decided to apply to Berkeley or whether I did it after. I suspect I did it afterwards, before I made up my mind.

And then what finally brought me out here was sheer luck, because a man who was then professor of Japanese here, Donald Shively, who is married to Beth Berry. Don was the professor—from here he went to Stanford and then to Harvard and then came back here as the curator of the East Asian Library. Don was here, and somehow my request for a fellowship—I mean, I couldn’t come back to school without a fellowship, that was clear—crossed his desk and he wrote me a personal letter. He said, “Listen, there aren’t very many university fellowships here, and you may well be able to get one, but the competition is very keen across departments. I think you stand a much better chance if you apply to the Center for Chinese Studies.” And I did. And I got a very nice fellowship. And so with that in hand, I was able to see, oh, well, I’ll go it for a year and take some Chinese and try it out and maybe at the most get a master’s degree and come back, do something else in life. In the meantime I thought, well, maybe, the Agency was always there, and so on. So I set off for this intellectual trip without knowing, without having any road map whatsoever. Just set out across the Tamiami Trail and headed west.

06-01:04:38

Lage: And your wife was with you, right?

06-01:04:40

Wakeman: Yes, Nancy was with me. I remember getting out here, we stopped off in Los Angeles where I had borrowed some money, because I didn't have the fellowship check yet, from my former agent on Labor Day and then drove up here, and I remember being very dismayed by University Avenue. I thought, "Is this Berkeley? Gee, cheap motels and"—

06-01:05:05

Lage: Right, it's not a great entrance. [chuckling]

06-01:05:07

Wakeman: And then we stayed at the Hotel Alexander, which doesn't exist anymore. It's down on Shattuck, and it was a real fleabag! [chuckling] And it wasn't until that evening, after we sort of settled in, that I got in my car, and we drove up into the Berkeley Hills, and oh, wow, this is a fabulous place. But I had applied in political science because of my interest in political theory, and also this again shows the incredible naiveté of people, I got out here, and I looked at the political science requirements, and I said, "No, this isn't going to work. There is so much stuff here that I've either done before or that doesn't interest me, and there is very little opportunity to take Chinese and do Chinese studies seriously." And then I looked at the other departments. Well, I love history, why don't I do history? So I decided to change to history. Now I'd been admitted—

06-01:06:06

Lage: Yes, and usually you're admitted to a department.

06-01:06:09

Wakeman: You're admitted to a department, exactly. The fellowship was coming out of the Center for Chinese Studies so that could be transferred; there was no problem there. But I went up to, all of those offices then were in Sproul Hall, little wicked windows, sort of like the French prefecture of police; you get up to the window and they close the window. They're going off to lunch or something. And I just was so determined and so convinced. Had I known—because they kept telling me, "No, you can't do this, this can't be done." I'd say, "Oh, of course it can." You know, I'd reach my hand in the window, some poor clerk back there, and I'd say, "See, it can be done." And this, that and the other, and finally they said, "Well, OK, if you can get the chairman of the history department to sign off on this you can make this transfer."

So I went over to the department. I didn't know anybody. I knew Levenson by name, but it was just the very end of summer, and classes hadn't started. He was at his cabin near Mount Shasta or Mount Lassen. And Delmer Brown, the Japanese historian, was chairman, and I went in, and of course I had all of the, well, I wouldn't say contempt, but all of the intellectual snobbery of a Harvard person—you know the old saying, you can always tell a Harvard man, but not

much? Well, that was sort of the way I felt [chuckling]—waving my Phi Beta Kappa key and so forth. So I went in, and I thought, who is this old guy, so I said, “I want to join the history department.” And he said, “Well, how come?” And I said, “Well, I’m really interested in East Asian history.” It had dawned on me as I looked at the books that he was a Japanese historian, so I thought, oops, got to be a little careful here. So he said, “Well, do you have your transcript?” I said, “Yes.” And I showed him my transcript. He looked at it, and he said, “Oh,” he said, “You’ve already had rice paddies.” Fairbank and Reischauer’s course—he was mistaking Gibb’s course on the Middle East. I said, “Yes, of course.” And he said, “Well, that’s very impressive.” He said, “Well, I think I could make room for you in my seminar, my master’s reading seminar. We start next week, and we’ll plunge right into the reading,” and so forth, and I said, “Well, that’s great,” I said, “But you do have to sign this.” He said, “Oh, that’s fine.” So he signed it, and I went back and the transfer was effected and then I thought, “I don’t know ANYTHING about Japan!

06-01:08:36

Lage: And you didn’t want to study Japan.

06-01:08:38

Wakeman: No, no, I had no intention of studying Japan! So I went out and I bought the Penguin—Richard Storry’s *Short History of Japan*, a little thing like that [indicating spine size], and I read it. And then I went to the seminar, and I was completely at sea! [chuckling] So my first courses were with Delmer and in fact—

06-01:09:02

Lage: Did you ever own up to him how—

06-01:09:04

Wakeman: Oh, I told him the story later. Yes, he thought it was very funny. I actually wrote a very, very intense paper for him on the—there was a one period in the history of the Japanese imperial institution when there were two emperors, sort of like the Pope at Avignon, and I was interested in that, the legitimacy, and I wrote a long, long paper. His interest, of course, was then Shinto—it still is—and of course that has a lot to do with the emperor’s cult, so I got excited about Japanese history. But Levenson was the one who really—Levenson and Ch’en Shih-Hsiang, Professor Chen—were the two people who really excited me the most at first.

06-01:09:52

Lage: I think maybe we should stop here and start up with that next time. What do you think?

06-01:09:56

Wakeman: OK. Yes, that’s a good stopping place.

## Interview 5: May 4, 2005

Audiofile 7 Wakeman 07 05-04-05.wav

07-00:00:02

Lage: Today is May 4th—

07-00:00:06

Wakeman: Today is May 4<sup>th</sup>.

07-00:00:08

Lage: 2005, our fifth interview.

07-00:00:10

Wakeman: Yes.

07-00:00:10

Lage: And last time we got you to Berkeley, finally.

07-00:00:13

Wakeman: Yes.

07-00:00:14

Lage: And you had enrolled in Delmer Brown's seminar on Japanese history.

07-00:00:17

Wakeman: Oh, that's right, yes, yes, I had.

07-00:00:19

Lage: So we want to talk about your graduate work and how you were shaped by that, and the people you worked with—

07-00:00:26

Wakeman: Graduate school was very important to me. The most important influence in graduate school was my main professor, Joseph Levenson, of whom I had read one volume of his trilogy, though not his thesis-turned-book on *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China*. So I knew he was a brilliant scholar, but I didn't really know him, and when I came here my first contact was not with him, actually, but with another person who had a great influence on me, who was a Chinese professor of Chinese.

07-00:01:11

Lage: Chinese language?

07-00:01:13

Wakeman: Chinese language and literature. His name was Ch'en, Ch'en Shih-Hsiang. He spelled it [spells]. He was—he seemed to me to be a true litteratus of the old school, and he was in a way, he was, although I wasn't able to place him intellectually until much later when I knew more about modern Chinese intellectual history and the intellectuals of the period. He was from northern China and came from a fairly well-to-do gentry background who had studied at Oxford. He didn't have a PhD, and he was a kind of protégé of Bernard

Berenson, the art historian. I think they met through Isabella Stewart Gardner, but I'm not certain about that, and he may have been married before, but he was married to a relatively young woman at that time, who is still alive. She's a very nice person, a master bridge player, one of those people who have master points. Cantonese, I think. I think they may have met in Hawaii, very beautiful, very charming.

But the reason I got to know him first was I came here to the Center for Chinese Studies on a fellowship, and the purpose of the fellowship was to take social scientists—I think I told you that I had applied in political science and then later changed to history, so I had applied for this fellowship when I was still coming as a political scientist; otherwise I don't think I would have been considered a social scientist—to take social scientists and teach them Chinese very quickly in a crash course. The money for these fellowships was put up by the Ford Foundation, which during that period invested about thirty million dollars in training a new cadre of Chinese specialists in America, and I think—

07-00:03:26

Lage:

And what was their interest?

07-00:03:27

Wakeman:

Their interest, well, it was know thy enemy. Red China was Red China; it was an enemy. The Ford Foundation, I think they thought it was a very good idea. They've always had a strong interest in—they had a strong interest then in international affairs and in training people who were expert at international affairs, and particularly under a series of presidents including McGeorge Bundy, they had invested a lot of money in overseas study in these rare languages. I think in part, you know, the upper echelon of the foundation world I've discovered later when I was president of the SSRC [Social Science Research Council] was riddled with people who had been in the OSS.

07-00:04:23

Lage:

Ah, again, we have this tie with the intelligence—

07-00:04:25

Wakeman:

Oh, yes. Well, the whole division of the world into areas is in a certain sense a legacy from the OSS.

07-00:04:32

Lage:

You mean the area studies?

07-00:04:34

Wakeman:

Yes, like Middle Eastern, East Asian, South—Latin American. That corresponds very much to the various sections into which the world was parceled off during the wartime period when OSS was operating. And many of these people, of course, had been at Harvard, which was where many of the first OSS people were recruited. If you look, for example, the president of the Mellon Foundation, Jack Sawyer, Frank Sutton, vice president of the Ford

Foundation, Bundy himself, and so forth and so on, and the advisers who helped them set these things up were following that tradition. And they were the Cold Warriors, the grand old men. There is a wonderful book about that generation. They were still around when I was in New York in the mid-eighties, and then they gradually retired or passed on or what have you. But these were the people who were professors and the ones who controlled the big foundations during the sixties, and they had decided that they were going to fund certain studies in a strategic way, for example, Soviet studies, and of course, Chinese studies.

The language part of it, I'm sure came—the model must have been the Monterey Defense Language Institute, where you could, if you were teaching people how to listen in on conversations between airplane pilots, shortwave radio communications, it was possible to take somebody with a bit of a skill for languages and train them in six months, or maybe on-the-job training another six months, to be able to do that. So we had these people in Okinawa and Taiwan who would listen all day to the radio and—very primitive by today's standards of NSA eavesdropping, but they would be listening to tank commanders telling this, that, and the other behind the bamboo and behind the iron curtain. And it was—I mean, I didn't think much about it at the time. I saw it as a great opportunity to learn this language with somebody else paying for it. And I didn't realize that you don't learn Chinese in one year. The language program here was run by this Professor Ch'en. At that time there was a great distance between the History Department and the Department of Oriental Languages and Levenson couldn't bridge that gap.

07-00:07:04

Lage:

Because—

07-00:07:04

Wakeman:

Well, the sinologists—Berkeley's Oriental languages is a very, very, very great department, was a very, very great department, and it still is one of the best departments in the world, although it has changed its name at the behest of Professor Tien because Oriental sounds, Orientalism—you know that sort of thing. And in fact, many members of my generation, colleagues in that department or in that field, were people who had gone through the army language-training programs. That's where their language skills—

07-00:07:40

Lage:

So they came here already—

07-00:07:41

Wakeman:

They came here, maybe they'd done a year with the NSA after they got out of the army, but they were basically intelligence, either enlisted men or officers. And the center was sort of trying to replicate that, so they got—well, there were about six of us that first year. There had been a couple of years of fellows before me including Chalmers Johnson, and an anthropologist that later taught here, a political scientist, James Townsend, and so forth. And we

used text books that were patterned after the Yale textbooks which were used in the Defense [Language] Institute and went through an intensive period of tutorial which commenced even before school began. So the minute I got here I had to report and we started off.

I remember sitting down; the person I first started studying with was Jerome Cohen, who was a lawyer, a legal professor in the law school then, a young guy, very hot shot. He had been, I think he was Justice [Felix] Frankfurter's clerk, editor of the *Yale Law Review*, all the right blue-ribbon credentials for a budding legal expert, who had been selected—this is typical again—by the Rockefeller Foundation who provided him with a seven-year grant to train him in Chinese law. There was really nobody in the country who could do Chinese law. And he was going—and he introduced it at Boalt, but Harvard quickly got wind of him and hired him away, and he set up the East Asian legal program at Harvard, regretfully, or rather regrettably, leaving nothing behind here. There still is no real Chinese legal program here, although there have been efforts made over the years to have one. We had another person out of that same Rockefeller program, who did not get tenure. And one of my hopes—I mean, I'm going into retirement, so it's not something that I will see realized in office, as it were, but I was talking just the other day to the next chairman of the Center for Chinese Studies and the law school has indicated they will make an effort to do this. It's ridiculous that Berkeley—

07-00:09:54

Lage:

To hire somebody or they'll train—

07-00:09:55

Wakeman:

Well, to set up a program, get a professor, get some lines set up and go out and seek the funding for it, because we're the only—Columbia has a program, they all have programs, and that Berkeley should not have one is absolutely scandalous to me. Stanford has one. So anyway, Jerry and I sat down and started learning Chinese together, and it was comical! Very quickly school started and I began taking regular elementary Mandarin with Professor Ch'en and Professor Chao Yuen-Ren, this famous phonologist who developed some of the modern romanization systems for Mandarin Chinese and had written the only real grammar of Mandarin, so these were very eminent scholars. Ch'en Shih-Hsiang was more of a literary person, however. He was a wonderful poet and calligrapher, and he had been classically trained and then had this additional edge of sort of somewhat the New Criticism, but very much influenced by I.A. Richards, Cleanth Brooks, that school of literary criticism of the prewar years and late forties. And the minute I got to know him I was—what can I say, I was dazzled by him. He was wonderful. And I decided then that what I really wanted to do—I guess this was the old history and literature background—what I really wanted to do was to do a lot of work in Oriental languages, and I think I ended up with more courses in that department than in the History Department.

07-00:11:37

Lage: You ended up with a PhD in both.

07-00:11:39

Wakeman: Yes.

07-00:11:40

Lage: Is that standard or unusual?

07-00:11:42

Wakeman: No, no, that was very unusual. And my real goal was to get to the point of being able to take a seminar with him or seminars with him. He taught courses in Tang poetry. Professor Johnson here, who was a year behind me at Harvard, also took the same Tang poetry course I took. Gary Snyder took it—the poet—he was very close to Gary Snyder, and then my real goal was to take his seminar on the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, the great Chinese novel, but to do that you had to get there—

07-00:12:14

Lage: You had to get good.

07-00:12:14

Wakeman: You had to get good, you had to—

07-00:12:16

Lage: Well, how was he at teaching this very kind of contrived way of—

07-00:12:20

Wakeman: Well, he was very discreet about it, but he thought it was—he didn't teach it, he ran the tutorial program. And the people who actually taught it were, well, in one case, a graduate student, whose father was a very famous Chinese statistician. And the leading tutor, the man who ended up with a permanent position here, had been a journalist in China in the 1940s, part of the democratic third-force group of democratic Harold Laski-influenced Chinese intellectuals. Mr. Gee was his name. He thought this was just fine. And we found—and these Yale books were—for example, you plunge right into the text of *On New Democracy* by Mao or Mao's essay on "a single spark can start a prairie fire," that sort of thing. And it quickly became obvious to me and everybody else who was doing these things that the Chinese we were reading—there was no such thing as Communist Chinese. I think outsiders had been misled by the simplification of the Chinese characters.

07-00:13:32

Lage: Now, you mean the language itself had been—

07-00:13:35

Wakeman: Well, the language—the Center for Chinese Studies then had two big projects. One project was an analysis of Chinese agricultural data, which was done on a contract from the Central Intelligence Agency, and there was a part of the

center you couldn't go into because, you know, supposedly this data was so, well it's, you know—

07-00:13:57

Lage: Was it known that they had this contract?

07-00:14:00

Wakeman: Oh, yes, yes. It was known among us, I don't know if it was—it was later publicized during the early sixties when Student MOBE [Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam] and these Trotskyist groups found out about it, and found out about Scalapino, and this that and the other, and published pamphlets about it, but at the time, I don't think people thought twice about it. There was also a—

07-00:14:27

Lage: This was '60; let's just place it in time.

07-00:14:30

Wakeman: Yes, 1960.

07-00:14:30

Lage: You were here in 1960.

07-00:14:31

Wakeman And at that time the center was down on Shattuck over the See's Candy Store, so we had a whole—it was sort of separate from the university in that sense. And there was also a project, which is the one that really counted for me, called the Current Chinese Language Project, which Ch'en Shih-Hsiang was head of, and he interpreted his mission and the goal of this very loosely. Obviously, the intention of the project was to work with the new vocabulary of Communist China: in that sense there was Communist Chinese—all of this socialist jargon, these slogans, 3-anti, 5-anti, what did they mean?—or the military terminology that was used so much in the Great Leap Forward. Now, Professor Ch'en could write; he wrote a brilliant essay on the military motifs of the Great Leap Forward poetry of the time, but he was interested in the aesthetic side of it, so he would do things—this project, then was sort of a mechanical, almost like a, I think the air force may even have been involved in paying for it and paying for the tutorial of all these students. But Ch'en would do things, and this was really—again, at the time I didn't realize who I was talking to. There was this pale woman, older woman, wan, she reminded me of something out of a Jean Rhys novel; something had shattered her life and I didn't quite know what it was. And her name was Eileen Chang in English, in Chinese it's Zhang Ailing, who is arguably the best novelist of the twentieth century; at least some people think so.

07-00:16:15

Lage: Wow. And she was teaching?

07-00:16:19

Wakeman:

She was hired as a linguist, so it was just a sinecure for her. She was writing her novels and short stories. And I got to know her quite well. She was very lonely and very shy. She died not too long ago. She ended up practically starved to death—I think she may actually have starved herself to death in a New York room, a New York apartment. And her tragedy was that she had been deeply involved, deeply in love with a man who had served the puppet regime in China. And during the war she was in Shanghai; she and another very famous woman writer became identified as collaborators. She published a lot of material in occupied Shanghai and sort of symbolized or emblemized the modern woman in Shanghai. But I would say along with Ding Ling, who wrote *Miss Sophie's Diary*, Zhang Ailing, who was not radical, was one of the great women writers of the twentieth century and it only slowly—

Then also there was another man involved in the project whose brother is still alive, he's a professor emeritus at Columbia, C.T. Hsia, and this man, Xia Jiqing (Hsia Chi-tsing), I guess it would be, Chi-tsing. I never called him that; I just called him by his Chinese name. He was a wonderful man, he was very funny and a very close friend of Ch'en, again, and we used to have lunch every Tuesday. There used to be a really crummy Cantonese restaurant down on Shattuck Square that we'd go to, and he just—I remember very well that first semester his telling me, "If you want to understand Mao, if you want to understand China, you've got to read the *Tale of the Three Kingdoms* [*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*]. It's as though you can't understand Western European civilization unless you've read about Helen of Troy. It's that central. Mao reads it all the time," and he'd go on and on. He was a very funny man. He wrote a wonderful story that appeared in *Partisan Review* about the Boxer Rebellion, and then he wrote a very short book called *Gate of Darkness* about Communist intellectuals.

07-00:18:43

Lage:

What was his political story?

07-00:18:48

Wakeman:

He was an exile from the mainland who had gone to Taiwan, and in Taiwan he didn't get on very well with the Chiang [Kai-shek] regime, so he was in exile from Taiwan too, because he wasn't Guomintang. He was a kind of romantic liberal intellectual. Those of that ilk suffered pretty bad fates in China, but he wasn't a rabid anti-Communist or anything. The funny thing was, he was having an affair with a woman, and this takes me back to an earlier tape, Roxane Witke.

07-00:19:23

Lage:

Oh, Roxane again!

07-00:19:25

Wakeman:

Roxane again. And she was, I think she was very deeply in love with him, and then he died very prematurely of an aneurism; it was a stroke, quite suddenly.

I think he was probably only in his late thirties, early forties, but he introduced me—through him I got to know, get more of a feel for, this new culture I was studying. So the Current Chinese Language Project really was a kind of cover for these other activities. Meanwhile—

07-00:19:55

Lage: They didn't take it as seriously as the Ford Foundation did.

07-00:19:57

Wakeman: Oh, no, they thought they were getting themselves some great vocabulary, set of dictionaries. There were lexicographies and dictionaries created by this project, and it went on for years and years. I eventually turned it into a visiting scholar program and just unabashedly said, "We're not going to do this."

07-00:20:15

Lage: You mean it continued that long, until you were—

07-00:20:16

Wakeman: Oh, it's still in existence, yes. But we use it to bring people like, people who are not conventional social scientists or humanists, maybe writers in residence to come here. It's been under budgetary attack in recent years, but it's still—it was actually set up with the support of Clark Kerr, who also gifted the center with a library of, I think, about a hundred thousand volumes then.

07-00:20:47

Lage: Separate from the East Asian Library?

07-00:20:48

Wakeman: Separate from the East Asian Library, so the unit, the Center for Chinese Studies had its own library and their own little culture. It was down there—we would, I would, I was studying so hard then, and I'd spend almost all night down there studying, listening to language tapes, and as I say, it quickly became obvious that somebody thought that, perhaps because, I think they thought that since the Chinese had simplified the written script, they must have created a new language.

07-00:21:16

Lage: I see.

07-00:21:17

Wakeman: And you could learn this very easily.

07-00:21:18

Lage: It was simple.

07-00:21:19

Wakeman: Because there were a lot of slogans, and it was simple. Well, you know, the minute you open up Mao, you're reading classical Chinese. He's got some quote from Sima Dian, or whatever, and in fact, this was a real shock for the social scientists, because either you satisfied—let's say you were an

economist—either you satisfied your economics professors in the department and took Stat 242 and whatever and devoted yourself to that, or you learned Chinese. And the people who tried to do both were very rare. We had one here, a brilliant guy who kind of went off the end—and now he's, he's still functioning, he's teaching down in Australia, and he himself had a big influence on me at the center. His name was Paul Ivory, and he was very, very—he wasn't the kind of person who joined parties, but he was extremely intelligent, really smart, and he was very radical.

07-00:22:25

Lage: And what was he bridging?

07-00:22:27

Wakeman: Well, he was in economics.

07-00:22:28

Lage: Economics.

07-00:22:29

Wakeman: And in fact, at the time, Henry Rosovsky, who was here before he went to Harvard, whose opinion everybody listens to, said that in his judgment Ivory was the smartest economist in the China field, bar none. Now, there weren't a lot of economists in the China field then, but if I compare him, I won't name any names, if I compare him to the ones I know now—I mean, he really could do very good econometrics. He really was an economist's economist.

07-00:22:57

Lage: Now, you say he was radical, is this politically radical?

07-00:23:00

Wakeman: Politically radical, also socially radical.

07-00:23:02

Lage: Also?

07-00:23:03

Wakeman: Socially radical. There was a big, I forget the name of the Berkeley newspaper then, but there was a big—

07-00:23:09

Lage: The *Gazette*.

07-00:23:10

Wakeman: *Berkeley [Daily] Gazette*. The *Gazette* ran a story one day, complete with photographs, rather fuzzy photographs, of nude bodies in which they had raided a party on Dwight Way, and it was a sexual circus and arrested was—by then he was an assistant professor, that's right—an assistant professor and his wife and identified him! Paul and Carol Ivory. They were nudists, they were, you know, free love, a lot of dope—

07-00:23:42

Lage: And this was before the counterculture? Or are we moving into the counterculture?

07-00:23:45

Wakeman: No, this was—I'm moving up a little bit to the counter culture. Yes. At that time he was just a straight radical, and he severely challenged my conservative or even patriotic feelings about America. We would argue for hours, and I almost always lost the argument, and I'd go home and—how could I—I would try to—it was like wrestling with a devil's advocate, because my belief structure was being undermined by this guy. And there were other very interesting young people. Robert Scheer, the columnist.

07-00:24:13

Lage: You've mentioned him in an earlier one—

07-00:24:14

Wakeman: I've mentioned him. Maury [Maurice] Zeitlin, who's now a very famous sociologist.

07-00:24:19

Lage: So Robert Scheer was also studying Chinese?

07-00:24:21

Wakeman: He was also a junior fellow at the center, but not a good linguist, so he couldn't—he was tone deaf.

07-00:24:29

Lage: Not good at Chinese.

07-00:24:32

Wakeman: Well, you just can't understand it, you know. And he tried so hard. I really liked Bob, and he will show up later, I think, when I talk a bit more about when I was chair of the center. But this was sort of the bread and butter part of my training at that point. We dutifully went ahead and studied all these things, learned how to read military manuals and all that stuff, but my heart, at least, was in the literary language, and at that time the Department of Oriental Languages did not emphasize the spoken language.

07-00:25:07

Lage: Oh, they didn't. They were reading—

07-00:25:10

Wakeman: Classical Chinese—the department was like a classics department. I mean, to have as your language teachers a man who began as a theoretical physicist and a musicologist and another man who is really an aesthete and a literary critic—they're not interested in doing transformation drills or explaining the potential verb in Mandarin. Chao Yuen-Ren was, if you asked him, but they preferred to *talk* about things. They were—so it was quite delightful.

07-00:25:48

Lage:

But could you learn it that way through talking with them?

07-00:25:51

Wakeman:

No, not very well. I took classical Chinese with a man named Boodberg, Baron Boodberg, Peter Boodberg, who was a true genius, and one of the world's greatest characters. He'd been a White Russian from Harbin. I was told by someone who knew him in those days that—remember that scene in Tolstoy where, is it Prince Andrei stands on the window sill, drunk, you know, and they were toasting him, and he's about to fall off? Well, Boodberg apparently had done this in Harbin when he was a cadet. He was from Baltic nobility, those German people that Peter the Great brought in. The family was from that era. And he himself was one of these prodigious, like many Russian linguists, prodigiously intelligent, who knew [Roman] Jakobson, and he was very familiar with all these things, had come here as a young man. The department had been, the Department of Oriental Languages had been, the domain of European scholars like [Ferdinand] Lessing from Germany and a tradition of Altaicism, Tibetan studies, and then Boodberg came in and he was essentially—his great work was in historical philology and phonology. He had invented a script of his own. The standard ancient Chinese, archaic Chinese script, was created or invented by Bernhard Karlgren, a Swedish sinologist, but Boodberg didn't think that properly captured the true sounds of archaic Chinese, which had been painfully reconstructed from evidence from very early dictionaries. Actually, we don't have very good evidence of that period. Really, the Tang period is where you really begin to get stable phonology, but some of the greatest historical phonologists in the world have taught in that department, including the most recent, who went to Hong Kong.

And Boodberg gave us this script to learn, which we all thought was completely kooky, and he operated sort of—we each had to have Fenn's five thousand-character dictionary. We'd come in and he'd pick a character and he'd say, "Well, let's talk about this." He had a very, very, very Russian accent, and he would make a, well, for example, I'll give you two examples. One I remember is the term in Chinese for gentleman, which also means a man of cultivation, like Confucius, is *junzi*—*jun* is lord and *zi* is son. And he said, how would you best translate this? And we said, "lord of the son," "gentleman;" everybody would try their hand, and he'd say, "I think the best translation is *hidalgo*, *hidalgo*," he said, "hijo de algo, the son of somebody." He said "*hidalgo*, we'll call them *hidalgo*," and I thought, "That's great!"

Then another time, there's a very famous poem by a Tang poet named Wang Wei about, it's called Kongshan (Empty Mountain) ["Lu Chai"], and let's see if I can remember it. *Kongshan bujian ren, danwen renwu xiang, fanying ru shenlin, fuzhao qingtai shang*. Empty mountain, see no one—the returning echoes enter the deep forest, [pause] the light once again shines upon the woods, whatever. [faintly recites words in Chinese] And once again illuminates, or reflects on, the green terrace, on the green terrace (*qingtai*

shang, shang is a preposition). So he would take that poem and say, well, let's now—now the scansion of the poem, because this is regulated verse means the last character should be a falling character, shang, but you *can* play with that, and Wan Wei does play with tones, so he said, this should be read, shang, ascending, which makes it a verb, same character. He said, “The sun is setting, and you are sitting there looking at these hills or mountains and there are the green terraces, and as the sun sets, the returning light ascends the green terraces.” “Oh, yeah!”

And I remember asking Professor Ch'en and I said, because that's not a very orthodox interpretation, I said, “Professor Ch'en,” and I think he thought I was trying to pit the two of them against each other, I said, “Professor Boodberg reads this poem this way, what do you think of that?” And he says, “Well, everyone has a right to his own opinion.” [laughs]

But Boodberg was a—and there were other great teachers in that department. The person who taught modern Chinese, Cyril Birch was an Englishman who had been in the RAF [Royal Air Force] during the war and had served mainly in India, but he was again, a prodigious language teacher but also a wonderful translator. I mean it just breaks your heart to read his translations, mainly of vernacular literature, well, no, not always, poetry too. He had some wonderful translations of seventeenth century poetry. But I took quite a few years of Chinese with him, but again, it was reading. I remember, I may have mentioned this, I don't think I did, but I remember one time he came to class. We were reading the great writer, Lu Xun, who was a twentieth century writer, and he wrote a particularly scathing form of essay called *zawen*, which were sort of almost, well, like a sort of a mixture, oh, gosh—a bit like Dr. Johnson, it had that same tone to it, a bit more acerbic than that, I guess one would have—Jonathan Swift perhaps. And he had this one essay about British imperialism and this, that, and the other, and we used to have to sight read in class, so I came to class and I, of course, I had looked up all the characters and I'd tried to figure out what the thing was, and he called on me to read this one page. I went down the page, and I came to this line, and I said, “and then,” I didn't know quite what it meant or why it was in there, I said, “and then the autumn [pause]— the autumn ascending refinement.” And he looked at me and he said, “Pardon me?” I said, “autumn ascending refinement,” *qiu ji er*. He said, “No, no, that's Churchill.” [laughter] I thought, “Oh, no!”

So when I finally went to Taiwan, I could read classical Chinese fairly well.

07-00:33:33

Lage:

But could you speak?

07-00:33:34

Wakeman:

But I couldn't speak—the vernacular, I really couldn't speak. In fact, when I first got there, I went into a store to buy something, and I wrote it out in classical Chinese. They thought that was very funny. First I said, I said it in

classical Chinese. I wanted to buy some cloth, fabric to make a dress, and in vernacular you probably say—you wouldn't say it exactly this way but that's the way I thought you would say it: "wo yao mai buliao," but I didn't, so I said "wu yu mai bo," which is the Chinese character, classical way of saying that in classical pronunciation. And the woman listening, she said, "I don't understand." So I wrote it out, wu yu mai bo, which is the way it might have been written in the Tang period, and they looked at it and burst into laughter. All of the sales personnel came around—look at this guy is absolutely loony! Sort of like Rip Van Winkle waking up and coming out.

07-00:34:33

Lage: Well, did they know the classical?

07-00:34:34

Wakeman: They knew what I wanted once they saw that, because students on Taiwan, not on the mainland then, learned classical Chinese. But that was the state of my classical—so I had to go through intensive tutorials to get my vernacular—

07-00:34:47

Lage: So what you were being taught here wasn't really that useful for current studies.

07-00:34:51

Wakeman: It was great if you wanted to read—no, it was cla[ssical]—it would be like going, if you take another diglossic language like Greek, it would be as though you studied classical Greek and then you had to speak the Demotic language and to go out to buy a {tipotahr?} or something like that on the streets. They wouldn't know what you were saying if you said it in classical Greek.

07-00:35:10

Lage: Well, how about to do historical research in a modern period?

07-00:35:13

Wakeman: Well, you see, that's the thing that these Ford Foundation people didn't understand. You don't get a dramatic break with classical Chinese really ever at the educated level. My father-in-law, who's a Communist official, but who is classically trained, still he writes letters in classical Chinese. He, of course, reads it; my wife was trained in that. For the intellectual elite, not the technical elite, but for the intellectual humanistic elite, so to speak, it's still very much used. And if you read any kind of literature, literary Chinese, even modern vernacular literary Chinese, is not really vernacular. Most recent modern manifestations attempt this, but today is May 4<sup>th</sup>, which is the anniversary of the May 4<sup>th</sup> movement in 1919, when the vernacular revolution took place. And supposedly, everything was going to be written in vernacular thereafter because the peasants could learn it and mass literacy could be taught, but within a few years, the great Marxist literary critic of China, Qu Qiubai, said, "We've just invented a xin wen yan, a new classical Chinese, and if you read

the newspaper it's in something called sort of guwen, newspaper Chinese. It's not spoken Chinese.

07-00:36:40

Lage: So the written and spoken is very different in either.

07-00:36:43

Wakeman: Are very different, are very different. You can't—and that has been the trouble, of course, in terms of training Chinese to read more. That's why it takes a lifetime to learn the language.

07-00:36:53

Lage: As an American, or—

07-00:36:55

Wakeman: Well, as a Chinese too.

07-00:36:57

Lage: Even a Chinese.

07-00:36:57

Wakeman: Yes, yes—my wife and I are constantly arguing. I'll correct her pronunciation of something, or say, that's not the right character, and she'll say, "I forgot that character, what's wrong with me!" And then I will say, "What is this damned," you know— "She'll say, "It's that." "Oh, fine, fine." It's, of course, it is, obviously *is*, a lifetime for someone who has not been trained in Chinese schools from four years old on.

07-00:37:23

Lage: Now, you said that Joseph Levenson couldn't bridge the gap with the Oriental languages.

07-00:37:27

Wakeman: Between the Oriental languages and the History Department.

07-00:37:30

Lage: Want to talk about that a little bit and get us into history?

07-00:37:33

Wakeman: I think because of this distinction between classical studies and historical studies, and the fact that so much of the historical studies then was tainted by the Ford Foundation era modernism, and the fact that he was a student of Fairbank, made Joe seem not very much of a sinologist. And the sinologists who—

07-00:38:01

Lage: Now sinologist means—

07-00:38:03

Wakeman: Well, that's a very interesting question; it's a very important distinction. sinologist means, obviously, the study of China, and in Chinese you would

say *Hanxue jia*, a scholar of Han studies. Han being Chinese. If you're talking about a historian you say *lishi xuejia*, you're a historian. Fairbank, when he gave an interview once in Taiwan to a literary magazine, and the guy said, "Well, you're a *Hanxue jia*," he said, "No, no, no. I'm not a *Hanxue jia*, I'm a *lishi xuejia*, I'm a historian." He would make no pretense of being a sinologue. The great tradition of European sinology from the French on, from [Paul] Pelliot, going back to [Edouard] Chavannes and before that Maspéro, and so on, or even before that—that is represented by the College de France—until fairly recently was very Orientalist. It's sort of the equivalent of Sanskrit studies, and it requires a very sophisticated knowledge of philology to get at it. You have to read classical texts, it's not—these people normally don't read [modern literature]. In the curriculum of the Department of Oriental Languages, Cyril Birch was something of an exception. To appoint someone to read modern literature, this is something—we have a lot of people who teach modern literature now in Durant Hall, but that's very recent.

07-00:39:36

Lage: So sinologists were not modern oriented.

07-00:39:39

Wakeman: They were classicists. And Joe Levenson was a modern historian. Now, there was a kind of intermediate and you mention in your brief notes, Woodbridge Bingham, because he worked on Tang history. I'll talk about him in a bit; he kind of bridged the gap, but he had his peculiar problems with Boodberg, which I can talk about in a while. But even so, it was really, the right hand didn't talk or didn't hold the left hand. It was very hard for a student, because I found myself caught—there's only about sixty feet from Durant Hall [then home of the Department of Oriental Languages and Literature] to Dwinelle [home of the Department of History], and in fact, there are a lot of TAs now, GSIs, in Dwinelle who are EALC [East Asian Languages and Cultures] TAs, but it seemed like it was a huge gulf—

07-00:40:29

Lage: And bad blood between them, are you thinking, or?

07-00:40:32

Wakeman: Well, I'll give you an example—Levenson's trilogy is entitled, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*. And he uses the word Confucianism a lot; in fact, he falls into it quite naturally. Confucianism tells us that—and this sort of thing. He gave a paper once, a brilliant paper, a brilliant paper, on the difference between Taiping ideologies of legitimacy and their notion of the mandate of heaven and regular Chinese imperial notions. And several times he uses the term "Confucianism." At the end of the talk, Boodberg raised his hand, this was in the Colloquium Orientologicum in Durant Hall, raised his hand and said, "Professor Levenson, how do you say Confucianism in Chinese, and for that matter, how do you say Confucian?" And Joe was just—I mean, first of all, he didn't know the answer, secondly he was too rattled to give it if he did know it, and third, he had betrayed the modernity of his

question, that is to say, what Boodberg was saying is nobody ever called themselves Confucianists in China, not until the time of Kang Youwei at the turn of the twentieth century, when they tried to emulate Western missionaries and said, let's create a religion, *kong jiao*, Confucius religion. Because these missionaries had this *jiao*. *Jiao* means teaching, literally, but they have this Christianity, and we can't compete with these Christians—these Christians are running around converting all of these people to Christianity. It's very dangerous, very seditious, so let's have a *kong jiao*. So there was no word for Confucianism. If you were a Confucian scholar, you might call yourself a *rujia* or *ru*. *Ru* is a character that means learned man, the school of the *ru* really is the school of Confucius. But even that's a very late term. So Levenson had reified Confucianism as a modern scholar, when in fact he—

07-00:42:45

Lage:

But did he know that? He must have known that.

07-00:42:46

Wakeman:

He of course realized that, but he was tongue-tied. What was he going to say? *Kongfuzi jiao*? Well, you can say that—Kongfuzi? You know who made up the term Kongfuzi? Well, my student, Lionel Jensen, discovered this in a book that's become very popular. It was the Jesuits! Nobody called him Kongfuzi—Confucius. He was Kongqui.

And so for the purists, and to get back to the early point of this, Boodberg was a purist. He wanted to get back to the original, so here he had—gave us this script. Now in the Analects, whenever Confucius says anything that says “the master says,” which is very simple characters, *zi yue*, the master says, so, just to give you an example of his script: he would write that ZiRg QyrT [spells and pronounces]. So, *zi yue* was originally ZiRg QyrT [pronounces]; well, maybe it was, I don't know, but we were told to think that. So we were going, Whoa! There were about twelve of us taking this class. Luckily, fortunately, there was a very good TA, Gari Ledyard, who is a professor of Korean studies at Columbia now, and another one of these army school graduates, who on the side, when we were supposed to be studying Boodberg's script, was having us read *The Mencius*, which is one of the easier canonical texts. I won't say easy, one of the more straightforward canonical texts, so at least we learned *The Mencius* and that enabled us to make the move on into more difficult texts. So we were learning classical Chinese, but I'll never forget the night before the final. This was the first semester of classical Chinese, and I was studying for the final, and at the last minute, it was like three in the morning or something I thought, “You know, I'd better just look at that damn script, I know he's not going to ask it”—

07-00:44:51

Lage:

His own script.

07-00:44:52

Wakeman:

His own script, he's not going to ask that. So, I just glanced at it, kind of reminded myself that it existed, a few principles of it, put it away. The next morning went into the classrooms, in Durant, and we were all sitting there waiting for the test, our pencils are poised over our blue books and in comes Boodberg, and he doesn't say a word. He goes up and the room had three walls of blackboard, and he began writing on the blackboard, and we were watching, and he's writing in that script! And he fills two blackboards with that script and then he turns around and says, "Put this into Chinese characters and translate." And we're like, "God damn!" Nobody knew what to do. And then he said, "I'll be back in three hours." And he left the room.

07-00:45:44

Lage:

And everyone was lost. No one had learned his script.

07-00:45:47

Wakeman:

Nobody—and I sat there, and I sat there, and I just, how could you do this? I said, first of all, I don't think he would give us a passage we hadn't already read, so what would that be? And, one by one people began getting up and leaving because they couldn't figure it out. They'd flunked the exam, obviously, and the course, and then I suddenly saw a pattern. I recognized the names of the Dukes of Lu, and I said, this is that passage from Dong Zhongshu, a Han philosopher, and it's a passage where he speaks of Confucius writing about things he'd actually witnessed versus things he heard and things he'd read. It was a very important passage, so I painfully began to transcribe it back into Chinese.

07-00:46:38

Lage:

Did you remember it that well that you could do it? Or—

07-00:46:40

Wakeman:

Well, we—well, I, you know, we weren't supposed to memorize all these sorts of things, but we read the text very carefully, so I couldn't get all of it, but I got most of it, and then I translated it back into English as best I could. And just got it finished at the end of the three hours and handed it in. I was the only one to pass the class. And the next semester—I was the only one to take a second year—a lot of other people came to audit, but they were damned if they were going to do this again!

07-00:47:13

Lage:

Well, it doesn't seem very responsible, frankly, as a teacher, to—

07-00:47:18

Wakeman:

Well, no—he was—

07-00:47:19

Lage:

If the script was only his—his only personal—

07-00:47:21

Wakeman:

There was a perversity about him. He didn't, he wouldn't publish anything. He published a few brilliant articles on the Tuoba wei, the Turkish dynasties in China, early on in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, but then he stopped publishing, and that was because he was such a perfectionist. He always was making changes. And he did have these circulate to a small number of people under the title, *Cedules from the Berkeley Workshop in Philology*. Now, one of my best friends, who still is one of my best friends, was a student from Columbia, Moss Roberts, who is a brilliant linguist. He's the one who translated that big *Three Kingdoms* (it's on that shelf just behind you, that one, yes) into English. Moss was phenomenal [in his] mastery of Chinese, and he came, he got his PhD at Columbia, but he came here and spent two or three years here working with Boodberg. Then later when Boodberg got cancer and was dying, Moss came out and spent most of that year with him, sitting up every night drinking up Boodberg's wine cellar and Moss pleading with him not to destroy these notes. So they have been retained and some of them were published later by a man named {Cohen?} who was one of his students. He inspired tremendous veneration and awe in his students. This man was unbelievably erudite, and it pained me to see him treat Levenson with such contempt. And Levenson treat him with such distance, or keep him at such a distance, but that's the way it was at Berkeley then, and that division wasn't really overcome, I think, until after I'd been here a couple of years on the faculty. Not my doing, but just—

07-00:49:16

Lage:

It wasn't your doing even though you'd had—

07-00:49:17

Wakeman:

No, I think the most important person in a funny sense was John Jamieson, who took early retirement and now lives in Hong Kong. John was also an army intelligence person who, I remember, one of the instructors at Monterey Institute told me that they called him, "Mr. Genius." And he was amazing. I took Shanghai dialect. One semester we had a person here as a visitor, after the exchanges began with China, who was a linguist from Shanghai, and because I was studying Shanghai then I decided to find the money to hire him to teach a class in Shanghai dialect and make up a little textbook, which about eight of us took. Tom Gold, myself, John, and a few others. Shanghai dialect has some very interesting sounds in it. There's one phonemic that, I think, only occurs in Tibetan; it's very hard to pronounce. And we were just struggling to get our tongues around this thing. John had this ear, I mean, and the mouth, he could just instantly, [makes this difficult sound]—

07-00:50:38

Lage:

Just say it.

07-00:50:38

Wakeman:

Just say it, and I was just—I mean, I knew, he is famous throughout the world for his Chinese, which he speaks with total effortlessness, and I mean—he

jokes. He's an Irishman from Boston, so he doesn't look like it, but he's also—God, he's—his first wife was a Korean and now he's married to a Chinese woman he met, who was a graduate student at Beida [Peking University] when I was teaching there.

07-00:51:06

Lage: Now, was he in history? Or was he in—

07-00:51:08

Wakeman: No, he was in Oriental languages.

07-00:51:09

Lage: He was in Oriental—

07-00:51:10

Wakeman: And he actually was hired as a Korean specialist. We had one other Korean specialist.

07-00:51:13

Lage: But he was able to bridge the gap.

07-00:51:16

Wakeman: Yes, I think first of all, he and I were very close friends. And then secondly, he brought to language teaching the latest methods and a real fascination with the vernacular. He succeeded me later as director of the Stanford Center on Taiwan, and he just completely revolutionized it. He participated actively in the courses. He would sit in on each of the sections quite frequently correcting things, meeting with the TAs, and you began to get the feeling that vernacular Chinese was now really being taught here.

This tradition was maintained later, and in fact even improved upon, by another great linguist, Sam Cheung, who was a PhD from here, a Cantonese from Hong Kong who actually got his PhD in linguistics with a thesis on Navajo, but he too is very, very—well, he's mainly a Cantonese grammarian. He had the same commitment of teaching the spoken language, and things suddenly began to change. And suddenly, I think by the early or the mid-sixties, modern Chinese became more legitimate. In other words, people like [Cyril] Birch, their influence began to be felt and above all students began to become interested in modern Chinese. It wasn't just a classicist department, so that students began to apply to come here to write their dissertations in modern Chinese literature, or in comparative literature. And that began to make a big difference. Some appointments began to be made in those fields that before would have been scorned as being too modern, but it was still a slow process. I guess not if you think of it in terms of years.

07-00:53:21

Lage: It seemed to be happening in just these years when you were here.

07-00:53:23

Wakeman:

It did; it was happening, yes, so I was quite happy to see that happen. I was quite pleased, but I don't feel I had any role in that. The only part I played in that, I guess, if anything at all was the center was very much the domain of the contemporary China people. In fact, its title in Chinese is Xiandai Zhongguo yanjiu suo, which means the Center for Contemporary Chinese Studies, in effect, post-'49 China, and that was their mission as far as they were concerned that the Ford Foundation had set for them. The library was to be devoted to contemporary China. The people who were on the executive committee were to be contemporary specialists, mainly political scientists, [Robert] Scalapino, [Chalmers] Johnson, Townsend, and so forth. Joyce Kallgren, who was actually at Davis, and then a smattering of other social scientists, Jack Potter from anthropology, an economist who actually did Yugoslavian economics, but in any case, Chalmers, I think it was, decided that I should be put on the executive committee. And some people resisted that very strongly. They said, "If you put Wakeman on the executive committee, you're putting on a historian, he's a Ch'ing historian, and this is going to break the whole thing down." I think, frankly, it was a matter of greed. They had a certain amount of money, that the Ford Foundation was giving them, and they, goddamn it, they didn't want to share that with anybody. Especially with the Oriental languages types. And finally—I was told of this argument later on—one person said, "I'm going to resign if Wakeman comes on." You know, "It's the camel's nose," and so then I was the first historian and there were dire prophecies. "Well, we'll be turning ourselves into, we'll be getting Song history next." Well, within a fairly period of time, David Keightley, who works in the Shang period was chairman of the center, so maybe that's right.

07-00:55:31

Lage:

So it really changed, even though the contemporary is still—

07-00:55:32

Wakeman:

Oh, yes, yes. And one of the things that forced the change was later when I became chairman of the center. Chalmers had been my predecessor, and I accepted the position. It must have been the summer of '71—I was teaching down in Stanford that summer and living down in Mountain View, so I had a few brief conversations with Chalmers about the workings of the center and then came up in the fall to take over. And as far as I was concerned, this was wonderful, the place was well funded, we had a nice big budget from the Ford Foundation, we gave out numerous fellowships, things were humming. And then, I knew I had to report to my masters in New York, as it were, so I went out to New York to meet with the Ford Foundation and the person then in charge of the China section was a man named David Finkelstein, who was difficult in his own way. I won't get into that part of it, but I came in, and we were talking—we shared an interest in the martial arts, he does karate, so that sort of was a bond, we could talk about that at great length—and then he made some comment, and I said, "Pardon me?" He said, "Well, you know the funding, the change in the funding." I said, "Uh, what do you mean?" He said, "Well, you got our letter, didn't you? You must have gotten the letter." And I

said, "Letter?" And he said, "Sure," he said, "Well, I'll have my secretary get a copy of it for you, run off a copy of it for you." So he called for his secretary, came back in with this copy, and I looked at it, and the letter in short said this, something like this: "We have decided to terminate our funding for the Center for Chinese Studies. We're going to give you a write-off grant of a million and a half dollars"—I think they were giving us about three every year, three million—to let you make the transition to finding other sources of funding."

07-00:57:43

Lage: Wow!

07-00:57:45

Wakeman: And the letter was postmarked the previous year, March, or whatever. I was completely stunned and I sort of, I didn't know what to do, I couldn't sort of say, "I don't know anything about this."

07-00:57:59

Lage: Had it come then before you were chairman?

07-00:58:01

Wakeman: Yes. It had come—

07-00:58:03

Lage: Yes, and Chalmers never told you about it.

07-00:58:04

Wakeman: Never told anybody about it. He jumped ship!

07-00:58:08

Lage: Well, was there politics behind that?

07-00:58:12

Wakeman: The politics, I think, were simply internal to the Ford Foundation.

07-00:58:17

Lage: But did it have to do with the Berkeley campus and radicalism, or—

07-00:58:21

Wakeman: Oh, in that sense.

07-00:58:25

Lage: Was it only Berkeley? Or did it affect the other centers?

07-00:58:27

Wakeman: Oh, no, no, no, it wasn't only Berkeley. All of the seven China centers, or six, that they supported, were cut off over the course of the next year. The internal politics were that a man named Frank Thomas succeeded McGeorge Bundy as president of the Ford Foundation, and Bundy—although Bundy told me later that he regretted having thought that they'd done enough to fund China, that China could now stand on its own, which was Finkelstein's point of view—he

admitted that he was wrong. Thomas came in with a totally different agenda. As an African American he wanted to turn to urban reform, urban problems; America had its own domestic problems; they should stop running their little empire overseas if they could, although they didn't shut it down obviously, but they should divert these funds to other domestic uses. So it was a very, very conscious policy.

Berkeley did have problems related to its radicalism. I can talk about those too in a minute, but anyway, I came back from—well, actually I went back to my hotel and called my secretary at the center, and said, “Jo,” her name was Josephine, “Jo, I want you to call a meeting of the entire China studies community. I'm getting back tomorrow, call it for Wednesday,” or whatever it was, the day after. And when I got back, the first thing I did was to call Chalmers and shout at him over the telephone. And he said, “Well, you see, [chuckles] you know.” My friend Moss Roberts said to me when he heard about it, “Well, when the money goes away, the liberals are left to play!” [laughter] And I thought, yes, there's a bit of that. But that was a really rude shock and that was the point—

07-01:00:26

Lage: And you were getting three million dollars a year and then you were virtually cut off—

07-01:00:31

Wakeman: We were cut off.

07-01:00:32

Lage: Except for the one year of a million and a half.

07-01:00:34

Wakeman: Well, that I banked away. And I probably shouldn't tell too many tales about that, but I will. We decided, the China people and then the Japan people too. The Japan people were—

07-01:00:51

Lage: Were they cut off as well?

07-01:00:53

Wakeman: They were in a different boat, because they had been given—I'm not sure if they'd just received it or were just about to receive it—a million dollar grant from Mitsubishi through the Japan Foundation. Now that was—they didn't have any expenses—they didn't have a [library]. The thing that was killing us was the library. We had to pay the salary of two librarians, three assistants, blah, blah, blah. And I had two goals then. One was to get the library on the main library budget, even though I recognized that somewhere down the line that library would be absorbed, which it will be when the new building is built.

07-01:01:30

Lage: It's been separate all these years.

07-01:01:32

Wakeman: Yes, well, no, I did get them, with the help of Joyce Kallgren, I did get the main library—it was a very, very hard battle that was fought, and I think had it not been for the strong support first of Rod Park and then of Bob Middlekauff when they were provosts, it wouldn't have been won, because the main library didn't want to do this, particularly that awful man Joe—

07-01:02:01

Lage: Rosenthal?

07-01:02:02

Wakeman: Yes.

07-01:02:03

Lage: Yes. He was the head librarian.

07-01:02:05

Wakeman: Yes—they didn't want to take on another budget, and we finally persuaded him to put the librarians' salary, and of course inflation and cost of living increases had really, we were really into that, which was a great relief, but of course if brought us under the authority of the library, and hence, thereafter, the director of the East Asiatic Library stands over, or stood over our librarian. But it retained its—the physical separation has proved very useful, and there is so much support for the integrity of this library, because if you are a contemporary China person, there is no other place like it in the world. You can come in here and find everything that's necessary. Because as things become less contemporary they're shelved off in EAL, but Peter Zhou, the new [EAL] librarian has promised me, or did promise me when I was director, that, and he says he has money for this, that they would keep the physical integrity of this collection—

07-01:03:06

Lage: Even when they move to the new building?

07-01:03:07

Wakeman: Even when they move, which I think will be helpful. But it provided a tremendous amount of freedom in making purchases. For example, I had decided that we should acquire two big sets of things or three big sets of things, actually, the third came a little bit later. One was in the late seventies, early eighties, the Chinese began to write local histories for the first time since God knows when. And we committed ourselves to buying all of them. Secondly, there was a set of documents that began to appear in Hong Kong after the Cultural Revolution called historical research materials, which were classified, confidential, or they were kept classified in China and *they are a goldmine*. I've written—

07-01:04:00

Lage: They're classified in China but they're—they escaped somehow?

07-01:04:03

Wakeman: Well, they made their way, friends would give you copies. People would sell them on the black market in Hong Kong for very exorbitant prices. They had *neibu*, which means internal use, only printed on their cover, and that was a problem then for China scholars—should you use these materials, because you could be accused of infringing their secrets act. But they were so valuable and my God, I mean, so much has been—I've really based two, at least two major books on those materials.

07-01:04:42

Lage: And how did they get here?

07-01:04:43

Wakeman: Well, we were buying them on the open market, spending a lot of money on that, and then it was mainly Annie Chang, the librarian who retired last year and who has been a *wonderful* librarian, who developed very close ties with a higher party school in China and also ran down, because she heard about him—I think she may have met him at the annual book fair in Peking—a man in Shandong Province who had been privately collecting these things. They were compiled by a branch of the People's Political Consultative Conference, and they're much in demand in China, and he had a duplicate set of all of them. I mean—fifty-two sets have been indexed already by Fudan University, but there are even many more than that. And he agreed to sell them to us on a sliding scale. He did very well, and it meant committing—I had to raise some money for this, but that was—and then finally, local Chinese Communist party materials, which are being published now sporadically. So we have the best collection outside of China of any of those things. And that was all part of the center's importance, but—how are we doing on time on your tape?

07-01:06:12

Lage: We have eight minutes on this tape.

07-01:06:16

Wakeman: Oh, OK. The radicalism problem—yes, there was a problem, which I didn't discover until I was chairman of the center. I was home painting my house one Sunday, and I got a phone call from Bob Scheer, who was then working for the *L.A. Times* and had a national television show. He called me up and he said, you know, he's a very direct guy, and he said, "Fred, did you know that your center has been infiltrated by the CIA?" And I said, "Oh, that's such bullshit. Come on now, don't give me that stuff, Bob."

07-01:07:00

Lage: Now what year would this have been?

07-01:07:02

Wakeman: Probably '73—'72-'73 something like that. Maybe a little earlier.

07-01:07:11

Lage: Was it during the Vietnam War still?

07-01:07:14

Wakeman: Vietnam War was still going on, yes. And I made some—"You're absolutely nuts." And he said, "Well, can I come over and show you some stuff?" And I said, "Yes." So in half an hour he showed up in one of these stretch limousines with his woman friend, who was the metro desk editor at the *L.A. Times*, a very, very good-looking woman. Bob was dressed—I remember he had, I think they were alligator boots, cowboy boots, and he had a little suede purse with—men used purses in those years, remember?, and a briefcase, a big briefcase and a tape recorder, Uher tape recorder, I remember. Now—was I married? I wasn't married yet, I think I wasn't married yet. I got married in '74 to Carolyn, so probably it was '73 or early '74. And we sat down in the living room, and he opened up this briefcase, and he started saying, "Would you take a look at this?" and handing me documents. Now, they'd been gotten under Freedom of Information, clearly, and there were a lot of blacked out names. There was one document where they had not blacked out the names, I guess, so they forgot to, or there was no reason for it, but it was easy if you knew the politics of the university to recognize who was whom and what was being said by whom, and so I didn't know what to say. They were very incriminating.

07-01:08:49

Lage: And they were people in your center, and are you going to talk about that?

07-01:08:51

Wakeman: Yes, yes. Yes, they were people in the center, and it was not that there were spies running around or anything like that. It was just that some of our faculty members were working very closely with them. And there the pattern began—

07-01:09:08

Lage: Now did that mean they were reporting to them about activities—

07-01:09:11

Wakeman: Well, what happened—I'll tell you what happened was—before Chalmers took over as chair of the center, the center was briefly under the chairmanship of Franz Schurmann, who was, at least in their eyes, a notorious radical, strongly opposed to the war and all the rest of it. And during that time, the agency decided that these reports, which were now routinely available from the Federal Broadcast Information Service, which is the radio monitoring service of the CIA, and which are incredibly valuable for contemporary China watchers, that we wouldn't get any copies of those or of some of the analyses from the consul general, essentially, the Department of Intelligence and Research in the State Department, because of, they didn't say Schurmann, because it was too radical.

07-01:10:05

Lage: But these were things you had been getting routinely?

07-01:10:07

Wakeman:

Yes, and then we got taken off the list for some reason, we couldn't figure it out, and it meant that we—this was, how can we get back on the list? And when Chalmers took over, the center was contacted—I'll keep it to the impersonal, because I don't want to drag anybody's name into it—was contacted by the Department of Academic External Research of the CIA, and it was suggested that the old relationship be renewed. That we had been ostracized, shut out in the cold, but now things had changed, and we could start getting these materials again. Other documents, and I also found out about this from other sources, and this wasn't just Berkeley, the avidity of political scientists, the contemporary China watchers, for contemporary, for immediate information, of course, is notorious. That's their bread and butter, that's what they watch China for. So there's a kind of symbiosis there anyway.

07-01:11:15

Lage:

Between the intelligence agency and the political scientists.

07-01:11:17

Wakeman:

Between the intelligence community and political science. If you can—you're trading in information, and that's how you make your reputation as a pundit and political scientists tend to be pundits. And if you're well known, you're on television, in the papers, the chancellor hears about you, it's medals on medals, right? So, the agency, recognizing that, it set up a kind of seminar that would meet at the time of the national conventions to which a select few were invited who were known to be friendly to the agency, and they would be made privy to information nobody else had in exchange for discussions with—now I'd attended one of these things one time, where these people all sit around, and a lot of it is just shop talk, but this was pretty systematic and was also secret. And there were requests, requests from people at our center for very sensitive information, for which I'm sure there would have to be a quid pro quo, I don't know. This is very dangerous, and I'm just going to—this would, I don't know if I want to say it on this tape, but I will just simply say there is a possibility that there might have been some recruitment of foreign nationals—

07-01:12:35

Lage:

By the CIA.

07-01:12:39

Wakeman:

By somebody on this campus, which is very, very—I don't know what the privilege and tenure people think about something like that, but I think it's illegal. So all of this—so that there was a—I came down that night and I spent all night in the files. Our office was elsewhere then and I went through all the files and of course, I didn't expect to find anything, but I found the smoking guns. There was a—

07-01:13:07

Lage:

That Robert Scheer had—

07-01:13:09

Wakeman: No, those were separate—

07-01:13:10

Lage: — alerted—

07-01:13:10

Wakeman: No, those were separate, those were separate. This was just the internal domestic documents, which I still have, that reveal all this, including this: “Well, I think from now on it would be better if we didn’t exchange any more mail on this topic. I think we should meet personally, please contact X at this office in San Francisco. In the hands of a journalist—Whoa!! The other stuff, the other stuff was, some of it was very explosive. And again, you could guess who the people were—

07-01:13:52

Lage: Now, I’m going to stop here to change the tape.

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08-00:00:01

Lage: OK, now we’re on—

08-00:00:05

Wakeman: OK.

08-00:00:06

Lage: And you’re reluctant to be too explicit, but we have to be sure that it’s understandable.

08-00:00:10

Wakeman: Yes, I am—I’m trying to make it understandable. So here I discover this— Bob Scheer had shown me some of these documents; they were that thick. He had gotten them from a professor at UCLA, also in the China field and formerly associated with Berkeley, who had gotten them from Morton Halperin. Remember Halperin was the guy that Kissinger wiretapped, who was on National Security Council—

08-00:00:40

Lage: Oh, yes, yes.

08-00:00:42

Wakeman: And he became head of this NGO in Washington that was dedicated to dealing with this sort of a security infringement, and wiretapping, and all that, and it was really a crusade. They were really quite voluminous, and Halperin had turned them over to Bob, to this man at UCLA, who in turn had given them to Scheer who was—

08-00:01:03

Lage: For the purposes of making them public, it seems.

08-00:01:07

Wakeman:

Yes, indeed. I don't know why he would have given them to him otherwise, and Bob was going to write a story about this. In fact, he told me he was going to write several stories. They had a whole week set aside in the *L.A. Times* for this exposé.

08-00:01:19

Lage:

Was there enough to piece together a real story?

08-00:01:22

Wakeman:

Oh, yes, there was. It would drag it out a bit for a week but there was enough there, including, and this is public knowledge, including one document which was a report prepared by one of the university's vice presidents, who was a reserve captain or admiral in the US Navy and did his summer duty one summer during the early sixties at the CIA, and prepared a paper for them on how to deal with a student movement here, what kind of techniques to use, blah, blah, blah. You know, dealing with in effect internal—almost none of the CIA's business anyway, right?

08-00:02:01

Lage:

Yes, like the worst fears of the student activists, realized.

08-00:02:04

Wakeman:

That's exactly right. And this thing was done and that's how the guy got—I don't know what, his reserve salary—but it was easy to see, it was easy for Scheer to guess who it was, but he couldn't figure out in every case who the others were.

08-00:02:21

Lage:

And were most of them more related to China studies?

08-00:02:25

Wakeman:

Most of them were except for a few. Most of them were, and most of them were in the Political Science Department. And he wanted me to identify them, and I didn't want to do that. So we concluded the interview. He had, meanwhile he had taped all this stuff. We concluded the interview, and he started talking about doing something together that evening—Jules Pfeiffer, you know, the cartoonist/playwright was coming to town maybe we could have dinner with him, and he said, "I have to use the bathroom." And Nadja or Naomi, I can't remember her name, went out in the garden with my partner, and Bob went off to the bathroom, and as he was out of the room, I, [chuckling] he'd left his little purse, I looked in his purse, and in his purse was a miniature Uher recorder still on! [slapping knee] So when he came back he says to me, "Now that the interview is over, who really were these guys?" And I—[laughs]—

08-00:03:21

Lage:

Oh, that's rich.

08-00:03:23

Wakeman: And of course, I didn't tell him. But I did go to some of the authorities at Berkeley and say, we've got a real problem here, and I'll tell you who I think is involved and you should know this.

08-00:03:35

Lage: And who did you go to as authority?

08-00:03:37

Wakeman: Well, I went to the chancellor—

08-00:03:42

Lage: Chancellor—

08-00:03:43

Wakeman: Bowker.

08-00:03:43

Lage: Bowker at that time.

08-00:03:48

Wakeman: And that was done. I felt I was doing my duty to Berkeley. I thought there was going to be some dirty laundry. I didn't want it to be a surprise to him. I wasn't asking that anybody be punished or anything. But about two days, one or two days later I got a phone call again from Bob, and the first thing he said was, "You son of a bitch." And he went on to shout at me, that I had exposed him, and this, that, and the other. And I said, "What's wrong, Bob?" And he went on to say that somebody had gotten through to the Chandlers [publishers of *Los Angeles Times*].

08-00:04:24

Lage: Oh, and squashed the story.

08-00:04:26

Wakeman: Squashed the story. And he had managed by threatening to run it on his television show to at least publish one story in the *L.A. Times* about the vice president. And that was really all that happened then, although a little bit later one of my students, a man named Ed Gargan, who later became a journalist for the *New York Times*, who was then on the *Daily Cal* staff, came to see me. He was very uneasy because I was his professor, or one of his professors, very uneasy, and he had gotten wind of this or he'd seen the article, and he said, "There's talk about the Center for Chinese Studies." Would I care to comment on that? I said, "Well, you can get the information—Freedom of Information." He said, "Well, you know, we tried to do that, but there's so much in there, more than 40,000 pages on Berkeley that we can't afford to pay for it. The xeroxing fees are too high. I thought you might be willing—" And I said, "I can't answer you, Ed." It's fine, we're friends and we made up for all those things later, but it was really, really a very, very rude shock.

08-00:05:46

Lage: Now, what is the implication? This is what I'm not clear on, maybe I'm a little dense.

08-00:05:52

Wakeman: Of this kind of—

08-00:05:55

Lage: What was happening? Without mentioning names or whatever, what were the professors doing who were involved with the CIA? Were they reporting on student activities? Or on professors' activities or—

08-00:06:10

Wakeman: I don't think it was anything as sinister as all that. It's, in fact, from one point of view it's pretty innocent. There had already been a major crisis or scandal at Harvard earlier when a group of radical graduate students—or—well, they were radical, I guess, who happened to be friends of my former wife. And they're—I'm not very close to them now—very well-known people who later became editors and writers in New York. Their names are—well, Jim Peck, Tom Englehart, and so on. John Livingston. These people had discovered that there was a CIA man, a CIA person at the Harvard East Asian Research Center. That there had been a number of them.

08-00:07:11

Lage: Actually CIA agents?

08-00:07:13

Wakeman: Yes, they were on leave—they were sent by the agency for a semester or two of training and so forth. Now, Fairbank had accepted that quite readily, and I mean, Fairbank is no stranger to a connection between government and scholarship. And his position was very clear as it came out during the dispute. The war in Vietnam was going on. The best reporting agency in Vietnam, the one that was telling the truth about the number of, the likelihood of the Vietcong winning, the number of casualties, and so forth, was the CIA. The stuff coming out from G-2 and the Defense Intelligence Agency was suspect. It was dirty, it was tainted. Westmoreland wasn't being straight, the Pentagon wasn't being straight, these guys should be supported because they represent one of the few voices of sanity in the government at this point. And it behooves us to educate these people. If we turn these CIA officers into pariahs and don't admit them to our discussions, how the devil do you expect to help them understand that what's happening in Vietnam is very, very wrong. Some of them already understand that.

The position of the students was, "Oh, bullshit. You are simply justifying, you're legitimizing their abuses internationally. You're providing a cover for them, the cover of Harvard. And this simply won't go down." And there was a controversy that burst out on the pages of the *Crimson* about this that went on for several days. It involved people like Ezra Vogel and Fairbank himself, each of which wrote letters, and these students wrote letters, and it was during

the heat and the height of the antiwar movement, so Harvard was—the Harvard authorities were made to look like reactionaries who were supporting these spooks in Asia, and some of the same odor attached to this here. Everybody in academia then, in these fields, I think even more, well, the Soviet field is much more unabashed about this.

08-00:09:35

Lage: About having some connection with—

08-00:09:38

Wakeman: Well, you know, the story of the development of the Soviet center, the Russian studies center at Harvard, which Sig [Sigmund] Diamond has exposed is a very nasty story. People getting blacklisted. This, that, and the other. Diamond spent years; he used to be a neighbor of mine in Connecticut, a professor at Columbia, and his apartment was filled with Freedom of Information material, and he finally wrote a book about it. He died shortly thereafter, but he documented very well {Inkelis's?} role—these are very famous people, but it was clear from the very beginning that the Ford Foundation was also involved. There was this taint attached to people working on these Communist countries or countries that were, let's say, neutral.

The other case was India. We had this project that Berkeley was involved in called the Himalaya Project, that Gerald Berreman denounced, and it was made public that the CIA was funding that. I was the press secretary for the Association for Asian Studies when they had their convention out here. That must have been around, let's see, 1970, and this guy came up to me in the lobby of the hotel and gave me a package without a word and walked away. What's this? I opened it up, and these were office files that had been purloined from the files of an anthropologist at Cornell. And I read through them that night, and it was shocking stuff.

08-00:11:18

Lage: Like—

08-00:11:20

Wakeman: These--there was a project that was conducted under the auspices of ARPA, the Advanced Research Projects Agency of the Pentagon that was part of the JASON Group that met every summer in, I think it's New Hampshire, that involved a lot of very high powered physicists and other scholars that, for example, had been given the task by Kissinger to think up Project Camelot. Many people think Project Camelot was the blueprint for the overthrow of Allende. In this case, for Southeast Asia, Southeast Asian anthropologists were approached and asked to meet separately at the AAS or at the American Anthropological Association meetings with certain officials purportedly from AID, which was then operating as a kind of front for the CIA and for other intelligence groups, to talk about the situation in Southeast Asia. The trip expenses of people to these conventions was paid for by—and what do they want to know? They wanted to know—they wanted to see studies carried out

to see what the effects of starvation would be on village leaderships. How do you isolate villages that you want to prevent from going Communist? How do you systematically have a cleared-earth policy? I mean, this is the sort of thing—

08-00:12:47

Lage: I see, I see.

08-00:12:47

Wakeman: —Japanese scholars were tried for war crimes for after World War II that they had been doing on the South Manchurian Railway. They were, in exchange for this—now, in the China case, I don't know that anybody was being paid for any—well, I know that certainly one member of this faculty was on a, because he's been very frank about it, Chalmers Johnson was collecting a consultant's fee from the CIA.

08-00:13:13

Lage: For this kind of information?

08-00:13:14

Wakeman: Well, he didn't say what he did; he just boasted about this, so it's no secret, it was no secret then. But there was this kind of palsy-walsy quality about it that many liberals especially, and of course radicals saw it as a great conspiracy, but many liberals found distasteful. And it went along with a general animus in the China field against political scientists. Political scientists—if you think of the key concepts that animate fields of the social sciences, and these concepts usually are not very clear and are often highly disputed. For example, the concept of value for an economist—what is value? Or the concept of status for a sociologist, or the concept of culture for an anthropologist. Well, in political science the concept that nobody ever really defines is the concept of power. They don't really know. I mean, Foucault can tell us one thing. I don't like what he says, but political scientists LOVE power! That's why they want to become political scientists. They're attracted—it's like being addicted to something. You know, when Mike [Michel] Oksenberg, a political scientist, was working in Carter's White House, or in the National Security Council, he'd come to meetings; we'd have meetings in Washington on other scholarly committees that he would be a member of. He's a very good scholar, and he'd come to these meetings, absentmindedly wearing his White House security pass. Well, you know—“Jesus, Mike, we know you've got Potomac fever, but take the damn thing off.” And he'd say, “Oh, oops, I forgot I had this.” So he could swing it around on his little sort of BB chain, you know.

But there is this, and the thought of these got people slavishly sitting around some rented hotel room at the whatever Hilton with four or five guys from the agency—people from the agency, most of them, have pretty big inferiority complexes about their, that they—

08-00:15:31

Lage: It relates to their academic—

08-00:15:33

Wakeman: They have a very love-hate relationship. Academics don't know a goddamn thing. I remember the errand boy between Lyndon Johnson and the agency was a man named Chester Cooper, Chet Cooper, who was Joe Levenson's cousin. And I remember one time Chet Cooper had come through. This is the sort of the way Chet Cooper operated. A friend of mine in the agency who was an economist, just before the Tonkin Bay incident, all eleven of the economists who specialized on Communist Chinese economy were called together and asked this question, "Can the Chinese economy sustain a war for more than a year?" And depending on whose figures you chose, because there was a great dispute over what the GDP figures were for China, you could say either yes or no. And they had a vote. And the vote was something like 7 to 4, no, the Chinese couldn't sustain it. The economy would collapse if they had to pay for, get involved in a major war. My friend was one of the four who used figures from Michigan given by Alex Eckstein, a very eminent economist. So Cooper comes in to get the information, and he's delighted to hear that the agency's economists are going to enable him to tell Johnson that China can't sustain a war if we do something wild as we were about to do in the Bay of Tonkin. He heard them out, and then as he was about to leave to go back to the White House, he said, "You know, I think the president would be very, very happy if I can go back and report that this had received a unanimous vote." So it's a little bit like this—

08-00:17:25

Lage: Sounds like what Bush is—

08-00:17:26

Wakeman: Yes. It's like the Iraq thing. This political pressure from the regime to get these economists. And these guys are desperate. You know if they don't get a raise, if they don't get elevated every three years, they could lose their job. It's not like—they don't have tenure. And many of them are academic manqué—they couldn't make it as an academic.

08-00:17:48

Lage: Oh, I see, I see, so they—

08-00:17:49

Wakeman: So—some of my students have ended up there, they're perfectly OK, but they're not—

08-00:17:54

Lage: Not your best students.

08-00:17:55

Wakeman: Not my best students. And so you get this sort of group coming together, the love-hate on the part of the CIA, trading this kind of insider knowledge with a bunch of guys and gals, if you'll excuse me, who are avidly eager for this

because it's their stock in trade. "I happen to know," that, you know, this kind of bullshit that you hear from these people. And it's obscene to many of us. I think that was the main feeling at the time as news of this began to get around. I mean, I'm perfectly in sympathy with, or I was perfectly in sympathy with John; in fact, the man in question, I later got to know very well in London, who was then in the American Embassy in London, but who was a CIA person, and these guys were not devils. The only problem is, in this arrangement in academia, is that nobody keeps their word on the other side.

08-00:18:57

Lage: On the agency side.

08-00:18:59

Wakeman: They don't keep their word. I mean, they do things—

08-00:19:02

Lage: Well, what kind of guarantees do they make?

08-00:19:05

Wakeman: Well, the ends do justify the means, whether in the field or in dealing with academics. What do they do with this information? What are they asking you for?

08-00:19:17

Lage: And why.

08-00:19:18

Wakeman: And why. And what if they meet you later and say, "Listen, we'd be very interested—we know you have a student doing this and that—we'd be very interested if you'd put in a word for us and ask this Indonesian fellow if he wouldn't mind talking to us, it's an interesting thing."

08-00:19:33

Lage: Oh, this is what you meant by recruiting foreign nationals.

08-00:19:36

Wakeman: Sure.

08-00:19:36

Lage: Where professors would hook the foreign nationals up with the CIA.

08-00:19:40

Wakeman: Yes.

08-00:19:41

Lage: Oh. And was there evidence of that, did you say?

08-00:19:45

Wakeman: Not in the papers I saw, but this was bruited—I'm not sure, it may be a slander, I really don't know, I really can't tell, but on the other hand in the field, I've seen cases where—I'll give you an example of this in the Peking

embassy. Now, you know we're not allowed to reveal the names of any of these people now, because it's against the law; you can go to jail if you mention X is an agent in the American embassy. You can't identify them, ever since Welch was killed in Athens, although nobody seems to be indicting Dick Cheney or anybody for this Valerie Plame—the rules are made to be broken. This guy I know very, very well asked me if I would put him in touch—he's ostensibly an economics attaché, economics officer—with someone in a particular provincial capital. And I said, "Well, what are you going to do?" He said, "Well, it's a person teaching English, I know they went to Berkeley. I just want to talk to them, nothing sinister about it, I'm just curious about what their experience is." And I said, "OK, well, I'll tell her you're coming."

So he went down there, came back, very jolly guy, and then about two or three months later, it was toward the end of the academic year, this young woman came to see me and she told the following story. He had come. He had told her he was an economics officer. He would love to meet with some of the students in economics and other fields at this institution where she was teaching, and if she could arrange an evening meeting that would be wonderful. They could have a free discussion, which she did, in good faith, and then he leaves town, goes back, probably writes up a report about all this important information he has gathered in Yunan or wherever the hell the province was, and gets a little check mark against his name. Meanwhile, all of a sudden she finds herself being totally ostracized. She had planned to stay there for two or three years. She's called in, and she said, "They're not going to renew my contract." And one of her teacher friends, Chinese teacher friends, says that the students were all called in, they were debriefed by the public security bureau.

08-00:22:11

Lage:

Because they knew—

08-00:22:12

Wakeman:

Oh, everybody in Peking knows who these guys are.

08-00:22:14

Lage:

I see.

08-00:22:15

Wakeman:

These guys all have dinner in the same restaurant every Thursday night. It's a big joke. I walked in there one Thursday night and I said, [snorting], "Is this the spook's banquet?" I mean, they don't get it—America does not do very well in these things, I'll tell you. These guys all want to live in the suburbs somewhere. And it was very—she said, "Can you help me?" So I went to a friend and said, "Can you check with the State Security Bureau," and I told him the story. He was a British Communist. I thought he might feel sorry for her. And he said, "No, I can't help you." I mean, this is a man who owed me a lot of favors. And so, I couldn't help her. This woman's plans, perhaps her

career, were completely derailed by this young man. I knew him as a little child when I was an adult, this young man, cocky, full of himself, rattling his fluent Chinese across, driving around Peking on his motorcycle.

08-00:23:15

Lage: Wow. Now, we probably need to close up, but what we haven't—last time we got you to Berkeley. You were already thinking of continuing with the CIA, or going back, and something—there's a big change here in the way you see the world.

08-00:23:36

Wakeman: Yes.

08-00:23:37

Lage: And we haven't talked about that.

08-00:23:38

Wakeman: Well, partly the big change came because of Paul Ivory and being here on campus. When I arrived here it was just after the city hall demonstrations, riots, whatever. Berkeley was—

08-00:23:53

Lage: Over civil rights.

08-00:23:54

Wakeman: Over the House Un-American Activities hearings, I became very friendly with Bob Scheer and others who were—forced me to seriously question my unthinking loyalty, or unthinking determination to be one of these Cold War patriots and I began to realize I was more of an intellectual than I thought. There were other people who had a very big influence on me while I was here—I would mention one—I haven't talked about Bingham yet, but—one certainly very important influence was Wolfram Eberhard. Eberhard was a professor in the Anthropology Department. Actually, he may have been in sociology, now that I think of it.

08-00:24:43

Lage: I think he was in sociology.

08-00:24:45

Wakeman: Yes, he was an anthropologist but he was in sociology, who was a grand old man. He was just incredible and he gave me something that Levenson couldn't give me, namely he taught me how to do it, to get things, to get historical research done. Levenson was never strong on that score.

08-00:25:06

Lage: Strong in doing it or strong at teaching it?

08-00:25:09

Wakeman: Strong in both. I mean, Levenson didn't wade around in archives. He didn't—that wasn't—he wasn't that kind of person. And he certainly wasn't going to

teach you how to read a difficult—he wasn't going to teach paleography and diplomatics and all these things you have to do to read an archival source. So Eberhard took it upon himself for three of us, two of my fellow graduate students, Larry Schneider, who is now, I think, a dean at Washington University in St. Louis, and Ralph Crozier, who's a professor of Chinese history up at University of Victoria, and myself to take courses with him every semester on—and just read primary sources with him. Local gazetteers we began with and then how do you do research. Those are the days of those little punch cards, IBM cards. And he introduced—it sounds silly—

08-00:26:11

Lage: Pre-computer.

08-00:26:12

Wakeman: Yes, we'd sit around with little pins, knitting needles, and—

08-00:26:15

Lage: And what kinds of things could you punch into those? This was data of—numerical data?

08-00:26:18

Wakeman: Oh, well—yes, well—you had to get your categories. For example, I still have the boxes somewhere: every single public disturbance involving three or more people that's mentioned in the records for the Kangxi period, and they're quoted according to place, size of disturbance, political elements yes or no, banditry yes or no, organized secret society activity, blah, blah, blah, blah. And then you punch that little ear and then if you want to sort for, let's say, I'd like to know everything about any uprisings that occurred in the prefecture of {Hai Chang?} between 1680 and 1685 committed by fishermen. You sort, and four cards will fall. So I'd sit at home at night watching television, punching.

08-00:27:12

Lage: Hopefully punching in the right places.

08-00:27:14

Wakeman: Yes, and of course the trouble with that before the days of Unix, with a microprocessor, is you couldn't enter alphanumeric data into this, so you could never change the categories. So if you were interested in something then, you can't go back and use it afterwards because it ain't on there! You had to repeat the whole process of—of course, there is a text written on the card, so you can painfully go back to the text, but I had these collected by Chinese graduate students in Taiwan so it's in very rough handwriting, I'd have to really—but Eberhard taught all these things, and he also came out to Taiwan when I was a student there and stayed with me for a while, and he represented the European tradition of sinology on the German side.

08-00:28:03

Lage: Here you're using the word sinology again.

08-00:28:05

Wakeman:

Well, he was actually training in Lessing's seminar in Sinology at the University of Berlin and his fellow classmate was Karl August Wittfogel, who was then a professor at the University of Washington, had been a member of the Frankfurt Circle, and had taught at Sun Yat-sen University, was a noted Communist. He wrote a very, very important book on Oriental despotism and hydraulic society and who hated Eberhard and whom Eberhard also seemed to hate as well. The man became a virulent anti-Communist, as former Mensheviks and Bolsheviks sometimes do, and a lot of the projects at the University of Washington operating at the same time were done under his intellectual authority, so to speak. And then I'd hear these stories from Eberhard. Eberhard was just a—he was a relic from those days when you tramped around China, which he had done.

08-00:29:06

Lage:

And what were his politics?

08-00:29:07

Wakeman:

You know I never talked about things like Republican or Democratic. He was a European intellectual—

08-00:29:16

Lage:

But Communist, anti-Communist—

08-00:29:18

Wakeman:

Oh, definitely anti-Communist, but even more fervently anti-fascist. He had been in China on a government scholarship in 1933 when Hitler was elected, and he of course, in the previous couple of years, had been very outspoken in his opposition to the National Socialist party, and this was well known in China among the Germans there. He—we should go soon, I'll finish with this and we can pick it up next time—he had his scholarship lifted, and he then was told he had to return to Germany. He got back to Germany, and he went to a friend in the Wilhelmstrasse, in the foreign ministry, and a very close friend of his who would know these things and he said, "Do you know what happened in China?" He said, "Yes, you were denounced as someone who is opposed to our chancellor." And Eberhard said, "Well, can I ask you who it was?" He said, "Yes, I'll tell you. There were two sets of denunciations. One came from a Jewish doctor in Peking who was fearful that he was losing his clientele and asked for the protection of the German Embassy in this regard, and they asked him for information on you because he knew you." Eberhard knew this man very well and he was astonished—a Jewish intellectual. And the second was from a German-American couple in Wuhan, a missionary couple, and I guess, sort of like the Deutsch-American Bund-type thing.

So the friend told him, he said, "Now, look. The Geheimstaatspolizei is after you. They may be after you. And if I hear the Gestapo is going to try to arrest you, I'm going to send you a cable or a message that will contain the word cherry in it, and when you get that, you and your wife leave Germany

immediately. And go in opposite directions, because they will be looking for a couple. So, shortly after that he got this cable, [including the word] cherry, and he took off toward the west, and his wife took off toward the east. And he came to America, came to Berkeley, because Lessing had come to Berkeley by then, and then made his way back to China, and for the next couple of years traveled in western China, and that area was overrun with bandits. I asked him one time, I said, “Well, Professor Eberhard, how did you avoid getting killed by the bandits?” “Well,” he said, he was a great big man, “Well, it was very easy as long as you didn’t carry a firearm. If you had a firearm they’d kill you for your gun.” I had these images of him sitting around campfires with Wittfogel and Owen Lattimore, he knew. Very romantic sort of that kind of—

08-00:32:20

Lage:

Did he meet up with his wife?

08-00:32:23

Wakeman:

He got to Ankara finally and he decided—of course, Turkey was neutral—that he would try to get a job teaching, and he learned, he’s a very good linguist, learned Turkish and got a job teaching at the university there, I suppose sociology or something. The very first lecture he got up to give, there was his wife in the audience. She’d heard there was an Eberhard giving a lecture and she came, and that was it—

08-00:32:50

Lage:

That is a bizarre story.

08-00:32:53

Wakeman:

Yes, and they stayed together until the year he retired here. And I believe within a couple of months they got divorced. I don’t know—she used to call him by his surname—I’d call the house, she’d say, “Eberhard is not in [in a German accent].” [laughs] But he was a rake too. He’s a fabulous guy. But when I got—and this is where I’ll end it all—when I got to Taiwan, I was working on a collection of documents which had been published. Actually it was published in the mid-nineteenth century, but it had been reprinted in an octavo edition, very hard to read.

08-00:33:33

Lage:

And they were documents we didn’t have here.

08-00:33:34

Wakeman:

Documents we didn’t have here. And so I was trying to read through those and looking for information relating to the topics I was studying, which meant I had to sort through one document after another, very laborious, very slow process, working out at the Academia Sinica, which was a bus ride outside of Taipei, and one day I was on the bus and a friend of mine, who was also working out there, named David Hamilton, who had been Fairbank’s TA, and I were chatting, and he said, “Well, what are you working on now?” He was working on local Hunanese history. I said, “Well, I’m reading through the

*chouban yiwu shimo*, and I'm looking for material on, and I told him, and he said, "Well, isn't it fortunate that we have Rowe's index." And I said, "Yes, isn't it." And I thought, [whispering] "Rowe's index—what the hell is that."

08-00:34:23

Lage: You didn't admit it! [laughs]

08-00:34:24

Wakeman: I didn't admit it, and I didn't know what it was—even worse! So I went into the reading room at the Institute of Modern History, and I spoke to the librarian—he said, oh, yes, David Nelson Rowe, who was a right-wing fanatic at Yale had compiled an index of the whole *chouban yiwu shimo*.

08-00:34:41

Lage: Oh, my goodness. How would he—

08-00:34:44

Wakeman: And I thought to my— I was furious! Why didn't Joe Levenson tell me about this?

08-00:34:48

Lage: Did he know?

08-00:34:48

Wakeman: I don't think he knew! So when I joined the faculty here, the first thing I did was to start a course, which I taught for the last time last term, on Chinese documents, to teach my students how to read these things, what the finding aids are. It's learning how to do history, and sort of bread and butter materials that you need.

08-00:35:14

Lage: Was this because Joe Levenson was an intellectual historian and was reading texts?

08-00:35:20

Wakeman: Partly, probably mainly that. The sort of research he did—he had never really lived in China, and as I told you, he spoke Japanese, not Chinese.

08-00:35:30

Lage: Oh, he didn't speak Chinese!

08-00:35:30

Wakeman: No, I used to have to come to his office and interpret for him if a visitor were Chinese.

08-00:35:36

Lage: So did he read things in translation then?

08-00:35:38

Wakeman: No, he read Chinese fine.

08-00:35:39

Lage: Oh, he read Chinese, OK.

08-00:35:40

Wakeman: But he couldn't speak it. He spoke Japanese quite well. The only time he lived in China was a year he spent in Hong Kong. And he regretted not going to Taiwan, where he could have spoken Chinese—because in Hong Kong it's very difficult to speak Mandarin—but his British wife wanted to be in Hong Kong, and there he read through a whole number of Chinese translations of western plays from the 1920s and '30s and wrote a small book about it, *The Chinese Stage of Western Stages*, or something like that [*Revolution and Cosmopolitanism: The Western Stage and the Chinese Stages*]. It's a beautiful book, but it's reading plays, and you can do that anyplace. As Larry Levine told me once, [Richard] Hofstadter never set foot in an archives in his life.

08-00:36:33

Lage: That's right.

08-00:36:34

Wakeman: There are people who can do that. But I'm not that kind of historian. So we should probably—

08-00:36:38

Lage: OK, we'll stop there.

## Interview 6: May 11, 2005

Audiofile 9 Wakeman 09 05-11-2005.wav

09-00:00:00

Lage: All right. We're on. It's our sixth interview, May 11, 2005, and we are concluding the discussion of your graduate studies with a concentration on the History Department. You talked last time about the language side of it. So tell me about the important people who shaped you in the History Department.

09-00:00:21

Wakeman: Well, I think probably one of the persons who was most important, at least in sending me toward social history and giving me a taste of sociology, which I didn't really know much about, was H. Franz Schurmann, who was half in sociology and half in history. A brilliant, brilliant scholar and a tremen[dous]—

09-00:00:43

Lage: How much older than you was he?

09-00:00:47

Wakeman: Oh, well, he must have been—

09-00:00:48

Lage: Was he a young scholar?

09-00:00:52

Wakeman: Yes, he was fairly young. He came here—he had written his thesis at Harvard on the Yuan Dynasty and had done some ethnographic work on the Mongols of Afghanistan. So he came here—he was a phenomenal linguist—came here to teach Turkish initially and then got into China and he was writing this book that became a kind of Bible for the field of Communist Chinese studies called *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* [UC Press, 1968]. Absolutely brilliant, but that wasn't really something I knew about at that point, but going to his classes—he taught social history of China and the social history of Japan. His Japanese was very good, and he was fully familiar with the literature, and it was just dazzling. I mean, just—he would, he would go in, his lectures went in spurts, he'd sort of wobble around for a while but suddenly he'd get into it, and there it would come out and it was very, very—I remember the first time, one of the first classes, I went up to him after one of his lectures and I said, Professor Schurmann, what is a sib? I never—I didn't know what a sib was; that's how ill-trained I was for that kind of work.

However, he was very scattered and would lose student papers, which made me very angry at him at times. He was going through a very difficult time in his own life. He was getting divorced, from a very temperamental Cantonese woman, but he had no sympathy for people who had any difficulty with the language. I remember going to a party at his house at the time that he was just starting to edit along with Orville Schell, or compile along with Orville Schell, this China reader that was very popular during that period. Standing around,

we were a bunch of graduate students and faculty, and I was there with a bunch of my fellow graduate students, and I said, “You know, Professor Schurmann, I know several languages fairly well, but I do find Chinese to be fairly difficult, don’t you?” And he said without—and just, “No.” [laughter] And I felt so crestfallen.

He was very radical, very progressive, and he went to Cuba to join one of these Venceremos Brigades that went down to harvest the sugar crop. He came back, and he said several phrases in Spanish. Now, you know I went to school in Cuba. My Cuban Spanish is virtually native, and I said, “Oh,” I said, “that’s very impressive,” I said, “where did you learn how to speak Spanish?” He said, “It must have been at the airport.” [laughs] And I can quite believe it!

09-00:03:35

Lage:

He’s that good a linguist?

09-00:03:36

Wakeman:

He was that good a linguist, yes. He was really quite extraordinary. Another person who didn’t have as dramatic an impact on me, but who is certainly one of the mainstays of the China program was Woodbridge Bingham. Woodbridge was—of course, we didn’t dare call him Woodbridge in those days—was very much a member of the old Connecticut gentry. He was married to a Griswold, and his father, of course, Hiram Bingham, was both a US senator and was, of course, also the discoverer supposedly of Machu Picchu. Now, my second wife was from their neck of the woods. She lived in Old Lyme, and we used to summer in Old Lyme, so I got to know the family, the Griswolds, pretty well, as well as his family. They had sort of like a Hyannisport setup right on the Connecticut River across from, near Essex. And you could see in him the—like most, I guess all, of the Griswolds, he went to Yale and had this very Connecticut gentry upbringing, which made him a bit stuffy to us. For example—

09-00:04:51

Lage:

He was quite a bit older by then.

09-00:04:53

Wakeman:

Oh yes, he was quite senior, and he taught a very old-fashioned history.

09-00:04:58

Lage:

In what respect?

09-00:05:01

Wakeman:

Well, he would say things that we thought rather comical, but I took them very much to heart later on. Never forget to take down the full citation. Because if you don’t do that, in some point in the future you’ll forget the citation. And I can hear myself saying exactly the same thing many years later to Professor [Wen-hsin] Yeh of our faculty, excuse me [telephone ringing]—

09-00:05:36

Lage: Now we're going again.

09-00:05:36

Wakeman: So, as I say, Bingham told me that I should take very, very full notes and accurate notes, because in the future I might otherwise forget the source. Now, I thought at the time that was kind of fusty and idiotic, but, also at the time, parenthetically, he wouldn't let you smoke in his seminar.

09-00:05:55

Lage: And that was unusual?

09-00:05:57

Wakeman: In those days it was very unusual. Nobody paid any—those were cigarette-smoking days. So we all sort of rankled at having to—he would have a break after an hour so the students could go out in the hallway and smoke. But he couldn't abide cigarette smoke. And in any case, this advice to me, I realized years later I heard myself echoing Woodbridge's voice, as I told *my* student who is now on the faculty, Professor Yeh, exactly the same thing, but in her case, she didn't listen to me! In my case, I listened to him. I did sort of old fashioned diplomatic history with him. He was a Tang historian; he was not a well published man. He had written a very important monograph, redone at the behest of young Professor Boodberg, on a very famous incident in the early Tang Dynasty when the son of the founder of the Tang carried out a coup. And this was a very important part of Tang political history, but his interest had gone off in the direction of Pan-Asian history, especially relating Persia to the Sassanid Empire to China and so on. He believed that you had to have this panoptical view of the whole, of the Asian or Eurasian continent.

09-00:07:23

Lage: Sounds like Bolton and the American continent.

09-00:07:25

Wakeman: Yes, very much like that. I think it may have been in the same spirit, although he was also very much influenced by colleagues like Hilary Conroy and Frank Iklé at University of Pennsylvania, and they had in fact produced a textbook which was the standby textbook for our initial Asian history courses at Berkeley. No one could really teach that course after he retired because none of us really did have that sweep. But it was perforce somewhat superficial and strongly political and dynasty by dynasty, and so on, which was not in tune with the interests of the times, and he was seen as a very old-fashioned man. And I'm afraid that I sort of treated him with all of the awful arrogance of youth—with a bit of contempt.

09-00:08:17

Lage: To his face you mean?

09-00:08:18

Wakeman: No, I wouldn't dare do that, but you know, scoffing behind his back and so on, "What does old Woodbridge want now?" Actually, I wrote some, at least I

learned to write, some very interesting stuff. I did a paper for him on the Sino-French War, which was one of my first forays into Chinese diplomatic archives. At the same time, I was working with another older generation, elder of the department, Ray Sontag, who was extremely demanding, extremely demanding.

09-00:08:57

Lage: In what respect?

09-00:08:58

Wakeman: Well, you'd go in, he had his office in the library, and you'd go into his office for a seminar, and he would tell you what you were going to be talking about. This would be during that interim between your thinking about what you wanted to write and actually producing the report. So you'd read widely in European diplomatic history, much in the same realm as William Langer had been working, but he'd start asking you about the—what was Aristide Briand like? What kind of vision did he have of European politics and history? And you pretty quickly exhaust a graduate student's knowledge about that sort of thing. It was quite frightening, because you try to prepare for this, but you could only learn so much. And after about ten minutes he would get up and start wandering around this book-lined room pulling a book off and saying, "Well, here." And he'd start—you know and—it was a terrifying course.

09-00:09:49

Lage: [laughs] Was he trying to demonstrate something, do you think, about breadth of learning?

09-00:09:57

Wakeman: Well, I've told a student just yesterday who's taking his qualifying examinations next week that before I took—Sontag was very interesting, he said to me once "You know, I hope you retain your enthusiasm." And I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, you're such a very enthusiastic young man, and in my experience people who study China become very, very bogged down in Chinese history and lose that spontaneity. They become—they lose their eyesight and they lose their spirit." And I said, "Well, I hope I don't." So there was a kind of—and furthermore his son was working for the government then, and I had met him so there was a kind of connection.

09-00:10:42

Lage: He was a fairly conservative man, Sontag.

09-00:10:45

Wakeman: Very conservative, yes, very conservative.

09-00:10:46

Lage: With ties to the government.

09-00:10:47

Wakeman: Yes, well, that's that area. He was on the National Intelligence Estimate Board that Sherman Kent had set up, the Yale professor. And he knew about some of

my connections, let me put it that way, and so I suppose there was sort of a kind of “we happy few” feeling about it all, but he really, he taught me how to do diplomatic history. My thesis was very much diplomatic history, as well as this effort to do social history, so I learned a great deal from Sontag, but he was a fairly—he wasn’t dour at all, he was just kind of—he had very high intellectual standards, and most people fell short of them. I remember before I took my—this is what I told the student yesterday. Before I took my, in those days there were written exams and oral exams, it was a long process to get through to the PhD candidacy. Now we just have orals. So I was telling this student that Professor Sontag had said to me, “Well,” that was just before my exams. Now my exams were kind of—I went through the system very quickly.

09-00:12:01

Lage: You did. Five years. You worked hard.

09-00:12:04

Wakeman: Yes. I really worked hard. The language acquisition was very—it took a lot of time. It took a lot of hours a day. And in fact I hadn’t planned to go beyond the MA, but once I had done the MA—which I did with, the exam was with Schurmann and Levenson—I realized I had in the process learned so much about modern Chinese history that it wouldn’t be that hard to go on. Because I sort of had that covered. I also, and this I again had picked up from Talcott Parsons, took all of my notes on tape, so I had all these tapes. My way of reviewing for the examination was sit down in one of those old fake Naugahyde chairs in this apartment I had bought up on Cedar next to Bill Bouwsma’s house and listen to the tapes. And I have a pretty good memory.

09-00:12:53

Lage: That takes a long time though.

09-00:12:54

Wakeman: Well, you set aside—

09-00:12:55

Lage: —longer than reading it.

09-00:12:56

Wakeman: —three weeks—no, not if these are tapes that are notes of readings.

09-00:12:59

Lage: Oh, I see, notes of readings.

09-00:13:01

Wakeman: So I, I mean, these weren’t transcripts. These were, I’d read a book, and just instead of taking notes, I’d simply make—

09-00:13:09

Lage: Make comments—

09-00:13:10

Wakeman:

—comments and impressions. And I think that Woodbridge Bingham thought it was too fast, because I went in to see him and he said, “Is it true that you’re coming up for your exams?” And I said, “Yes.” He said, “Well, this is awfully rapid.” As if to say “you’re moving along too quickly.” He said, “I don’t think you really understand much about Asian history.” I said, “Well, perhaps not, but I thought I might be able to become qualified as a candidate.” He said, “Well, you really should know more about Turkish history.” I said, “Do you mean the Western Turks or the Eastern Turks.” He said, “Well, both, for one thing, what distinguishes the Western Turks from the Eastern Turks.” I said, “I see.” So I went back and I got out the main monograph which is by a French sinologist named [Edouard] Chavannes and read it. It is very, very, full of all these various kurultay and meetings of these various Turkish leaders and the divisions between East and West, which I committed to memory. And I thought, “I’m going to show that son of a gun I can learn this.” So I really stressed that the last week or so for the exam.

09-00:14:20

Lage:

Before your orals.

09-00:14:21

Wakeman:

Before my orals. So you know, while Sontag is saying the two best moments or most important moments in a graduate student’s life are, first, to take the examination, and the most important thing is when you go into the exam, or before you go into the exam, is to recognize how little you know. And I listened to that and I thought, “Well, that’s very true, certainly.” He said, “And the second most important thing, alas, it doesn’t happen to all of us, is to be driving across the Bay Bridge with your finished dissertation,” of course, this is before the days of computers, “your finished dissertation sitting in a box beside you on the front seat of your convertible and with the wind suddenly picking up the dissertation and sending it over the side in to the Bay of San Francisco.” He said, “And then to realize that the world is far better for this than it would otherwise have been.” [chuckling]

09-00:15:10

Lage:

This was Sontag! [chuckling]

09-00:15:11

Wakeman:

Sontag. And I thought, wow, yes, well, OK.

09-00:15:14

Lage:

What an attitude!

09-00:15:15

Wakeman:

So I remember my exams going in, and I was so—

09-00:15:19

Lage:

And who was on your committee?

- 09-00:15:20  
Wakeman: Oh, Levenson was not, Levenson was away. Delmer Brown, Richard Herr, Woodbridge Bingham, Wolfram Eberhard, who was—the other historian was—Tom Metcalf who had just arrived here.
- 09-00:15:43  
Lage: And Metcalf—
- 09-00:15:44  
Wakeman: Indian history.
- 09-00:15:45  
Lage: In Indian. So you have one in Japanese, only really one in Chinese, but Eberhard in sociology.
- 09-00:15:51  
Wakeman: Oh, and Franz Schurmann was the outside person, he served as—Eberhard and Schurmann both. It was an extended committee. Schurmann served as both a historian and as a sociologist. So China was pretty well covered. But when the exam started, Bingham led off the questioning, and he said something about the Turks. I said, “Ah, yes, the Turks,” and then I launched into this thing. And I was just going a mile a minute, and I could see Bingham’s eyes start to glaze over, and finally he said, “That’s enough, that’s enough, young man, that’s enough.”
- 09-00:16:26  
Lage: Young man. [chuckling]
- 09-00:16:27  
Wakeman: And I thought I would—but then—Richard Herr, Dick Herr, now of course—
- 09-00:16:31  
Lage: In Spanish and Portuguese.
- 09-00:16:32  
Wakeman: Yes, but he also knew French. He’d written on Tocqueville, and he was questioning me on European economic history. And he was asking me the various, the historiography of the industrial revolution. Why England, why not France, you know, what about Germany, or the to-be Germany, and then, and I was giving various, the sort of, this is the period when David Landes was very important in economic history in the economics—well in our department too. And Herr, I think, wanted to get down to nuts and bolts and asked me to compare the coal resources of England and of the Saar, the Ruhr area in the early—
- 09-00:17:22  
Lage: Hmm. Very specific.
- 09-00:17:23  
Wakeman: Very specific. In the early nineteenth century. And I had some vague notion, but I said something about, well, maybe, and you know, I was waffling. He

said, “No, I mean the precise estimated tonnage of coal.” And I couldn’t think of that. And I was just dismayed, and like so many graduate students taking examinations, even though they’re told this isn’t true they think that if you miss a question, you fail the exam. Now, all I knew about that was that when the exam was over you went off, and you waited, and then the chairman of the committee, Delmer Brown, would come out and tell you, and if you passed he would shake your hand. That was the signal that you’d passed. So at the end of the exam I went off with thinking, “Oh, my God, I failed the exam.” And Delmer came out of the room, and he was speaking, but I was too catatonic [chuckling]. All I could do was look at his hand, and his hand was not moving. And I just thought, “Oh, woe is me.” And then finally he began to talk about—I’d passed with distinction. And then finally the hand came up, and I didn’t care about this distinction stuff. I just wanted to know whether or not that hand was coming!

But Woodbridge, I got to know, actually Levenson set me straight on Woodbridge, because I think the year after the exams I was, no, it was actually in the year I came back to teach here, I made a comment about Woodbridge, and it was slightly disparaging, and Joe—we were in a Chinese restaurant in the cit—and Joe was very sharp, in a gentle way, but he said, “Oh, he’s a wonderful man, he’s a wonderful gentleman.” And he said, “You know, the department was very anti-Semitic when I came in the department, and also they were very anti-Communist, and as a Fairbank student I was thought of as being sort of a Communist, fellow traveler,” and he said, “Bingham defended me on both counts, and I’ll never forget that.” And I thought, “Wow, I’m a very petty person not to have recognized that.” And then because of my in-laws living there and spending time in Connecticut, we got to know him and Ursula fairly well.

09-00:19:26

Lage:

That was later after you were on the faculty?

09-00:19:28

Wakeman:

That was later, yes, that was later, that was later. But at the time he was just one of the professors. And as far as—I mentioned Sontag, I mentioned Schurmann, and I’ve mentioned Bingham. I think the other person I would take about just a little bit is Carl Schorske, because I think the department in those days had really—well, Bill Bouwsma, too. Bill Bouwsma was—well, I’ll tell this story because it is very funny and it sort of shows you the way—it’s very revealing. Bill Bouwsma, of course, served as vice-chancellor for a while and that was during the People’s Park incident, and then he went off to Harvard, I think in part because he was disgruntled by that. We thought we’d lost him to Harvard, but he came back after a couple of years. He had lived right next to me, so I knew him as a neighbor. They had a house at just the very top of, at La Loma and Cedar. And I, with money from that novel I had written, was able to buy a duplex and rent out the top.

09-00:20:29

Lage:

On Cedar?

09-00:20:32

Wakeman:

On Cedar, right next to his house. And his kids were—they were kids of the sixties. They were hippies, wonderful people, and they—my own second son reminds me very much of some of the artists and the sort of things that—this very loving but in some ways unconventional couple. I'm going to be seeing Beverly next week, in fact. One night, Beverly and Bill went down to Stanford for a dinner party, and I was sitting in my living room reading something with a pair of earphones on. I was listening to Bach and I had the curtain—we had a little sort of closet area—the only direct window looking onto their house. And all of a sudden I was aware of somebody standing there. It was my wife. It was fairly late, and she was going [making whispery sounds], "Can't you hear what's going on?" And she said, "Look, look out the—." I looked out the front window, and there were all these police cars with lights flashing, and I thought, "What's happened?" And they were clearly involved in the Bouwsma house, so I pulled aside the curtains, looked, and I was looking through their living room window which looked out over the bay and the room was in total disarray. The curtain had been torn down, there was a sofa overturned, there were police in there, the kids were being handcuffed or whatever and apparently they had had a bad LSD trip or something. Again not very unusual in Berkeley then. But the *Berkeley Express* ran this story about this.

09-00:22:08

Lage:

Oh, really! [chuckling]

09-00:22:09

Wakeman:

Yes. And they said, the headline of the story as I recall the story, said that the, it didn't identify Bouwsma, but it said that the son of something or other, of a distinguished Berkeley historian thrown in jail for drug something or other drug bust. So Bill told me this a few days later. He was down in the department, and Bingham was coming down through the hall. You know, Bingham was tall, a very distinguished guy, and Bill who had this kind of perpetual look of being somewhat lost, but with this wonderfully sardonic smile was going along, kind of, and Bingham came up to him and said, "Bill, have you seen this," and he started waving the *Express* at him. And Bill said, "Yes." He said, "Do you see it says that a son of one of Berkeley's distinguished historians has been arrested." Well, and Bill felt he should come clean. He said, "Well, actually, it was my son." And Bingham said, "But it says *distinguished*." [laughter] Which I thought was wonderful! That was a very interesting time in the life of the department.

But Schorske was very close to Joe Levenson. And like Joe he had that magical wit and high, high intelligence. When he went to Princeton, everybody mourned his departure. I don't think I ever actually took a course with him, but I audited his courses. He was an interesting contrast to my professor at Harvard, H. Stuart Hughes. I would have to say much more

erudite and much more playful, much more aesthetic, very aesthetic—well, his Fin-de-siècle Vienna book is still a book I read and reread time and again. So those were the people that really had an impact on me in the department.

09-00:24:18

Lage: Did you get to know him or work with him? Or just from his course.

09-00:24:23

Wakeman: Not until I joined the faculty. I didn't—I thought of him as being Professor Schorske.

09-00:24:28

Lage: Now you didn't talk about Joe Levenson as having an impact on you.

09-00:24:32

Wakeman: Well, he did, I—

09-00:24:33

Lage: We haven't really—

09-00:24:34

Wakeman: Yes, it's almost too painful to tell you about the impact because of his death, I mean. No, Joe—I came here, I mentioned earlier, in one of the earlier interviews, that two people instantly attracted my attention and regard and my worship, in a sense. One was Joe and the other was Ch'en Shih-Hsiang. Joe, though, I found I was fighting him all the time—not personally, he's too nice a man to fight—but I was struggling against his way of approaching history, which seemed to me—

09-00:25:17

Lage: Oh, really?

09-00:25:18

Wakeman: Yes, it seemed to me to be too intellectualized. That in the spirit of Occam's razor, one could find much simpler explanations for things that took place rather than getting deep into the convolutions of the intellectuals that he was studying—on the—

09-00:25:36

Lage: Did you feel that way right away? Or is this what over time you—

09-00:25:39

Wakeman: I felt that way, yes, from the first lectures I started attending of his. I remember the first thing. I mean, he was very patient. Prior to coming to Berkeley in Paris I had picked up a very famous book by Marcel Granet, the French sinologist, about early Chinese civilization, which distinguished between—it was built around the motif of the yin and the yang, the female and the male, the dark and the light sides of peasant life, must have been peasant life, in ancient China. And I was very taken with this, and I remember going up to Joe, and I asked him what he thought about it. He was very

equivocal. He obviously thought it was interesting but it didn't, wasn't sufficiently profound for him. It was too simple to think in such, in such, we would now say, binary ways. And I was a little bit disappointed and upset that he didn't think it was great also. I wanted to persuade him that as I read Chinese history I really understood what was happening and that I thought he was too much of a—I think the Yiddish word is a *luftmensch*, you know. Flying up there, never coming down and landing. Which wasn't true, but that was my perception.

In his seminars, his seminars really centered on his own work. You would read his Confucian China, the trilogy, and go through it with him, which was in some ways immensely wonderful as a didactic method, as a pedagogy, because the book is extremely hard, or the three volumes are extremely hard to understand. Many historians later on, particularly after Joe's death, have tried to analyze it. Levenson was not paid much attention after, let's say, five to six years after his death. But as many people do, they fall out of fashion, but then he's come back in.

09-00:27:53

Lage:

Oh, really. Now, why, what—

09-00:27:55

Wakeman:

I think it's a different appre[ciation]—I think that during the period of time when everybody was so intent upon doing social history in the sense of E.P. Thompson, or cultural history in the sense of Raymond Williams, that he didn't seem to be doing that sort of thing. When it came to something like the Taipings, he wasn't writing about social banditry like someone like [Eric] Hobsbawn. He wasn't writing about the sorts of things later—class, gender, race—that make up so much of, or made up so much of the social/historical work of the seventies and eighties. And so, his own approach suffered; that is, appreciation of his own approach was wanting. But now that that wave has passed—it has not gone, it's still very strong, but I think we're witnessing now a, first of all, a return to the grand narrative traditions, that people like C. Vann Woodward or Leon Litwack, for that matter, write about. And also a higher appreciation of a kind of Durkheimian approach to culture. Cultural history, not in the sense of cultural studies, but cultural history in a way that somehow isn't simply concerned with popular culture—so Levenson is now being read again.

And he certainly is remembered. I gave my last lecture of the term on Monday, and this man who was about my age, maybe a bit younger, who has been auditing and hadn't said a word—of course, it's a large lecture class—but he came up to me and thanked me for, the usual thanks for the course and he said, "You probably don't remember me, but I remember you from the sixties." I said, "Well, I'm afraid I don't." He said, "Well, you know, I came down here," I don't know where he was from, Seattle, he made it sound like somewhere up north, "to work with Levenson, and then Levenson died, but I

remember hearing your course,” or something like that. So I said, “That’s wonderful.” But when he mentioned Levenson it was with a tone of veneration.

09-00:30:19

Lage: I’ve noticed that in the other interviews I’ve done with historians.

09-00:30:23

Wakeman: Yes.

09-00:30:24

Lage: In a personal way and also his mind.

09-00:30:27

Wakeman: Well, you know, I think that the History Department at Berkeley was quite unique in general, looking at other history departments in the United States, in that Chinese history—of course Fairbank was a big figure at Harvard—but Chinese history was somehow separate, it was radically other, it was another, and still that’s true to a certain extent.

09-00:30:52

Lage: In other universities here or at Berkeley?

09-00:30:54

Wakeman: Well, even here you know, people have come up to me and said to me—this hasn’t happened recently, but they’d say, “You know, you’re starting to look Chinese.” And I don’t look at all Chinese, but I’d think, “Boy, you know, this is—.” And even in this department, which is very enlightened and has a very high respect, and I’ll come back to that in a minute, for Chinese history, there is a feeling that somehow it’s so foreign, it’s so out there—

09-00:31:21

Lage: Kind of exotic, is it still?

09-00:31:23

Wakeman: Oh, yes, exotic and therefore incomprehensible and mysterious. It really is the other, the alterity that you’ll never understand. Japan, because of the illusion of the occupation and I think the kind of Japanese culture we were used to in this country, somehow doesn’t seem so strange, but China really seems strange, and therefore it was assigned a kind of marginal position. But Levenson, whose knowledge of European intellectual history, which is where he started, was so refined, and his aesthetic sense—he was a wonderful musician, you know, really a wonderful pianist. In fact, his friend Rhodes Murphy, who was a professor of geography at Michigan, said that they met as freshmen when Rhodes was wandering through the halls of Straus or Wigglesworth or wherever, I don’t remember what freshman hall Joe was in, and he heard someone playing Gilbert and Sullivan on the piano with great verve, and Joe always played Gilbert and Sullivan, he loved Gilbert—but he could play a pretty mean etude, you know, Opus 64 Number 2. I remember one time I felt very sort of kind of angry at him but also sort of humiliated. I

had just gotten a record of Joan Sutherland—oh, two things, it happened very close together. One was Vivaldi. I like *The Four Seasons*—and I mentioned this, I just said very neutrally something about this new record of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, and he said, "Oh," he said, "yes, all that pushing and pulling." And I thought, "Oh." Then I got this record of Joan Sutherland, *Norma*, and I just loved that record. I had the Callas record, but I loved that record, and I played it over and over, particularly "Casta diva," that wonderful aria. And I remember seeing him the next morning, we used to have coffee together in the mornings, saying, "I just had this wonderful—Sutherland singing "Casta diva." I really love Bel Canto, and isn't Bellini great!" or something. And he said, "I don't think so." [laughter] But he said it with such seriousness. I mean, for him, Mozart was great, not Bellini, not Bel Canto. But he's a great musician. All of these attributes made him a—he was a cosmopolite. A truly educated man and a man of such wit and spirit that he elevated Chinese history. Compare him to Bingham, for example, who was doing Chinese history. Levenson elevated Chinese history to such a level that it attained a prestige in the department that made it—it was no longer marginal. It was central.

09-00:34:18

Lage:

And it seemed to have relevance for the others.

09-00:34:21

Wakeman:

Absolutely, and it wasn't just because—you get this usual stuff about the Pacific Rim in the last fifteen years, which is nonsense! But—I mean nonsense the way it's done here, but you know, it funds president's programs and the directors of institutes like this can talk about outreach in the Pacific Rim, Walter Shorenstein, sister cities, you know, Feinstein, Richard Blum, blah, blah, blah. But that doesn't really cut it when it comes to, where does Chinese history and culture stand. And Joe—it wasn't that he legitimized it, but he gave it a significance that made people realize that it wasn't just a rarity. It wasn't a *rara avis* that some people like antiquarians studied because they liked to collect old Chinese vases. You know there was a wonderful thing about it.

But I kept struggling with this difference in our historiographical point of view, realizing I was losing the battle all the way, that I was gradually ceding more and more ground, and but at the same time, wanting very much to have his approval. And my own parents had gotten divorced, my father and I were not on speaking terms at that point, so he sort of, I sort of wanted him to make himself a new father figure for me. And he—I really respected him for this later. He steadfastly refused to do that.

09-00:35:49

Lage:

Oh, interesting.

09-00:35:50

Wakeman:

He wouldn't accept that.

09-00:35:52

Lage: So he—he recognized—

09-00:35:53

Wakeman: He recognized that and how easy it would have been to, say, well, you know, to spiritually adopt me or something, but he never did that. His modesty was really quite genuine. I think partly because of his linguistic nervousness about Chinese as a spoken language. I remember one time we'd been to a meeting down at the Center for Chinese Studies which used to be located down on Shattuck to hear a paper by, I guess it was Maurice Meisner from Wisconsin who was, again, a disciple of Levenson's at a distance. And on the way back up, I had just been rereading a section in Levenson's *Confucian China* that concerned some work I was doing on the late Ming, early Qing on abortiveness—the abortiveness of empiricism in early Qing thought. And it's absolutely bloody brilliant. I mean, he hadn't done the research I had done, but he just got so far, much farther. And it started raining, and we stood under one of those trees at the entrance to the [campus], where they now have that University of California sign at the west side of the campus. Stood under a tree, neither one of us had an umbrella, and I started waxing enthusiastically about this. I mean, I was just sort of gushing, like the rain, my appreciation. And Joe said, "Oh, no," he said, "No, no, your work is," and he really meant it, he said "No, that's nothing; I just sort of thought it up."

And that was sort of the way he did—you know, after he died I became sort of his literary executor, which meant I had to go through all of his papers, and he was the kind of man who would jot down ideas, and these are in the Bancroft in this form, on the back of cocktail napkins, matchbooks, theater tickets, you know, so if you're doing—it's sort of like archeology, the archeology of Joseph Levenson, you find, oh yeah, that's where that idea first occurred, and then you trace it back to here; oh, he read that in Nietzsche, or this is what he thought Weber meant, but it's all put together to, you know—

09-00:37:56

Lage: Did you learn things that you hadn't know from all those years of—

09-00:38:00

Wakeman: Yes, yes, that I wouldn't have known from his published work what the genesis of his ideas was. Then when I finally passed my exams and had to think of a thesis topic, I was torn between doing something in essentially, literary cultural history—I was fasc[inated]—

09-00:38:16

Lage: It would have been more in his area?

09-00:38:17

Wakeman: Not necessarily. He was too broad to be so pigeonholed. For me it seemed to be either/or, because one topic, which I'm actually working on now, many, many years later, was a group called the Creation Society, which in 1926 suddenly changed almost overnight from being a group of art-for-art's-sake

romantics who—you know, young Werther and Schiller and all that stuff—to becoming Marxists. How did that happen? I was fascinated by that. But it was a literary intellectual topic, or on the other hand, the other side of me, the Eberhard side, the social history side, which wanted to look at the social and economic consequences of the opium war and the rise of the Taipings as a social movement. So I went into his office, and I said, “Joe, I’ve got these two different things.” No, I didn’t say [Joe], Professor Levenson, it took me a long time to call him Joe. “Professor Levenson, I have these two different topics,” and I really wanted him to tell me what to do. I had this, and I explained, and that, and I explained, “Which do you think I should do?” And he said, he took a puff on his pipe, and he said, “Well, whatever you want to do, whatever you really want to do.” And I thought, I was sort of—I didn’t want to have that much freedom! [laughs] So I chose the latter, which was not a bad choice.

09-00:39:45

Lage:

Well, did he guide you in that? Or was that just too far aside from his area of—

09-00:39:51

Wakeman:

No, I decided that I was going to do this differently than an ordinary thesis. As it began to take shape, I probably got more guidance from John Fairbank.

09-00:40:06

Lage:

Oh, from John Fairbank!

09-00:40:08

Wakeman:

John Fairbank came out to China, to Taiwan, for a short sabbatical at the Academia Sinica, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, on Taiwan, that is—there was one, of course, on the mainland as well—to the Institute of Modern History, which was headed by a man who was one of my other mentors, Guo Moro [means Kuo Ting-yee], I was appointed the Guo Moro [means Kuo Ting-yee] professor last year to deliver the first lecture of this man who was the leading modern Chinese historian on Taiwan.

09-00:40:42

Lage:

And how do you spell his name?

09-00:40:44

Wakeman:

Kuo [spells], what am I saying, Guo Moro? Kuo [spells], Ting-yee, Kuo Ting-yee; Guo Moro is a very famous Creation Society member, that’s how the slip—his name is Kuo [spells] Ting-yee and he spells it, or spelled it, Ting-yee [spells], in fact, there’s even a— it’s over here, I have a CD of the commemoration, the commemorative ceremony.

09-00:41:15

Lage:

Now, how did he become your mentor?

09-00:41:17

Wakeman:

He was the head of the Institute of Modern History.

09-00:41:20

Lage: At Academia Sinica?

09-00:41:22

Wakeman: At Academia Sinica. And I, well, I sort of found myself caught at that point between the Oriental languages and the history side of me. And that is between sinology and historical study, which is very hard to bridge in China. But Kuo Ting-yee had managed to bridge it, and had set up this Institute of Modern History, eventually with funds that came from the Ford Foundation and through the good offices of John Fairbank. Later, I was, when I was a faculty member, I became a member of the committee that supervised this operation, as a kind of joint American-Chinese operation. I went out to Taiwan knowing I wanted to work on this, but not knowing exactly how to go about it.

09-00:42:08

Lage: So, like '64 would this have been?

09-00:42:11

Wakeman: '63.

09-00:42:11

Lage: '63, OK.

09-00:42:13

Wakeman: And I decided to approach it diplomatically at first, and I had a great deal of trouble getting access to their archives. They had diplomatic archives from the first modern Chinese foreign office, Tsung-li Yamen, and I knew that they had them because there had been an article in one of our scholarly journals about their discovery of these files in the collection of the Academia Sinica, which was then out in the countryside outside of Taipei in a coal-mining area. It's very tropical and hot in the summer, you know—it was very, I mean, you'd go out, those were the early days of the Academia, with a bunch of young scholars, not much older than I was. Some of them had gone to the States for training, some of them never left China, but they were very young; in a certain sense they were a radical cohort. And he protected them.

09-00:43:12

Lage: Radical politically?

09-00:43:13

Wakeman: Yes, well—the right wing on Taiwan thought that cooperation with the Americans was very bad, especially with Fairbank, who was seen as a, what they called a *guxi fenzi*, an appeaser, a fellow traveler who had sold out China to the Communists. And Kuo Ting-yee, although his political credentials were excellent, was exchanging materials with the United States, so that he was accused in the Legislative Yuan by one of the most right-wing, a former Communist actually, right-wing scholars, Hu Qiuyuan, of having sold out the country, *maiguo*, which is another way of saying traitor.

And in part, Joe had come out there—well, anyway, I, Kuo Ting-yee had sort of gotten me over this hesitation about whether it was sinology or history and furthermore enabled me to use these archives, because when I first went out there, I made the mistake in a very brash way, not understanding Chinese culture very well, of going to the library of the Modern History Institute, and boldly marching up to the desk and saying I'd like to see the Tsung-li Yamen clean files. And the young woman behind the desk was very, you know, who knew nothing about them went and called the director of the library who came out and he said, "We don't have those." And I said, "Oh, but you do." We were right at the reading room, so I said, "Here." And I marched him over—I mean, I look back and wonder, how do you do this in China?—I marched him over and showed him the journal article that talked about these materials. I don't even know if the man read English, but I just, "See, see, see?" And his face darkened, and he said, "Well," and he said, "Well," and he went back and then somebody else came out, one of his assistants said, "We can't find these materials."

So, I mean, this was to be the beginning of my thesis! I was terribly frustrated, and I didn't know what to do. I would go out to the reading room. They had a service bus. I'd go out every day and sit there and read something else, but—obviously I was trying to wait them out. And finally one of the younger assistants, who took pity on me took me aside and said, "I really think you should go and pay a, it's called *bai fang* in Chinese, go and pay a respectful call on this gentleman. So I prepared myself, I got, I don't know whether I had cigarettes, or a gift, or something fancy and went to the librarian's house on a Sunday and presented them, and we chatted, didn't say anything about the archives, just chatted about other things. I'd by then begun to recognize, begun to learn that there is a certain indirectness involved in these things, and you know, the next week or so he came out with a big smile and says, "You know, we found those archives after all." But I learned later that Kuo Ting-yee had been approached and he said, "No, let this young man," he thought of me as a student of Fairbank.

09-00:46:16

Lage:

But you weren't.

09-00:46:17

Wakeman:

Well, in China there is this notion, even in mainland China, of the, you call your teacher *shifu*, father teacher, and your teacher's teacher is your grandfather teacher.

09-00:46:31

Lage:

So Levenson was a student of Fairbank's.

09-00:46:33

Wakeman:

Yes, so for example, when a Chinese person has been a student of mine, and this happened in Chicago just a few weeks ago, and my wife comes out, they'll call her *shimu*, mother teacher. So there is a sense of a genealogy, so I

was seen as Fairbank's, and in fact, people still say, [regarding] one of these books I've published recently in China, they say, "Wakeman is a student of Fairbank's, the other great modern Chinese historian." Levenson isn't even mentioned, which is too bad, because I was getting very frustrated about the work I was doing. It was very difficult to use these materials. I actually hadn't been properly trained for them. I would write Joe about this, but Fairbank, who's very much a kind of hands-on, matter-of-fact person, I think deliberately so, took a liking to me.

09-00:47:30

Lage:

And he was there.

09-00:47:31

Wakeman:

He was staying there, partly to protect, to lend his presence to Kuo Ting-Yee. And he said to me, after he learned what I was doing, he said, "Well, that's a very good topic." He said two things, one was he said, "But you've got to get to London." I was slated to go to Japan, which I did go to for a period of time to work on my Japanese, but, "you've got to get to London sooner or later to work at the public records office, because they have all of these materials on Canton, the Opium War, and all of this." And I said, "Well, I can't do that, Professor Fairbank, because I'm a Ford Foundation fellow, and I'm supposed to be doing work in the Far East. They won't let me go there." And he said, "Well, I'll talk to them." And he in fact went to {Dorothy Sutherland} who was the executive director of the program and persuaded them, just as he had persuaded the Rhodes Scholarship authorities to let him go to China instead of Oxford, to let me go to London for six months to work in these files. And then the second thing he told me, which put me into something of a panic, was that he had another student who was working on this topic, Philip Kuhn, who is now a professor at Harvard. He and I are very good, very close friends, but we were for many years seen as rivals. And I, you know how graduate students are, you think, geez, somebody else is writing the same thing as my thesis.

So Fairbank had, at least in terms of the mechanics of it all, had a great, a great influence on me in that sense, but the real influences on me were people I didn't know. The leading intellectual influence on me at that time, two of them, were Robert [means Richard H.] Tawney, the British economic social/historian, whom I've, of course, never met. He was dead by then, and Maurice Freedman, again, a Marxist anthropologist at the University of London. And I was deeply influenced by Freedman's analysis of lineage and class in southeastern China; he really was, I thought was, the best China anthropologist. So I wrote pretty much on my own and I decided that I was going to make, because I felt I could write well, that I was going to take a big risk and write this as though it were a book.

09-00:49:58

Lage:

Instead of a dissertation.

09-00:50:00

Wakeman:

Yes. So I went off to London, discovered, I mean, not only did I discover these British materials, but I stumbled across, completely by accident, the actual Chinese records of the Viceroy's Office of Canton in the 1850s, which had been captured by the British and then moved up to Peking, they're all Chinese of course, stored in the Peking legation and kept there until the Chinese kicked the British out in the 1950s, and they brought all this stuff back to the public record office, and it was stored out in the countryside. And I just happened to run across this clerk's catalog with "Chinese Documents" written in a very spidery hand in brown ink, and I thought, "What are these?" And I called—you were allowed to call ten documents up a day—called up ten, and the first one I got, I began to unwrap it, and it was a huge military map from the period of the military emplacements of the Taiping done in that Chinese cartographic style which uses human figures. It was a gorgeous—you could hang it on a museum wall. The next thing I opened up were the account books for this yamen. We suddenly had price indices for labor costs and the cost of living. The third thing I opened up were a series of arrest records of secret society chiefs—I mean, I was, my hands were just shaking!

09-00:51:34

Lage:

And these were things that hadn't been opened, it sounds like.

09-00:51:37

Wakeman:

And the amazing thing, and this is often true, as I think you know, that there were two other people in that reading room that winter—it was very cold—who discovered the same set. Charles Kerwin, who was at SOAS [University of London] and a Japanese historian named Sasaki Masaya, and none of us knew each other. We were working in different parts of the reading room.

09-00:51:58

Lage:

And you didn't affect each other's discovery.

09-00:52:00

Wakeman:

And the thing is, the keeper of the rolls never told us anything. I didn't know until years later when we began publishing. In fact, there's a book that is about these documents written by David Pong, where he writes about this odd thing. In fact, I got to know Kerwin very well. We spent time together in China, and it was just absolutely eerie. But I mean, here I was, a graduate student—it's like, for me, I suppose like an archeologist finding a mummy! I was just completely—so I wrote it up, I started writing it up tentatively, although I was working day and night. I sent my family back to the States.

09-00:52:42

Lage:

Did it—I don't want to interrupt your thought, but did finding those sources shape what you were able to write and the focus of your thesis?

09-00:52:48

Wakeman:

Yes, yes. Not just the thesis, but also subsequent articles. I wrote several pieces on secret societies and an uprising called the Red Turban Uprising. The

sense of the connection between the viceroy's yamen and the merchants of Canton. There wasn't anything directly connected to the incident I had chosen to work on; the information for that I mainly got from materials that were published in reproduction from stone carvings from these *beike*, you know, like commemorative shrines that list the exploits of the martyrs who were engaged in this movement against the British, which became later hailed as sort of a, I don't know, the Alamo. One of those great moments in Chinese history.

09-00:53:39

Lage: By the Communists?

09-00:53:41

Wakeman: By the Communists.

09-00:53:41

Lage: Made it a central, kind of symbolic thing?

09-00:53:43

Wakeman: Yes, they did—a central symbolic theme. And what I did, what I did find in these archives, but more especially in the British military archives, was it was a completely inconsequential event from the British point of view. And yet it occupied this central place in the psychology and the propaganda of the time. It was blown up by the Cantonese gentry to glorify the role of the militia, which is what our paper is on at 4 [o'clock, today], in fact. And in fact, years later, when I went, during my first trip to China, when I got to Canton, I was the translator for this group, and the man who was our host I'd gotten very friendly with; it was the very end of a month trip, very friendly with me and he knew I'd been working on something about Canton. He said, "What are you really writing about?" So I told him, and we were in the historical museum of Canton, which is a pagoda at the north wall of the city. And he said, "Oh, my God," he said, "I've got something to show you." And he took me down into the garden of this historical museum, and there was this stele of the Guangping xueshe, the Guangping Study Society, which was the name of the militia group with these names that I'd used to—by matching surnames and year names I was able to work out who was related to whom, was this a unit that brought together [Hakka, Punti?] Was it interethnic? Anyway, I used it as a kind of very important part of my research, and I was just staggered. My God, there it is! And then, although it was closed, he took me out to the temple built on the spot where this famous incident had taken place, and I was stunned to discover they'd actually read the book.

09-00:55:40

Lage: That he had read the book?

09-00:55:41

Wakeman: That they had actually read my book that I'd written about this. They were very critical of it and I wasn't allowed—

09-00:55:46

Lage:

Did it counter Marxist, it must have countered—

09-00:55:49

Wakeman:

Well, it was, it was very neo-Marxist. They weren't quarreling about that, but they were quarreling about my suggestion that these militia units were primarily or largely engaged also in internecine warfare, in clan vendettas and ethnic struggles, which now is quite accepted, but then that sort of broke down the sense of this unified Chinese peasantry driving out the foreigners. And they were also upset by the fact that I'd said, "Look, from the British point of view, this was a minor military skirmish. Nobody paid any attention to it." So, but I couldn't take photographs because the pictures in the temple-turned-museum and their murals were quite bloody, showing Chinese stabbing, disemboweling foreigners and all this xenophobic stuff.

Anyway, that's a long way around that story, but—Well, at the end of my research stay, I got this phone call from Levenson, very diffident—he told Irv Scheiner then that he was very upset because he had decided that he wanted me to come back here, which he thought maybe I wouldn't want to do, and the best job that year was at Rochester, and he'd nominated my friend Crozier, a student of his who's now a professor at the University of Victoria, for the Rochester job. And of course, I was never going to go to Rochester, you know! But I remember, it was before my family went back, and I called the apartment we had rented at lunchtime; I came out for a bite to eat, and my wife said Joe Levenson had called from California, to call him back at such a time, you know, eight hours behind, and I did, and he said—he was very, well, sort of stammering about, "We have this job, you see, and I don't know if you want to come back," and I said, "Yes, I think I'd like to try that."

But I went ahead, and what I did was, I went to Florida where my mother was living, and rented a house on the New River, crummy old house without air conditioning in a hot Florida summer and just continued writing and churned this thing out and then I decided to present it as a thesis. So I sent it in—

09-00:58:17

Lage:

This is '65.

09-00:58:19

Wakeman:

'65. Sent it in. Schurmann could not be found to read it. I don't think he ever did read it because he was too busy revising his own book. But Levenson read it. Levenson was up at his cabin near Mt. Lassen, and he wrote me back in tremendous enthusiasm, and he said, "This is an incredibly well-written book; it reads like a novel. I've gone ahead and I've given it to Phil[ip] Lilienthal at UC Press and asked him to look it over, and you should perhaps get in touch with Lilienthal when you come out here."

09-00:58:57

Lage:

This is something you put in for your dissertation.

09-00:58:59

Wakeman:

Yes. So when I came out here, I had not even formally filed the dissertation because I couldn't do that until December. I met with Phil, I don't know if you know anything about him.

09-00:59:09

Lage:

No.

09-00:59:09

Wakeman:

Well, he was—that's another story, he was another man, certainly as a faculty member I found, who had tremendous influence on me. And Philip, or Phil, I never called him Philip, who was the main East Asia editor at the press, took me out to lunch, and he said, "I think this is a wonderful book. Let's send it out to readers right away." And they sent it to Maurice Freedman and also sent it to Mary Clabaugh Wright, Jonathan Spence's teacher at Yale, whom I also had never met, but she gave me a wonderful reading and authorized them to tell me it was she. I didn't know who the other reader was. Freedman had not—

09-00:59:54

Lage:

They don't tell you this.

09-00:59:56

Wakeman:

Only if the reader says that they're willing to do that, and Freedman's reading was very subtle. I didn't in fact realize it was Freedman until I was going through Joe's papers after his death and I saw the report, and I saw Freedman's name, and I instantly took the whole thing up and took it up to Riasanovsky, who was chairman and said that I shouldn't be looking at this stuff.

09-01:00:18

Lage:

Even at that point you should[n't]—

09-01:00:20

Wakeman:

I felt it was very, it was very, it would be very unscrupulous of me to take advantage of that position. But, so at that point, Joe's encouragement was tremendous, and in fact, I don't think I would have sent them anything. I just thought, damn it, I'm just going to do this—

09-01:00:43

Lage:

You didn't send chapters, ask for advice—

09-01:00:46

Wakeman:

I thought, I'm doing this on my own and you know, I'm leaping off, I may be dead wrong—well, I wrote him a letter saying if you really want to see chapter by chapter I'll do that, but I think I would prefer to hand you the draft, is that all right? And he said, "Sure, if you want to do it that way."

09-01:01:02

Lage: Oh, gosh, that's amazing. Now, I was kind of taken with your introduction where you end with "Let us engage in local history." Tell me about that—local history wasn't fully respected in the major universities.

09-01:01:21

Wakeman: No, no. That was, in fact, that singled the book out. There was a book published a few years later on, by the SSRC on social science and history. And they selected that book as an example of a very good marriage of anthropology, a certain amount of psychology, because I relied heavily on the social psychology of Gordon Allport.

09-01:01:47

Lage: On mass movements?

09-01:01:49

Wakeman: Mass movements and on prejudice, racial prejudice.

09-01:01:52

Lage: Now had you studied with him? Wasn't—

09-01:01:55

Wakeman: No, I never studied with him. I just had read his book, his books. And then the usual literature on the crowd, [Hadley] Cantril and Gustave Le Bon and all that stuff, but the point that this little book made, which I found out later was actually written by Tom Smith, who later joined our faculty but was then at Stanford, was that it was the area studies people, more than the conventional traditional historians, Eurocentric or American, who were most likely to turn to social science in an eclectic way and use it somewhat parasitically to inform their own work, and they gave as an example, *Strangers at the Gate*, but that local turn signaled a whole new departure in modern Chinese historiography. Quite a few years later, Paul Cohen wrote a book called, *Discovering History in China*, and he like many other people said, "Well, Wakeman was the first to get us to turn to local history."

09-01:03:04

Lage: Oh, interesting.

09-01:03:05

Wakeman: Yes, I mean, so much before had been dynastic, intellectual history, or the history of intellectual figures.

09-01:03:12

Lage: So it was local, but it was also a different class, looking at a different class.

09-01:03:15

Wakeman: Well, I, yes, I was; I was very interested then in two things: local history and world history. And the other point of that preface, which was summed up by those poetic lines from the *Shropshire Lad*, you know: "It dawns in Asia, tombstones show, and Shropshire names are read; and the Nile spills his

overflow beside the Severn's dead," that suddenly you have Welsh boys dying in Egypt or dying in China under the terms of the British Empire, and this was a new global history that China had not made. They didn't write the rules of that game, but events that were happening in China had a tremendous repercussion in England. Not necessarily that incident, but the Opium War itself, and vice versa and to understand how these events interacted, you had to begin not to talk about diplomats negotiating the treaty of Nanking, as Fairbank had been doing, but you had to get down to the local and to begin to see that this high political theater had very real social consequences; in this case, the origins, or the outbreak of the largest civil war in human history, the Taiping Rebellion. So a lot of people then began looking at local history.

09-01:04:40

Lage: Well, you hear all the time now, currently, the local and the global.

09-01:04:45

Wakeman: Absolutely.

09-01:04:46

Lage: Or the connection between the local and the global, I don't know how many conferences have been announced on that theme in the last four years.

09-01:04:51

Wakeman: Absolutely. Global village, the globalization and then these local particularistic ethnic identifications, religious identifications, all of these primordial ties that seem to be strengthened, paradoxically, by the global, which doesn't surprise you if you think about it. We live in a world where you get on any airplane, in practically any airplane in the world and you're in the airplane culture.

09-01:05:15

Lage: Right, but here you're showing this going on back then—

09-01:05:18

Wakeman: But here I'm showing really, yes, in 16,000 miles apart England and so, I became—and that's always been a great interest, I mean, I really, I just read a really great book, the night before last, by a man named Thomas Layton, who's an anthropologist at San Jose State, that starts out with a wreck on the Mendocino coast, some Pomo Indians discovering it, goes to Canton, Bombay, you're back in Boston, in Baltimore building clippers. It's a great web of consequence and of coherent meaning that I find in that. And that's what I came out of this whole thesis exercise with. So local history, in that sense was the flashpoint of this.

09-01:06:08

Lage: Yes, fascinating. And then you also came out of it with a job.

09-01:06:12

Wakeman: Yes.

09-01:06:13

Lage: And did you—when we talked two times ago, you said you were still thinking of getting back into the government service.

09-01:06:19

Wakeman: Yes, I actually had several jobs lined up.

09-01:06:22

Lage: And even CIA-type programs?

09-01:06:24

Wakeman: Well, these were essentially front groups.

09-01:06:26

Lage: Was this before you got the offer from Berkeley?

09-01:06:29

Wakeman: Yes, in fact, I was, at that point I was actually, in the little spare time I had, I was studying, I was reading *China News Analysis*, which was a very good weekly information sheet put out by a very, very knowledgeable Jesuit in Hong Kong, full of intelligence. I would go to the US Embassy and read stuff trying to get myself up to speed because I had been, basically, in Taiwan and Japan. I hadn't been following events in China very much. And I was about to go to Washington.

09-01:07:07

Lage: But, you talked about the sort of a transformation, a shift in your political outlook. It hadn't occurred by then? Franz Schurmann hadn't worked his magic by then?

09-01:07:17

Wakeman: Oh, yes. No, no, no. That's a very good question. That's a very good question. You're very, you have a very good memory and you're very astute. Yes, something had happened along the way, which was the Vietnam War.

09-01:07:33

Lage: Right, but that wasn't a big thing by then, was it? Or—

09-01:07:36

Wakeman: Well, it was, it depended where you stood.

09-01:07:38

Lage: Oh, that's—you knew more of what was happening than the general public.

09-01:07:43

Wakeman: Yes, and also just even if you were just in, you didn't have to be an insider or privy to anything to know that something was going to go very, very bad in Asia. We now know that the presidents who got us into that war, Kennedy and Johnson were being manipulated by their generals and by the intelligence services. I don't know what to say about Bush today, about that problem, or Bolton or any of these things, but, Kennedy, you know, really, he had great

doubts, although Cardinal Spellman and others were trying to urge him to come to the aid of the Vietnamese Catholics. But by '63, it was pretty clear that we were committing ourselves. We were committed in Laos, in a clandestine war, and in Taiwan the American military presence was very, very visible. The United States Army had a program called FAST, I forget what the acronym stands for now. And of course, there were all of these CIA, they had other names, of course, but CIA organizations on the island, and then this very large military base in Zhongshan beilu, which was the MAAG [Military Assistance Advisory Group], military advisory, army advisory group which was US run. The FAST program was dedicated to training American military officers who had more or less opted for professional careers in intelligence. That's a big choice for someone like that to make, because if you make that choice, you're probably never going to make general.

The most notable person was a man named William Whitson—this is no big secret; it's well known—William Whitson, who was the FAST officer, very interesting individual. He was a very smart officer, very unconventional in terms of tactics. He had served at Leaven—where was it, Fort Riley, or else, I can't remember which military base it was where, it's sort of, you have this testing period for would-be generals, and they were playing war games, and he attended this, he told me later. And in one of the war games they were fighting the Soviets in Poland and Eastern Germany. Each of the commanders was given a certain number of tactical nuclear weapons to use against the opposition's armor, presumably, and of course, that was the conventional war, the armored division. And you don't see what the other guy is doing. You've got your room with the mockup battle and these military observers who are going back and forth in one room. The next room is the other guy, the enemy. And he was on the American, or the NATO side, and the other was the Warsaw Pact side. And he decided to commit all of his nuclear weapons; he dropped them in two forests before and behind the main Soviet, where he thought the main Soviet line was advancing, the armored line was advancing, and it was a brilliant move, because he knew, of course, from reading reports of nuclear tests, that if you do that, a forest is impenetrable to tanks. There are so many trees torn up you can't get through it. So that would simply pin down the Soviets which they could then outflank. And the military judges, after considerable consultation, decided this wasn't kosher. He was just too smart for his own good, that you couldn't do that.

So he got sort of ticked off and really decided to go into intelligence. He was a major at this point and went to this FAST program. He also had a PhD from Tufts, very athletic man. He was an army ranger, but he had been a parallel bars champion and he began to sponsor—there were very few graduate students on Taiwan then, and because he spoke Chinese he began to sort of sponsor American students. The great, what, the Achilles heel of American graduate students abroad are things like whiskey, cigarettes, you know all of these things that PXs have but you can't get very well on the Black Market, and so he would, and I sort of liked Bill—

09-01:12:24

Lage: And this is when you met him, when you were in Taiwan.

09-01:12:27

Wakeman: In Taiwan, yes. And what they were doing is they were sending these American military officers to the war college of the nationalist government, studying anti-Taiping tactics, which were used also by Chiang Kai-shek in the thirties, to use in Vietnam against the Vietcong.

09-01:12:46

Lage: Oh, my, this is—

09-01:12:47

Wakeman: And they did do that. It was of course a disastrous problem, but anyway, Bill, whom I enjoyed talking to, became more and more involved with students because they were very, the other thing that students can offer in return is information.

09-01:13:04

Lage: About—

09-01:13:06

Wakeman: Well, anthropologists working in a village. You want to find out what the real feeling of the Taiwanese people is about their mainland occupiers, and anthropologists can know but not an American military attaché. And there's a lot of corruption going on, I mean, it's very bad, and that happened, and I got very irate about this. There were a group of us who were very upset about this.

09-01:13:27

Lage: At that time. I'm—we have about a minute left on this tape.

09-01:13:30

Wakeman: OK. We have about seven minutes [until his next appointment], yes.

09-01:13:33

Lage: We can, so let me change this.

Audiofile 10 Wakeman 10 05-11-2005.wav

10-00:00:00

Lage: And now we're recording, we're back on.

10-00:00:05

Wakeman: OK. So several of us knew about this and we were very upset about it, and we were also very upset about the situation vis-à-vis Communist China. That was at the time, it was at that time that Fulbright, Senator [J. William] Fulbright made this very famous speech about thinking the unthinkable, that is, recognizing Red China. And we decided that we, a group of us, supported it, so we, and a group of American students supported it. So we wrote up a letter to the *New York Times*, which more or less said, "It's very dangerous to announce these views on Taiwan," which it was, which was under martial

law, but “we feel very strongly about this.” And we got the signature of quite a few students from the Stanford Center, who later one by one sheepishly came by and took their names off the list because they were being pressured by the authorities and by their own school not to jeopardize their sweet little existence.

10-00:01:10

Lage: Is this the Stanford Language [Center]—

10-00:01:12

Wakeman: Yes, Stanford Language Center. And that left only three of us who ended up sending the letter.

10-00:01:17

Lage: And what schools were you from?

10-00:01:19

Wakeman: Well, one of them was me from Berkeley, one was actually the daughter, Emily Cohen, who was the niece of Harold Laski and ended up marrying Rod MacFarquhar, who just retired from Harvard as a very eminent professor of government but who was a Laborite MP after service in the British Foreign Service. And she was working, she also worked as a correspondent for *The Economist*, and *The Far East Economic Review*. And then Moss Roberts, my friend who translated, who was from, at that point, still from Columbia. And we were all very contemptuous of this, you know, but suddenly we became pariahs. And that, you know, because everybody knew everybody there, you know, suddenly these three American graduate students had turned out to be foxes in the hen coop here.

And in the meantime it was clear that we were going to go into Vietnam in a big way. Hanson Baldwin was already saying in the *New York Times* that if you did this you were going to have to put in 800,000 troops. I thought from my study, I was studying xenophobia and proto-nationalism, that the last thing you wanted to do was send a bunch of GIs into Vietnam because it was bound to strengthen the Vietminh, the Vietcong, because of their nationalism, and so, and I began to argue that publicly, but worse yet, I began to discover on the part of people like Whitson—I wouldn't actually accuse him of this, but other military officers. It was kind of a little bit, a combination of Jean Larteguy's centurions—you know, these soldiers who are defeated, like [Jacques] Massu and so on at Dien Bien Phu or in Algeria—with *Seven Days in May*. I mean, what you were hearing them say is the American civilian government is incapable of doing this, they don't have the guts, they don't have the fortitude to get in there and do what it takes to hold back Communism. We're dedicated soldiers of the empire, as it were; we're the centurions or the Praetorians. I can remember sitting in my living room with these guys having an argument with them, and in fact, I started writing a novel about it, based, or influenced by Graham Greene's *Quiet American*. And at that point, one of my friends who was the head of US Naval Intelligence responding to this kind of, “Oh, watch

out for Wakeman,” took me aside and said he knew that I was, let’s say involved in this world, said, “You know you don’t want to do this.” And he put it very directly, he said, “You can’t have a friend like Moss Roberts if you do this.” And I began to realize that I had gone too far.

10-00:04:12

Lage: You can’t do this.

10-00:04:14

Wakeman: You can’t engage in this kind of thing, you can’t—

10-00:04:17

Lage: Engage in this kind of—

10-00:04:18

Wakeman: This kind of radical criticism.

10-00:04:19

Lage: Well, what’s the friend like Moss Roberts?

10-00:04:22

Wakeman: Oh, Moss was a very radical person.

10-00:04:25

Lage: Oh, I see, you can’t have a friend like Moss Roberts.

10-00:04:28

Wakeman: Moss Roberts was seen as a radical firebrand who went around—I mean, people who were talking about things like “support Taiwanese independence” were hauled before military tribunals and shot. That’s the way—

10-00:04:41

Lage: In Taiwan.

10-00:04:42

Wakeman: In Taiwan. That’s the way things were in Taiwan. Mark Mancall came in town, who was the leading light of Harvard, and he was beaten up by the secret police. It was—ah, OK, I’ve got to go [to next appointment].

So, I had already turned, I had already realized that, but I still had this job lined up, so Levenson’s call came as, it was a call from heaven in a sense.

10-00:05:13

Lage: It was like saving you from this other—

10-00:05:15

Wakeman: Saving me from this other, yes.

10-00:05:16

Lage: Career.

10-00:05:17

Wakeman: Yes.

10-00:05:17

Lage: Interesting. I wonder if it hadn't come, what would you have done?

10-00:05:21

Wakeman: I—that's called a [chuckling] null hypothesis.

10-00:05:25

Lage: [chuckling] I know, but it's still interesting to think about. OK, you have to go and—

Interview 7: May 18, 2005

Audiofile 11 Wakeman 11 05-18-2005.wav

11-00:00:02

Lage: Today is May 18, 2005 and this is our seventh interview with Fred Wakeman, working along, we're up to the sixties and we just got you hired at Berkeley and I wondered just to start out whether there is some significance to that transition from being a graduate student to the professor.

11-00:00:31

Wakeman: Yes, of course, it's a tremendous, even just to call your former professor by his first name is difficult, I think. It's very hard, I think it's—

11-00:00:42

Lage: That wasn't done as a graduate student?

11-00:00:44

Wakeman: Oh, no, no. I didn't anyway. I wasn't taught to do that, I suppose, but I couldn't bring myself to say Joe to Joseph Levenson for a number of years, although he made the transition much easier. I returned to Berkeley from Asia and Europe to find it a very different place than when I'd left. I'd been away for about three years.

11-00:01:07

Lage: Oh, you'd been away that long, so—

11-00:01:08

Wakeman: Yes. And of course I missed the first year of Free Speech. But I came back to a department that was deeply involved if not riven by the Free Speech Movement and all of this ferment. I came in with a group of people; I was, I think, the last of the cohort that had been brought in by people like [Gene] Brucker and Bouwsma, who in their time had been young Turks. And the university then was expanding at a huge rate, had a lot of money, and they brought in a lot of the assistant professors. Two of us were Berkeley products in my department, Sheldon Rothblatt and myself.

11-00:01:46

Lage: Now that was unusual, was it not?

11-00:01:48

Wakeman: That was unusual, yes.

11-00:01:48

Lage: Or even, almost—

11-00:01:50

Wakeman: I don't think the department had ever done that before they did that with the two of us.

11-00:01:54

Lage: They did it in the early years before these young Turks had their revolt.

11-00:01:58

Wakeman:

Yes, right. Yes, and precisely because it seemed to be incestuous, or rather, just you didn't get fresh blood, they had stopped doing that, so that was unusual. Most of my friends then, who are now either retired or have gone elsewhere, were people like George Stocking, my best friend Irv Scheiner, Sheldon Rothblatt, of course. Bob Middlekauff was a little older but he was sort of part of the group. Richard Abrams; Robert Paxton was already there and not really, I don't think he was sort of part of the cohort in that sense, but Ira Lapidus, who had been a year before me at Harvard, was here and so on. And it was a very, very exciting time to be here because these were all very, very bright people, very uh, well, we had, what would be unthinkable now, I think, a separate faculty lounge that you would sort of go to.

11-00:03:05

Lage:

In the department.

11-00:03:07

Wakeman:

In the department, yes. And I can still remember seeing George Stocking and others of a morning and, "Have you had any conceptual breakthroughs today?" that kind of thing. It was the joke, sort of the standard joke. Or one time sitting in there with Levenson and Sheldon Rothblatt coming in and making some outrageously bad pun, and at that point one of the members electing to leave the room to go up to class probably, and Levenson looking up from the *Times Literary Supplement* saying, "Gresham's law of conversation." Which I thought was wonderful. Those were very heady times, but very politically engaged. Reggie Zelnik was one of us. He, of course, had been deeply involved in the Free Speech Movement. He's written about it, or he wrote about it. And at the same time, in the same department, people like Martin Malia, who were very conservative. The department, unlike many departments, seemed to stick together. I think it stuck together relatively well. There never was the kind of division that you saw, for example, in political science.

11-00:04:13

Lage:

In Sociology.

11-00:04:15

Wakeman:

Some of the other—Sociology in particular.

11-00:04:17

Lage:

Well, did this faculty lounge have something to do that?

11-00:04:21

Wakeman:

I—no, I think not, I think it was just—well, maybe it did, now that I think of it. It reminds me of another instance when you talk about the importance of furniture and settings. When Sheldon Rothblatt was chair of the department—Sheldon can be very fussy at times. He was one of the first to buy a nice Berkeley house, which meant he had to come to work with a brown bag lunch because house payments were really quite beyond us. I mean, we were kiting

checks, we were living from—starting about five days before the end of the month we were out of money and then you started writing checks on checks, going to the old Coop and somehow making it through until the next—

11-00:05:01

Lage: This was in the sixties because of salary levels?

11-00:05:04

Wakeman: Yes, well, the salary level—they just weren't very high. And Sheldon bought this big house. But anyway, he later was chair at a time when Larry Levine got a MacArthur Award. His was—the first MacArthur Award in the department went to Peter Brown, who has since left and is at Princeton, who was an absolutely fabulous historian, one of the best in the world, has written—

11-00:05:34

Lage: In what area?

11-00:05:35

Wakeman: Well, he works in late antiquity. He wrote a wonderful book on Saint Augustine and the early Christian fathers. But he's one of these luminous intellects, and—whose own reaction to the Berkeley years at that time was very interesting. He talked about it in the Charles Homer Haskins lecture for the American Council years later. At any rate, Peter Brown got a MacArthur and he was so clearly, such a genius that we all went around saying, boy these genius grants are really something, you know, think of it, Peter Brown got a genius award. We were so proud of him, and he was you know, and then shortly after that Larry Levine, who was one of us, got a MacArthur grant. Others have since gotten them, of course, in the department, and I remember bumping into Tom Laqueur in the hallway, Tom Laqueur saying to me, "You know, Larry Levine just got a MacArthur genius award." I said, "Yes, he did." He said, "You know, I could have gotten one of those." [laughter] Suddenly jealousy spread through the ranks. "We could have gotten one of those."

11-00:06:43

Lage: 'Cause Larry seemed like one of you.

11-00:06:45

Wakeman: Just one of us, yes, right. I remember when David Keightley, my colleague in Chinese history got one, and like many MacArthur Award winners, in my experience—I used to serve as a nominator for the MacArthur Foundation.

11-00:07:01

Lage: Oh, you did.

11-00:07:02

Wakeman: Yes. And the money often goes to putting a new wing on your house, buying a new car, paying off old debts. Well, David got, I don't know how he spent his money, it's far from me to say, but suddenly this very bright red Honda Prelude showed up, which was then sort of the poor man's Porsche, and David

had this, I thought it was a neat little car. The Keightleys always gave, they still do, always give a Christmas day dinner, or cake and punch party. And I remember taking my children, some of my children to the party, and I was pointing out to Matthew, I said, "Oh, look, Professor Keightley has a new car." And he said, "Oh, that's neat Dad, where did he get that." And I said, "Well, there's an award called the MacArthur genius award and it pays quite a bit of money, and I suspect he may have, I don't know this for sure, but he may have used some of the money to buy that car." And Mattie, Matthew, looked at the car, and there was a kind of a long pause and he said, "But, Dad," he said, "you're a genius too!" [laughter ] Clearly, I deserved to have a car as well.

11-00:08:06

Lage: Right, and especially one he could ride in! Oh, that's wonderful.

11-00:08:09

Wakeman: But anyway, no the solidarity was very different. It was very, I think the thing that shocked me other than that was tenure.

11-00:08:20

Lage: Shocked you?

11-00:08:22

Wakeman: Shocked me in that I had never, I had never realized, and I didn't even realize it until—I was promoted very rapidly. I think the department policy then was to try to promote people they thought might be targeted by other universities, so a number of us were, as the Chinese say, helicopters. We just sort of flew up, and when I was made an associate professor and began to attend tenure committee meetings, and in fact was on an ad hoc committee, the very first one I attended, I was astonished at the level, first of all, everybody in the department had read the works or work of the person in question. They took it very, very seriously. Many departments, some of the most illustrious in the country in the history field rely on outside letters, and Berkeley always prided itself, even recently, on relying upon its own judgment. Sure, outside letters are important, especially to influence the budget committee or the provost or what have you, but the Berkeley department felt that you read and you decided. That there was nobody better equipped than this department to decide who should join it as a tenured, tenured—

11-00:09:33

Lage: So you would read the works of the person in question.

11-00:09:36

Wakeman: Everybody. And if you didn't, it was a point of honor not to vote, or to abstain, because you hadn't read the works. And so the discussions operated at a level of intellectuality and academic knowledge that was extremely unusual. I just was astounded by this—why would someone working in early Roman history be reading my work or somebody else's work? Why would a historian of science be reading somebody who was working in Civil War history? But

that's the way it worked. And as I began to observe other departments around the country, I realized this was really quite unique, as is the Berkeley system of governance. The budget committee—it just, it doesn't work that way elsewhere.

11-00:10:22

Lage: Well, I would think this would have an effect on the historians themselves, to be required to really attend to work outside their field in a very serious way.

11-00:10:32

Wakeman: Well, of course, it increases the solidarity of the academic community, because you know what the other person is doing. Of course it can lead to cleavages and factions, or rifts, better said.

11-00:10:46

Lage: In terms of making those decisions?

11-00:10:48

Wakeman: Well, some of these were very hotly contested positions and particularly in later years as the field of history began to divide into sort of a hard history and a soft history—

11-00:10:58

Lage: Tell me what that is.

11-00:11:00

Wakeman: Well, hard history would be conventionally viewed as diplomatic history, economic history, political history, the history of men, or as my colleague Susanna Barrows would put it, boys' history, and then the other, to put it in gender terms is sort of girls' history—gender, race and class, popular culture, mamas and babies, children, you know the—

11-00:11:27

Lage: But is it also the historical approaches? Cultural—

11-00:11:31

Wakeman: Yes, cultural studies. Berkeley is considered now to have the best cultural studies or cultural history department in the country, as it is considered to have the best Asian history department in the country. And many of my colleagues do that work, in fact, colleagues in Asian history do that work.

11-00:11:50

Lage: And what do you think of it? When you use those terms hard and soft? Is that a judgment? And girls and boys.

11-00:11:57

Wakeman: Well, that, I hasten to say, comes from Susanna Barrows, who is obviously a woman, and she was using it, in fact she used it yesterday in a PhD exam, kind of tongue and cheek because she's very sophisticated, and we were talking about Bryn Mawr, Mount Holyoke, and so forth, Smith, where she

went, where she taught. I guess she went to school, yes, she went to Smith, and her daughter is going to Smith. But, yes, it became over certain controversies, where, for example, an eminent German—this is made up, but it's pretty close to the truth—political historian of the Weimar Republic, decides to retire and the clique that makes up cultural studies decides to put forth someone who really writes about women's topics. That was where the big cleavage began to occur, or, you know, there was a period of time when I was, I remember when I was president of the American Historical Association, I once counted up on the year's program how many topics there were of this gender sort, of cultural studies sort. And I think it was something like 65 percent of topics like—I'm parodying it now—Thirteenth Century Lesbian Nuns in a Convent in Fiesole, you know, or things like that, I mean, that was the sort of thing, and you know, it was generating a new kind of interest and excitement in the field, particularly for women, and the department I entered had no women in it.

11-00:13:36

Lage: Right. No women when you entered.

11-00:13:38

Wakeman: There had been one, she had left a couple of years earlier, but there wasn't a single woman in the department.

11-00:13:45

Lage: So when the women came, they brought new topics—

11-00:13:49

Wakeman: Well, I wouldn't say it was entirely their bringing them; there was a kind of search for a new, this is part of the field of history in general—and I'm dating this now to the mid-seventies—a search for a new, a new, they would say discourse now, but a new kind of idiom. And new interests began to appear, interests in—when I say cultural studies, I'm thinking of people like Lynn Hunt, who were working on the symbology of the French Revolution, or Tom Laqueur, who had worked on Sunday schools and English social history and then began working on the history of monuments or the history of death, very much a kind of combination of the Annales school in France and this new cultural—the cultural turn we all talk about. I didn't think the department would find any difficulty adjusting in that way, but it did, and some of the worst battles occurred when I was away on leave, where you would get a division between the so-called, the hard-headed types, who tended to be politically more conservative [who might] say, “Oh, look, what is this stuff, this isn't what history is about. I mean, fine, if you want to talk about what's going on in an orphanage in sixteenth century Paris, that's OK, but if we want to talk about what history really is, who runs the armies, who has the governments, who owns the capital,” you know this kind of thing. But that hadn't yet—

11-00:15:20

Lage:

That hadn't happened when you came in 1965.

11-00:15:22

Wakeman:

That sentiment hadn't raised its ugly head yet. There was a lot of solidarity over what we were doing, and I think Free Speech somehow helped create that, or made that community cohere, because in our department we had people on both sides. I would say the one figure who, and that's why he's so venerated now, and his death was so mourned, who did more than any other was Reggie Zelnik, because Reggie, who was on the left, always could find a compromise. He would always work it through and try to bring the Malias of the world together with whatever person on the left they were opposing. And of course, many of the members of the department were politically prominent in the sense that when the Reagan [gubernatorial] administration came in, people like Leon Wofsy and Reggie Zelnik were featured on television as Communists or fellow travelers or whatever. I remember, in fact, Reggie's tenure, which was held up at the Regents level and a meeting. They of course meet on a Saturday usually, and a bunch of us going to his house waiting for the news, and I think about nine of us had agreed we would all resign if he didn't get tenure. And I was thinking about where am I going to move to, this kind of personal petty interest, and it was with a great relief that we all heard that he had been granted tenure by the Regents of the university.

So that the transformation from graduate student to assistant professor, if you like, wasn't as difficult as it would have been if you were entering a very conservative hoary department dominated by gray beards, and the older professors, the ones who were the chairs, Henry May, and so on, were immensely open minded and eager to help young people along. So it was a very exciting place to be. And I quickly discovered, as I would entertain other offers from other places or and visit and speak at other universities, how different Berkeley was and that was tremendously inspiring.

11-00:17:40

Lage:

Do you want to talk at all about other offers? This is going off chronologically, but since we're there—

11-00:17:46

Wakeman:

Well, in a way the strategy worked, because I was promoted very quickly, and I can recall several times, Stanford, for example one time approached me and said, "We'd like to, would you like to be considered here?" And I said, "Yes, but they pay me very well." And they sort of, you know, that kind of funny Stanford way, "Don't worry, we can handle that." And I said, "Well, I'd have to get x amount." And saying, "Oh, no, no, no, that's too much, I'm sorry. You're too junior for that." And similar kinds of things. So a lot of those things were nipped in the bud, and the offers that were important, the ones that went—I found, I think many of us found that when offers came along you had to be very, very serious about them. You didn't just try to use them as a ploy

for getting a higher salary. You had to be willing and want to go, even though you might in the end decide not to.

11-00:18:46

Lage: To get, to keep your reputation clear?

11-00:18:49

Wakeman: No, just because, well, I don't know if others felt the same way I did, but to go in and tell the chair of the department that, "Oh, I got an offer from the University of Maryland, and it's half again as much as my salary." Well, come on. We know you're just—that was a genuine offer, you wave the letter around, but are you sure you really want to go to the University of Maryland? Or is this just a way to get your salary. On the other hand, if you thought, "Well, I can imagine going there." I remember one offer I got from Columbia I took very seriously. And you know I talked to the, of course, I have to go to these places and decide if you can move there. Very often these things, because I had, I'll come to this in just a minute, because I had some good administrative experience, and they needed sometimes people to come in and handle an institute or whatever, usually an institute in trouble, they would make very generous offers. And this Columbia offer was extremely generous, and I had lived as a kid in New York City; it wasn't a strange place to me. But my wife was carrying twins, and as it turned out only one of them was born alive, but we of course didn't know that at the time, and as I looked into it the thought of living in some place like Stamford and commuting down—Columbia doesn't have, you know people come in and go out. Of course they promised me a nice apartment, in those apartments off of Riverside Drive, and a lot of my friends, my college roommate was there. Bob Paxton by then was there. And I had gotten to know him and like him very well when he was at Berkeley. But the combination of the twins, or the twins-to-be, and the fact that my other, my older child had decided he wanted to go to Berkeley and not to an eastern school, so there was no point trying to get a tuition deal at Columbia, which is usually pretty generous, and the fact that Berkeley came up with a really incredible counteroffer, I mean in terms of support, assistance, secretaries, and all those things, I eventually turned it down. But I was very tempted because I like New York City, so I think you really have to take it all the way and sometimes—

11-00:21:28

Lage: And be willing to take—

11-00:21:30

Wakeman: Be willing to do it, yes. And then when I left the SSRC [Social Science Research Council] to come back, then I had three offers, from Columbia, from Princeton, and Harvard, all of them chair offers. And but I—

11-00:21:40

Lage: Chair of the department?

11-00:21:41

Wakeman: No, no, I mean a chair.

11-00:21:43

Lage: Oh, a chair, yes.

11-00:21:44

Wakeman: And I talked to Mike Heyman, who was chancellor then about it, but I really wanted to come back. I mean, it wasn't a matter of, sort of—there may have been some marginal advantage for any number of reasons going to those places. The biggest, I'll talk about this later—Harvard was always a problem for me because I had gone there, and there is this vestigial loyalty.

11-00:22:11

Lage: But you had talked at one point about being a little turned off by the smugness.

11-00:22:19

Wakeman: That's exactly what happened, yes. That's exactly what happened. I had mentioned administrative experience. I was only here a couple of years during this period of great excitement. My own work was coming along very well. I had finished and revised my thesis for publication. As I told you, I tried to write it as a book relatively quickly, and the person who was a tremendous help that I mentioned to you in an earlier tape was Philip[E.] Lilienthal. Phil Lilienthal was, for all who knew him, one of the—well, he was first of all an incredible gentleman intellectually, socially, culturally. He had, he was related to the Lilienthals, you know, one of the great German Jewish families in this country, and had worked for the Institute of Pacific Relations before the war, actually operating their Shanghai office.

11-00:23:23

Lage: Now what is that institute?

11-00:23:26

Wakeman: That was an institute that was set up in the 1920s and '30s to further relations between—well, to further understanding between the United States and Japan and China and also other parts of Asia, but primarily those two countries. It was funded by a number of foundations, Rockefeller being the most prominent. And it was a place where you, it was a very exciting institution then, they published a journal called *Far Eastern Quarterly*, which was *the* journal of the field. They sponsored the publication of a series of books that had a major impact on scholarship before the war and then during the war itself. Phil was out there partly for that and also, I forget the name of the institution but it was one of the Jewish funds to help refugees. As you probably know, Shanghai was the only place in the world where you didn't have to have a passport, and the Germans themselves had suggested as part of the Final Solution that Jewish refugees go to Shanghai. So the Jewish population of Shanghai expanded to about 42,000 people, most of who were stateless. And they were put up, they were confined to a ghetto by the

Japanese. It was a difficult time for them and many of them lived in the Bay Area.

11-00:25:12

Lage: Or have now moved—

11-00:25:13

Wakeman: Had ended up in the Bay Area, a number of them had, but there were a number in St. Paul, Minneapolis, other cities. The visa consul then was, this is of course before Pearl Harbor, was Jack Service.

11-00:25:30

Lage: Oh, yes.

11-00:25:31

Wakeman: And he, Phil, would advise particularly important intellectuals to go see Jack Service to try to get an appointment with him for their US visas. And Jack would give them, knowing, even though the regulations didn't permit him to do so, so there was a kind of a, oh, I don't know, Schindler-Wallenberg type of operation. And, well, in fact, one of the great editors at the press, at UC Press, Max Knight, was out of that milieu. Phil ended up as the Asia person for the University of California Press after the war was over in the fifties and became sort of the impresario of East Asian publishing there. He was a wonderful editor, every step of the way, and the first thing I did when I came to Berkeley, at Levenson's advice, was to sit down with Phil, and Phil said, "Let's get this out." He was very, very witty and in sometimes a sarcastic way. And he was married to a Heller, Sally Heller [Lilienthal], who still is very active.

11-00:26:56

Lage: Of the Heller family.

11-00:26:57

Wakeman: Yes, of the Heller family. And [founder of] this Swords to Plowshares movement that she has paid for. He wasn't married then to her. His first wife died but he later married Sally, and he just was, gosh, he became almost an intellectual patron for me and with this kind of push, I mean, I was on my way in a sense.

And I almost instantly started on a new project, but I tend to work on many projects at once. I jump, in the middle of something I'll start working on something else, so the next project I selected was simply based upon circumstance. One of the things you worry about when you study Chinese history or work with Chinese, is that you'll forget the language. The written language, of course, depends on, frankly, on pure memory. And if you don't use it, you can easily lose particularly active control of it. So when I was about to finish my thesis research in Asia, I picked up a book which was a collection of documents on seventeenth century Chinese history, a period that

was very little studied in the West, and had begun reading those and that's what turned eventually into *The Great Enterprise*.

11-00:28:21

Lage: Much, much later.

11-00:28:22

Wakeman: Much later.

11-00:28:23

Lage: '85 wasn't it?

11-00:28:24

Wakeman: Yes, I mean, we're talking about twenty years later.

11-00:28:27

Lage: So you started that as your next project.

11-00:28:29

Wakeman: Yes, I did and in the meantime—

11-00:28:31

Lage: Did you know it was going to be such a big project?

11-00:28:32

Wakeman: No [emphatically].

11-00:28:33

Lage: Oh, OK.

11-00:28:34

Wakeman: In fact, it started out as kind of a reading project. I mean, I wasn't going to, I didn't plan to write about it so much, and I had other things that were on my desk, so to speak. Now, I had only been here two years when I was asked to become director of the Stanford center in Taiwan, the Inter-University Language Program [Inter-University Program for Chinese Language Studies].

11-00:29:03

Lage: Where you had been earlier as a—

11-00:29:06

Wakeman: No, I was never really there. They were just setting it up when I was a graduate student.

11-00:29:12

Lage: I see, you mentioned it.

11-00:29:12

Wakeman: I mentioned it, yes. The center was run by a consortium of eight universities. The headquarters was at Stanford, so during the time that you were director, that one was director, you became an employee of Stanford University, so I took leave from the university and went to Taiwan as the director of this unit.

It was a tremendous challenge. I was very young, which doesn't necessarily do you very well in Chinese society. My Chinese was not as fluent as it is now. And I discovered quickly once I had gotten there that there was a real problem with this IUP, namely the person who was in charge of the teaching program was misusing funds, let's put it that way.

11-00:30:10

Lage:

And you were the one to discover it? Or you—

11-00:30:12

Wakeman:

Well, they knew about it and I was, after I accepted the position and spent a good deal of time prepping for it by observing Chinese language teaching classes—the center had a staff of about forty-five Chinese teachers, most of whom were mainlanders, that is, refugees from mainland China, a few of whom were regular full-time employees with health benefits, insurance, and all the rest. But most of them were young women who spoke excellent Pekingese accents, what we used to call broadcasting Chinese, sort of like the BBC accent in Chinese, who were fresh out of college, or university, perhaps just married, and who worked as contract teachers, so many hours a week but not full-time. The full-time teachers were the problem, because they formed a kind of—they'd been together a long time in Taiwan, not at this institute, and this guy, this person, who's a male, was their *diren*, their problem.

11-00:31:20

Lage:

Oh, I see.

11-00:31:21

Wakeman:

So that was the other side of it, and I think they, as I look back on it, I think they felt that even though I was not a professional language teacher and had not gotten my—I had gotten part of my degree in Oriental languages, but I was not the ordinary Chinese literature or Chinese linguist PhD—that somehow I was brash enough to take care of this job. And it was a really shocking thing for me because suddenly I had—I'll give you an example, we always, we hear the word "face." Now I was sufficiently naïve and ignorant about Chinese society in spite of having lived in Taiwan to not have heard this term used in Chinese, because Chinese don't talk about face.

11-00:32:10

Lage:

It just exists but it's not discussed?

11-00:32:12

Wakeman:

Not in front of foreigners. And I thought it was sort of one of these typically racist, somewhat deprecating things about these silly Chinese who have this concept of face, this notion of shame-versus-guilt societies, all of this Ruth Benedict-Erik Erikson kind of, what I used to think of as toilet bowl social psychology. And when I finally got myself aroused enough, having done a kind of reconnaissance of the terrain, to decide to tell this fellow that he was going to have to step down, it was terrible. The man broke up, he broke to pi[eces]—he survived, he didn't have a nervous breakdown—

11-00:33:02

Lage: You didn't take into account the concept of face?

11-00:33:04

Wakeman: Well, he came to my house one day after it was clear he was on his way out and came into my study and at one point fell to his knees sobbing and said in Chinese, "Give me some face, please give me some face, you can't do this to me, you're destroying my face." And it was, for me, I guess what I'm trying to say is that this was both a, it was a very instructive period to run a small unit of forty-five employees, and at that time having begun reading in Ming history, particularly the late Ming, which is a period of intense bureaucratic factionalism, I learned a lot about how factions operate.

11-00:33:46

Lage: [chuckling] Interesting.

11-00:33:47

Wakeman: But in a very naïve way. For example, I would have these weekly meetings with the teachers, and I would, you know, again with all of the ignorant arrogance of an American who thinks their system is so great, tell them pompously about how great our department was, how it was truly democratic, how we didn't engage in personal caviling or insults. I'd tell them that you should *bie shuo ren, shuo shi*, don't talk about people, talk about matters. You don't want to get down into personal things. And they'd all sit there. There was one older man who would kind of sit there and smoke his cigarettes and smile benignly and rather, "Oh, here we go." But the younger women were, they were intently, I was the new wind that going to change things. And it got down to the point, the secretary of this organization, which didn't have any legal status in Taiwan—we had no contract with the university. It had been an oral/verbal deal. We were given tax-free import privileges, so the students could import ice boxes, or rather, refrigerators and fans and even, not cars, that was too much, without paying a shred of tariff, so they lived like an expatriate class of privileged Americans.

11-00:35:12

Lage: So this might have rankled a bit.

11-00:35:15

Wakeman: Oh, yes! But this was all done how? By bribery. One of my jobs as the director was to go to Hong Kong around Christmas time, before Chinese New Year, and stock up on brandies, and cigars, and Hermes handbags, whatever, and whatever, nice beautiful gifts, and to come back and in a traditional Chinese New Year as it's practiced in Taiwan—this isn't true on the mainland any more—after the New Year's Day is over, which is a day at home and you know nothing is open, you then go out and there is a flurry of rushing around town paying visits on other people's houses and leaving gifts. And the object is to get your gift to the person before they get their gift to you. And I had a huge budget to buy these things, because it was—

11-00:36:03

Lage: You'd been told about this—

11-00:36:04

Wakeman: Oh, yes, I'd been taken into the confidence of the—and it was far cheaper to do this, including bribing the head of the Chinese customs and the head of the foreign affairs police.

11-00:36:15

Lage: Now, when you say bribe, you mean, give them this gift?

11-00:36:17

Wakeman: Well, the line, in a gift-giving society, the line between politeness and bribery is very difficult. There is a sort of gray zone, but then you know when you've stepped over that zone, which is why corruption is so problematical in China today. But, in any case, so we didn't have a con[tract]. We didn't ever pay an electric bill. All of these air conditioners humming away. God knows how much current they were drawing off of the—

11-00:36:46

Lage: And it's interesting that here, these US universities were—

11-00:36:50

Wakeman: —doing this.

11-00:36:51

Lage: —playing that game.

11-00:36:52

Wakeman: Well, it suited well the Taiwanese regime, I mean, the president of Taiwan National University was not doing this in a political vacuum. Clearly, the regime wanted, the Chiang dictatorship thought it was very nice to bring Americans to Taiwan to study. They were going to build up a core of very loyal American China specialists who had fond memories of their days on Taiwan, and that indeed is what happened, by and large.

11-00:37:15

Lage: Were you able to find some face for the man?

11-00:37:20

Wakeman: Not really. I kept him at his job, I gave him a job and a title and a salary, but he quickly, in effect, resigned. He had lost so much face that he just couldn't survive this. And I felt very badly about it. I appointed a young Chinese teacher, relatively young, who later came to Berkeley, who became one of our lecturers in the EAL department, in the East Asian Languages Department, whose brother was a very famous political dissident there and whose husband later became my student and now is a professor at Washington University in Saint Louis, so I've kept close ties with that family. This man I haven't seen since then, but all of this was a tremendous sort of revelation to me.

And to put it in a lighter way, my secretary, the secretary had to know, of course, Chinese and English, but she also, because men weren't secretaries then, preferably knew how to type using a Chinese typewriter, which is a device where the little claw picks up, essentially, a font, and it's like printing, but you have to have memorized the entire font. I think there were about 15 or 1600 characters on it, and it's very slow, obviously. But you also have to be able to write this kind of particular letter style that is used by bureaucrats, so the person had to be educated, and this is a demanding job. And as well, she took my dictation in English, and then when this woman quit I was, you know, what was I going to do? I had resolved that I would do this job, but I'd only work at it half a day. So I'd go in in the mornings, early, and work until 1:00, skipping the lunch hour—it started at 11:30—and then go home and have a late lunch and work in the afternoon at home.

11-00:39:12

Lage:

Doing your research or writing.

11-00:39:15

Wakeman:

Or studying with my former tutor. And so, I thought if this person has quit I'm not going to be able to do this; it was very selfish. I told my office chief—who was a man who had worked for the US military, he was a Chinese military man who had been sufficiently imbued with the American military ethos of impersonal bureaucratic, you know, but of course, that is there to be ignored, we now know, of course, from Iraq, for example—that I wanted to do this the right way. I didn't want to have somebody come in and say, "I have somebody who I know who is related to so and so"—and have them recommend them to me. I wanted to have a real competition. We were going to put an ad in the newspaper, advertise for this position, we would test them, give them a day or two of testing, and I would interview the best ten, and then I would decide. I would consult him, but I would decide. And he said, "Well, but that's awfully complicated," he said, "I know someone, I have a cousin who could—." And I said, "I don't want to hear about your cousin."

And so we did this. It took days. These women came in and we gave them dictation, the whole business. I interviewed all ten of them in English and in Chinese, and then after a lot of thought, I picked this one woman I thought was perfect for the job, and I called Mr. Chen and I said, "Mr. Chen, I've decided on the person I want, Miss Yang." And he smiled, he said, "Well, my cousin will be very happy." She was the one he was going to recommend in the first place! [laughter] If I had just listened to him. And she came back here eventually and became an academic coordinator at Stanford for this program and did very, very well. But there was, in other words, this sort of ugly, not ugly American, but this American kind of, it all can be done rationally. And I learned that that isn't the way it necessarily operates. So it was a wonderful, wonderful, though at times a very trying [experience]. I had a rape case I had to deal with, for example. One of our students was accused of raping a

Chinese woman and on and on, but it gave me tremendous administrative experience.

11-00:41:27

Lage: I would think so. And also experience with the culture.

11-00:41:30

Wakeman: Exactly, exactly.

11-00:41:31

Lage: I don't know if that translates to understanding the past.

11-00:41:35

Wakeman: Oh, it did. It translated in my work on Chinese bureaucracy, on Chinese political factionalism about which I've written a great deal. All of that reflected this experience in Taiwan. However, it meant my time with Levenson was severely curtailed as a colleague because I went in—let's see, he was away in Hong Kong in '66-'67. I came in '65-'66, that was a wonderful golden year; '66-'67 with me here, he went to Hong Kong with his family for a sabbatical, and then in '67-'68, I was in Taiwan. So I came back, very late, because I had to train my successor, and this now is the year '68-'69, and we had, again, for me intellectually a very stimulating time.

11-00:42:32

Lage: Were you and Joe Levenson—

11-00:42:33

Wakeman: Joe Levenson, yes. And by then it *was* Fred and Joe. There was no difficulty dealing with him as a junior to a senior colleague. And then he died. I got this phone call early one morning, it was a Sunday morning, and it was Bill Bouwsma on the phone who called me to say that Joe had drowned, and I was completely devastated. I realized then—my father and I were totally estranged still at that point, over my parents' divorce—that I had taken him as a surrogate father, and it was, it was like having a father die, but well before the time you're ready for it, and I just was absolutely, I could barely speak. I had to take over his courses. It was the end of the semester. It was very hard even to lecture.

11-00:43:26

Lage: Oh, I would imagine.

11-00:43:28

Wakeman: And taking over his seminar was, you know was, these graduate students were not much older than I was, in fact, some were about my age, trying to reconstruct what had he been working on. There was a flurry of activity after his death, because his work was so clearly—that was just when we were learning about the Cultural Revolution. And so much of what the Cultural Revolution was about, which was dealing with the Four Olds, the persistence of the past in China. So much of that Levenson at first failed to understand, because in his own work he thought that the Chinese Communists—and much

of *Confucian China [and Its Modern Fate]*, UC Press, 1958] and several of his other books were about this—had been able to deal with China’s heavy past by museumifying it, by turning Confucius into a figure safely set behind glass in some kind of cultural museum who no longer posed a kind of living threat. And that was true in many other areas. The past was dead and buried.

11-00:44:38

Lage: That was Levenson’s perception.

11-00:44:40

Wakeman: That was Levenson’s perception, but he then had to face the fact, as word of the Cultural Revolution, which came out terribly slowly—it took us a long time, for China scholars to recognize what was happening.

11-00:44:54

Lage: It actually started about ’66, or—?

11-00:44:58

Wakeman: That’s the official date, but it really starts in the summer of ’65. By ’66, by ’67, the height of the struggle in ’66-’67 when these trussed up bodies began floating down the Pearl River and were being picked up by the Hong Kong river police, you began to realize something was going awfully wrong in China. China completely closed down and the first real reportage came out from Japanese journalists who were in the country or from western travelers or teachers who were there and came out, and it became clear that much of what was being attacked was the Confucian past of China. So Levenson had to completely revamp his thinking, and he was in the process of doing that and in teaching that in his seminar, grappling with it. His seminars were always very, very closely related to, in fact they were completely suffused with his work at that time, so he was struggling with this problem when he died.

I remember going into the first seminar after his death, two weeks after his death, and meeting with his students, and the seminar was on syncretism and eclecticism in modern China. And I asked—there were six students in the class, all of them went on to become very famous professors—and I asked them what was this about. All I knew was the course title, what did this mean, what was meant by syncretism as opposed to eclecticism? I mean, I knew what the difference was by the dictionary, but what did it mean to Levenson? And the first student said, “Well, what he meant by syncretism was this, and eclecticism that.” And the next student said, “No, no, you’ve got it turned around, he meant that.” There was hopeless confusion on their part.

11-00:46:58

Lage: Interesting.

11-00:46:59

Wakeman: So, I to this *day* don’t know how he divided it. But I was also asked by his widow, Rosemary, to take over the—I don’t think I was formally appointed literary executor, but in effect to deal with his papers and his books. And that

was painful and very time-consuming and difficult. At the same time, well, historians are snoopy people.

11-00:47:26

Lage: Yes, a view into somebody's mind.

11-00:47:30

Wakeman: Yes, a view into somebody's mind and also university politics. I remember one file that was in there that was sort of directly commissioned by Chancellor Heyns—there was a sort of secret committee that had been set up to look into the Ethnic Studies issue. And the material was so, so hot, that I remember, I was in his office late one afternoon and I saw this thing and I started reading it, and I thought, "Oh, no, I shouldn't be reading this." Taking it up and going to Nick Riasanovsky who was then the chair of the department, saying, "Nick, this is not for me to read." And I don't know what it said, actually, I only saw the first couple of pages.

11-00:48:15

Lage: And this had to do with Ethnic Studies?

11-00:48:17

Wakeman: Yes, it was, and then there was another that was an investigation of a Berkeley faculty member, I don't even dare tell you the name, who left Berkeley shortly after this, very famous person, who had grossly misused university funds, and I mean his name is still, he's very eminent, and I didn't know what to do with this too, so again, I took it to Nick and said this had better go back to the chancellor or the provost or whoever had asked that Joe look into this. So there were all kinds of things I wasn't supposed to see, including one amazing, amazing, which I did read, which was a review of my first book.

11-00:49:08

Lage: Of your first book.

11-00:49:09

Wakeman: Of my first book by a man I thought, along with Joe, I thought was one of the greatest people in the field, Frederick Mote. Professor of Chinese at Princeton, who is now retired. And who is just a legendary scholar, and Mote had written this, had been asked, I guess, by the department to write a review of my work.

11-00:49:32

Lage: Oh, for promotion or appointment.

11-00:49:32

Wakeman: For my appointment or for my promotion, or—I think I became an associate professor that year, so it may have been for that, and it was incredible. I mean, it was, when Fritz does something, he does it. I mean, you're just—and if you come out of that without having had several limbs, so to speak, chopped off, you're very lucky. And he didn't, he said, "I would prefer you don't share this with young Wakeman." It was nothing, I mean it was actually very glowing, a few little mistakes pointed out, but I thought, "Gee, I wish I had been allowed

to, I wish Joe would have,” but Joe couldn’t reveal a confidence. Fritz has always been very secretive in that sense.

So, but going through these and then putting his papers together for the Bancroft to be archived gave me a very unique opportunity to review, not his intellectual development, although he had his college papers still, but how he went about these projects, because he kept his notes. And I think I may have mentioned, he took notes on the back of cocktail napkins, so you could begin to see where he got this idea. A fragment here and a fragment there, and it was—Levenson, I don’t, I’ve never done, well, I took physics, of course, but I can imagine getting something that would tell you how Feyerabend or Murray Gell-Mann thought of things, and well, it was that kind of insight that all of this gave me, that taught me even more about Levenson than I had realized.

11-00:51:20

Lage:

And did it make you have more respect for him as a scholar, or—

11-00:51:24

Wakeman:

Oh, absolutely, yes, yes. There was a kind of revisionism that set in after his death in this book that his old college roommate Rhoads Murphey had edited with Maurice Meisner, who was a kind of acolyte. There were some critical essays, particularly one by Jim Cahill, the art historian, who of course, was here.

11-00:51:45

Lage:

Not the book about him, the *Mozartian Historian*.

11-00:51:47

Wakeman:

Yes.

11-00:51:47

Lage:

Oh, in that book.

11-00:51:48

Wakeman:

In that book on the amateur idea there is a section on the amateur ideal that is where Jim takes issue—I don’t think he would have done that to Joe’s face, but Jim is absolutely right. I mean, Levenson was not “right,” in that quotation mark way about things, but he, getting there was what really mattered, you know, and that was what, what really was in its own way very, very inspiring.

But the death was, had, well, you know, he died on the water, he died. And I had always loved the water and sailed a lot, and the next year, the next summer, I had gotten to know a representative of the publisher, Macmillan’s {Ryo Arai?}, who lived here in the Bay Area, from a very eminent Japanese-American family, and he had a boat, a Bahama, an Islander Bahama, and asked me to crew for him. And the first race, the opening race of the season is usually the race to Vallejo, and on this particular race, it was a very, it was unusual. Without any proper weather prediction, a high-pressure front off the coast had, with a low-pressure front inland, had created this immense draft

across Mount Tamalpais and San Pablo Bay. Of course, you have to sail across San Pablo Bay, and as we got out into this thing, there were 450 boats in the fleet, something like 175 were dismasted, sunk, turned over. It was—the Coast Guard was, it's fortunate nobody died, but the {Arai}, I was a much better sailor, frankly.

11-00:53:55

Lage:

Than—

11-00:53:56

Wakeman:

Than the skipper, and he really panicked, partly because his sails were a little too old, and they weren't doing that well in that kind of wind, but it was so scary. My wife, Nancy, almost got knocked, well, she did get knocked overboard, but I got her back in, and it was just completely, and I got down there, and I—

11-00:54:17

Lage:

You made it.

11-00:54:18

Wakeman:

We made it, but after that I thought, "I can't do this anymore, I'm going to die on the water too." I had this fix [ation], obsession, and I became frightened of the water. There was a sort of nemesis-like quality about this to me, that my fate was going to end up like Joe's, but I couldn't admit to myself that I was frightened of the water except that I began having nightmares about sailing accidents, and finally I decided, I went through a long period of this and I finally decided the year after the time of the Cambodian bombing, and the campus was on strike, that I would buy a boat.

11-00:54:57

Lage:

To overcome this.

11-00:54:59

Wakeman:

To overcome this. I just got an advance from a publisher for a book, *The Fall of Imperial China*, and I took that advance and went and bought a very good racing sloop, a Santana, which I bought sort of—it wasn't in kit form, but it was not fully finished, I guess you'd say. I got the hull and the basics, and I spent most of that time during the Cambodian strike working on that boat.

11-00:55:34

Lage:

[chuckling] So, should I ask you if you held your classes during the—

11-00:55:37

Wakeman:

Oh, I held my classes, yes, I did hold my classes, but you know, everything sort of ground to a halt, and I would just go to the boatyard and work on this damn thing. And I got it in order, and the boat was very, ver—actually not that tender a boat, but it was a hard boat to sail. It was a very fast boat and, I remember, I was scared of it. Shortly after I got it, I moved the boat from Alameda over to Berkeley Marina and took my little son and my wife out for a sail on a typical Berkeley afternoon when, you know, by two in the

afternoon it's twenty-two knots out there, and you've got to—they had a different jetty then—but you sail out beyond the jetty and so on, and we got out, and right there we got into one of these, what used to be called, I hesitate to say this, a Chinese fire drill. Everything was going wrong and the boat, and Nancy couldn't, I had clam cleats and she couldn't get the damn sail out, and the boat went over, and the sail got under water, and there we are drifting right into the rocks and I had, [you know, chuckling].

11-00:56:47

Lage: Your worst nightmare.

11-00:56:48

Wakeman: Yes, I was trying to clear the halyard, which had gotten messed up, and I remember, I remember little Freddy sitting back, holding onto the back stay saying, "Shit, I'm not scared, shit, I'm not scared." And I got us out of it, but they wouldn't sail with me anymore for the longest time, so I took to single-handed sailing, and at first I had to force myself out, but I would go out every possible occasion.

11-00:57:19

Lage: And were you doing it to sort of show yourself something or because you still loved to sail?

11-00:57:23

Wakeman: Well, at first I was doing it to prove to myself that I hadn't lost my nerve and to overcome this absurd feeling that because Joe Levenson had died in a canoe accident, I was going to die in a boating accident. And then that phase passed relatively quickly, and I overcame it. It was a kind of demon for me that I had to fight down, but for many years I thought that when I turned forty-, this is how haunted I was, that when I turned forty-nine, which was Joe's age when he died, that I would die too, that something terrible would happen, or I'd have a pre[mature]—

11-00:58:04

Lage: So that shows a lot of identity with—

11-00:58:06

Wakeman: Oh, absolutely, absolutely, yes. And a very close relationship with Rosemary [Levenson], who was very, very stricken then, very stricken. I won't go into that dimension in any great detail, but she was very needful, and it put a great strain on my marriage, just because she would call me up and I'd have to go over at night and soothe her and calm her. She, of course, had convinced herself that it was her fault he wasn't wearing a life jacket, all of these things that people experience in grief. And the department was just stunned, actually stunned. It was, I think the most, at that time, well, a little bit like Reggie's [Zelnik's] death, you know; nobody could quite believe it had taken place. On the other hand, it forced me almost instantly to take over the program.

11-00:58:54

Lage: Yes, you were the senior person.

11-00:58:56

Wakeman: I was—yes, and I had a choice of either—there were, in those days, even now, in those days most people came here to study modern China, and we had a very large number of people doing that. I badly needed help, I mean, there were too many students, but I decided that we really needed now, at this point—Woodbridge Bingham retired.

11-00:59:25

Lage: So was there anyone else besides you? Once Bingham retired?

11-00:59:31

Wakeman: We had just hired David Keightley. Joe and I had interviewed him at the AAS [Association for Asian Studies] meetings about two weeks before Joe died, and Joe had not been eager to interview David, because he thought David was a bit long in the tooth, as he put it, a bit older than most graduate students. Martin Wilbur, David's teacher at Columbia, had said, "No, you must read this guy, you must interview him." And when we met him, Joe was completely, as I was, completely impressed by this incredibly serious and able scholar. So David was there, but here we had early, early China, and then we had modern China, then this great middle ground, and the question in my mind was, look, all the students are up here and maybe we should just get somebody else in modern. Well, of course, we tried to replace Joe. Joe had held the Sather chair. The department didn't have that many chairs then. And the department decided that they would give the chair to Ben [Benjamin] Schwartz at Harvard if—I don't think this was ever put to a vote, but this was the general feeling—if he could be persuaded to come. And I actually flew out to Cambridge and told Ben this.

11-01:01:00

Lage: How was he in age with you? Was he an elder?

11-01:01:02

Wakeman: Oh, Ben is Joe's age.

11-01:01:03

Lage: Joe's age.

11-01:01:04

Wakeman: They were sort of classmates at Harvard.

11-01:01:06

Lage: And were you agreeable to that?

11-01:01:08

Wakeman: Oh, yes, oh, sure. I was very hopeful he would come. But it was clear to me that Bunny, Ben's wife, didn't want to leave Brookline. I mean, that was her part of the woods. And I said, "Ben we need you," and this, that. And I'll

never for[get], he said—of course, they do this at Harvard, not at Berkeley—he said, “Well, he said, I don’t think—” he thought about it for a couple of days as I cooled my heels at Harvard, and then he said, “I don’t think Bunny wants to go and I can’t go.” He said, “Look, why don’t you just take the chair?” And I said, “We don’t do that sort of thing back where I come from,” feeling by now as a Californian or westerner, and the chair went to Bill Bouwsma, in fact.

But I decided then that I could somehow weather this period, and the students were many, but it wasn’t a bad thing necessarily, but that we had to get someone in the middle period. And at that point we had an open search, but I’d already had my eye on a young man I’d met who was a year ahead of me in career, I think, or was I a year ahead of him? He was a couple of years younger than I in any case, Tu Wei-ming, who was then teaching at Princeton. He’d gotten his PhD at Harvard, and he was a very charismatic young man. He and I had ended up as observers at a conference in Illinois, and that’s when I really got to know him and I, we went back and forth on this, the committee—

11-01:02:55

Lage:

Was he born in China?

11-01:02:56

Wakeman:

He was born in mainland China. His father was a minor diplomat. His mother was, I think she may have been a school teacher, but he had been educated on Taiwan, and on Taiwan he had become the pupil of a number of, oh, they were neo-Confucianists, who saw as the great hope of China, after the mainland was taken by the Communists, Confucianism, a revival of Confucianism. And even as a high school student, he studied with a man named Yin Haiguang, who is a philosopher, and later with a group of very brilliant philosophers, Chinese, who again were exiles at New Asia College in Hong Kong, but his Harvard training was also very important to him. He had studied with [Robert] Bellah, became a close friend with Erik Erikson and Shmuel Eisenstadt and so on, so he was able to— and then with Reinhold Neibuhr, Martin D’Arcy, he was able to combine existential theology with this new approach to Confucianism and was also at the same time beginning to develop this public image, which he wasn’t consciously trying to do, but it came along with it as a sort of theologian himself and in fact was treated as almost a preacher. He is identified today as the leader of the third wave of Confucianism. He hasn’t met the new pope, but has had many interviews, many audiences, had many audiences with John Paul II and his predecessor, with Islamic leaders. He was here for ten years.

11-01:05:08

Lage:

And he was a historian? I mean, you’re describing someone who sounds more like a philosopher.

11-01:05:13

Wakeman: Yes, well, that's a very astute question, Ann. That was the problem I had selling him to my colleagues, because first of all, much of his writing was in Chinese and like a Chinese—he's a Chinese man of letters.

11-01:05:25

Lage: So they couldn't read all of this—

11-01:05:27

Wakeman: They could read his dissertation, which was on a Ming philosopher named Wang Yangming, and when they read this dissertation they took it as a kind of thesis in philosophy, at worst, and at best, maybe an intellectual biography. But where was the beef, where was the history? And that's always been a problem for Wei-ming. Is he or is he not an historian, because when he came here, as Levenson's intellectual historical successor, he clearly didn't feel like a historian, and always felt uneasy about this.

But I remember also there was so much stuff, so much material in Chinese they couldn't read, I had to read it, translate it for them, and explain that he was, that he *was* a man of letters. He wrote newspaper columns and journals, and he still is, he's a very controversial figure. He was one of the first outside professors to teach at Peking University after the Cultural Revolution. When the head of the Academy of Social Sciences in China found out that Wei-ming was teaching— this old Communist [said], "We can't have a Confucianist teaching," and on and on. But you know there has been a Confucian revival in China, and Wei-ming is very much at the heart of it, and he has a huge following of students. He is now director of the Harvard Yenching Institute at Harvard, but I so much wanted him to stay here. He is, I think, he is the closest Chinese friend I've ever had.

11-01:07:04

Lage: Hmm, so he did come, you did convince your—

11-01:07:07

Wakeman: Yes, he came, I convinced my colleagues—

11-01:07:09

Lage: And he was here for ten years.

11-01:07:10

Wakeman: And he came for a decade and then, you know, the old saying that at a certain point in your life you either get divorced or go to another school; well, he did both at once. [laughter]

11-01:07:20

Lage: Oh! I'm going to stop this for a minute and put a new—

12-00:00:50

Wakeman:

I guess what I was really driving towards and diverted to say a few things about Tu Wei-ming, who I can mention later perhaps—Levenson's death left me very perturbed and very confused myself about Chinese studies, especially the Cultural Revolution and these ideas and problems he'd been wrestling with about it. This, my perturbation, my puzzlement about China was, if anything, increased by the appearance of some of the then secret speeches of Chairman Mao that at first appeared in Japanese journals on China and then were later sold in Hong Kong.

12-00:01:48

Lage:

And how—did they come from—

12-00:01:51

Wakeman:

Well, they—you know, we would buy, our library here would buy material in Hong Kong from book dealers who got a lot of money for this, but it was also being published in {Zhongguo?}.

12-00:02:05

Lage:

But they're considered to be authentic, then.

12-00:02:07

Wakeman:

Oh, yes, yes. They've been published since then by Rod[erick] MacFarquhar at Harvard, I mean, there is a whole set, Stuart Schram, but I began reading these speeches, and I was completely astounded by the, how could Mao turn against his own party? And what began as a political question, well, actually, I was asked to write about this because—I was asked by Chalmers Johnson to write a little piece for the journal that Scalapino had founded here called *Asian Survey*. A little ten-, fifteen-page piece on the way in which a social historian looks at the Cultural Revolution. And I started out writing that ten-page piece and it's the only book I think I can remember writing, except maybe a novel, in this kind of white-hot heat. It's a thick book, it's a big book.

12-00:03:12

Lage:

Is this *History and Will*?

12-00:03:15

Wakeman:

*History and Will*.

12-00:03:16

Lage:

You wrote this just—

12-00:03:17

Wakeman:

I wrote it in six months. I just, I was completely obsessed with it.

12-00:03:22

Lage:

Trying to understand Mao.

12-00:03:25

Wakeman:

Trying to understand it *philosophically*.

12-00:03:26

Lage: Mao, the Cultural Revolution Mao.

12-00:03:30

Wakeman: The Cultural Revolution Mao and the book is called *History and Will: Philosophical Aspects of the Thought of Mao Tse-tung* [*Philosophical Perspectives of Mao Tse-tung's Thought*, UC Press, 1973]. So I did it; it was maybe a lousy way to go about it, but I was trying to do it through the philosophical influence on Mao's thought. And it gave me at the same time, an opportunity or an occasion to go back over a lot of the thinking I'd done as an undergraduate at Harvard about Kantianism, Hegelianism, and neo-Hegelianism, the last of which had a tremendous impact on Mao as a young student in normal school in Changsha. And I was completely carried away with it, so I stopped everything else and took—

12-00:04:17

Lage: Stopped *The Great Enterprise*.

12-00:04:18

Wakeman: Absolutely, and worked on this and then finished it and it was—I remember, I gave it to Nick, to Nick Riasanovsky, to read, and we met at lunch and he had read it carefully and he said, “You know, one's always interested for whom you're writing this book.” He said, “This book seems to be written for you and for Ben Schwartz.” And I said, “Well, I guess you could say that.” And he said, “Well, that's all right.” But at the same time, I gave it to the group in theory of comparative inquiry, which I'll talk about next time, that Neil Smelser organized, to read, and Bob Bellah read it, and I remember the night we discussed it—and I was passionately involved in this—Bob finishing up and saying, “Fred, I implore you, do *NOT* publish this book, do not publish it now.”

12-00:05:16

Lage: What was his thinking?

12-00:05:17

Wakeman: He thought it was rash; he thought it was headstrong; he thought it was overly radical. He thought, well, he thought a number of things. Fritz Mote also thought that it was, “How can you call Mao a philosopher? This is a tyrant.” But I remember driving Irv Scheiner home to drop him off, and I was completely distressed. I didn't know what to do, and I must say that later when it was nominated for a National Book Award in philosophy, I thought, “Well, I'm not going to tell Bob Bellah anything, but I'm glad I didn't listen to him.” So anyway, I'll talk about the Smelser group—

12-00:05:59

Lage: Tell me the name of the group you were referring to.

12-00:06:01

Wakeman: This was called the Group in Comparative Theory and Methodology.

12-00:06:05

Lage:

OK. That must be something worth talking about.

12-00:06:08

Wakeman:

Yes, really, that had a tremendous impact, I would say next to Levenson, and I mean, that was the next big influence on me in terms of my own development.

12-00:06:17

Lage:

OK. So, I didn't realize it was 5:00 already.

12-00:06:20

Wakeman:

Time has—

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13-00:00:02

Lage: So, we're going to start. Today is May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2005.

13-00:00:08

Wakeman: 2005.

13-00:00:12

Lage: And this is our eighth interview. We were just sort of reviewing what we talked about last time and we were up to the seventies with *History and Will*, but we never really talked about all the turmoil around the Vietnam War, on this campus but nationally as well, how that affected your field and yourself and your work. So shall we start with that?

Wakeman:

Let's start with that. First, I'll just say that it had an immense impact on the China field in general and, I think, on political relationships here, more particularly. In my own case I was, partly because of being in Asia at the beginning of the war, at the beginning of the American involvement in the war, and partly because I had been interested in Vietnam for a long time, it was pretty clear to me by 1964 that we were going to be at war there, and in fact, I was very troubled by some of the conversations I had with American military officers in Taiwan who were looking forward to the opportunity to try out their spurs, as it were.

13-00:01:25

Lage: Yes. You mentioned that a little bit when you talked about Taiwan the first time.

13-00:01:29

Wakeman: Yes, and the awareness that this is going to be a big war, I think, was reinforced by the articles that were starting to appear then by people like Hanson Baldwin about the number of American troops that might have to go in—all of this, of course, was not information that the American public really sort of paid much mind to. When I came back to Berkeley as a beginning assistant professor in 1965, we were already there. I mean the war was already there, Bay of Tonkin incident, Johnson's decision to send in troops to add to the ones already there. All of that began to inspire rather rapidly, especially on the part of young Asia specialists, a reaction against the war. And here it took the form of some activities that a number of us, especially a number of my students who were then roughly my own age—

13-00:02:36

Lage: Your graduate students.

13-00:02:39

Wakeman: Graduate students, especially. People like Joe Esherick, who was very prominent, or Orville Schell, who was then very much involved with antiwar act[ivities]—

13-00:02:48

Lage: Was he a graduate student at that time?

13-00:02:49

Wakeman: Yes.

13-00:02:50

Lage: Oh, I'd forgotten that.

13-00:02:51

Wakeman: He was in the History [Department]—

13-00:02:51

Lage: I remember he was very visible.

13-00:02:53

Wakeman: He was very visible because he was in the History Department, in fact. All of that began to snowball, and the first marches, the march to the Oakland city line when this incredible intervention by the Hell's Angels with a bunch of us getting shoved around by them, and—

13-00:03:13

Lage: So you were on these marches.

13-00:03:14

Wakeman: Oh, yes. I was on these marches. The Oakland Army Yard marches and so forth, and as well the atmosphere that was growing around, well, what became the Weathermen. I can remember meeting with people like Jerry Rubin, talking about what was going to happen and realizing that some of these people were going to get very deeply involved in extremely serious antiwar activities including raiding the Oakland Draft Center, destroying files, throwing blood on people, that sort of thing.

13-00:03:48

Lage: Was this something you were involved in, their planning sessions?

13-00:03:52

Wakeman: Well, I walked out of one finally. It came to the point where I thought, I'm not prepared to do this. I remember it was a house on Fulton Street, and as I was leaving, Jerry Rubin said to me, "Watch out, there's an FBI truck across the street,"—it was a laundry truck—"they're filming everybody who comes in and out of here." I think that house has been torn down now. And I walked out, and I out of curiosity walked over, and of course the truck was empty. There was a sort of element of paranoia about it, but as it picked up, it became, of course, an obsession for all of us. A growing sense of despair that this war was going to take place. I was personally quite convinced as well

from my own research on anti-foreignism in Guangdong that if you dropped a hundred, two hundred, three hundred, four hundred thousand American troops in Vietnam, you were simply going to reinforce the anti-foreignism and the nationalism of the Vietminh, which of course is exactly what happened. So I had a very bleak expectation, but the war had not yet reached that nadir, that point of the veterans returning, and throughout these years, that decade from '65 to '75, kind of meld together because you went through various stages of the veterans coming back as the antiwar movement grew with people like Kerry leading it and returned Vietnam War vets coming here. I had a student who had been an officer in Vietnam and was involved in Operation Phoenix, which was the selective assassination program that Bill Colby set up under the CIA, but using American military intelligence and—it was a colossal failure, by the way.

13-00:05:38

Lage:

Was that all highly secret at the time? It hadn't been—

13-00:05:40

Wakeman:

At the time it was all very, very secret, yes.

13-00:05:43

Lage:

But he told you about it.

13-00:05:44

Wakeman:

Yes, and of course, later, he wrote, in fact, wrote a very good article about it based on his experiences. It turns out, at least in his case, that most of their information about who was Vietcong in one village or another was coming from a very highly placed informant who would feed them the names of people, and then night killer squads would go out and assassinate that person, so on, so, or such and such. And at the end of the war, after the evacuation from Saigon, Jeff, this guy, discovered that the man who was their informant was a colonel in the Vietcong, in the Vietminh, the army of North Vietnam, who was fingering perfectly innocent people, or people who were actually leading village resistance against the Communists.

13-00:06:38

Lage:

People he wanted to get rid of.

13-00:06:40

Wakeman:

Yes, and of course, all of our computer files at that point fell into the enemy's hands, so it was a tremendous, tremendous tragedy, but Bill Colby made his reputation on it and went on to become head of the CIA and so forth. So all of these things, and of course, if you're in a field like Asian, or like Chinese, or especially Chinese studies, with its fairly close connections with the government and with people going in and out of Asia all the time, your students, many of them veterans—I had a student that was very excellent, fine professor now in Australia, named David Marr, who had been a marine interrogator in Vietnam, and then he turned—he was married to a Vietnamese family, his brother-in-law was a captain, I think, in ARVIN, in the Army of

the Republic of Vietnam, our allies. David had become energized when that monk immolated himself, that famous case, and he became an antiwar activist, went to Cornell, which was then a center of the antiwar movement, and then came back here and wrote his thesis under my supervision.

So you were constantly running into people, and then also the problem of people coming here, officials coming here from American government agencies, very seldom identifying themselves if they were working for the Central Intelligence Agency—they were always AID or State Department, but it was pretty clear—

13-00:08:08

Lage: When you say coming here, what do you—

13-00:08:10

Wakeman: To Berkeley.

13-00:08:12

Lage: To study.

13-00:08:13

Wakeman: To study, sure. I mean, they were coming here in part because they had finished a tour in Vietnam. They were coming here to get a year's break and to bone up on whatever they could—learn from academics, which of course, is what produced the big crisis at Harvard, when it was discovered that Fairbank's East Asian center was entertaining these people. I mentioned this controversy with Joe Esherick and others and Fairbank over Harvard University's willingness to admit these people as students. And as I said earlier, Fairbank argued that we had to keep these people informed. They were the only people on the ground who were really reporting what was happening. But this provoked a huge debate in the China field and what had been taken as a given, namely the Fairbank approach to Chinese history, which was very much an approach that stressed the impact of the West on China and its response assigned to the West the role of the bringer of western progress, modernization and so forth, and assigned to China the role of a traditionalistic, backward Confucian society that resisted this modern progress. So Western imperialism was presented in that guise as an enlightenment.

13-00:09:39

Lage: And Fairbank endorsed that view or—

13-00:09:41

Wakeman: Fairbank was far too wise to endorse it, but that was clearly the implication of what he was doing. His first book was squarely against the notion of imperialism, and he was actually, I think, quite hurt by these attacks. I got to know him very well during those years, and I remember one time sitting with him. He was being attacked then, everywhere. In Hong Kong, the publisher of *Dagong bao*, a man named Fei Yimin, who was a fellow traveler, accused Fairbank of having been secretly really in cahoots with Chiang Kai-shek

undermining the Chinese Communist movement. In Taiwan, the right wing of the Kuomintang, Hu Qiuquan and others, were accusing Fairbank of being a, what they called a *guxi fenzi*, an appeaser, who'd sold out China. His own students here were accusing him of writing apologetics of imperialism, and I knew by then, from my own research, that Fairbank had been very important in the OSS in China during the war. This was not public knowledge, but some documents I'd seen had shown this, and I remember mentioning this to him sotto voce at one of the conventions, and he said to me, very ruefully, he said, and a little resentfully, he said, "You know," he said, "what we did in those days was considered patriotic. No one questioned that these were good things to do for your country when we were fighting against the Japanese empire, and now it's all brought up, these things are brought up to attack one. I'm attacked from all sides." And then he'd laugh, kind of ironically, sardonically, I suppose, and I didn't know what to say about it, because my even seeing Fairbank was sleeping with the enemy as far as my students were concerned.

13-00:11:33

Lage: Goodness, really, that strong a feeling?

13-00:11:35

Wakeman: Oh, yes.

13-00:11:36

Lage: Even though he was anti-Vietnam War also.

13-00:11:38

Wakeman: Yes, in the sense that we hadn't learned our lesson in Asia. If we knew more Asian history we wouldn't be behaving so senselessly. Those were the kinds of things he wrote in the *New York Review of Books* and a kind of historical poetic, and other people, Levenson to a certain extent, who was after all, Fairbank's direct student, felt that this was self-serving.

13-00:12:03

Lage: That Fairbank's—

13-00:12:05

Wakeman: Fairbank was self-serving. Joe himself was very upset by, for example, his cousin Chet Cooper, who was the liaison between Johnson's White House and the CIA among other agencies, was doing the handwork of the devil.

13-00:12:25

Lage: That was Levenson's cousin?

13-00:12:26

Wakeman: Levenson's cousin, yes. And then Franz Schurmann, who was one of my other teachers, was absolutely—I mean, he was so enraged he, I remember at one of the Association for Asian Studies meetings, a very eminent Southeast Asianist named Guy Parker came up and greeted Franz, whom he'd known for years, and Franz refused to shake his hand. Franz went to Vietnam and actually struck the American ambassador, knocked him down. Oh, he was completely,

so angry with the war, and and his life—I wasn't this, at first, this absorbed by it—but his life was completely caught up in antiwar activities.

13-00:13:14

Lage: Do you know why it struck such a personal note with him?

13-00:13:16

Wakeman: [pause and sigh] You know, I can't. I don't know. He had been a member of the John Reed Club at Harvard, which was a left-wing, sort of, there were some Communists in it, but a left-wing club, so he was very radical as a Harvard student. I don't know. He just saw it as an example of American imperialism, pure and simple. You know, it's strange because one of Schurmann's great heroes later on was Nixon. Nixon really understood the world and how it operated.

13-00:13:50

Lage: Really! [laughs]

13-00:13:52

Wakeman: I think what Franz saw in it, at least that's the way he would express it to me, was the same thing as had happened in the mainland of China in Manchuria during the 1930s when the Guangdong army, the Japanese army, began to carry out a series of provocations, of *faits accompli*, which the home government couldn't disavow, that the same thing was happening in Southeast Asia. That the American military, Westmoreland and others, were presenting presidents back here with really nonsolvable problems. They really, the solution, the only solution was more troops, more bombing, and so forth. And then the solution that someone like Kissinger suggested to Nixon, which was not to bomb them back into the stone age, but to use strategic warfare to force them to the negotiating table by upping the ante, I think Franz found obscene.

At that time, I remember one incident very strongly, which was in the, again I'm speaking of the profession, not so much of Berkeley. Berkeley was the center of so much opposition to this. The only major figure, Asianist, on this campus who supported the war was Robert Scalapino. He had already lost a lot of standing because of his behavior during the Free Speech Movement, especially in that famous scuffle in the Greek Theater with Mario Savio. But there was a time of bitterness, when Scalapino spoke his usual *staatsrecht* power game, we had to support them, Communism is at the gates. He had been an ADA liberal before. He had coined the two-China policy, and many people admired him for that, but he suddenly seemed to be the man who was getting up there on television and telling the American people why it was good to go to war, where almost every Asian scholar—there were exceptions, Clifford Geertz, for example, at Chicago, had refused to come out against the war for a long time. But most people, the ones who were—of course, Schurmann you could expect. I remember one show broadcast on public television where Scalapino was the speaker pro-war and the two antiwar speakers were Franz—who announced when he came up to the podium that

he'd left his notes on the airplane, typically Franz, and then proceeded to launch into a brilliant structural analysis of why the war was taking place—and this wonderful woman, Mary Clabaugh Wright, Mary Wright—the woman who had read my manuscript, who was one of the first female professors at Yale, who had been a southern belle and spoke in a southern accent, very charming woman, smart as the dickens—got up and delivered a very, very moving attack on this as the body bags were piling up on the Oakland piers.

The war movement is getting more and more inflamed. Students were coming to Berkeley to study Chinese history just because it was Berkeley. We had a huge number of people coming here, many of whom dropped out.

13-00:17:20

Lage:

Coming here because they wanted to be at the center of all this antiwar—

13-00:17:23

Wakeman:

This was one of the centers. Cornell was another. Harvard was to a certain extent, but not, Harvard never really gets excessive. Columbia was, but certainly Berkeley was attracting that group of people who were deeply opposed to the war, and it got caught up in the turmoil of campus politics. I was always having problems with the Revolutionary Communist Party USA, which is not the Communist Party, it's a Maoist version of it.

13-00:17:55

Lage:

What kinds of—

13-00:17:58

Wakeman:

Well, they would come to my class, and I almost always ended up teaching modern Chinese history during the spring quarter, and of course spring is when students riot, and they would be rioting out there, and they would come to my class, of course—everybody was always on strike, but at that time I had decided that, and I was quite open about this with everyone I spoke to, that as long as there was one student in a class who wanted me to teach, it was my job to teach. The only time I broke that resolve was during the Cambodian bombing, but other than that I didn't go on strike. So I'd have students who wanted to hear my lecture, and then in would come the RCP people and they'd sometimes bang garbage can lids and shout at me slogans that had to do—how could be teaching about Mao and not be out there supporting the revolution? In a way, it was a kind of comical, a kind of comical quality to parts of it. You know, during these high points of agitation, the school would really close down. Professors wouldn't go to class. The students insisted on meeting on lawns or in bars or wherever. Reagan was breathing down our necks, and we would be going out to reach the people, get through.

13-00:19:27

Lage:

Now, you say this sardonically.

13-00:19:30

Wakeman:

Well, I do. I can remember, I can remember, well, for example, debating in the Albany High School basketball gymnasium with the local head of the John Birch Society. That was a big John Birch city then. But we'd go out to high schools, or we'd have a teach-in, and we would play Chairman Mao's, these songs, and then do what they called *cao*. *Cao* means exercise, but it also means military drill. I do them now. My wife, who is a child of the Cultural Revolution has me do my exercises. "*Ni yao zuo cao*," she says, you've got to do your exercise, "*yī, er, san, si, wu, liu, qī, ba* [counting in Chinese]," and we'd be out there doing all this trying to get some teacher from Modesto to go so that she could teach her students.

13-00:20:22

Lage:

Now, that's very interesting, in a sense.

13-00:20:26

Wakeman:

Well, it was very interesting.

13-00:20:28

Lage:

Was this sort of an endorsement? I remember how romanticized Mao was—

13-00:20:33

Wakeman:

Oh, yes.

13-00:20:34

Lage:

By the radicals.

13-00:20:35

Wakeman:

Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I mean, everyone. No, I mean, I can—I remember one meeting at Columbia with some very famous people who were sympathizers, a couple who were doctors, I won't mention their names, and the late Michel Oksenberg, who later went to work for the Carter National Security Council, chairing this meeting on the Chinese experience, and Ric Pfeffer, who died young and who was, like Franz, constantly throwing blood on university presidents, getting up and we were looking down at the burned out Bronx and saying, the guy, this doctor from the Einstein Medical School was saying, "See, you would never see that in Shanghai. Shanghai has a much lower natal death rate than does the Bronx." And Ric Pfeffer, who was teaching at Hopkins then, saying, "Well, in America they say that politics is the art the possible. In China, politics is the art of the impossible." You know, you only have to dream, you only have to dare to win.

And it had its ludicrous aspects, too. Jonathan Mirsky—who is now a very conservative, fairly conservative journalist, he's an old friend again—was teaching at Dartmouth then, was very active in the antiwar movement. He would come here and give speeches, and I got to know him pretty well. He was actually fired at Dartmouth, supposedly for academic reasons, mainly because of his political activities, I'm convinced. [He] went to China. They

chartered a boat, the peace movement chartered a boat, and sailed to Shanghai, and went up the Huangpu River to the Shanghai waterfront, the Bund. Of course, the Chinese were then in the middle of all this turmoil, and they wouldn't let anybody in, and the Cultural Revolution was at its height, and so there they were going up, and these Chinese police boats started following them up the river. And when they got up to opposite what was once the Hong Kong and Shanghai banking building, the loudspeakers shouted out in Chinese, "Turn back, do not land, you will be apprehended if you land." And Jonathan was so excited about being there, he was waving a copy of the red book saying, "I'm a friend of China, I support the Chinese Revolution." And he was so carried away he jumped in the water to swim to shore. Well, the police fished him out with a boat hook and they put him back on the boat and they—

13-00:23:22

Lage:

They didn't want any part of him, I bet.

13-00:23:24

Wakeman:

But he *still* wanted to go to China. A few weeks later, he went down to Hong Kong. Then the representative, so to speak, of the mainland was the Bank of China, where you got your visas, and he went into the little place where you got your visas. There was a little tiny office with bullet-proof glass, and this young woman sitting behind this desk, and she looked up and took one look at him—his picture must have been circulated—got up in terror, ran out and locked the door behind her! [laughing] And so Jonathan, they wouldn't even talk to him! Oh, it was—so there was a comic side of it. But it was deadly serious, of course, I mean everybody—

13-00:24:01

Lage:

But why does being against the Vietnam War require some kind of idolization of Mao and what was happening, did they at that point know what was going on in the Cultural Revolution?

13-00:24:14

Wakeman:

No, no, you see, see, no, no. The Cultural Revolution, though it really commenced in '65 and then was officially launched in '66, it really wasn't until, I would say, '67-'68 that people really began to appreciate what was happening and it was just, it was great puzzlement. But in a way, Mao, you see, could still be presented as the Rosa Luxemburg of the world Communist movement. Rosa Luxemburg had predicted to Lenin that if the Bolsheviks ever took power they would end up being as bad as the people they overthrew. They would become bureaucratized and routinized and corrupted by power. And so, in that regard, Mao seemed to have the ideological foresight and daring to say, "My party has done just this, and I want to turn to people, the masses, the mass line against the party." And it was to cope with that that I wrote *History and Will*. I mean I just took out six months and just threw myself into this book.

13-00:25:25

Lage:

That's why I wanted to go back and visit that, because we left it out in terms of the genesis of the book and why—

13-00:25:31

Wakeman:

Why did I write it or how—

13-00:25:33

Lage:

Well, you said something about how you wrote it, but how does it fit with your political views at the time and what you thought about Mao? You've said that people were afraid it was too radical and you'd be ruined.

13-00:25:44

Wakeman:

I was very, I was very ambivalent about Mao. I've always been very ambivalent about powerful political leaders. Last night we had dinner with a scholar who had lived under dictatorships in the Middle East, and we got to talking about a comparison of Stalin and Mao, which one was the worst. Well, in terms of numbers, I suppose Mao was, if you're talking about the dead, but Mao was no Stalin in my view, and I felt then I was intrigued ideologically by this. There was something terribly romantic about him and that romantic quality continued to capture me even as I knew that these social policies were tearing the country to pieces. How could he dare to go against his party? Well, I found that both amazing, but also how could you capture such a person? So Protean a figure, and I decided to try to do it through his philosophical thought and the influences on it.

13-00:26:51

Lage:

Now, that was a departure from your work in social history.

13-00:26:55

Wakeman:

Very much so, and yes, it was a great departure, and I set everything aside and just—and to that extent as an intellectual pursuit it was extremely interesting and invigorating as a—it was a work of real passion, because I found myself, I was truly ambivalent. And I ended up feeling that, hence the title, that it's this pitting of voluntarism, of will, against necessity, history, that constituted the majesty, if you like, of Mao, but it was a very abstract conclusion, a very abstract judgment. And I felt at the time, I was very nervous about this because I knew that, I mean Mao was a man of revolutionary praxis, that he would just sweep all of this aside like a house of cards, as I mentioned, and that he'd have no patience with it.

13-00:27:51

Lage:

With your own analysis.

13-00:27:53

Wakeman:

With my own analysis. But to give you an example of that, after, still, the Cultural Revolution was still going on, but after the ping-pong visit—

13-00:28:03

Lage:

And what year was that?

13-00:28:04

Wakeman: Well, that was '73.

13-00:28:06

Lage: '73 and that was the year you published this.

13-00:28:08

Wakeman: Yes. After that we began to get a small trickle of visitors including one that was an official visit that was mainly composed of people from Xinhua Press. Xinhua is the national press agency. There are actually two Xinhua. One is a conventional press agency like UPI or AP, and the other is an intelligence gathering organization. They're under the same roof, and of course it's like TASS; people can work both functions, but they have a legitimate, so to speak, journalisticly legitimate and then a somewhat illegitimate side, and this guy was probably both. He also taught journalism at Fudan University. He came here and the book was just out—actually we weren't here, we were then in Barrows—and the librarian, C.P. Chen, showed him the dust jacket of this book and said, "Professor Wakeman just wrote this." And the guy said, "What is the point of this? What are these philosophical things?" And I tried to explain to him in Chinese what I was doing, started talking about Wang Yang-ming and T.H. Green, and he listened very impatiently for a few moments, well, maybe a minute or two, and then he said, "This is all," I mean, in effect, "This is all a bunch of bullshit."

13-00:29:31

Lage: [chuckling] In Chinese.

13-00:29:32

Wakeman: Yes. "This is completely vacuous talk." He said, "You should go to China and see for yourself." And I thought, man, I must seem like some kind of empty-headed, ignorant, Western intellectual who doesn't understand what was going on, and I *didn't*. This man went back and was one of the seventy, seven zero, professors who jumped off the clock tower at Fudan to commit suicide.

13-00:29:57

Lage: Oh, no, at—

13-00:29:58

Wakeman: When he went back he was hassled or harassed, maybe for his trip to America, who knows.

13-00:30:04

Lage: And he committed suicide.

13-00:30:06

Wakeman: He committed suicide.

13-00:30:07

Lage: So he was bringing you a different sort of message.

13-00:30:09

Wakeman:

He was looking at me as if I were some kind of starry-eyed kid who had no idea of what that world was like out there. I mean, the Cultural Revolution is—it's very hard to explain it. [He] Lea [Wakeman], my wife, was arguing with Phil Kuhn the other night that it was worse than the Holocaust, and Kuhn, who is Jewish, was just, "No, it's impossible." And in a certain sense it's very different. Something humanly went wrong in Germany. I was talking, we were, with a friend, friends also, who were talking about the little Jewish bourgeoisie of the Grunewald area of Berlin and how they all of a sudden—if you go to the Grunewald station today, you go in there, there is one kilometer of train tracks where they had the transports—they took all of these absolutely cultivated, educated higher German, the higher bourgeoisie of the German Jewry, who had thought they were assimilated to a certain extent, and packed them into these things. Next thing they know they're in Dachau or Buchenwald or Auschwitz or God knows what, but anyway—

13-00:31:19

Lage:

But how does the impulse, what do you see happening differently in China?

13-00:31:23

Wakeman:

Well, in China, that sort of Eichmannesque Germanic mechanical quality, the machine-like horror of it is not what seems so striking, although nobody will ever know how many people died—in the millions, certainly, but the way in which people were complicit in their own guilt. They lost all faith in themselves, because—

13-00:31:59

Lage:

No moral compass?

13-00:32:01

Wakeman:

There was no moral compass, and if you had one, you were made to feel that there was something terribly wrong with you. It wasn't until 1971 and the death of Lin Biao that people began to say, "Jesus, maybe I—maybe these deep misgivings I felt about going out and beating up people and killing them were not wrong. And that has left the most profound cynicism.

13-00:32:32

Lage:

On the culture.

13-00:32:34

Wakeman:

On the culture and on the people. All anybody wants to do now is make money, which is—that's fine, everybody wants to make money in this society too, but there it's just—there is again a kind of mindlessness about it.

13-00:32:47

Lage:

But you see that as a result of reaction to the Cultural Revolution in part?

13-00:32:51

Wakeman:

Yes, I think that it's created a tremendous sense of anomie, of meaninglessness, in people in China and it happens, of people who experienced those years. You hear it again and again.

So the Cultural Revolution and the Vietnam War, to get back to that problem, kind of came together and the fact that the Cultural Revolution really wasn't quite understood, meant that Mao could still be, particularly after this became a world student movement, after the May Days in Paris when it—you know, I remember talking to, well, I have some students who have come back, occasionally, now they're auto mechanics in Stockton, or whatever.

13-00:33:41

Lage:

Ones who've dropped out.

13-00:33:43

Wakeman:

The ones who dropped out and who say, "You know, I really thought we were making a revolution then, that there was going to be a revolution, and it was going to start in Berkeley, and now it seems so ludicrous. It seems so comical, but at the time, I really thought that was going to happen."

13-00:34:00

Lage:

Well, the Cultural Revolution was taking place, with all these young people being involved, at the same time that the student revolution was taking place—

13-00:34:11

Wakeman:

Absolutely.

13-00:34:11

Lage:

— here and in Europe. Is there any connection that you see? That the youth got so drawn up—

13-00:34:18

Wakeman:

Nobody has ever been able to tell me, provide a plausible explanation for this coincidence, to me. I can see why it might happen with Europe and America, but I can't see why the students of Berkeley shared much in common with their same cohort in China at this time.

13-00:34:44

Lage:

It doesn't—

13-00:34:45

Wakeman:

It doesn't work that way, it was a different matter, and of course as everybody says, the draft had an awful lot to do with it. But in my own case, this led to more and more, finally a feeling that something, we really had to do something, and from a liberal's point of view. And so I became, and a number of us became active in, we—there was a group set up called Asia Scholars to End the War, of which I was one of the members and I think at one point I was the leader. I'm not even sure, we didn't have any titles.

13-00:35:17

Lage:

Is that different from Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars?

13-00:35:21

Wakeman:

Yes, yes. Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars became more and more radicalized during the antiwar movement and gradually the liberals and moderates began to drop out because their anger turned into a kind of anti-intellectualism. Why were we sitting around reading books when the world was, when people were bleeding to death in Vietnam? There was an indignation about that. We had a meeting of the AAS out here in San Francisco, and as was their habit, the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars had a kind of counter-convention in Glide Memorial Church, so if you were radical, you went to that and heard about this, that, and the other. I had just attended a panel that was given that involved a man named Morris Rossabi, who is a very, very good Mongolist. He publishes at the UC Press all the time, wrote a wonderful biography of Kublai Khan, and he wrote a very important piece on the tea trade and the Ming dynasty, or the tea-horse trade and the Ming dynasty, because it showed that the trade between the Ming and the Mongols—in which the Ming provided tea in exchange for Mongol horses, since Chinese war horses were incapable of really taking battle against Mongol horses—meant that the Chinese had a supply of mounts that enabled them to keep the empire intact. And when this trade broke down because of war hawks at court who said, “We don’t want to give these Mongols tea. Stop pandering to these guys,” the Ming began to run out of military mounts and that’s one of the reasons why this great imperial dynasty, that ruled for nearly three centuries, fell.

Well, that’s a pretty important thing. And I remember going to one of these meetings, one of the large meetings in the actual worshipping area, the pews and so forth of the church, and this one kid getting up and saying, “How can we sit here and hear this bullshit from these scholars who talk about things like, totally irrelevant things, like the horse-tea trade in the Ming dynasty when hundreds, tens of thousands of people are dying in Vietnam?” And I didn’t know what to say. David Keightley, you know—who is a scholar of the highest probity was there, and he’s also very blunt—got up and he, in that English accent of his, he said, “Well,” he said, “this is a meeting of the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars. I see a lot of concern, but I don’t see any scholars.” [laughter] Well, he was booed out of there, you know, so there was this kind of anti-intellectualism.

13-00:38:20

Lage:

Yes, very much.

13-00:38:21

Wakeman:

But very honestly intellectual people thought, well, we must do something about this, the way that our democracy is supposed to, and hence went off to Washington to lobby. Now it’s easy—

13-00:38:34

Lage:

With this other group, the Asia Scholars to End the War.

13-00:38:35

Wakeman:

Yes, the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars [perhaps a misstatement, means Asia Scholars to End the War?]. And there was a kind of coalition with people on the left who realized this was an opportunity to try to influence the Congress to vote against the war. Of course this was before the Paris peace talks had really gone any place and certainly before Watergate, but the—so a group of us went, and we had our meetings and then we fanned out to—we were usually in groups of two or three—to make the pitch to various congressmen. The ones that were easiest, the ones everybody wanted to go to were people like Senators Church or Mansfield, who were good liberal democrats and were very much opposed to the war. Going to see Eastland or some of these hawks was another matter altogether. I remember going, I went to a number of them and with a professor from Columbia who was painfully shy and didn't say a word, but I went to see Fred Harris, the populist senator from Oklahoma. I went in and of course, he was converted, I was preaching to the choir, and I said, "Senator Harris, why don't you do something about this? I mean, vote away the budget; this is a terrible thing that's happening in this country. The country is being split down the middle. Parents won't talk to children. Brothers won't talk to"—I mean, my own family was divided. My stepfather, my brother who was in the US Navy then, thought I was some kind of a—on and on—

13-00:40:18

Lage:

Hmm. Maoist.

13-00:40:19

Wakeman:

Yes, exactly. Maoist. And Harris said, "Well," he said, "you know what it's like," he said, "you go over to the White House and you go into the East Room and they bring out the big briefing boards, you know with all those acetate overlays, and they get all these very, very fine generals up there and these smart-looking young majors with their pointers, their maps, and their arrows, and they tell you about how well the war is going, and then pretty soon the president of the United States, the *president* of the United States, comes into the room and tells you we're winning the war and says, 'I need your help.' What are you going to do to that!" [laughs] So at some point then I could just see—

13-00:41:07

Lage:

But he himself was against the war.

13-00:41:09

Wakeman:

Yes, he was, he was! He tried to run for president and didn't get anywhere, but there was that, but that was when finally public opinion was turning. I remember in my own family's case it turned with that famous *Life Magazine* edition where they had the pictures of the dead that week, and I was going back to Florida to visit my mother. When I got there my stepfather, who had

been in the military during the Second World War and was in the reserves and completely convinced we should support the American military and the president all the way, had just looked at that, and he said, "I don't know, I think I'm changing my mind." And I thought, "Well, if Herb can change his mind, maybe there is hope." So you know, the country did finally get it, but the university and the China field were both deeply affected by this in a way that made the first decade of my teaching here much different from what would have happened had I come here in 1975.

13-00:42:20

Lage: And the students that you were teaching must have—

13-00:42:23

Wakeman: Students were—

13-00:42:24

Lage: Did any of them attack you for not being more activist?

13-00:42:28

Wakeman: Well, they, yes they did. But they never, I mean it was never anything unpleasant. These students were very contumacious, and of course, they were very anti-authoritarian and would, I think I may have mentioned, would call you by your first name or nothing at all. I taught a seminar, co-taught a seminar with Irv Scheiner, where we had to cope with a group of about eight of them; almost all of them now are very well-known academics. And they would have a caucus before the class meeting, decide what to do, how to get at us, and we would go in and they would have some particular attack on the readings, usually. But it was not, "you're a lousy scab," or something like that, but on the readings, and they would come into this—

13-00:43:28

Lage: They would sort of politicize the readings more than—

13-00:43:30

Wakeman: Well, they would— yes, so you had to constantly be ready with some sort of a, or you had to think very quickly and sharpen one's defensive instincts. I remember Joe Esherick one time, we'd assigned them as a seminar in Western-language works on China and other writings that might be relevant. In this one week we assigned, among other readings, a book by the famous French historian Marc Bloch on rural France, and Esherick got up and started going, "What is this bullshit about French history? I came here to study China; that's where the, the war is going on in Vietnam," and this and that, "why are you giving us this French bullshit to read?" It was always bullshit and just a lot of obscenity, and Irv got very flustered and didn't quite know what to do.

Now I happened to know a lot about Marc Bloch. I really loved him when I was younger, and I'd in fact read through the entire *Annales* that he and Lucien Fèbvre edited. And I said, I mean, it was very much acted out, I started talking about—I said I was very sorry he didn't like Bloch. I talked about

Bloch's background, his relationship with his father, who was an Egyptologist, how Bloch had served in the First World War and was wounded, and then how he had served again in the Second World War, and after the Germans overran Paris he wrote this book called *Strange Defeat*. And about his personal life, his development as a scholar, his wonderful book on the historian's craft, and so on, and I said, then of course he joined the resistance, and I talked about it. No one, they didn't know his name in the resistance, he was taking all of these chances, and finally he was rounded up in Lyon and held by the Gestapo. Then eventually they took them out, when the Americans landed in Normandy, to execute these prisoners, and they got out there and they dug their own trench. The Germans had lined up machine guns, and they all lined up, and there was a young boy who was about sixteen who survived. He feigned death in the bottom of the trench, and he somehow was dug out and told this story that at the last minute he knew—it was clear they were starting to cock their machine guns—that they were going to be machine gunned, and he started crying. And Bloch turned, now I made it much more dramatic than this, a real tear jerker, and Bloch turned to him and said, "*Ne pleure pas mon petit*," "Don't cry my little one, and you know, "you'll be remembered." At that point the machine gun shots rang out, and all but the boy were killed. Bloch tumbled into the trench, the Germans not knowing whom they'd killed, the greatest French historian of the day and so forth.

And it was such a tear jerker. And Esherick, who was so difficult, just kind of looked down, and he knew that I had him. We used to go afterwards up to my apartment next to the Bouwsmas and have a couple of martinis, Irv and I, to kind of get over these times. I think it was the only time we sort of said, "Well, I think we won that one."

13-00:46:57

Lage: [chuckles] Now how did your relationship with Esherick and people like that evolve over time?

13-00:47:03

Wakeman: Well, in Esherick's case—

13-00:47:06

Lage: He did write that glowing review of you as a historian.

13-00:47:09

Wakeman: Yes, yes, yes, no, no, in Esherick's case there was a great deal of difficulty over his thesis, because what he did was—and this may be as telling in its own way—what he did was to take the 1911 revolution in China, about which he wrote a book, which I think is the best book ever written on that revolution, but in its thesis, as a dissertation, essentially took the framework of what was happening in California, to apply to Wuhan, to Central China. I mean, there was sort of a Reagan type, it was a law and order, on and on. He had this great

hero and a local populist, who was a totally irresponsible fellow, and I mean, it was just—that part of it I thought was really stretched, and I wrote him back and said that I felt that I couldn't accept this *thèse* [said in French], in the sense of this *argument*, but he and his wife read that as “this thesis.”

13-00:48:15

Lage: Oh, and what was the word?

13-00:48:16

Wakeman: I used the word “*thèse*,” argument, you know, but he took it to mean thesis or dissertation.

13-00:48:22

Lage: That the entire thing was being rejected.

13-00:48:23

Wakeman: The entire thing, yes, and he, well, he wrote me back a letter, I think at his wife's urging, he wrote me back a letter that was, well, I read the letter and I put it into a file, and I said, “I'm not going to do anything for a while on this.” And I never answered it.

13-00:48:42

Lage: Because it was a pretty strong?

13-00:48:44

Wakeman: Oh, it was very insulting, very strong, with a lot of this political stuff woven into it. You know, I've known ever since you were, and that you just didn't have the will, the leadership, blah, blah, blah, and I was quite wounded, but I thought, “No, no, no, let's let it sit.” It's like Georges Sand said, “Wait until the cold light of morning before you send off that letter.” And I waited and waited and waited, and what finally eased it a bit, eased it, was skiing with him. He's a very good—Esherick comes from, well, his father was the architect.

13-00:49:23

Lage: Oh, I wondered if there was the same Esherick.

13-00:49:24

Wakeman: Yes. And his mother is one of the Kents of Kentfield, so they're all sort of California gentry, and he was raised very well; he learned to ski. Every year they'd go to Biarritz or St. Moritz or somewhere to ski. Excellent skier, skied on old-fashioned eight-foot skis, you know, with those traditional leather bindings. And one time, we were snowed in for a while one time at Alpine Meadows, and his kids, one of his boys and my older boy skied together. They were both very good skiers. And we went up skiing later in the day. I was already tired, and he said, “Hey let's go down here.” He took us off to the right of the regular trail into Wolverine Bowl, which is very dangerous. There are a lot of avalanches.

13-00:50:19

Lage: The places they tell you, “Don’t go off the trail.”

13-00:50:21

Wakeman: Well, it had all these signs you know, crossed skull and bones, and as we started down, and I thought, “Oh, I don’t want to do *this!*” But you couldn’t turn back because you were traversing and there was no way to get back up, very narrow couloir—I had a pair of long skis, I had Fisher 210s on, you know people now ski with 175, 180 skis, and we got there and the cornice went way out and under, so you had to jump off and leap about twenty feet down before you hit snow and then you just better keep on going. Well, the two kids got off OK, and Joe, of course, went down and then waited for me and I went down and promptly fell out of my skis. Now it was really like this [demonstrating angle] and he calmly came, stepped back up to me, got me back into my skis and talked me down the mountain. And so though we were, our status, I was higher and he was, and he’s a little younger than I am, that kind of reversed the whole thing [laughs].

13-00:51:25

Lage: [laughing] Gave him a little power.

13-00:51:27

Wakeman: Yes, and I gave him a lot of power, and every time that we remember this I accuse him of having set me up for this whole thing. You know, taking somebody and whupping him like hell, and then they’re grateful when you give them a glass of water. But then when I had my fiftieth birthday, he showed up at the birthday party in New York, and he read a little letter, he said, this is to Fred, “What I said back,” whatever years ago, “when I wrote you, I really regret, I really was way over the line.” And I didn’t say anything, “I said, well, you know—“

13-00:52:07

Lage: Because that had sort of gone unspoken all those years?

13-00:52:09

Wakeman: Never talked about it, and he’s a very close friend now, but, and with all of them it’s pretty much the same way. I don’t, I mean there was—we had one meeting toward the very end of the war. One of the guys I was teaching, this is again typical of the students that were coming here, was getting an MA degree in Asian Studies and he said he wanted to write his MA thesis for me, and I said, “Well, what do you want to write on?” He said he wanted to write on the Chinese Eastern Railway, the Russian railway in North China. I said, “OK, fine, that’s good.” He had a little bit of Russian, and so he labored away at this thing, and then he came and he said, “Well, I didn’t really get through the whole thing; I couldn’t get through the whole thing.” And I said, “Well, what have you got?” He said, “Well, I’ve got some—but it’s not. . .” And obviously there was a problem.

So he handed me this master's thesis, and I promised to read it. He left looking a little bit abashed, and I took it home that evening. I sat down to read it and started out and there were about, there was a page and a half on the Chinese Eastern Railway, very mundane stuff, but obviously boring the hell out of him, and then we got down in the second paragraph of the second page and he said, "I don't want to talk about this horseshit anymore. I want to talk about Carlos Castaneda and the Yaqui way of knowledge." And he went on to write—[laughter]. So I called him and I said, "Wally, I can't sign this, I'm sorry." And he said, "Oh, what the hell, I'm not meant to be a scholar, that's fine, that's OK." So he dropped out.

Well, a year or two later, he was working in the GM [General Motors] plant down in Fremont, and we had a meeting of the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars—and after this, I'll tell you one more incident to give you an idea and then we can move on—and he, a lot of us came to this meeting, including faculty members. There were about five or six of us who were still members of the committee. And a lot of us didn't know each other because there were Stanford people there, started going around the room, and it got to this guy, who was standing right next to me, and he said, how did he put it, he said, "I'm Wally X. and I'm a worker." And then I was next and I said, "Well, I'm Fred Wakeman, and I made him a worker." [laughter]

13-00:54:43

Lage:

That's very funny!

13-00:54:46

Wakeman:

But it was all said, you know, in good fun. At that same meeting there was a kid who was in the Berkeley Tenants' Union here whose father was a very wealthy Peninsula, I don't know what, David Hewlett-type. Very handsome kid, but who always wore cut-off blue jeans and a red bandana as they would in those days, and the girls loved him. There was a lot of sexuality attached to this antiwar movement as Madge [Marge] Piercy sort of shows. And we had the—this was on another occasion shortly after this—again the introduction, and my friend Harry Harootunian, Japanese history, who taught then at Chicago and now is dean at NYU was there. Harry is a short Armenian man, of ferocious temper, whose father was an Armenian terrorist, and Harry was a working-class person as a kid. So this kid, this kid of the favored rich is standing there, and he says, "I'm so and so, I'm one of the people." And Harry just looks, "People, people—I'm one of the goddamn fucking people" [in a loud voice]. Just, you know, this anger, who could claim to be the most proletariat! So these kinds of histrionics went on and about, but the more serious side of this was that the division in the faculty continued in some cases.

13-00:56:15

Lage:

Yes, that's what I wanted to ask you.

13-00:56:17

Wakeman: The instance in the China field that was the most provocative was when the students took over the Center for Chinese Studies, occupied it.

13-00:56:29

Lage: When was that and why, if you remember?

13-00:56:32

Wakeman: Let's see—what year was that, that must have been '72—'71-'72.

13-00:56:38

Lage: Before you were chair. So was Chalmers Johnson chair?

13-00:56:41

Wakeman: Yes, that's right.

13-00:56:43

Lage: Well, he was another Scalapino. You said that mainly it was Scalapino that was, but Chalmers also—

13-00:56:45

Wakeman: Yes, that's right, that's right.

13-00:56:48

Lage: — he supported the war.

13-00:56:48

Wakeman: Johnson was very much at that time, very much, before he changed his stripes, so to speak, he was. And he was chairman of the center. We had then, working at the center, Jack Service. I think I mentioned him. And Jack, who at first had been very, very cautious because, I think, of his personal history during the McCarthy period, had become more and more radicalized by the war. And was taking more and more of a role vis-à-vis the students, who looked to him as a kind of protector, so when they took over the center, they turned it into a sort of mimeograph mill for pamphlets and handouts to go to high schools, anyplace they could, to try to build up an antiwar movement. The center was down on Shattuck then, and they also hung out of the window of the center, a long scroll, a long banner with "venceremos" and some revolutionary slogan. I was aware of this because one of my RAs was in this strike. That evening, I got a phone call from Chalmers. Chalmers was absolutely irate. He said, "You know, Sheila," his wife, "Sheila just drove by the center and she saw this revolutionary scroll. The students have invaded the center. They've taken over the center. And I wanted to tell you, I'm going to tell all the members of the executive committee that I'm calling in the police. And if you oppose this, if you don't agree with me, then I'm resigning as chairman of the center." And I said, "Well, Chalmers, you'd better resign!" [laughter] And the others told him the same thing. Stanley Lubman and others who were—and so, but Jack was in there—

13-00:58:38

Lage:

With the students!

13-00:58:38[

Wakeman:

With the students, pledging to put his body up against, I assume, it would have been a combination of the sheriff, the Berkeley police, whatever, and nothing really came of that, but there was this sense of, well, you know, again—I think the most dramatic moment for me (we just had the anniversary of Kent State, which was May 4<sup>th</sup> [1970]). There was a motion then. We'd been meeting, the faculty as a whole had been meeting in Wheeler Hall, to discuss various motions dealing with issues like People's Park, and whether or not we opposed the war. When you went into the meetings, there was a crowd of students sitting outside of it led by Mario Savio, and he would stand up as the faculty filed past, I mean, right in your face, and say, if he knew you, he'd call you by name, but "You're going to vote with us, aren't you? We're against this war," whatever, you know. They wanted a vote of no confidence in Heyns, I believe.

And in order to avoid that kind of confrontation, the head of the Academic Senate decided to hold a meeting up in I-House in that little auditorium, which is barely large enough to hold the Academic Senate members. So we all trooped up there that afternoon, and there was a motion before them, I believe, censuring the government for the Vietnam War, and a number of people opposed this, especially engineers and some of the scientists. The social science and humanities groups tended to be in favor of taking this vote. And there was a sort of flurry of debate, and then I forget who came in, but someone came in and said, "I have to make an announcement," and they announced that at Kent State, well, they announced what had happened at Kent State, and, God, there was just a long silence and then someone moved the motion, and of course, the motion went through. So there was a sense of—I mean, the country was kind of falling apart.

13-01:00:59

Lage:

Wow, I remember that.

13-01:01:01

Wakeman:

Yes, that sense of real—and that was very strong here, I think very strong. But it wasn't—it didn't get nasty like Columbia.

13-01:01:10

Lage:

Among the faculty you mean, or?

13-01:01:11

Wakeman:

Among the faculty and the students. Or Cornell, where they occupied the gym, remember? And they almost brought in—they almost fired. I mean, for a bunch of us, I think, the big, the big most frightening moment was that moment in Sproul Plaza when they gassed the crowd. [May 20, 1969]

13-01:01:28

Lage: Yes, I mean, that was pretty scary.

13-01:01:29

Wakeman: I was, I was really scared that day, because I—you know we were told—I was with Jack and Jack and I went up to talk to the colonel and said—I was a crowd monitor—“We’ll move these people, these students will go up to Sproul Plaza, if they will be allowed to do so peaceably.” Because we were, they were organized down in front of University Hall, and he said, “Fine, there will be no problem.” So everybody marched up there after we used our bullhorns to get them up there. And then I became aware, I was down with the crowd, Jack was up in that balcony in the student union, the ASUC building, you know the one that’s where the—

13-01:02:16

Lage: The Pauley Ballroom and—

13-01:02:17

Wakeman: Yes, that’s right. And I realized all of a sudden that there were all of these guardsmen on either end of the square that had gas masks on and were with fixed bayonets. And I thought, first thought I thought was Amritsar, which was a massacre in India by the British, I think it was in 1919. I may not have the year right, but I thought, “Boy, if some one of these farm kids gets nervous and they have live rounds of ammunition, this is going to be really dreadful.” And then we heard this [puck, puck, pukka, puck] and anybody who had been in Vietnam during the war just, you know, cringed as this, this Huey helicopter came swooping down trailing smoke, and I thought, well, what is—I thought it was just tear gas.

13-01:03:12

Lage: But wasn’t it just tear gas?

13-01:03:14

Wakeman: It was CS gas, which is the stuff they’ve used to throw down the bunker, the—the—to—

13-01:03:18

Lage: Oh, it was—I’ve always thought it was tear gas.



Nacio Jan Brown, photograph of helicopter spraying tear gas, May 20, 1969

13-01:03:20

Wakeman:

No, it was CS, much worse. You can't get it out of your eyes; it's just terrible. But that was the one moment I thought, "Oh, we've got ourselves something awful here."

But you know, those were, those were days of high drama and I think everybody was affected. My wife was arrested and taken to Santa Rita. She worked for the Department of Agriculture then, had been running down in Berkeley waving her Department of Agriculture federal badge, didn't matter.

13-01:03:52

Lage:

Oh, she wasn't—

13-01:03:54

Wakeman:

She was arrested and she was out on the tarmac with everybody else out at Santa Rita, finally was allowed to make a phone call at midnight and said, "Hey, I'm here." 'Cause I didn't know what had happened. You know, they had all those barrels of trash burning downtown and cars turned over, it was—

13-01:04:09

Lage:

Oh, it was quite—almost unbelievable.

13-01:04:09

Wakeman:

When I describe it to people, it's almost unbelievable.

13-01:04:13

Lage:

Now what kind of scars did it leave in the China, or Asian studies—

13-01:04:19

Wakeman:

I think the biggest scar was the scar that was left between the Political Science Department and the rest of us. And those healed gradually, you know. Bob [Scalapino] managed to recover from it, his—it became clear to us that the only way, after the Ford Foundation had cut funding, for us to survive was to get regental funding or use that to raise money outside the university. And the Political Science Department didn't want that, because they wanted to keep Asian Studies under the Institute of International Studies, which was run then by Carl Rosberg, an Africanist, political scientist. And efforts to get Rosberg to help us raise money—I was chair of the center then—it wasn't that he was vicious or anything, he just didn't really, didn't care. And so I argued with my colleagues that we had to try to get ourselves an institute. We needed higher visibility and a united front, and so they agreed, we agreed to do this, but we had to overcome resistance from people who still were comfortably under the Institute of International Studies, which was very much, I think then, an app[endage] with some exceptions, and I'll mention one in a minute, an appendage of the Political Science Department. So, Scalapino was opposed to an institute. He didn't want to do it. He didn't think it was right. IIS would do a fine job, things would work out OK in the long run, and finally Tom Smith and I—Tom Smith was then chairman of the Japan center and I said, "Well, we've got to offer the directorship to Bob. That's the only way you can deal with this."

13-01:06:21

Lage:

[chuckling] Oh, being politic.

13-01:06:23

Wakeman:

So we went to his house on Christmas day, as I recall, and we said, we told him we thought he would make a wonderful director, and we knew that he didn't want the extra administrative burden, but we were sure we could get money for an assistant director who would also raise money, and we did, and Bob agreed, and we had ourselves an institute.

13-01:06:46

Lage:

So then you had the Institute of East Asian Studies—

13-01:06:48

Wakeman:

Over—

13-01:06:48

Lage:

With the various—

13-01:06:50

Wakeman:

—various centers, and Bob raised quite a bit of money, with his, you know, friends in the Bank of America. He has enormous connections, and really put this institute on the map. I think the feeling, the bad feelings about political science then began to be directed against the sorts of things they did. So much of what was being done here was what Bob wanted to do, namely international conferences on international relations, which he's a master of,

only he knows what's going on in Sri Lanka at the same time as what's going on in Korea. He has this wonderful sense of global politics. But the rest of us felt that we were—we never saw budgets, we couldn't understand what was happening. And later when I became director, I tried to go to a more federal system, more power back to the various centers and trying to bring the humanist social scientists in together, and I think that worked, although unfortunately, politically speaking, the kinds of people who can bridge those gaps are usually historians. So it was viewed, I believe, by many, as sort of a coup by the historians. When the time came for me to step down after a decade—now, you know there are ten-year term limits—I think the social, the political scientists were sharpening their knives. So, in some senses now, it has taken a turn back in that direction. But those old animosities are pretty much over with.

13-01:08:29

Lage:

It sounds almost more disciplinary than political, in a way.

13-01:08:33

Wakeman:

Absolutely, it's not political anymore, not at all, it's purely disciplinary and T.J. Pempel has been doing a very good job of trying to keep everybody satisfied at once, which isn't easy here. It really isn't.

13-01:08:44

Lage:

Now, you're not under Institute for—you didn't go back under the Institute for International—

13-01:08:50

Wakeman:

International Studies? No.

13-01:08:51

Lage:

International Studies, yes. But the other area groups are under it, aren't they?

13-01:08:56

Wakeman:

Well, what happened then was there was an effort. The feeling was that there was so much, so much international studies being done here without coordination that they needed to have a powerful dean of international and area studies. And a committee was set up, headed by Earl Cheit, to look into this, and they had a bunch of hearings. I was at the SSRC then, I came back. My argument was that if you had such a dean, it should be on something like the Columbia model. A dean with real power, not just a lot of responsibility. And that meant budgetary power, that meant FTE. You had to give this person FTE and the right to give them out, otherwise it wouldn't, it wouldn't work. And then they had a search committee and they interviewed me, and they asked me to become dean. And I clarified the role of this dean, and it was clear he would *not* have—he'd have maybe, control over maybe ten FTE and that was all. And they wouldn't revert to him and then some sort of consultative role as far as appointments, and well, that was not what I thought would work.

So before I actually came back here, Mike Heyman called me up in New York and said, “Well, Fred, you know we’re glad you decided to come back to Berkeley, but you know you’re not going to get back here without having to do something.” And I said, “Well, what do you mean?” He said, “Well, you’re either going to have to be director of the Institute of East Asian Studies, or you’re going to have to be dean of International and Area Studies.” And I said, “Well, I don’t know what to say. I don’t agree with what you—.” Mike had backed down. Mike would hate me if he heard me say this, but Mike did not bite the bullet on this one. When department heads and Academic Senate committee heads, the powerful elders of this university, came out against a strong dean, he said, “OK, fine, we’ll compromise.” And I wouldn’t accept that. Instead, Al Fishlow became dean. And one of the reasons I didn’t accept it is—after Mike called me, Bob Scalapino called me and asked me, he said he was coming to New York and could I meet him at the Algonquin to talk about this. And we got there, and he said, “Well, you know, look, I know you still want to maintain your scholarship. If you’re director of the institute, that’s your area, you’re going to be continuing your scholarship. And frankly, we’ve got money. That dean doesn’t have any money.” So I said, “Well, I’m going to talk to Mike again. I called Mike back and Mike said, “Well, that’s true, but I must remind you that the new dean will appoint the director of the institute.” [laughter] And I said, “Well, I guess the new director will have to take his chances, or her chances.” So that was, so they, I decided to stay with the [Institute of East Asian Studies]—but that complicated matters immensely.

13-01:12:18

Lage: Having— ?

13-01:12:19

Wakeman: Well, the problem is, and I think it’s still very much up in the air because the dean never did have, and I’ll honestly say that if I had been Fishlow, I would have resigned the minute I really discovered how little power—

13-01:12:33

Lage: He didn’t have very much power.

13-01:12:34

Wakeman: No, and—

13-01:12:36

Lage: Deans always complain they don’t have power at Berkeley.

13-01:12:39

Wakeman: Well, some deans do. I mean, the deans of the College of Engineering have a lot of power, or the College of Chemistry, but you’re right. Many of them don’t have power. It’s a conciliar thing. But the dean of International and Area Studies is not even one of the eleven deans who sits on that council.

13-01:12:59

Lage: Oh, I see, so he’s not a full—

13-01:13:00

Wakeman: He's not one of the top rank.

13-01:13:04

Lage: Well, what would he do with his FTEs? Appoint out—in to certain departments?

13-01:13:10

Wakeman: He would tell the Department of Economics, "Look—

13-01:13:12

Lage: Oh, I see.

13-01:13:13

Wakeman: "—you have been refusing to appoint someone in Chinese studies for twenty years because nobody is a good enough economist to do China. I'm not only going to just give you an FTE, but you'd better take it, because you're not going to get an FTE in any other area." Now, the provost does that now, [Jan] de Vries does that now to a certain extent. Under the old system, before Tien, Rod Park didn't do that, I mean he just didn't have that power inclination, I think. So, and after Fishlow left, Dick Buxbaum found himself in the same plight. When Leonard took over as dean, Leonard is a micromanager and a budget man and all they could do was to try to find sources of money in the various centers or institutes under their purview. And in terms of signing off on things, the director of this institute *has* to go to the dean, that dean. And this institute is very well heeled. Now people didn't really quite know this until this new BFS, Berkeley Finance System, was set up where anybody can read the bottom line. I know because I did something similar at the SSRC, when you know exactly how much money you have and what's unspent. I mean, there was at time when I was getting calls from chairmen saying, "Fred, we know you have 3 million dollars in this account. You can afford this—

13-01:14:45

Lage: Oh, wow that gives you—

13-01:14:47

Wakeman: — and if you can't you know we'll spend it for you, you know, this kind of thing—spend it or lose it, that sort of thing.

Audiofile 14 Wakeman 14 05-23-2005.wav

14-00:00:03

Lage: OK. Here we are on a new disk and did we finish? We should finish that topic, the—

14-00:00:09

Wakeman: Well, I guess I wanted to add one thing which was a bit peripheral, but for me, very central. I don't mean to imply that the IIS isn't a worthy or wasn't a worthy organization or didn't do a—make a major contribution. In my own

case, it sponsored this group that Neil Smelser ran for years on comparative theory and methodology in the social sciences.

And I don't even remember exactly when I joined it, but probably when I was maybe a first or second year associate professor. And at first it was very broadly gauged. I mean, there were people from every discipline, a very exciting group of people. Later, most of the political scientists dropped out, and you retained sociology and a few anthropologists and historians.

14-00:01:14

Lage: And what was the goal?

14-00:01:16

Wakeman: Well, the goal was, actually, it sort of had two different kinds, three different kinds of activities. One was, when there was an important social thinker at Berkeley or at the Stanford Institute for Advanced Study for the year, would be to invite that person here to read the person's work and discuss it, or the person's latest work and discuss that with them. And those were very interesting occasions, or opportunities to have someone here to talk with them. [Michel] Foucault, [Jürgen] Habermas, Talcott Parsons, Shmuel Eisenstadt, Wolfgang Schluchter, just some of the, you know, I guess what kids today call "heavy hitters." And it was, it was interesting because it was a very, very open, egalitarian, and free-thinking, free-talking group, so you could—it was always over dinner and a couple of glasses of wine, so people tended to be lubricated. That was one function.

14-00:02:31

Lage: And it was interdisciplinary.

14-00:02:34

Wakeman: And it was interdisciplinary, yes. Second function was to read social theory. So a member would suggest, "Well, I think we should go back to one of the classics. Go back to John Stuart Mill on comparative inquiry and read that classic and then talk about it. Or, maybe we should read Bentham again." And then—and these are very, very brilliant people that you're listening to—Arthur Stinchcombe. There were just some wonderful members. So it was sort of like a high, high, high-level seminar and it taught me—it taught me a lot about social theory. I read a lot of things I wouldn't otherwise have read. Or if I'd read them I wouldn't have really appreciated them the way that Neil, who's a wonderful sort of emcee, intellectual spirit, and entrepreneur in that sense.

And the third thing was to read your own work, that is, if you finished a book or a manuscript to bring that in and discuss it very critically. And in all those areas, I mean, I had all this stuff, that anytime I did anything I'd ask the group to read it, and they were brutally honest about it.

14-00:03:48

Lage: And how many would be in the group?

14-00:03:50

Wakeman: Well, typically there'd be, maybe a dozen.

14-00:03:53

Lage: Other historians?

14-00:03:55

Wakeman: The other historians, well, you could introduce people, and say, "I think so and so should join us." I brought Irv Scheiner in. Martin Malia was a member. I think the three of us were the most active and steady members of it. Tom Smith. There weren't many Europeanists except for Martin, and Martin was a very stimulating, if sometimes ornery person. Gene Hammel was a member of the group. Nelson Polsby. I mentioned Arthur Stinchcombe, who is no longer here, of course. Leslie Lipson, and so forth. I mean—of course, it varied and people would lose interest after a year or two, then maybe come back a couple of years later. I stayed on pretty much 'til the end, toward the end after Neil left, after he retired, and it was taken over by Vicky Bonnell. I came less, not that Vicky isn't great, but it didn't play such a central function. But I found that for me to be a tremendous Berkeley experience.

14-00:05:15

Lage: Did it shape how you approached your work?

14-00:05:17

Wakeman: Very much so. I mean, it, what little social theory I have now was deeply influenced by that. I mean, Bellah would have us read Durkheim; well, I'd read Durkheim, but I hadn't seen it through his eyes. Or Reinhard Bendix, who was a member of the group, would have us read some portions of Max Weber that he liked. And then we discussed that. There were very few—the only economist who came fairly consistently, well, there were two, but the most ever-present one was Gregory Grossman, the Soviet economist—the Russian economist. But economists don't tend to do that, I mean, they are much more—

14-00:06:10

Lage: They're not cross-disciplinary?

14-00:06:11

Wakeman: They're not so cross-disciplinary, yes, which is a pity. But I learned, I think what it gave me was a different vantage point, a different perspective on thinkers and theories that I'd read about before or studied as a student and now went back to and savored and read again—thought about in a very different way.

14-00:06:37

Lage: You said when we were talking about Harvard or something, that it took you away from the Parsonian—is that what you said?

14-00:06:46

Wakeman:

Yes, I think the Durkheim emphasis, it took me, it did take me away from strict Parsonian concerns. Neil himself—you know, he's— Neil is a great, his work on collective behavior is really fundamentally important and although he was Parsons's best student, he in some ways turned Parsons on his ear, so it both enriched and revised my sense of traditional American sociology. Stinchcombe was very—it was very strange because he looked like sort of a good-looking motorcycle punk and he acted like one, but his mind is extremely supple and very sophisticated. More conventional would—Charlie Glock, who taught American religion so that dimension was explored more extensively. The anthropology—well, Paul Rabinow was a member of it for a while. It was sort of a floating crap game, you know, you'd—

14-00:07:57

Lage:

It sounds like you were one of the stalwarts.

14-00:07:58

Wakeman:

Pretty much so. Yes. I really found it very stimulating.

14-00:08:02

Lage:

Are there other things like this that that go on underneath the surface of Berkeley?

14-00:08:07

Wakeman:

Well, I think probably some of the groups at the Townsend Center are like that, where they, those are more narrowly focused on an interest, as you know, I mean, as you can tell from the titles. This was very broad and sweeping, practically anything went, as long as it was interesting. At the end of each session—we met about once a month—at the end of each session Neil would say, “Well, what do we want to do next?” And someone would say, “Well, I know somebody who's very interesting who is going to be at the think tank, and Robert Keohane, for example, is going to be there. Maybe we should have him come up and talk about his sort of regime theory.” Ernie Haas was a member of the group also, and that's the sort of suggestion he might likely have made. I would never have thought of that myself.

Now I was exposed to people like that personally, in a more personal way, and a more administrative way at the SSRC, which was a great job because I spent every day doing that, but of course you're doing it, you're doing that by the seat of your pants. You haven't got time to read anything. And you have to make very rapid decisions as to whether or not you want to put your support behind some project to raise ten million dollars for behavior modification, or something dangerous like that. But this gave you time to reflect, and there were several weeks in advance and you could read—the group was always very well organized in terms of getting the materials to you in good order. The dinners were fairly well chosen—Neil is something of a gourmand if not a gourmet.

14-00:09:56

Lage: Was this at the Faculty Club?

14-00:09:59

Wakeman: Alas, yes! [laughter]

14-00:10:02

Lage: It wasn't *too* gourmet then.

14-00:10:05

Wakeman: If I ever see another piece of salmon, I'll croak! We sometimes ate elsewhere; it's just that, you know, you can stay, have a private room and it's fairly, it's a good place to talk. You're not too distracted by the food, let me put it that way.

14-00:10:25

Lage: [Chuckles] How was Foucault's visit and your reaction?

14-00:10:29

Wakeman: Well, of course, he was by then sort of a deity, you know, and he already had gotten this part-time teaching thing here where he came every spring. He was a good friend of Martin [Malia] and Martin always used to think it very strange that Foucault had become such an icon because Foucault makes fun of himself and his acolytes don't.

14-00:10:58

Lage: I'm glad to know he could make fun of himself!

14-00:11:00

Wakeman: He could, yes, although his time in Berkeley cost him his life, of course, or in the Bay Area. But we had one session, he was not present, fortunately, in which Paul Rabinow and Herbert Dreyfus, who had written a book about Foucault, sort of designed to be the kind of hitchhiker's guide to Foucault, if I can be facetious about it, and Foucault, you know, has got all kinds of problems. One of the things is he doesn't really explain very well what power is, although he talks about it all the time. And I remember we were reading the "History of Sexuality," and there was Paul and there was Herbert to tell us what this was about. And they by then had become complete advocates of Foucault; I mean, everything he said, anything he said, had to be right. Lynn Hunt, who was on the faculty then, in the History Department, and who for a brief time was a member of this group. I don't know if you've met her, but she's a very serious, funny, extremely intelligent person. And she said, she said, "There are two sentences on page 93," I think it was, of the book, "on page 93 that give us Foucault's description of how he defines power." And it was some incomprehensible convoluted—you could read it over and over and over and you'd—can you explain what this means? And it was so—Paul and Herbert went through hell, you know, wriggling, intellectually, I mean, struggling trying to—and you know, and finally you had to sort of say, they had to admit that Foucault was, at this point, inscrutable.

Habermas was very charming. I liked him a lot. He was very—of course, Habermas has two different faces. He has a face he shows to the Germans and a face he shows to an international crowd in very different respects, I think, but—

14-00:13:16

Lage: In what way?

14-00:13:18

Wakeman: Well, I mean, when he's dealing, when he's talking about Germany to Germans, he more or less, he vaunts the German Enlightenment. That is the great point, the great zenith of modern German intellectual history, and when you get to 1933, for him history just—it stops. It's not worth studying and you pick it up again in 1945, so the dozen years of Nazi rule are just, "forget about it—let's, you know, we could agonize about this forever," and he's not calling for amnesia; he's just saying it's not worth really studying. Whereas, he doesn't behave that, I suppose, irresponsibly, toward an international audience. He's much more likely to stress a kind of *geistesgeschichte*, a sort of spiritual history, and to stress the fact that he shouldn't be misunderstood. He's a historian, not a sociologist. You can't take his concept of the public sphere and expect to apply it to Ghana or China or whatever, because it's not German. It's not Germany. And yet, I think at the same time he's very happy when people do that. So, he's made the disclaimer, but, you know, it's still nice to have such—

14-00:14:48

Lage: Well, could you apply it to another country—to China?

14-00:14:54

Wakeman: Well, in the case of China, for some reason, not many modern Chinese historians read German, and it wasn't until his book on [*Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, on the public sphere, was translated into English that all of a sudden Chinese historians began to take notice. And it was an instant success. The interest occurred just around the time of the Tiananmen incident. I think his book was translated the year before, and it occurred at a time when the work of Charles Taylor, who writes on civil society and in both a Hegelian and Lockean way, became very popular. And so the notion that civil society—that civil society was, that which accompanied it may even have helped spawn the movement towards democracy in Central Europe. That you had autonomous public or civil organs, apart from the state, like Solidarity, helped account for the way in which the Polish revolution had taken place and that that might apply to China.

Wasn't Tiananmen something like that? And couldn't we find traces of civil society and of a public sphere, an independent sphere? Again, of course, to have a public sphere, you have to have a private sphere. Well, that's a little problematical for China, but that there is a public sphere that is capable of creating rules of civility that can be used as a way to guide and judge public

discourse and hence help shape government reactions, the state's reactions. And so where do you find this public sphere? Well, of course, you can find them in German coffee houses and in print capitalism, but where do you find them in China? And where do you find civil society in China? And the great quest began, and everybody got involved in this great hunt. And at first it was to try to find examples of it in contemporary China, but then to find the roots of it in the late early Republican Period or the late Imperial Period or the late nineteenth century, to find it in a new definition of the gentry as bureaucratic managers in which the state isn't just regulating things, it's trying to create a productive sphere on and on and on. And a lot of ink was spilled in this regard and I found it very wrong.

14-00:17:40

Lage: It didn't ring true, it didn't enlighten?

14-00:17:42

Wakeman: No. I'm afraid I'm more of a—a lot of my work in more recent years has been directed towards understanding the growth of state power. Not in some monolithic way, but by looking at sheaves of state power, or even, well, think of it as bundles of rods, and examining how that sort of power, which is largely bureaucratic but also can be used to penetrate society, develops. Because one of the most of amazing things that seem to perdure, one is culture and the other is bureaucracy. It's very hard to get rid of bureaucracy once it's there. That's what Mao tried to do, I mean, everybody is always trying to do with it. But if you believe in modernity, one of the stories of modernity is the steady growth of this bureaucratic scheme of things. And in my own research I had seen this starting, really back in the eighteenth century. And certainly if you look at the twentieth century, which has been viewed largely in terms of discontinuities, the 1911 revolution, the nationalist revolution, if you want to call it that, as I do, or the Communist revolution, there are all these deep breaks, but if you look at it in terms of these institutional bundles, they just seem to go right on, and if anything they increase their power and authority.

And that doesn't leave a lot of room for a civil society, particularly given Chinese social expectations and the lack of, I once wrote a piece called, "The Price of Autonomy," arguing that for intellectuals to make themselves relevant in twentieth century China they had to give up their autonomy as intellectuals. But autonomy was always circumscribed and limited and what we think of in, say, Western European history as examples of civil society, of autonomous sectors, going back to medieval governments like town councils and so forth and so on, don't really exist in China. The state is always there.

14-00:20:08

Lage: Or the university in Europe, or—

14-00:20:10

Wakeman: The university in Europe and in effect, there is no university in China. There was a university in the mid-Imperial Period but by the time you get to the late

Imperial Period the university is just a name for a status that's given to students who don't go to the university. I mean—

14-00:20:30

Lage: Well, you mean it's part of the state?

14-00:20:34

Wakeman: Yes, oh yes, it's part of the state. It's called the Guozijian, and basically you test into it or you buy into it and get a degree or you get a status that enables you to sit for state examination degrees that make you member of the civil service.

14-00:20:53

Lage: Oh, I—it's just part of the bureaucracy.

14-00:20:56

Wakeman: Part of the bureaucracy. So it's, you don't really get a modern university in the Western sense until Peking University in the 19-teens, and that's a very, very new thing. And the question of the autonomy of that later is a big problem. So I, I found myself really opposed to this. And I wrote an article about this for an issue of a journal that had a whole series of articles telling us why there was civil society in the public sphere. So in effect I was saying Habermas is fine for Germany but he just don't travel. And I took as an example the work of a very good scholar at [Johns] Hopkins, William Rowe, who has sort of attempted to use Weber without, or, has attempted to say Weber is inapplicable, but then tries to show you why China is Weberian. It's very strange and has examples of sort of civil autonomy, that if you look at them closely are not autonomous. They're always being run by officials, guilds, local fire departments, things like that. And I wrote this in a rather, um, I wouldn't, somewhat cutting fashion. It was a hatchet job, let me put it that way! [laughter]

14-00:22:31

Lage: If the truth were told!

14-00:22:35

Wakeman: But I didn't think that was that difficult or would be that difficult. Meanwhile, a fellow who'd had a postdoc here with me, David Strand, who's a professor at Dickinson [College] University now was then at Columbia had written a wonderful book called *Rickshaw Beijing*, about Beijing during the 1920s and again, it's presented sort of as though it were an American city, these little unions striking against each other, with crowds assembling in an orderly fashion, and that just ain't the Beijing I know. So I debated Rowe, and before the article appeared, I debated Rowe in a talk at the Smithsonian held in the Smithsonian Library, which is a very dark room with a lot of little cubbyholes, and in the course of it, I—again, you should always know who's in the audience—I rather disparagingly said, “Well, take David Strand's book, for example; after you've finished that book, which was called *Rickshaw Beijing*, you know much much more about Chicago urban politics than anything at all

about Beijing.” [chuckles] And out of the shadows stepped David looking at me in high dudgeon saying, “I’ve never even been to Chicago.” [laughter]

So, I was already becoming Peck’s Bad Boy, and then when this article appeared, it was presented as, first, as a paper at a symposium at UCLA. A friend, Josh Fogel, who teaches Chinese and Japanese history at Santa Barbara, put Rowe up at his house before they went to this meeting, and he told me later, he said, “You know, Bill was so nervous he flew out on the airplane, and he couldn’t sleep all night, because he just read your piece.” And I was, I said, “Oh, well, I didn’t mean to, I mean, this is just a, this is not the end of the world. People can argue about these things.” But when the meeting opened and he led off, he said, “Well,” and his face got very red and he said, “Well, I’m certainly glad that I have my tenure before Professor Wakeman’s piece is published.” I thought, “Oh, God.” I’m OK with these people, but I’m seen really as sort of a Wittfogelian person who believes in Oriental despotism at this point, which I don’t, but I’m getting too tired to protest otherwise. So I’m the sole voice, sort of, though others are joining me now, that came out against this fad for the public sphere and civil society, which is you know, Habermas’s great contribution to—

14-00:25:28

Lage: Oh, that’s interesting.

14-00:25:29

Wakeman: — to China, yes. It’s, it is, it’s been, it has dominated debates for the last ten years.

14-00:25:36

Lage: Wow.

14-00:25:36

Wakeman: And now it’s finally beginning to, I mean, graduate students jump, as they will, jump at something. Everything is, the public sphere is everywhere, civil society is everywhere, and now people are saying, “Well, I’m not so sure.” Now, they may just be pandering to me. I hope not, but I think that it’s losing some of its—

14-00:25:57

Lage: There are these fads of—

14-00:25:59

Wakeman: There are fads, and fads come and go, and we somehow—and I’m not nearly as adamant as I was then about this. I mean, there are a lot of things happening in the late nineteenth century. In fact, I published an article a couple of years ago of a different conception of nested hierarchies. You see, the thing about China that you discover, and it’s a hard thing for a Westerner to see this, which is one reason why it’s hard for an outsider to study China, is that what we can often see as fairly discrete and defined boundaries are almost always diffused boundaries in China. Nothing is ever cut and dried, so that it’s not

that there isn't something like a civil society, it's that it is something *like* a civil society. It's not that there isn't something like a private sector, there is something like a private sector, but the neatness that too many years of Hegel have given us, or too many years of Anglo-American political theory have given us, just breaks down. And it's very frustrating, because you long for some clarity. I mean, take law for example. The great hope after the opening up of China was that they would adopt Western legal forms and the substance of Western law, which is constitutional law. Not just commercial law, not just contractual law, but actually the notion of civil rights.

14-00:27:36

Lage: That was a big hope.

14-00:27:40

Wakeman: That was a tremendous hope. And the Ford Foundation, who invested a lot of money in both bringing Chinese lawyers here and training our people—especially sending young, recent graduates of Harvard Law School, Yale Law School, Boalt, whatever—off to China to study Chinese law. And in the case of the Chinese coming here, they might attend classes on constitutional law taught by [Lawrence] Tribe or some other famous person at Stanford or Harvard or whatever. And then go back and —eh—there is very little law in that sense practiced in China. People are always signing contracts, dealing with mediation—“Can you refer this case about this fellow refusing to honor his contract to pay the Italians so much for this factory before the Hague or can you not?” That's what they worry about, and a lot of it is simple business negotiation. People are not sitting down saying, “Well, now, do we take a fundamentalist view of our constitution?” Because the Chinese constitution boldly states that the constitution applies to everything except the Chinese Communist Party. Well, as long as you have that kind of exception, that ain't the kind of constitution people want to see.

14-00:29:03

Lage: We should end up because we are past our time, but did you come to this thinking about China through your research, or in part through visits, which we could talk about another time.

14-00:29:17

Wakeman: Both. I'd have to say both. We can talk about that, because that's a very interesting question. Research or visits. Yeah.

14-00:29:26

Lage: Or both.

14-00:29:28

Wakeman: Both. We'll talk about that next time.

Interview 9: March 21, 2006

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15-00:02:40

Lage: [initial remarks not transcribed] OK, we're ready. I think the equipment is working. Today is March 21, 2006. It's been, about ten months, I think, since we've talked, but we're going to start right up where we left off. This is Fred Wakeman, by the way; I'm Ann Lage.

15-00:03:01

Wakeman: Without dropping a single stitch.

15-00:03:03

Lage: [laughs] Right! Well, the last time we talked, where were we? You were talking about the public sphere and how you didn't think it worked in China, and I asked you if your visits there, your travels, had had an effect on your thinking, or whether your research [was more important.] Well, that kind of led us into the travels in China and the opening up of China—

15-00:03:27

Wakeman: Yes, right.

15-00:03:28

Lage: —to research and new archives and all of that. So that's where I thought we'd start. And I know you've written about your trips.

15-00:03:33

Wakeman: Yes, I have.

15-00:03:34

Lage: I'm hoping maybe you'll get behind some of the things that you wrote, or—

15-00:03:40

Wakeman: It's, the opening of China to Western scholars, to American scholars in particular—there had been a few European scholars who had gone as sympathizers, or I guess what used to be called fellow travelers in the fifties, some of them Communists. And we envied them immensely, but I remember as a graduate student when I was finishing my dissertation, being in Hong Kong and going to the border and looking over and thinking, "Well, you know, in my lifetime I will never, ever have a chance to go to China."

15-00:04:18

Lage: You thought it was that permanent a condition then.

15-00:04:21

Wakeman: I thought it was that permanent a condition. And I'll just jump ahead right now for illustrative purposes. Right now, for reasons that somewhat elude me, I am a big deal in China. They are publishing my books. I just got a copy today of a book that had been published earlier as an internal study document,

which is a translation of my book *History and Will*, which Cal [UC] Press originally published and now has been published by People's University, so—

15-00:04:51

Lage: Now, that's very interesting that they would pick up on that one particularly.

15-00:04:54

Wakeman: Well, I think so. Yes, particularly because of the current controversies about Mao and how to evaluate him. But my work on police and of course, espionage, I mean I'm really— In fact I'm kind of furious at the publishers there because I can't get—the Chinese now will sign contracts that pay advances and royalties.

15-00:05:18

Lage: Oh, they will, they don't just take the book—

15-00:05:20

Wakeman: No. They were very careful about that. Now they are observing the Berne copyright convention, but they won't really report the true sales, so there is a lot of finagling and it's very political. I have a book right now—they're trying to publish a trilogy of mine in July to coincide with the anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. And they are also very open about things like censorship. I just got a note from the People's Press asking me, or telling me, that there will have to be some censorship of this particular book I'm referring to and please to send them a Chinese translation of the last two chapters; they will see what they have to do to satisfy the censors. Will I be satisfied? I mean, everybody talks about Hillary Clinton and her book—or will I have a fit of pique, and so on. The point is that this would have been totally unthinkable to me back in the 1960s.

15-00:06:22

Lage: Of course.

15-00:06:22

Wakeman: So that the ping-pong diplomacy and the Shanghai Communiqué in 1972, which was rapidly followed by an opening up of scholarly exchange with China that was limited primarily to delegations, was a tremendously eye-opening opportunity to visit China. My first visit was as a kind of political advisor and interpreter for a group of herbal pharmacologists in 1974. We spent about a month in China. Of course it was highly medical and the trip was interesting. A report was issued by our own National Academy of Sciences afterwards. I wrote part of it.

15-00:07:08

Lage: How did you get hooked up with the pharmacologists?

15-00:07:11

Wakeman: Well, it was—we had developed a strategy. There had been in existence long before the Nixon trip, a group of very prescient American scholars had said, "What happens if they ever open up? We have to have in place an

organization that will be prepared to deal with this.” So they set up something called the Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People’s Republic of China.”

15-00:07:39

Lage: Now, who was a moving party there?

15-00:07:41

Wakeman: There were three parties. One was the National Academy of Sciences, the second was the American Council of Learned Societies, and the third was the Social Science Research Council. So there was a triumvirate that ruled this group that didn’t of course require any funding to speak of at the beginning, but was in place. I don’t think I even knew about the existence of this group until suddenly this great opening appeared and the committee instantly began to engage in putting together lists of China scholars whom in a sense they wanted to reward, if you like, for their years of toiling in the vineyards of the Lord, with a trip to China. But it could only happen if they came along with scientific delegations—the Chinese were not prepared to receive historians or social scientists—to serve as interpreters. Now, I could interpret. Many of the people we sent can’t really speak Chinese that well, but it didn’t matter, we sent our luminaries, and they had their, so we would select a delegation, plate tectonics, herbal pharmacology, anesthesia, rural medical care, you know, on and on and on, these things—

15-00:08:58

Lage: Each accompanied by a social scientist or a historian?

15-00:09:01

Wakeman: Yes, each accompanied by a social scientist or a historian who was there and of course was viewed initially with great, great suspicion. When I went on this first trip, I was at that point chairman of the Center for Chinese Studies here, and to a Chinese, this was during the Cultural Revolution, to the Chinese it was unthinkable that the head of a center for Chinese studies at a major university like Berkeley would be anything other than a spy. So the first thing they had to decide was, was I really a bonafide scholar. They were, of course, totally isolated, by and large.

15-00:09:32

Lage: They didn’t know your works.

15-00:09:33

Wakeman: Well, they did in South China where they had translated without my knowledge, my first book on *Strangers at the Gate*. But elsewhere, no. Oh, they did know about the book I just held up. They had, they’d heard about that and they’d already read versions of it. It had been translated covertly. So I got there and all that they of course assigned, they had the usual welcoming group for us, the Chinese Medical Association, in this case. And another man showed up whose name was {Chung?}, who was very ingenuous, and who announced himself to me, he didn’t speak English, he announced himself to

me as being a representative from the Work Department of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, which is—the Work Department is a very sensitive department. And it became obvious to me that he was there to vet me.

15-00:10:27

Lage: Oh, to see if you were a spy.

15-00:10:29

Wakeman: To see if I was a spy or, you know, I was a real scholar. And so he would follow me around, and actually I passed the test when I went out to the Peking Library, which is their Library of Congress, and has a very great rare book collection, and spent a day with the head of the library going through texts and readings, and so on. And he quickly decided that I was a—

15-00:10:55

Lage: You knew something about these things.

15-00:10:57

Wakeman: I knew something about these classical Chinese texts. And that was all right. I seemed to be OK thereafter. But he still followed me around. In fact, the funniest part of this whole thing was at that time, the Chinese Communist Party was predicting that there would be a revolution in the United States through an alliance between the working class and the oppressed Blacks, you know, ghetto riots, and this was where the revolution would—the Black Panthers and whatever else would join together. And so they were very keen to see some kind of cooperation between our White proletariat and the Black underclass. And on this bus, one of these minibuses one day as we were going to an acupuncture demonstration, one of our members who's a very, very great scholar, he's dead now, he died of melanoma, but he was from a working-class background himself and rather vulgar, and he made a, I think very off color and rather obscene remark about Chinese women's sexual—

15-00:12:04

Lage: In Chinese?

15-00:12:06

Wakeman: Oh, no. This guy couldn't, you know. In English, but all the people on the bus laughed and one of the—but they did so ruefully, and one of them said, "Oh, come on George, you're worse than Archie Bunker." So this Mr. {Chung?} who was seated with me at the back of the bus said, "What are they laughing about?" I said, "Well, he told a bad joke. It showed that he was prejudiced, racially prejudiced, and they compared him to a television character, Archie Bunker." And I described Bunker who was against Jews, and Blacks, and everybody. And he listened very carefully. The next day we had to go out to Tianjin to witness some microsurgery. They had perfected the reattachment of limbs, and so on, and we were away for about three days, came back to Peking, and there they were waiting at the train station for us. Mr. Chung was standing apart, and so I went over to him and I said, [in Chinese] "How are

you, how are things going?" He looked a little harried, but once we got aboard the bus I said, "Well, you must be very relaxed. You've had three days to rest from this onerous assignment of seeing us around." He said, "Oh, no, no, no. I haven't been resting. I've been writing many, many, many reports." And I said, "I see." He said, "By the way," he said, "how do you spell Bunker?" And I thought, "My God, there's going to be a document in the Central Committee about this Archie Bunker that confutes the policy that" you know, on and on and on. But that was sort of the state of the relationship.

15-00:13:35

Lage:

He reported every word!

15-00:13:37

Wakeman:

Every word. But I passed muster, I discovered later when I had indirect access to my file there. They decided I was an OK person, and in fact, they arranged for me, and this was a big deal then, a meeting with historians in Nanking. It was my first real exposure to Chinese historians. Now, this was a period of time when the Chinese history field was in a terrible disarray, particularly fields like the study of the Taiping Rebellion, which was taken as a kind of analogy to what was going on in China at that time. Each of the major figures in the Taiping Rebellion were simulacra for Zhou Enlai, Lin Biao, Mao Zedong, and so on. So they were on the hot seat and they gave me this interview. I told them I was going to take notes and they agreed to that, in the Taiping history museum in Nanjing, and I spent a full morning with them just completely avid, because they were in a way revealing the rifts between them and the members of the cultural revolutionary group that dominated the universities in Shanghai. And I told them I was going to publish this, then went on and published an English translation of the conversation in a journal called *The China Quarterly*, which I then I thought no more of it. And later when I went back to China and lived there, one of the figures, a man who's still very active, a very great scholar, told me one time on a trip, he said, "You know, I was almost killed for that." Because I addressed him at one point and said, "I notice that there's a distinct difference between your interpretation and the interpretation of Fudan University. Is that true?" And these four gentlemen looked at each other, rather shiftily and finally one of them, the oldest of them said, "Shì duide," "yes, it is." And I noted that. Well, I had no idea what this meant in terms of the consequences. The fact that he would acknowledge this kind of rift to an outsider was taken as an act of treachery, and they sent a team from Shanghai to arrest him. Had it not been for the protection of the vice president of his university, he would have been taken off, and I don't know what would have happened to him. He said, "Well, you know, they would have my head cut off," which of course was hyperbole. But it was very, it was a highly politicized atmosphere.

15-00:16:07

Lage:

Well, did you realize that when you were writing that up? Did you—

15-00:16:09

Wakeman: No.

15-00:16:09

Lage: Were you careful about how you wrote it up?

15-00:16:12

Wakeman: Of course, I was, but I didn't think something that simple and direct, except that I had it done as dialogue, so he was identified. And it was one of those mistakes you commit when you learn later that somebody pays a price for it that, I mean it would have, utterly, I don't know what I—it would have destroyed me if I had been responsible for the man's death.

15-00:16:33

Lage: Well, did you also feel that for your own protection, in terms of whether you'd be received back, that you had to be careful?

15-00:16:41

Wakeman: Uh, no. I was, no, I didn't really worry much about that. At that point it didn't seem that we were going to move much beyond the scientific delegation phase of things. And it came as a real shock in the summer of '78 when President Carter's chief science advisor, Frank Press, who later became head of the [National] Academy of Sciences, went to China to meet with his counterparts, especially a man who was the deputy, or the minister in charge of technology, and with Deng Xiaoping. This, of course, was after Mao died in early '77. This change had started taking place, and by the summer of '78 Deng Xiaoping was firmly in power, and he had—I had been visiting China between then—

15-00:17:39

Lage: You had been?

15-00:17:39

Wakeman: Yes, because by then I was taking on the role of—the Committee on Scholarly Communication was always headed by a natural scientist, and usually someone of great distinction, for example, oh, gosh, just—um, well, I can give you names, but very, very—Nobel Prize winners, Seaborg, that kind of person. Charles Townes was head of the committee then; in fact, I served as his vice chairman. The vice chair was always a China specialist.

15-00:18:15

Lage: I see.

15-00:18:16

Wakeman: So I had by then become appointed as vice chair, and the natural scientist, of course, Charles Townes, handled the sort of ceremonial side of it and of course exerted a powerful influence on science exchanges, but the vice chairman was dealing with social science exchanges. And there was such an asymmetry at that point that, as the Chinese were so eager to get access to American science and technology, the Americans were not terribly eager

except in areas like plate tectonics where they could go to Sichuan and do field work, or examine the Yangtze crocodile, or something that was unique to China. But the social scientists, for them, this was a potential laboratory, so the sort of thing that was worked out, which became quite flexible was an exchange program based upon exchanging, in effect, mainly social scientists for natural scientists who would come here to study and we would send our people there. And that the Chinese accepted in a very flexible way, unlike the Soviet exchanges, where we had a very wooden, sort of man-hour per man-hour relationship. Either you have so many hours per month to send people there, and we give you the same amount. This was much more, much more flexible. So I was negotiating in those terms already by then, but the thing that happened in '78 was I was actually in my home in Kensington, it was toward the end of the summer and I got a phone call from Press aboard Air Force One, flying back from Peking and saying, telling me that the Chinese had agreed to an exchange program of actually sending students.

15-00:20:07

Lage: Sending our students there?

15-00:20:10

Wakeman: And back and forth. And they had, of course, realized that they had far more students that they wanted to send here than we there. We didn't have enough people to send. Could we put together a program, Frank asked me, and I should say again that we had already foreseen this by holding a special meeting that previous spring that I convened in Washington with all of the agencies including with various government agencies from the State Department, to the Defense Department, CIA, and so forth, to talk about what this entailed. And, so that we had some sense of what we would have to do. But Frank said, "They want to send, Deng wants to send 5,000 students in September, and they want to receive 50 students. Can you do it?" And I said, "No," I said, "We can do it in January but not September. It's July 20<sup>th</sup>, for godsakes! As quickly as we move, we simply can't do it." Because one of the problems we had was the FBI. They insisted upon a certain number of working days to check each applicant, and I think initially it was forty-five working days, and then we argued with them and negotiated and got them down to twelve days, but you know, that's—

15-00:21:24

Lage: Did they think the applicants might be sympathetic to the Chinese government?

15-00:21:29

Wakeman: No, no, no, no. The Chinese coming here.

15-00:21:31

Lage: Oh, the Chinese coming here! Yes, yes, I see. I thought you were thinking about the fifty.

15-00:21:35

Wakeman:

No, no, no. When they went into the liaison office to get their visas, then of course they were forwarded instantly, or the names were sent to the FBI and they then had to say yes or no. Were these spies or not? And one, I remember one man, {Shu Ti-xi?}, a very famous economist about whom I'm actually writing right now, came, and when I met him here in the States he said—he was joking about this—he said, "You know," this guy is a very prominent Communist, "You know," he said, "When I went in to get my visa the consul told me, not to, when they ask you on the exam have you ever been a member of the Communist Party, say no." And he said, "This is absurd," he said, "Am I a Communist? Of course I'm a Communist. I've been a Communist—" you know, but the FBI was sort of in that gumshoe—

15-00:22:27

Lage:

What did they expect?

15-00:22:28

Wakeman:

What did they expect to get, exactly. Well, they didn't want to get—I think, actually, and that was always a problem in this program. People from *both* sides trying to use it for other purposes. But in any case, we put together a program by January of '79. We sent over the first batch of American students, one of whom was Tom Gold, our professor of sociology here who was then a graduate student at Harvard, who actually went to Chinese universities and began, and that was the beginning of this huge wave that began. The Chinese, of course, began sending their students here, mainly to Berkeley, but also to Illinois for high-energy physics and so on.

15-00:23:12

Lage:

Now, you say mainly to Berkeley. How—

15-00:23:14

Wakeman:

Well, I think partly because the person who was the main negotiator for the Chinese during the negotiations that set this all up was a man named Zhou Peiyuan; he's dead now. Zhou Peiyuan was a theoretical physicist who had graduated from Caltech, from Chicago, yes, Chicago and then Caltech. And he was president of Peking University and also a very prominent party member who was—that was not trumpeted widely—but he was ostensibly head of the Democratic Party. You know, the Chinese still maintain this set of parties that had been active during the Third Front period before 1949. And Zhou, I got to know him very well because I was the main advisor to Richard Atkinson, who was then the head of the NSF.

15-00:24:07

Lage:

Oh, yes.

15-00:24:08

Wakeman:

Who was the lead person for this joint agency committee that negotiated the exchanges. And it was a very touchy kind of thing, I mean, Zhou Peiyuan had long been a major figure in the Pugwash meetings. Everybody, a lot of people

in the international physicist community, the *Bulletin of [the] Atomic Scientists* knew him, and he's a very dynamic, charismatic person. And he took a liking to me. We got along very well. But I found myself sort of caught between him and the—as you always do if you're sort of the borderline negotiator, caught between the two sides trying to get either side to be, both sides to be amenable. But we did work out an agreement. And the agreement was by and large immensely successful. I would say that it ceased to be important once the floodgate was open in the late-eighties, and thereafter it has really not occupied a very major position in exchanges. But that was the vehicle for all exchanges. The reason it was so successful is that we managed to maintain, because of the cooperation between the head of the National Academy of Sciences and the two main humanistic and social science bodies, one of which I became president, the agreement to keep a conjoined package always natural science-social science, what we would call the human sciences, *wissenschaft* and whatever, together, and negotiate from a common stance. And it worked. We managed to get access to field work—that was difficult. There were many, I don't want to get into all the long history of this, many cases that I was involved in that were never made public involving very delicate matters including efforts on both sides to infiltrate the ranks with professional intelligence officers.

15-00:26:06

Lage:

And how aware were you, or how—

15-00:26:09

Wakeman:

Well, I was traveling back and forth to China all the time. I went over for a kind of more permanent residency in, let's see, late '79 and was visiting a professor at Beida, Peking University. That was actually carried out under the aegis of a program that Berkeley signed with Peking University. And another program that they signed with Tsinghua University because of our faculty here. S.S. Chern, the geometrician who set up his own mathematics institute in Tsinghua was very important in this. The Chinese members of the faculty at Berkeley were extremely important in setting these things up.

15-00:26:53

Lage:

So is this one reason why so many Chinese students came here?

15-00:26:56

Wakeman:

Yes—

15-00:26:56

Lage:

Because we had the professors—

15-00:26:57

Wakeman:

Yes, because of these connections and because also, Peking University, which was the premier university then, and still is of course, and Berkeley had signed a sister-to-sister relationship. It was the first relationship we had signed with a Chinese university and the first they signed with an American university.

15-00:27:13

Lage: Now, when would that have been?

15-00:27:14

Wakeman: That was 19, let's see, that was 1979.

15-00:27:26

Lage: Now, were people like yourself important in doing that? Or was it more the Chinese-heritage professors—

15-00:27:33

Wakeman: Oh, no, no, no. No, I think, I mean, the whole thing was really run by scholars. I mean, we had to answer to our masters in the government, particularly when it came to funding. Ted Kennedy, to get it through Congress, had said, had promised that we wouldn't put any money into scholarships, so we had to find funding from elsewhere. So a lot of this meant our running around to the MacArthur Foundation, Ford, etc., Carnegie Mellon, to raise money to help pay for fellowships to send our people there. It was easier in a way to bring Chinese here because most of them were science students, and even by then it was very difficult to staff any physics program with TAs and science—and lab assistants without having a lot of Chinese and Indians around.

15-00:28:19

Lage: Even then?

15-00:28:19

Wakeman: Even then, yes, even then. But the main problem was lab space and the cost of their scientific research, but all of this was very much generated by, I mean, in my life it was one of the most hectic periods. I was on the plane to Washington, sometimes twice a week taking the red eye, and it was very hard on my family, and going to China at the drop of a hat if something came up. We had to place each of our students in China. Our embassy was totally ineffective.

15-00:28:59

Lage: In helping you place—?

15-00:29:02

Wakeman: Well, they just didn't have any contacts. They didn't have anybody who really understood Chinese academia. And we had contacts through our faculty, through contacts that we made later on. When I was living there and being a professor at Beida, I met many members of the faculty, and I met them at other universities elsewhere, so that I could go somewhere and say, "Would you take this person as your student?" Whereas, the Ministry of Education in China had begun helping us with that and finally said, "We haven't got the resources. We're OK in Peking, but we can't go down to Hangzhou and find you a berth for this student." And the embassy, well, frankly, the USIA—well, it was then called the ICA [International Communication Agency]—were a bunch of jerks. I mean, they really were. I know this because I worked for

them. I mean, this was part of what, the evolution of all of this, because, in that first residence, we decided we needed a person in Peking.

15-00:30:01

Lage: Now, give me a date again.

15-00:30:03

Wakeman: That would be '80, '80-'81. We needed a person in Peking, permanently, to run this program. Somebody who knew China well, spoke the language well, and we picked a Berkeley faculty member, a man named John Jamieson, who is now retired. John is one of those linguistic marvels who speaks fluent Japanese, Korean, and Chinese—Chinese you literally can't tell him from a native. When I was living there, I lived in the western suburbs, and my maid, the ayi who worked for me—I'd come home at night from university, I'd peddle dutifully down to school every day—would come in and she'd say, "So and so, Mr. Jian xiansheng, Mr. Jian gave you a call. I'd say, Oh, Jian, that must be Jamieson. She'd say, "No, no, it's not a foreigner, that's Jian; he's a Chinese." I mean, he absolutely, perfect colloquial, effortlessly spoken, ability to joke, to play finger games. He was very popular with Chinese officials. His situation then was somewhat complicated because when he was picked for this assignment, of course you had to go through the regular State Department to get an appointment in the Foreign Service Reserve. I mean, you couldn't go—

15-00:31:22

Lage: You just weren't a scholar going over.

15-00:31:23

Wakeman: Yes, you weren't a scholar. You were there as a member of the embassy staff.

15-00:31:26

Lage: I see.

15-00:31:27

Wakeman: With the title of, I think he was first secretary, or something, and involved in cultural affairs. And when they sent a cable en clair, as they say, that is, not in code, to the embassy saying that John Jamieson was showing up as a representative of the ICA, but whoever sent the telegram got it turned around and it became CIA! So John, for a long time, and he had been working for US, when he was a serviceman he had worked for the National Security Agency, so there was a lot of, a kind of confusion about that. But John was, you know, John did very, very well there. He had his own personal problems. He got divorced and married a—his wife is Chinese, but so John was handling all of this.

Then the time came, this was toward the end of the Carter presidency, and I was in Peking, so they said, "Well, why don't you stay? Why don't you take the embassy job? John only has a two-year tour." I said, "I don't think I want to do that." And I said that quite, quite, I thought realistically, because it was

after the botched raid that Carter ordered on Tehran, and I thought, you know, he's not going to be reelected. Reagan is going to win this election, and I don't want to be here seen in any way as a representative of Reagan, whom I politically, obviously differed with a great deal. So I said, "No, I don't want to do this." And at that point, the National Security Council officer in charge of China, Mike Oksenberg, wonderful, brilliant, wonderful human being who died just a couple of years ago—a major figure in Chinese political science. Mike Oksenberg was working for the government, and he said, he called me up in Peking and said, "You've got to do this." He said, "We managed to get reinstated again, the same system that we had with John Fairbank in Chungking during the war of having the scholar in charge of these affairs. We can't give it up, because if you don't take this job, we're going to lose it, I'll tell you."

15-00:33:43

Lage:

Especially with Reagan coming in.

15-00:33:45

Wakeman:

Especially with Reagan coming in. So I rather reluctantly said, "Yes, of course." Well, I got involved with an incredible entanglement. That is, I had to go back to the States, maintaining my apartment in Peking. It was very difficult because my wife was then working teaching at a school that had been part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

15-00:34:07

Lage:

There.

15-00:34:08

Wakeman:

Chinese. And she of course teaches at Berkeley now, and she was, I think, very, very, how do I put it, very empathetic toward the socialist revolution. And she, she wanted very much to keep her job. Well, the Chinese said, "You can't keep your job and have diplomatic immunity. You're going to have to renounce your diplomatic immunity." Well, actually, you can't do that. I mean, that's not permissible. But she said she would do that. Meanwhile, the American Embassy was telling me, you can't live out there in the Haidian area. They'll be bugging you all over the place. In fact, at one point they sent out a security crew to monitor my room, and they found sixteen listening devices buried in the walls.

15-00:34:56

Lage:

What were they expecting to find?

15-00:34:58

Wakeman:

Just that. And of course, probably the minute after they left there were new devices—

15-00:35:02

Lage:

No, but I mean what were the *Chinese* expecting to find from you.

15-00:35:06

Wakeman:

Oh, those days, the Chinese had, there was a big room in the basement of the Friendship Hotel, which was just filled with monitors and video monitors and they'd tape everything.

15-00:35:19

Lage:

So any, just in case you *were* a spy, or—

15-00:35:23

Wakeman:

Oh, no, just because they wanted information, and there were few enough foreigners coming to China then so that you could do this. You had enough English language speakers and graduates of these language schools, which are very well run and teach English very well, to be able to do this. I remember one time in the late-seventies, in '77, I think, being there, and we were having a discussion about—no, it was later actually—a discussion over field work because of an incident that had been provoked by a Stanford student, and we were in the hotel room discussing. We knew that the next day we were going to see a major political figure. They never, in China when you're going to have a meeting with a high official, they don't tell you who it is, they just say, "You're going to have to be ready, from this hour to this hour be ready. So you get your clothing on, your suit and so on, and then they come and pick you up, drive you over to the Great Hall of the People, and take you in and you have your meeting. You aren't supposed to know. Our guess was that it was going to be a senior deputy premier named Bo Yibo, who's unfortunately deaf, nearly deaf. And it was a very, our, that the two translators involved were the woman who translated for Nixon, and the other person wasn't a translator, she was then the foreign secretary of the Academy of Social Sciences, Wang Guangmei, who is the widow of the former president of China, Liu Shaoqi. So they were there to sort of feed Bo Yibo with whatever he needed to know about this.

Mike Oksenberg, who was on the trip, wanted to be up forward about this business about field work and the way in which this one scholar had overstepped the bounds and engaged in what the Chinese considered espionage. And I was saying, "No, don't bring it up with Bo Yibo because if he makes a pronouncement then it's going to be set in concrete. It's going to be very hard to change it once he says anything. In this session he doesn't know anything about this and so forth. And so we were arguing about this. In the middle of the argument the phone in the room in the Peking Hotel rang and the guy who was in charge of the mission, {Ken Pruitt}, picked it up and said, "Hello? Oh, oh, I see, oh, yes, well, thank you, Zhao Fusan," and put it down. Zhao Fusan, who is a fascinating character in his own right, I don't even—he defected later to the States, so I'm not going to talk about that, but it was Zhao Fusan who was my counterpart on the Chinese side. We negotiated all the time. Zhao Fusan had said, the voice said, "Hello, this is Zhao Fusan, I wouldn't do that, I wouldn't bring it up in front of Bo." I mean, obviously they were listening all the time. So we, of course, we turned up the television,

but you just know that you're, and you get used to living in a situation where you assume that everything is being monitored. It's just part of the action.

In any case, I decided to go ahead with this, and I insisted upon being appointed a councilor, which is a higher rank and having direct reporting privileges to the head of ICA. Reagan had not yet been elected. The ambassador in charge of ICA was a man named John Reinhardt. But in between my decision to do this and the actual appointment, because I had to go back to Washington, and of course they had to go through the usual full security clearances again, physicals and all the rest of it, the government changed hands. And Reinhardt, of course, was fired or resigned, and there I was with the Reagan problem. But nonetheless, they said, "No, that's fine." Except now my boss was a man named Charles Wick, who was, he had been a band leader, and he had raised a lot of money for Reagan. He was one of Reagan's big buddies, and ICA, now renamed USIA, thought that with Wick in control, they had direct access to the president. And they could somehow get around Alexander Haig, and they were very excited about this, because it would give USIA the clout that they needed to be—the people, I will be very frank, the people in USIA are generally sort of, not the best in the foreign service, so this was their big moment. Now I knew I was doomed when I got back into this setting and would go into a meeting and they would say, "Well, here's the professor." Anytime you're called the professor in a government council or meeting, forget it.

15-00:40:13

Lage: [chuckles] It's not a respected position.

15-00:40:17

Wakeman: It isn't. Absolutely not. But twenty minutes before being sworn in, one of Reagan's aides, [Lyn] Nofziger, I don't know if you remember that name—

15-00:40:34

Lage: Yes, sure.

15-00:40:35

Wakeman: —pulled my file and for reasons that I later discovered after getting my material through Freedom of Information, deemed that I was sort of too soft on Red China. They still called it that in the Reagan Administration, and I was given various reasons—why I wasn't willing to stay three years? And of course, by then, I was literally a few days on the eve of leaving.

15-00:41:01

Lage: And with all the arrangements that you make to come.

15-00:41:04

Wakeman: All made, my kids were going to school in China, my wife was working there, my furniture was there, my library. So as it turned out, I'm very grateful to Joe Duffy, who was then head of the National Endowment [for the Humanities]

who appointed me a special advisor and sent me to the embassy with this kind of extra foreign service appointment which gave me my official position to work in the embassy to try to keep—

15-00:41:29

Lage: But not *that* position.

15-00:41:31

Wakeman: But not that, which I was frankly very relieved about, because in its new aggressive pose, the USIA wanted to use people like me to get to academics to talk to them, to try to persuade them, to, I mean it was more than I—

15-00:41:48

Lage: To turn it into kind of a spying operation?

15-00:41:51

Wakeman: Yes, to turn it into kind of a spying operation.

15-00:41:52

Lage: That would have undermined what you had been trying to do.

15-00:41:54

Wakeman: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. So, I flatly refused to do that, and this got me off that hook. But it meant that I was very much in the midst, in the middle of all of these things, these bumps and so forth in the road that occurred as we went on down towards full exchange of people. But it was a very, very exciting time. We were bringing in, we were now having conferences with Chinese scholars that we thought were dead, that had reappeared after—

15-00:42:22

Lage: They'd been sent to the provinces?

15-00:42:24

Wakeman: They'd been sent to the countryside, and they'd been assigned some menial task in a publishing house to punctuate manuscripts, but they were legends to us, because they'd published before 1949. Many of them had been in this country, and gone back to China, and then had been purged or whatever during that, the awful period.

15-00:42:44

Lage: And could they speak freely with you at that point?

15-00:42:47

Wakeman: In private, in private. We began bringing people here, outside of this program, under the Luce Foundation. The Luce Foundation set up, again I was very important, or very—that sounds too self-vaunting, but I was very—

15-00:43:04

Lage: Instrumental.

15-00:43:04

Wakeman:

Instrumental in help setting up this program with Terry Lutz, who was then the program officer at the Luce Foundation, of bringing people here for six months. And we would select them very carefully, you know, people who we knew were going to be very, very good scholars, were very good scholars, bring them to Berkeley. I brought a number of them here. One of our first problems was, we discovered after they arrived, that the Chinese Consulate General here was taking all their money and giving them a very small stipend. They would say, "Well"—

15-00:43:41

Lage:

Oh, the money that you had planned to provide them.

15-00:43:43

Wakeman:

Yes, we provided them with a generous stipend worthy of a visiting scholar then, but they seemed to be living in the most mean of circumstances, eating terribly cheaply, and it was a big puzzle to us until we discovered, and one of the people who discovered this was {Sophie Sarujian?} who worked with the Chancellor's office then, that they were being taxed to pay for their families back home. I mean, it was just a device for the Chinese government to get this. So our solution was not, and which I then persuaded the Luce Foundation to adopt, was never to give them money, but just to pay for their expenses.

15-00:44:23

Lage:

Uh huh, pay their rent, pay their—

15-00:44:24

Wakeman:

So they could then, pay, so the consulate general couldn't say, "Give us the money." The person could say, "I don't have any money. They give me a weekly allowance of so and so, and they pay the rent. But that was one other way of cementing this.

The other part of it in building these ties, and beginning to collaborate with these scholars, was the issue of archives, which was a big, big question mark in the beginning. I remember Al Feuerwerker, a professor at Michigan once telling me, "You know, Fred, it's going to be impossible ever to do real social history in China because there are no such thing as parish records, for example, they just don't exist, and the documents from the Qing Dynasty have all probably been lost." And we'd heard rumors that people had used some of these, and that people were going to use them, so I mentioned to several people in China, you know we're very interested in the archives for the Qing Dynasty. And they took due notice of this.

In 1979, I was appointed to lead a delegation of Ming and Qing historians of China. This was quite revolutionary in the sense that you had had a few historical delegations. They were mainly in art history, or earlier periods, archaeology, that were fairly safe politically, but Ming and Qing history gets awfully close to the present. If you, for example, follow this recent closing

down and then reopening under new editorship of this journal, *Freezing Point*, that was really about publishing a professor's revisionist interpretation of nineteenth century history. The Chinese are so historically conscious, and they use history in such an Aesopian way, as a way of talking about things in the present, that it's very, very risky to discuss those things. So, we figured it was a great coup to have this mission go. And we got there, the second day we were there, it was again one of those occasions where people who we thought were dead or had disappeared, or whatever, suddenly were saying, "I'm Xie Guozhen." My God! Or, you know, "I'm Wang Qingcheng," or "I'm"—any number of—Zhang Zhongli." You know, very famous people.

15-00:47:00

Lage: It must have been thrilling.

15-00:47:03

Wakeman: Oh, it was absolutely thrilling. It was, we were all completely atingle with excitement. And the second day there, the person who was assigned to be our, the Chinese call *peitong*, the person who accompanies you, who was a very, very vigorous, strong intellectual who had made his way through the Cultural Revolution, without—he had been labeled a Number Nine Stinking Intellectual; he'd survived that, and he was a wonderful man who'd been a secretary of Guo Moro, the great Chinese poet and writer and historian. He told me, in confidence, he said, because I was the head of the delegation, he said, "We're going to take you to see the Ming-Qing archives. I said, "Really!" I was so excited. So I told the group about this, and everybody was, you know, "Where are they!?" So we asked more about this, and he said, "Well, tomorrow, some of you who have never been to Peking before, we're going to give you a tour of the Forbidden City." Well, I'd had, you know, umpteen tours.

15-00:48:06

Lage: You'd been there.

15-00:48:07

Wakeman: As had many, some of the others. "And, we'll go through the Forbidden City, and then on the other end, near Coal Hill, the northernmost exit, we'll get back in our buses, our little bus, *mian bao che*, they call them, one of these little mini-buses, and we'll go find the archives. And I said, "Are they nearby?" He said, "Yes, they're nearby." So the next day, we were all excited, of course, and we went into the palace. Now, one of our members is a man named John Wills, Jack Wills, who teaches at USC, he's an emeritus now, who was an expert on Chinese tributary missions, or missions to China from tributaries like the Dutch. And he had his Nikon camera and I swear, a hundred rolls of film. He was fascinated with imperial ritual in the palace, so for him, the Forbidden City was really something. He'd never been there before, and he would stop and photograph every pebble, every fallen tile, every little bronze, it was just *agonizingly* slow! And meanwhile everybody

was just chomping at the bit—

15-00:49:18

Lage:

Everyone was trying to get trying to get to the other end.

15-00:49:20

Wakeman:

They just wanted to get to the other end. At one point we walked up to the, we were at the Meridian Gate, and I asked our friend, the accompanier, “Where are the archives?” He said, “Well,” and he pointed over to the west side of the palace. I had never really looked over there very carefully before, which is a completely closed off area. It turned out, we later discovered that it was the barracks and training ground for something called 8341, which was sort of a combination of the Secret Service and the Special Forces—super elite troops that guard the leadership and are kind of like our Green Berets. And so, nobody could go in there. And there were five big huge buildings, done in palace style, so that they kind of blended in with the background, and he said, “There are the archives.” Oh, my God, those are damned big archives, you know. So I whispered this to my chums, and again we were all the more impatient. Well, finally Jack was dragged through this, we got out there at the gate and the, one of the sort of minor functionaries helping us with our visit came up and he said, “The bus isn’t here,” looking very puzzled. And I said, “Really?” That’s very unusual, I mean, usually things are arranged very well. And a few minutes later, the bus pulled in empty, with a driver. The driver looked very troubled, and he explained that two of the members of our group [were missing], and I looked around, and they were indeed missing. Professor Philip Kuhn from Harvard, and Professor Susan Naquin from Princeton, had commandeered the bus, gone over, and driven into this compound to be the first to reach the archives. And the Chinese just couldn’t believe this. This was so *uncollective*. This was so, and I remember the guy saying, “Well,” he said, “when you get back to the hotel tonight, you’d better get your people together and do a little bit of thought work, *sixiang gongzuo*, which means, sit down and have some self criticism.

15-00:51:33

Lage:

Yes!

15-00:51:34

Wakeman:

So I said, “Well, we’ll do that.” Well, we got aboard this bus and went around. The guards at the gate to this very guarded compound had been told that one group of foreigners would come through that day. Of course, we didn’t know that there were—

15-00:51:47

Lage:

So you’re the second group.

15-00:51:47

Wakeman:

So we’re the second, so we start to drive through with the guy holding up his little I.D. card as a Social Sciences Academy functionary, and these gung ho

Chinese expert militarists jump out, and all of a sudden we find, we hear the snicking of cocked AK-47s and there are about five of these semi-automatic machine guns pointing at us, and these guys were ready to fire. They thought we were invading, you know, I mean—

15-00:52:19

Lage: The archives!

15-00:52:20

Wakeman: Mao's compound is only a little way from there up just across the road, and the guy, the guy turned absolutely, he blanched, and he said, "No, no, no, this is all. . ." Well, anyway, we got there, and Kuhn and Naquin were forced to wait outside, and so forth, looking very sheepish. But then we went in, and they took us into the first vault. Now, this is, next to the Ottoman archives, is the largest archive in the world.

15-00:52:48

Lage: You find out now.

15-00:52:49

Wakeman: Well, I found out when we got there, because we didn't know these things had been preserved. The reason they were put in there was because Zhou Enlai had wanted to protect them, and he figured that by putting them in this military compound, none of the Red Guards would dare come in and try to destroy these documents. There are over 10 million sets of them, and you go into these vaults and it's, "My God!" and it began to dawn upon us. This was—we had our work cut out for us!

15-00:53:15

Lage: [chuckling] I'll say!

15-00:53:16

Wakeman: You know, we had one member of our group from Kent State, a Wang Yeh-chien from Taiwan, who had just finished a book that was going to be published by Harvard on Chinese grain prices, an economic historian. And we're walking along, we come up to the section where there are maybe, as far as I could see, maybe fifty rows of hempen bags in which the documents are kept, and it says, *liang jia*, grain prices, and he said, "Are those grain prices?" He had something like 10,000 bags. He said, "Yes." He said, "Oh, my God, I'll never be able to publish this book." You know, so that there was such a surfeit of documents that you, well, it has been, all of our students go there now. I have worked in there, it's—

15-00:54:06

Lage: Now, what's the nature of the documents, are they all official records of the central government?

15-00:54:11

Wakeman: They are basically, the majority of them are reports or memorials sent into the throne from officials in the field.

15-00:54:19

Lage: So, you're getting local—

15-00:54:21

Wakeman: You're getting local reports and they cover, there are only a few Ming documents, but the whole Qing Dynasty from 1644 down to the end of the dynasty are in there. I mean, you can imagine!

15-00:54:34

Lage: That's incredible!

15-00:54:35

Wakeman: These are the central archives of the Chinese government for 268 years. So—

15-00:54:43

Lage: Had the historians in China been delving into them?

15-00:54:47

Wakeman: They were very jealously kept as a preserve of the archivists. One of the problems of archives in China then was that most of the archivists had been trained, the older archivists, had been trained in People's University, on the eve of the liberation in South China, as specialists to go along with the troops, enter a city, or enter a town, and seize and maintain control over household registers, police files; in other words, as a kind of control mechanism. So they were sort of a bunch of people who thought of themselves as being security personnel. And their job in life was to guard these things. That, and when you pile that onto two traditions of secrecy: the Bolshevik secrecy tradition of keeping things secret and the Qing tradition, I mean, which had 150 different levels of security classification, you could imagine how they guard these things. So very few Chinese scholars, a very, very few, they had to have enormous influence to get in there, and later, I think, sincerely enough, many of my Chinese friends, scholars who use them, said, "Boy, you guys really opened this up for us."

15-00:56:03

Lage: Fascinating!

15-00:56:04

Wakeman: "Once they let you in, they had to let us in."

15-00:56:06

Lage: And then having visited there, was it a difficult step to get them to let you work there?

15-00:56:11

Wakeman: Well, we had free run for about two hours of the catalogs. I mean, they don't have one single catalog, Unfortunately, this archives was reordered during the mid-1950s, with documents pertaining to topics of interest to Marxist historians—peasant uprisings, Sino-French War, the Opium War—pulled out and kept in their own category, so the shelf order is disturbed. And there are

various catalogs to reflect this. For two hours, there were twelve of us, a dozen or so of us had free run of these catalogs, and we were just going nuts, because our experience in Taiwan had told us that in dealing with archivists—I suppose this isn't just true in China—if you can't order the document, you can't name the document, you don't get it. It's a real Catch-22, and people as a consequence—

15-00:57:11

Lage:

Oh, you have to order it up, you can't just flip through pages.

15-00:57:14

Wakeman:

No, no, no, you can't flip through pages, so you have to say, "I want this or that document." If you have a shelf number, all the better. But even if you don't have a shelf number, if you specify what it is you want, then if they're willing to cooperate, you can get ahold of it. So we wanted to know what they had, so we were all, "You take this, you take that," and we were all just jotting things down, which later, of course, we went back and made very careful records of, circulated them among all of our—I think the Chinese kind of underestimated the mad thoroughness with which American scholars work. You know we just go, "Whoom." It was a wonderful example of American collective zeal, because we really got a very good sense of what was in there.

15-00:57:58

Lage:

Sort of like the assault on Mount Everest.

15-00:58:00

Wakeman:

Yes, exactly, yes. Put on your oxygen tanks and get there. But then, once we had seen those, they were not to be seen again until several years later. And there already was one American working in there, though he was being given documents in a separate area, a man named James Lee, who is now at Michigan, who is the son of Li Zhengdao, the Nobel-prize winning nuclear physicist at Columbia. And Li Zhengdao is a household name in China; he's one of these great science heroes who Mao received many, many times. So there was a special privilege that James had gotten.

15-00:58:40

Lage:

And he hadn't told you about it?

15-00:58:42

Wakeman:

No, not 'til we got there. In fact, I remember bumping into him on the Beida campus. He was strolling out of the dormitory. I said, "What are you doing here, James?" And he said, "I'm doing research." And we found out every day they sent a red flag limousine for him, drove him down to the palace museum and brought these things in. He was—he's a demographer. A very, very good scholar. The leader of his field. And so he had used them, but nobody else really had, other than the occasional, oh, a French scholar named [Marianne] Bastid and so on. So we were so thrilled and instantly began trying to test access. The matter was complicated by a change in the leadership of the collection, but it was one of those great changes in a field that I think you

seldom witness. I think in our field, akin to the opening up of diplomatic archives after World War I, when the Yellow Books and the German, the Wilhelmstrasse archives, and all those things were opened up and suddenly you could get access to the documents that tell where the origins of World War I [were].

15-00:59:57

Lage: Well, what about the opening of some of the Soviet records?

15-00:59:59

Wakeman: Well, that's the next step, of course, that was yet to come at the end of two decades, or nearly two—

15-01:00:05

Lage: But somehow, this seems more vast; the time period it covered.

15-01:00:09

Wakeman: Well, yes, it does. I mean, the Soviet documents, I think, are, I mean that's an incredible opening, but for the China field, of course, we were so focused on this, to think that, yes, we could do that kind of history, because along with the sorts of documents I mentioned, memorials, there were also population registers, local records. One of the great, one of the great sources for social history, which makes it possible for us to do the kind of work that European historians have been doing for generations, are the legal documents. In China every year there are autumn assizes in Peking, and all capital cases, supposedly, are reviewed by the emperor. On that occasion, all of the documents, including the depositions and the repositories of witnesses from the locale were sent up to be reviewed. And those are sitting in the archives, so you can get into, let's say a woman killed her husband, and she is sentenced to death. The details, the circumstances, the neighbors' accounts, the life of the family, how the woman was treated.

15-01:01:20

Lage: Everything, it's just incredible.

15-01:01:22

Wakeman: Everything is in there. It's absolutely incredible.

15-01:01:24

Lage: We're just coming to the end of that tape, so let's pause, stop for a second. What a story! Now, the next tape. Are you doing OK? [omitted informal remarks while tape is changed]

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16-00:00:00

Lage: OK. We're going.

16-00:00:03

Wakeman:

Well, and so the next, the next step is, I'll finish with this topic soon, is that we suddenly began to develop close collaborative relationships with Chinese scholars. I mean, before then, it had been very much polite passing acquaintances, but working together in the archives side by side, many of us spending time on university campuses as the exchanges began to multiply and grow, getting out of Peking, which was one of our aims from the very beginning, to get to other campuses and other cities. All of these things spread the net wide and the net result of this is that now this is almost part of the regular training of Chinese history students at the best places. By that I mean Berkeley, Harvard, Princeton, I don't know what Stanford—Stanford is sort of recovering now from years of neglect—Columbia, is to send your students to China a year in advance before their research. Let them go into the archives, see what they can do with what they have there, what might be a good PhD thesis topic, meet and talk with the professors who will be helping them, and establish those contacts, so that they have one leg up when it comes to going out and doing a thesis.

And the quality of the scholarship has just soared. I mean, the work that Matthew Sommer at Stanford has done on Chinese legal history is incredible. My own students, I mean they're just—all of this would have been unthinkable, and particularly the idea of getting into China. That's why I harken back to the sixties, and my feeling that I would never see China. And now, I mean, there's a sense of a sort of fellow scholarly community with these people. I mean, I, of course I'm married to a Chinese intellectual, most of our friends are Chinese writers or historians, or other kinds of academics, and you know, it's a very close, intimate relationship with them. The fact that now so many of our books are published in translation there means that, and the audiences are—I mean, look, you know, if I write a book here, I'll feel very successful if I sell 6,000 copies. The latest book I published in China has sold 80,000 copies, and it's still going on. I mentioned this trilogy that's going to coincide with the anniversary of the party. That will be suggested to party members to read. There are seventy million party members.

16-00:02:53

Lage:

Now, what trilogy did you mention?

16-00:02:56

Wakeman:

Well, it's two books that have already been translated and published in Chinese. It's the police trilogy. It starts with the Shanghai police in 1927 and ends with them, through various regimes, in 1954. And the third of the trilogy—the trilogy is three volumes—has not been published yet in English, and in fact, will first appear in Chinese. So the intellectual intercourse is just, it's a whole new dimension.

16-00:03:31

Lage:

And does politics enter in? Do you still find the same need to fit it into a Marxist scheme, or into the—

16-00:03:39

Wakeman:

Well, no, I don't think that so much. They don't expect that of—this book, for example, that I showed you has a very long preface where it explains how a bourgeois American historian has all these certain faults, but there are certain advantages to understanding what—. Now this is all pro forma.

16-00:03:56

Lage:

This is *History and Will*.

16-00:03:57

Wakeman:

Yes, when you write about Mao in China, that's a very delicate thing.

16-00:04:00

Lage:

Yes. So they try to put you in a framework, in a sense.

16-00:04:06

Wakeman:

Yes, but everybody knows what the framework is. I mean, they know that this book—when it was first published, I couldn't see a copy of it, because it was classified. It was a document that was published for the higher party school to read. So you had to be a high party member, higher cadre to read the book.

16-00:04:25

Lage:

How long ago was that?

16-00:04:26

Wakeman:

Oh, that was a good ten, twelve years ago.

16-00:04:28

Lage:

I see.

16-00:04:29

Wakeman:

And I didn't get to see a copy for about three years, because it was, I guess I wasn't fit to read it [chuckles].

16-00:04:34

Lage:

[laughing] You didn't know how well it had been translated.

16-00:04:36

Wakeman:

Yes, but I heard a lot about it, people were very interested in it, and then it was reviewed, and so people have been clamoring for a regular copy. This is now published openly, a book to be openly read, but this police trilogy is, two of the books—

16-00:04:55

Lage:

This is *Shanghai Badlands*.

16-00:04:57

Wakeman:

*Policing Shanghai* and *Shanghai Badlands*, and then the third of them is called *Red Star over Shanghai*, which is the end of the trilogy. The People's Press in Shanghai wants to publish them together, and they've already gotten the copyright, or the printing rights from the two other publishers that did

those volumes. And I've got to work out with the American publisher of this, I mean, of the *Red Star* book how we deal with the copyright problem. The last contract I signed with UC Press, I had them give me Sinophone rights, but you know, all of that is very new, because the Chinese didn't pay any attention at all to copyright seven, eight years ago. Now it's becoming just the accepted way to do business. But you know, this is a radical, and it means turning your head in a certain way. Now, the problem is censorship, not so much a Marxist framework. I don't write in a party framework. That's one reason why they want to read this, because I'm an outsider and I'm not toeing the party line, or whatever. But they are concerned about how history is presented.

16-00:06:14

Lage: So they'll censor the book.

16-00:06:15

Wakeman: Well, my experience with that so far has been, in the case of this book I published two years ago, *Spymaster*, which was published under the aegis of the United Front Bureau, was they presented me with seventeen pages of changes that they said had to be made. But they graded them, you know, sort of, you should make them, make them if you can, and sort of, you *have* to make them. And you know, some of them were simple things like, nomenclature, the Chinese have this great thing about *zhengming*, rectification of names, so that you could call a Guomintang agent a secret agent, but if you're calling a Communist agent, you have to call him an underground worker, underground party worker. You know these kind of euphemisms.

16-00:07:05

Lage: [chuckles] And is that acceptable?

16-00:07:05

Wakeman: Oh, yes, yes.

16-00:07:06

Lage: For you, I mean.

16-00:07:07

Wakeman: Oh, yes, sure. I mean, that's really insignificant. But the other part of this, when they really bridle at something that—it's particularly irksome when you know that everybody in China knows this has happened, but it's not been officially recognized, and nobody dare says it in print.

16-00:07:28

Lage: Some particular historical—

16-00:07:30

Wakeman: Some particular historical event or some scandal or whatever, or the relationship between party leaders. And then when they rigidly adhere to their party history line, because they have, of course, an official party history, that's where you have trouble. I had two problems with that, and I finally bent on one, and the other I stuck to my guns, and that was that.

16-00:07:57

Lage: Did they accept it?

16-00:07:58

Wakeman: Yes. Now in the case of this *Red Star*, the last two chapters in—I've sent them a Chinese translation of the table of contents and the first two chapters in Chinese. There are thirty-six chapters altogether. The last two chapters, by the title, seem to be very sensitive, so they've now asked me to send them as soon as possible, a translation of the last two, and very frank, they said you must recognize that we have to deal with a censor, and what we're going to do is go through this and show it to the censor and let you know what would have to be cut.

16-00:08:33

Lage: Beause this will be the more sensitive one for them.

16-00:08:35

Wakeman: Yes, sure. And what needs to be cut and what doesn't.

16-00:08:42

Lage: You're sort of in the position Google has been in.

16-00:08:45

Wakeman: Yes, in a way, I suppose. And I have to decide whether I may want to do it, but for me it's a straw in the wind, because the big book I'm working on now with my wife, *Pan Hannian, the Survivor*.

16-00:08:59

Lage: Of, who is it?

16-00:09:01

Wakeman: His name is Pan Hannian. He was a deputy mayor of Shanghai, a poet and novelist who was also—and he's sort of the counterpart to my Nationalist Dai Li—he was head of the East China branch of their intelligence services during the war, and he was purged by Mao in 1955 and died on a prison farm in 1972. Although his case was reviewed in 1977, it was not, he was not fully exonerated until 1982 when the party announced that this was the gravest case of injustice, of a miscarriage of justice in the history of the party since liberation. And of course, that has cheered his followers, and so on. But it's very delicate because it involves Mao's judgment, so how do I deal with this in the book. Not in this *Red Star* book, it's just a sort of passing reference, it's not the major part of the book. And that's going to be very difficult, I mean, I don't know if I can—

16-00:10:13

Lage: How you deal with it in a way that will be acceptable.

16-00:10:16

Wakeman: Well, you know, there are alternatives. You can publish it in Taiwan, and they can then choose to pirate it, but of course, well, actually, it's very routine now

for Chinese publishers from the mainland to go to Taiwan and buy book rights. And the other is to publish in Hong Kong, which doesn't come under Chinese censorship yet.

16-00:10:34

Lage: Oh, it doesn't.

16-00:10:34

Wakeman: No.

16-00:10:36

Lage: And then will it be read in China itself?

16-00:10:39

Wakeman: Well, yes, these things are read, but they may not be officially distributed. For example, there's a recent biography of Zhou Enlai in his waning years, which is very painful to read—I just finished it the other night—that has not been published in China, but it is a stunning book, and it's a bestseller around the world for people who read Chinese. When I tried to get the book, I went over to the old China Books and Periodicals. Now, it's clear to me after I talked to the people in the store, they are party people, they—

16-00:11:17

Lage: Now where is that?

16-00:11:18

Wakeman: It's located now in that industrial park near the airport. It used to be in the city. The old China Books and Periodicals was founded by a guy named [Henry] Noyes, I think, and it was a kind of friendship place, US-China Friendship Committee, and you got little books, how to learn Chinese and all this stuff, and the latest foreign languages press publications on China, and so sort of in that kind of peculiar Bay Area way of well-meaning liberals who, you know, they'll see only the sunny side of things. But that closed down, and now they have this, it's very hard to find, on one little back street behind the airport, and it's essentially an importer. But the people who run it, I mean, the minute you see them you say, *apparatchiki*. They have another mission, and that became very evident because they instantly started grilling my wife about who she was, and so on. They were very eager to help. We asked about this book, and they said, "Well, we don't know anything about it." Well, you go down to Pacific Mall, and there are hundreds of copies available. People are snatching them up like hotcakes, because it's—

16-00:12:34

Lage: Isn't that interesting?

16-00:12:36

Wakeman: Yes, so there's a whole kind of underground publishing industry, but it bleeds over into China. And people read this stuff, so the question is then, which enterprising publisher decides to take the bull by the horns and actually try to

publish it in China. And that's very difficult because you have to have an ISBN number, you know, these catalog numbers, to be able to publish, and those are controlled by the government and by the big publishing houses who then sell them to smaller ones. And if you take a book like this and publish it, even in some remote place like Guilín, will the government crack down or not? You just don't know because it's constant testing of the water.

16-00:13:19

Lage:

There's no way to predict, it sounds like, but—

16-00:13:22

Wakeman:

No, it's very unpredictable. I had dinner the other night with a very famous dissident poet who can only, can't really go back to China. He's allowed a certain number of days a year for, if a relative dies, things like that. And he's been in this country since the late-eighties and he sort of said, "Well, that's the way life is, you know, they leave me alone. Some of my stuff, my latest book was published there—it had great sales." So it's interesting. It's this sort of gray world between completely spontaneous, unfettered publishing, highly controlled from the top, and then this intermediate zone, and if you're publishing in China, as I am now, I want to get as close to that line because the distribution network is so great. And the sales are so much better, and yet you don't want to compromise and start changing what you have to say.

16-00:14:21

Lage:

That's right, but it has to be on your mind. But you're writing in English.

16-00:14:25

Wakeman:

Yes.

16-00:14:26

Lage:

And you'll publish it, just—

16-00:14:30

Wakeman:

Well, my wife [He Lea Wakeman] is a wonderful translator.

16-00:14:32

Lage:

So she does the translation.

16-00:14:33

Wakeman:

Yes, she's a professional translator. She mainly translates Italian works into—she's translating the works now of Norman Manea, the Romanian novelist, who writes in Romanian, but the best translations are in Italian.

16-00:14:48

Lage:

So she takes them from Italian.

16-00:14:50

Wakeman:

Yes, she doesn't know Romanian. And she also translates Renaissance texts into Chinese.

16-00:14:56

Lage: Good heavens.

16-00:14:57

Wakeman: She's now sort of the leading translator doing that, but she's—she translated *Spymaster*. It's a very good translation.

16-00:15:03

Lage: Now, is she free to go back? We haven't really talked about her circumstances.

16-00:15:06

Wakeman: Yes, yes, she is. She worked for the Liaison Department in the Central Committee, which is a very high-level hush-hush kind of powerful job.

16-00:15:17

Lage: In liaison with what? Or—

16-00:15:19

Wakeman: With Communist parties around the world.

16-00:15:21

Lage: Oh, I see.

16-00:15:23

Wakeman: Hence the hush-hush part of it. I could tell you an amusing anecdote—it was one—

16-00:15:29

Lage: Yes! [laughs]

16-00:15:31

Wakeman: [laughs] She got the job after—she was originally an ophthalmologist. She graduated and then went through retraining after the Cultural Revolution, because a lot of those people had very poor training, and ended up working in a military hospital in Shanghai, where her father was connected with the military. And then she suddenly decided she didn't want to do that. She wanted to expose herself to the outside world more. And she quit her job, which is a big deal there, and sat for the first national entrance exams in '77 and got into the University of Foreign Studies in Peking—because the best foreign language and foreign literature schools [are there], and decided to study Italian. There weren't that many jobs for Italianists then, but to her surprise after a stint in the Ministry of, essentially, of Military Rocketry, you know, which has a lot of Italian input—the Italians have a lot of connections with that—she was selected by the Organization Department of the party to work for the Liaison Committee, the Liaison Department, which was a big, you know, big deal. I mean, you flashed that pass and you could get in anywhere. And it was very heady for her at first. She and a friend of hers was the, she was in charge of the Italian Communist Party, as well as peripherally in charge of Eastern European Communist Parties.

16-00:17:14

Lage: I mean, really in charge, or in charge of—

16-00:17:15

Wakeman: Well, in charge of all liaisons. So there was a direct line from her department to the Botteghe Oscure, the headquarters of the Italian Communist party in Rome, like a hotline, a red line. You picked it up and you were talking to the chairman of the Italian Communist Party. And she handled all the press relations and all, made several trips. She was attached to a man who is sort of a bad name in China, Deng Liqun, who was minister of propaganda and a very, very heavy-handed conservative Marxist and traveled with him to Europe as his aide, which was difficult for her because her own clique was the clique of Hu Yaobang and Jiang Zemin. So she found herself caught between two cliques, which may have presented her with the difficulties that led finally to her decision to leave. And they wouldn't let her leave. They said, "You can't leave." She, through her connections, had managed to get a scholarship to La Sapienza in Rome. Her thesis, eventually, well, that came later, but they wouldn't let her go there, because like our people you're not allowed to go to the target country for seven years after serving in a job like that, because you're, I mean, it's an intelligence job, you understand. So she bridled at that and in a very devious long, complicated way managed to get out of China without their knowing about it.

16-00:18:52

Lage: Hmm. I would think that would be hard to do.

16-00:18:54

Wakeman: That was really hard, but she's a very, very determined person. And came to the States, and after fighting off our intelligence agencies that wanted to employ her—

16-00:19:06

Lage: Oh, they wanted to employ her to, for what she knew.

16-00:19:10

Wakeman: Yes, right, and the terms were very generous. She enrolled at NYU and took a master's in Italian literature, and then had a fellowship at Columbia, Brown, and UNC in Durham and chose North Carolina because the fellowship was better and went down. I think she really enjoyed North Carolina and took a PhD there writing a thesis on [Giovanni] Verga, the Italian neo-realist Sicilian writer. But then she got sort of pulled off into Renaissance studies. She did a stint at Chicago, and she decided after seeing what happened to her—it's very hard to break into the Italian field if you're not Italian or Italian American, and for a Chinese it's very difficult. She's about the only Chinese—she speaks absolutely unbelievably fluent Italian. And people come out and look at her, I mean, now where did you learn that Italian? And so she decided to get out of the sort of assistant professor rat race. I met her when she was at the National Humanities Center in North Carolina. That's when I had had a leave, a term there, and we weren't romantically involved then, but I got to know her,

corresponded over the years, and then met one time, and things just happened. But she's a novelist and writes essays also. She doesn't only do translations.

Her departure, though, meant that for a long period of time her family was in trouble. They were under continuous surveillance and the thing that really worsened matters was they didn't know where she was. After the Tiananmen, the students in New York, after the demonstrations in front of the U.N., went down to demonstrate in front of the Chinese embassy, so she went along with her fellow Chinese students from NYU. And she was very bereft and grieving over the students killed at Tiananmen, some of whom she knew. And she was standing there holding a flower in the rain, tears coming down her face, and several photographers came up and said, would she mind if she had her picture taken. And she said, "Oh, all right." And so the picture was taken and the next day it appeared in *USA Today* alongside a picture of Deng Xiaoping, and so the Chinese of course saw that, "That's where she is!"

16-00:21:50

Lage: And they hadn't been able to locate her before?

16-00:21:52

Wakeman: No. But when she published, she published a translation of *Candelaio*, the [Giordano] Bruno piece, and the Italian embassy and the Academy of Social Sciences Comparative Literature Group invited her to come to Peking and present the book. And she went with real misgivings because she was afraid something might happen to her, but at the party that was given for the group at the Italian embassy, the ambassador, two of her old comrades from the unit she worked for came to her and said, "All is forgiven, come back any time you want to." Blah, blah, blah, now—

16-00:22:40

Lage: So now do you go there a lot?

16-00:22:42

Wakeman: Oh, yes, yes.

16-00:22:43

Lage: She feels free to—

16-00:22:44

Wakeman: Yes, yes, we go over there—

16-00:22:45

Lage: You'd think being in that sensitive position she was in—

16-00:22:47

Wakeman: Well, you know, the Chinese are very funny about those things. I think they make a decision that's highly moralistic, and if you, sort of, they think you're a good person, even in something that you'd think would be as Machiavellian as intelligence, she, or in my case also, they decided I was a good guy and, I mean, I discovered this to my shock later on when several people said, "Oh,

well, people have gotten in trouble,” because of things I’d done, asking, using them to get me documents and whatever. And they lost their jobs. I mean really important people coming to me and saying, you know, without you, I would have lost my life, and you’re such a great friend, you’re such a great friend of China in the eyes of the Committee on State Security. And I think that’s what happens. They sort of decide, this guy’s good until he proves himself otherwise, and you know, somehow they reaccepted her as having made—I think the fact that the other woman who was working in her section also, I wouldn’t say defected, but also left the job, which was an even greater scandal because it involved a French journalist whom she married. So, it’s very strange, you never quite know, you know.

16-00:24:19

Lage: Do you think they do any spying over here?

16-00:24:23

Wakeman: Oh, God!

16-00:24:24

Lage: To see if she did hook—

16-00:24:25

Wakeman: Oh, absolutely!

16-00:24:26

Lage: They couldn’t have done too much if they didn’t even know where she was.

16-00:24:28

Wakeman: Well, this is after they, I mean she didn’t move out here until 1999.

16-00:24:35

Lage: From the East Coast.

16-00:24:37

Wakeman: From Chicago.

16-00:24:38

Lage: So, you think they try to make sure that she hasn’t hooked up with American intelligence?

16-00:24:45

Wakeman: [pause] I think so, I think so. I don’t know for sure, because I don’t know what—I haven’t—I had a very strange experience indirectly through a friend who came to her and said, “Let me tell you about this Wakeman guy.” This guy, this friend’s mother is very big in that world, a very important figure in that world, and he obviously had seen my dossier, and he recounted it in great detail to her, my various peccadilloes [chuckles]. I had a reputation as a womanizer, and so forth, and so on. And—

16-00:25:31

Lage: Now, who was this man?

16-00:25:32

Wakeman: This man is a Chinese whose mother is very important in that world. I can't say much more than that. But I was astounded at the detailed information they had and I realized—

16-00:25:43

Lage: About your personal life.

16-00:25:44

Wakeman: Yes. Here in this area. That they had, they are immensely curious about China scholars and they keep very close tabs on you. I don't think there are people following me around or anything. That would be crazy.

16-00:26:01

Lage: Do you still feel when you're there that there's recording going on?

16-00:26:04

Wakeman: I felt that very much after Tiananmen, but that was exceptional. I went back, after the Tiananmen Massacre, I was still president of the SSRC [Social Science Research Council] and on the day afterwards, on the 5<sup>th</sup>, I called up Frank Press and Stanley Katz, who was head of the American Council of Learned Societies and I said, I think we've got to cut off our relations. So I sent a cable to Li Tieying, who was then the commissioner of education, and I said we were cutting off all connections, all exchanges, until things had been worked out, sorted out, and at that point we withdrew our people and some people—

16-00:26:56

Lage: You brought them home.

16-00:26:57

Wakeman: Yes. We had a person in place in Peking who was doing the job I had done earlier, Perry Link, who's a professor at Princeton, and Perry went through, he went through serious hazards to get these people out. A number of our students were on the square. Our driver, we had hired a driver, who actually crawled into the square and came out covered with blood, dragging along two of these kids. A couple of them refused to leave.

16-00:27:28

Lage: Were they Chinese Americans?

16-00:27:33

Wakeman: No, these were Americans.

16-00:27:33

Lage: They were—

16-00:27:34

Wakeman: These were American Americans, yes. But most of them left. Melissa Macauley, who teaches now at Northwestern, was living in a dormitory along

one of the ring roads, and she almost got killed by fire, random fire from these crazy troops they brought in, and fortunately nobody was killed or even wounded. They made it out to the airport, and after waiting around, you know, they managed to get out of the country. And for a year, no, let's see, well, for, yes, for nearly a year we closed everything down.

16-00:28:13

Lage:

Were you afraid that even students who hadn't been anywhere near the square might be targets? Or—

16-00:28:18

Wakeman:

We didn't know what was going to happen, frankly. And it was just too unsettled. There was also a feeling of wanting to protest against what had happened in general, and I was less adamant on that sort of thing because I guess I'm, how can I say, a bit more cynical about the value of those things, but people at Harvard, for example, they were extremely, they flatly said, adamantly said, "We're not going to have anything to do with China until these people are brought to justice," that kind of thing. And then they went, they ran against, or they swam against the mainstream of China scholars because we had a meeting about a month afterwards out in Annapolis to discuss it, and it was a very heated meeting. What do you do about this? The students, the graduate students simply bided their time. They went to Japan or Taiwan, and then went back in after we opened up relations. But to open them up again, I decided in January, it was very strange, because I had fairly close connections then, personal and just friendly connections with the Chinese military mission at the U.N., and I'd go down and have dinner now and then with them, all of these—

16-00:29:33

Lage:

Were you at—

16-00:29:34

Wakeman:

At the SSRC.

16-00:29:35

Lage:

So you were living back there.

16-00:29:36

Wakeman:

Yes, and of course, the next morning the FBI was on my doorstep, the counter-intelligence people, that wanted to talk about it and this kind of thing. That's always a little difficult. You know, I don't mind telling them what I had talked about, but I resent the prying. And they're so inept, frankly. The Chinese were a complete puzzle to them. They didn't behave like the Soviets. They didn't seem to go out and do things to get things, but they somehow were getting intelligence. Industrial intelligence from Long Island and electronics—

16-00:30:07

Lage: I would think it would make you look bad to go and talk to your friends at the U.N. and then be debriefed by the FBI.

16-00:30:17

Wakeman: Oh, I always, you know, my philosophy in all of this has always been to be very open with people on both sides. To let them know exactly what I'm doing and what I've done.

16-00:30:26

Lage: So you tell your friends.

16-00:30:28

Wakeman: Yes, I mean, I don't—I know I never tried to conceal anything, even some of my earlier connections. But it, no, that's worked out. I mean, it's as I say, the moral side of it was very interesting. But anyway, I thought I'd better go back, so in January I got two others to come with me, Nick [Nicholas R.] Lardy, who's an economist at the Brookings [Institution] and Gene [Eugene] Eoyang, who's a literature professor at Indiana, very sophisticated guy. And the three of us went back to sort of vet the situation, decide whether or not things had calmed down sufficiently for us to call for reopening our exchanges. I was no longer chairman of the committee. I was only the vice chairman of the committee, but I was one of the triumvirate that granted, so my opinion obviously counted for a great deal. And we got there, and it was very, very tense. The embassy, the US embassy, was completely isolated. The ambassador then was Jim Lilley, and Jim told me that, you know, they'd go out to the Great Wall for a weekend excursion and the security, the Chinese security would break their windshields or their headlights, and wherever they went they were tailed. And I found, I found myself being tailed by two or three cars at a time.

Later when I came back, and this is jumping the gun a bit, when I came back, one of our fellows here, who had been dean of the College of Diplomacy in Peking, and who still had many students working in the Committee on State Security, took me out to lunch one day. And we had a normal lunch at the Faculty Club, and then he held my arm as I started to leave, he said, "I want to tell you something," he said, "you must be very careful," he said, "you know all those conversations we had in China were recorded." And I said, "Well, I didn't say anything." However, I had been meeting with the political secretary, the political officer at the American embassy, who seemed to have no source of information as to anything that was going on, in parks around the city, you know, and they were obviously using parabolic microphones, because I was just astounded that he knew about all these meetings, and I thought, man, they really kept close tabs on me in that one.

16-00:32:56

Lage: And then that *he* would be aware of it all.

16-00:33:00

Wakeman: Yes, well, he was, this guy was an intriguer—

16-00:33:02

Lage: So was he like a spy from the Chinese government to know all this?

16-00:33:08

Wakeman: No, no, he wasn't. But he thought of himself as an intermediary. And he was working closely with Douglas Paal, who is an intelligence person working for the former Bush administration. And I think he thought he was going to negotiate some, broker some kind of a deal. He got way over his head. We had a person here, who was supposedly from the Foreign Affairs Bureau of the National People's Congress, who turned out to be a real heavy duty fellow. He, I mean, the minute I met him, I thought, who is this guy? He was one of these guys with a forearm that was sort of like steel. It turned out that he was the military officer who rescued Pol Pot in the Cambodian jungles and took him across to the camps in Thailand before we—you know, to save Pol Pot's skin. And I thought, now this is—and this guy was really funny because he kept wanting to use our Vietnam materials down on San Pablo, which are now in Texas because the man who owns them, Doug Pike, left. And I said, "Sure you can use them." So he was using, really looking up—he was a military attaché in various places, and the military attaché system is the military intelligence system.

So we would come in, and we'd sort of, very cautiously fence with each other, a bit of badinage. And then one day I got a call from him at about 1 or 2 in the afternoon, and he was calling me from the airport. He said, "Professor Wakeman, I'm very sorry, but I have to go back to China." I said, "You have to back to China." He said, "Yes," he said, "my mother is very ill." And I thought *wait* a minute, because people were already raising questions about him, and then of course, the next thing, there's the FBI. They've got to close the trap. And when they raided, when they went into his apartment, the Oakland landlady let them in, they found on his bureau, a picture of him with this other fellow, with this man who worked for the Bush administration. So that obviously was very high intrigue. I don't know what was going on there with that, but that was a period of time when there was a lot of this sort of third-man stuff swirling around here. You never knew with whom you were talking.

But anyway, in Peking itself, a lot of my friends were under house arrest. The one that was the most—

16-00:35:49

Lage: Your Chinese friends.

16-00:35:49

Wakeman: Chinese friends. But I visited them then, I mean, there was no problem with that.

16-00:35:53

Lage: And what had they done?

16-00:35:54

Wakeman: Oh, they had gotten up and said something against the regime, or their students had participated in the events on the square. These were very loyal party members; I mean, it wasn't that they were wild-eyed radicals. The leadership in some of these units had been completely overturned. It was really eerie because there were no foreigners other than the residents living in these various hotels. Maybe a few Japanese and a few German businessmen, but the hotel was completely empty. It was quite amazing. And one man came to see me. I won't mention his name. He's a very famous person still today, who told me about his experiences. He'd been arrested twice, and we were meeting in the suite that was attached to our office there, the regular mini-office, which I knew was, obviously, monitored. So I got very nervous when he started talking about these things. I pointed at the ceiling, but he was oblivious. He just babbled about what had happened to him and this and that and the other. He and I had been involved in a publishing venture that the authorities had shut down, and so forth. So as we walked out, he was telling me a funny story about all of these things in the elevator. We got down to the lobby of this Building 4, and the lobby in this empty hotel was full of people. There were all these men sitting around in leather jackets, instantly recognizable as plainclothesmen, and there was a taller, more authoritarian figure talking to this old guy, whom I hated—I'd known for years—who was one of these fussy service personnel who had some linkage with the security people. And he was obviously so excited, you know, this was big-time spy stuff.

Well, my friend caught one glimpse of them, and he just, he turned gray. He said in a very loud voice, in English, "I brought a present for Carolyn," my spouse, "and I want you to take it back to her." I said, "Oh, OK," and he thrust something in my hands and walked out. And I went out after him because our chauffeur, the guy who'd been on the square, was outside with the car we leased, and this man goes rushing off around the corner with a couple of these plainclothesmen coming out and looking curiously after him. So the chauffeur was agitated, and I got in the car, and I said, "Well, we have to go over to see this friend of mine who's under house arrest," and he started the car. We jerked forward, drove around the corner. There's a sort of industrial laundry there, and he stopped the car, and he turned around and he was just shaking, "Those are the same men who arrested me."

16-00:38:48

Lage: Oh, my God.

16-00:38:49

Wakeman: Because he'd been arrested. "Those are the same men, what am I going to do?" Now, this guy had a wife and a daughter, but he said, "What about my mother?" What's going to?—and I felt very, very bad, I said—

16-00:39:07

Lage:

He was worried because you had been meeting with—

16-00:39:10

Wakeman:

Yes, and he saw these same guys who had arrested him, he thought, “Oh, they’re going to throw me back in the hoosegow again.” So I said, “Don’t worry,” blah, blah, “we’ll protect you.” Well, of course, how can we protect the poor guy, you know? But I must say it was with great relief that we left Peking and got out of the capital, and things were much different elsewhere.

The net result of all of this was I went back because people of all stripes, including dissidents, had said to me, “Don’t close it down. You shut the window and we’ll have to start all over again. Please, reopen these exchanges.” And I went back to the States, and my problem then was our scientists, our natural scientists, because of the [Andrei] Sakharov business. The National Academy was so proud. Sakharov came after his release from house arrest, came and told them in the great hall of the academy at this banquet they gave for him, which I had not attended, that had it not been for their intervention, he wouldn’t have survived. And that really stuck in their minds, so my arguments to Frank Press ran up against this feeling on the part of the science community that, you know, they had this strong feeling of support for scientists around the world. They’d helped Sakharov; they weren’t going to let their Chinese colleagues down now. And I said, “But that’s not what they’ve told me.”

And that was when Frank raised the issue at Harvard. He said, “Who are these people at Harvard? Who’s this guy Ez Vogel, who’s this guy Roderick MacFarquhar, and what about Merle Goldman?” I don’t know if you know who she is, but she had been at BU [Boston University] and wrote a lot of things about repression then. And I said, “Well, they have a particular take on this, but it’s not the take of most of the China studies community, and I think it would be a big mistake to continue to shut down this program.” But I actually had to go up to Woods Hole, you know, where they had their summer retreat that summer and meet with the council of the academy to present a case that they finally very grudgingly accepted to reopen the whole program. And I think it was a good decision that they made. At least I believed at the time that it was.

16-00:41:32

Lage:

And then did that level of anxiety there and suspicion calm down over a period of years?

16-00:41:40

Wakeman:

Yes, yes, I think that there was a period, I think after, at that time in China there was still a kind of sense of grief in Peking, at least. People I knew who were by no means dissidents would—they took to drinking a lot, going to nightclubs, singing, other things to kind of get their minds off the feeling that something terrible had happened and that always there was this thought

there'd sort of be a final accounting , *cuan zhang*, which, of course, has never taken place even though party members have asked for it. But gradually it attenuated, you know, and things got back on an even footing, and then I was soon, soon enough, by the following year I was out of the SSRC and back here, and I knew that that wasn't my concern any more. I was a free agent, as it were.

16-00:42:36

Lage: Right. Is this a good place to stop?

16-00:42:38

Wakeman: Excellent time to stop, yes.

16-00:42:41

Lage: Very. You spin a great tale [laughter]. I hope you enjoy talking about it as much as I enjoy listening.

16-00:42:49

Wakeman: Oh, yes, I do actually. [videotape turned off]

16-00:42:53

Lage: Let's see, next time, should we look at *The Great Enterprise*, or maybe your books before, and that?

16-00:43:00

Wakeman: No, *The Great Enterprise*, that's a good thing to cover, yes.

16-00:43:02

Lage: Because, you'd already—were you in the midst of writing that when the archives opened up or did it come after?

16-00:43:16

Wakeman: It came after. I had a finished manuscript.

16-00:43:20

Lage: You had a finished manuscript before they opened?

16-00:43:23

Wakeman: Before they opened, yes. Yes, based on material primarily from the, you see, when, this is just for you, but when the Nationalists went to Taiwan—

16-00:43:37

Lage: Is this something we should record?

16-00:43:39

Wakeman: Yes, sure, if you want to. Just to explain that—

16-00:43:45

Lage:

OK. [We were talking while the videotape was turned off about your research for *The Great Enterprise*. (videotape turned on)] We have something to add here.

16-00:43:57

Wakeman:

Well, when I talked about the immensity of the opening of the archives, I neglected to say that we had already had some sense of what might be in there, because when the Nationalists went to Taiwan, they shipped with them as much of those things they considered valuable from the Palace Museum collection. The Palace Museum collection comprised also the archives, so in addition to all of the artworks they took that are now in the Palace Museum in Taipei, or outside of Taipei, they took documents, primarily from something called the Grand Council, which was the important decision-making organ after roughly 1730 all the way down to the end of the dynasty. And those are very, very valuable, and they were already indexed and available to historians, and we'd already begun to use those, and several very distinguished works were written off of them. So in a way, we knew how to read this material. I mean this is what everybody, all of my graduate students learn to read this stuff by the first or second year. Presumably, they've had Classical Chinese before that, so we knew how to read them; we knew roughly what the content of them was and their organization. A very dedicated scholar named Betsy Bartlett from Yale had spent seven years of her life working in Taiwan and later, as the opening up in the archives on the mainland took place, she brought the two sides together up to a point. There had been some talk of reuniting them, but that's impossible.

In any case, there was that, so I had used some of those for *The Great Enterprise*, but by the time I finished that manuscript and actually had brought part of it with me to China, the new archives were just opening. I did do research in them on other topics afterwards, but I never really wrote a major work off of them. I can talk more about that later if you like in terms of *The Great Enterprise*, but, in fact, one of the funny things about this, and then I'll cease and desist, is that we were worried early on that Taiwan would fall to the mainland, and what about all those marvelous Palace Museum documents, because they included among other things, the earliest so-called secret memorials, secret communications between highly trusted officials in the field and the emperors, starting with the K'ang-hsi emperor, and the thought was, or the concern was, that these secret memorials would somehow be swallowed up by the mainland when they took over the island. The importance of these archives is probably demonstrable in the fact that Jonathan Spence's first book was based upon these secret memorials, his book on *T'sao Yin and the K'ang-hsi Emperor* [*:Bondservant and Master*].

I was chairman of the Committee on Studies of Chinese Civilization then. We actually put together a fund, quite a generous fund, which we offered to the Chinese to use as a revolving fund to publish parts of these archives, and as

they published them and sold them, proceeds from the sales would plunge back into the fund. So we managed to work our way all the way up to the nineteenth century. But it seemed very amusing later on when I thought, well, Taiwan did *not* fall, we still have those, and in some ways they were much more convenient to use.

But you know, I mentioned earlier the use of these legal materials, because those materials were not considered high state matters, none of those very, very rich materials for the kind of social history that you know, that Carlo Ginzburg does, or that Le Roy Ladurie does, you know this sort of history, *The Cheese and the Worms*, all that kind of thing. That doesn't exist on Taiwan, that's only in the mainland.

Well, for example, I mentioned Philip Kuhn. When Philip realized—he had been working on a book on the twentieth century—when Philip saw these documents and realized what this amounted to, he redirected his whole career. I mean he simply decided he would go to Peking, and he was not that very pro-mainland China, and settle in and read these materials that resulted in this masterpiece of his called, this book on the sorcery scare, *Soul Stealers: [The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768]* that he wrote later on. So a lot of people shifted. It was that kind of a sort of dramatic, magnetic field that pulled all of us.

16-00:48:56

Lage: To the type of history they did, it sounds, and the time period.

16-00:48:59

Wakeman: The type of history they did. One of the things I'm going to be working on after the Pan Hannian book is a study of corruption in the eighteenth century based upon materials from the archives, so I mean, you know, you just—

16-00:49:13

Lage: It also reminds me of stories Gene Brucker tells about the Florentine archives because there were those legal—

16-00:49:17

Wakeman: Yes, yes, exactly, yes, well, Gene is a master of that. He's really a historian's historian when it comes to that. But there is that sense of, "My God," you know, your hands shaking as you—

16-00:49:30

Lage: Right. You're communicating with the dead.

16-00:49:34

Wakeman: The dead live on.

16-00:49:36

Lage: OK. Now we will shut it off here.

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Audiofile 17 Wakeman 17 04-04-06.wav

17-00:00:00

Lage: OK. Now we're recording.

17-00:00:08

Wakeman: All right.

17-00:00:08

Lage: And I think our [recording] levels are fine, and today is April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006. This is our tenth session. We are going to talk about your work today. We were going to start with *The Great Enterprise [The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth Century China]*, but I was wondering if we should go back a little, and—

17-00:00:22

Wakeman: Actually, that came after, so why don't we talk about *Great Enterprise* first and then I'll turn to that.

17-00:00:27

Lage: OK, but you talk about—I'm referring to your *Spymaster* introduction where you talk about a common theme in your work.

17-00:00:37

Wakeman: Oh, in that sense.

17-00:00:38

Lage: And you go back and say, well—

17-00:00:39

Wakeman: In that sense, yes, that's true.

17-00:00:41

Lage: Conflict and control.

17-00:00:43

Wakeman: Conflict and control, disorder.

17-00:00:45

Lage: Disorder, right, but—

17-00:00:47

Wakeman: Yes, social disorder in South China, yes, so all of those, well, I think I said in that preface as well. You put it very well. I had to recognize, in writing this book on Dai Li that so much of my work has been concerned with social disorder, conflict and control, reconstructing imperial order, which is what *The Great Enterprise* was about, policing Shanghai, and of course, Chairman Mao, which I'm also thinking a lot about right now because I'm about to give a public lecture on Mao redux, and where do we stand with Mao these days

after this Jung Chang and [Jon] Halliday book [*Mao: The Unknown Story*, Knopf, 2005] has come out.

But apart from that, yes, I think someone once said to me, and it was said lightly and in passing, but I think it's true—it's said generally that historians sometimes tend to write about things that they fear, that to write about them is a way of overcoming that fear. And certainly in my case, in picking those topics, the topic or the theme of disorder, of lack of control, obviously, I think, has to do with my efforts to control whatever disorders I may contain. And certainly personally I've had, although I feel fairly tranquil these days, my life has not been one of great peace and internal harmony at all times. In fact, I think a lot of my life has been to question how one channels one's disorders, and in that sense, I've, this has always fascinated me. I mean, I think that when I first came into Chinese history, that was part of what interested me about dealing with China.

I can come back to that in talking about *Spymaster* maybe at the end of our discussion today, but *The Great Enterprise* was part of this, but also part of the serendipity of how things fall in one's lap because of sources. When I finished writing my doctoral dissertation, I had a summer left to prepare. That was when I was invited to come to Berkeley, and I was biding my time waiting until Labor Day and showing up here to report for work, and I had finished working, as one does, on this dissertation so intensively, and I had started to worry about maintaining my capacity in reading Classical Chinese, which one can easily forget how to do. I mean, it's not something that just remains there like learning French as a schoolboy and then it's always there.

I had managed to pick up, when I was in Hong Kong a little bit earlier, the year before, a collection of documents prepared by a historian at Nankai University in Tianjin about the peasant rebellions of the seventeenth century. I knew nothing about this. It was a very understudied topic in western historiography, and I started reading these documents just because I wanted to keep my hand in, and I suddenly realized that we had put so much focus, directed so much attention to the nineteenth century that the earlier period, the late Ming and early Qing was where so many of these things began that I saw as part of the disorder of the mid-nineteenth century. That not so much in a search for origins but in a search for resonances, one could find much in that period, and I started reading in it. And I won't go through all that this entailed. Along the way I was writing other books because the documentation, as I discovered as time went on and I began to gather materials in Taiwan and eventually materials from mainland China toward the very end of the project—it was really a vast project, because I wanted, really to understand what the seventeenth century had been all about. Was it a century of crisis? Historians were already writing about *the* seventeenth century crisis which has since been denied by some, accepted by others.

17-00:05:18

Lage: The worldwide crisis?

17-00:05:19

Wakeman: The worldwide crisis, the global crisis of climate change and the conjuncture of the Pacific and Atlantic economies, all of these things that historians like Pierre Chaunu and the other annalists, *annalistes*, had written about. And also the whole question of the origins of European absolutism was part of this, but for me it was looking squarely at the whole issue of the Manchu conquest, and it was a moving target, because these new materials were forcing us to realize that it was not the simple story that we'd read about as written by the scholars of an earlier, actually, pre-war, pre-World War II generation.

17-00:06:03

Lage: How did they cast it as a simpler story?

17-00:06:04

Wakeman: Well, you know, they cast it very much as a story of acculturation. That the Manchus were yet one more, one more barbarian tribe, very much like Hegel's famous passage in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, one more barbarian group perched on the outskirts of the empire, and this has sort of been the way that people have looked at these steppe nomads or forest nomads that attacked China, attracted to sedentary civilization by the possibility of looting it, collecting tribute from it, or even taxing it, and invading China in successive waves. That there had been these—this was a phenomenon that had been familiar in Chinese history since the Huns, the Xiongnu, of the Han Period going way back to our Christian era around 0 CE, in other words. And that their invasion of China was always a case of the barbarians descending into the vale of civilization, that they ended up being acculturated by the Chinese, and the price of acculturation was losing their native roots in the steppe, where their military prowess and forces and energies lay, and becoming sinofied and eventually falling because they'd become too acculturated. They had become too Chinese, as it were.

And that in the case of the Manchu specifically, the institutions that they created to conquer China were institutions that were copied from the Chinese themselves. For example, the Manchu banner system, the military organizational system that they used was believed then to have been copied from the Ming military garrison or *weisuo* system that was used along the frontier. And we were discovering that that wasn't so. They had actually been copying the Mongols, that there was a kind of inter-Asian tradition that wasn't necessarily evolutionary, but that at least was a process that moved towards a creation of a new kind of polity, a new kind of state.

So this began to dawn upon me as I also had to confront the issue of the tremendous disorder of the seventeenth century. For Chinese nationalist historians, or I should say, not nationalist in the sense of the Guomindang, the Nationalist Party, but for Chinese historians at around the turn of the twentieth

century, the Manchu era, the Manchu conquest, represented a blow against China, if you like, that threw China into chaos, that through the Manchu dictatorship vitiated the powers of the Chinese people. The sheer—

17-00:08:53

Lage:

So they saw them as foreigners and remaining foreigners.

17-00:08:57

Wakeman:

They saw them as foreigners and remaining foreigners, but furthermore they were perplexed and in fact humiliated by the awareness that roughly, well, with the addition of Mongol banners and Han banners, roughly 245,000 men had conquered 150 million Chinese. How could this have happened? So there was a sort of soul searching, and much of this concern was revived during the war against Japan in the 1930s. This was a period similar to the seventeenth century, when China was occupied. The general picture was one of a complete caesura in Chinese history that led to the attenuation or destruction of certain very important endogenous currents of thought and a sea change in the attitude of Chinese philosophers, statesmen, and so forth thereafter and a kind of uneasy coexistence with the Manchus that ended in the late-nineteenth century with the open revival of anti-Manchuism, eventually the Revolution of 1911 that toppled the Manchu Dynasty itself.

That was the sort of standard way it was presented. I was grappling with that as well. The trouble was it was such a huge topic—I'd never written anything quite so large, that I was doing it in bits and pieces. It sounds very silly, but one of the simple problems is just understanding how they'd conquered China. Many of the place names were names that no longer were used, so if you went to the veritable records, the sort of second rung of primary documents for the writing of these dynastic histories, you found yourself reading about places that you didn't know where they were, military engagements that seemed to make no sense. At that time there existed—people, Americans actually, in Taiwan, had put together a massive map of the Ming empire from photostats of a comprehensive gazetteer of the empire that were pasted on a large piece of canvas that was about the size of this room, unrolled, or unfolded.

17-00:11:22

Lage:

With the original place names.

17-00:11:24

Wakeman:

With the original place names, but very hard to read because these were photo reproductions. So I spent months on my hands and knees, crawling around this map with a magnifying glass—where was Manchu ko, where was this place or that? It was like putting together a history of the, Jesus, I can't think of a ready analogy, but well, for the twentieth century, a history of World War II from the Normandy landings all the way to the fall of Berlin where you had to reconstruct where all these things had taken place, and you know, I, I was not then, I don't consider myself now really a military historian, but I got into the

innards of that sort of pursuit, and it took an immense amount of time simply to, in my sense, reconstruct what had happened.

17-00:12:18

Lage: Just to tell what happened, not to analyze or interpret—

17-00:12:21

Wakeman: Just to tell what happened, no grand—none of these grand, no gender history, no, no global history, none of these things that are now, you know, so much the fashion, but simply to learn how had these guys done it, the way military historians do write. How did Desert Shield, Desert Storm, whatever, take place, what units were doing what? And you know, as I did all of this—and then in the meantime I began reading in the philosophy and the poetry and the literature of the period, which was, I felt, a particular strength of mine, and examining the dilemma of those Chinese who survived the years of actual military conquest, which were accompanied by plague and famine and a huge drop in the population. Their nostalgia for the Ming, their way of looking at the new Qing, their ambivalence toward this new dynasty that after all had restored order provided a kind of rich texture of the thought of an age, of a whole century, of a long seventeenth century. So I was doing that apace with this material, and I reached a real point of crisis where I thought, first of all, who is going to have the patience to read through this kind of military history, I mean it's—

17-00:13:42

Lage: But it's not all military, as you discuss it.

17-00:13:45

Wakeman: No, no, no. And then how do I, how do I bring this together? It was, I mean, *can* I? Is it possible? And you know, as one will do, I was constantly trying to think of other ways—well, you know the last recourse of a person who wants to write a big history is to write a series of essays and publish them as discrete little fragments because they can't put the whole thing together, and I was at the point of thinking I should maybe do this. I was even negotiating with publishers about such a book, and I finally decided—and now we're talking about a period that really, we're talking about more than fifteen years of work.

17-00:14:25

Lage: You said you started it in the sixties, and it was published in '85.

17-00:14:30

Wakeman: Yes. I'm talking now about the mid-seventies when I finally came to the point of deciding whether or not I would decide to go on with this. I was ready to throw my hands up and do something else. I had published a number of books along the way, as I say, but I kept at this idea, I couldn't seem to let it go. I had a fellowship at Corpus Christi College at Cambridge, which made me a fellow of the college and so forth, and gave me the, the right, if you like, to go back in the summers and live in one of the college houses inexpensively enough to be able to afford to do that, and I decided to take a summer off and

just haul all my notes, which were in suitcases and suitcases full of cards and documents, back to Cambridge and just sit down and see, to find out—is there a book here? And I did that. I took them all along, I remember piling all this stuff up, I mean—

17-00:15:26

Lage: And this was the mid-seventies?

17-00:15:27

Wakeman: This was in '76, let's see, yes, it was '76, and I remember, I was living at Lake Hampton, which is on the other side of the Camden River where the college has very nice residential living area with a wonderful statue, a Henry Moore statue, and I'd look out across the green and see that sitting there, and of course, England in the summer is often delicious. But after I played my tennis for the day or whatever, I'd come in and sit down and look at this pile of stuff and start going through it, and finally at the end of the summer, I *saw* the book. I could finally see where the book, what kind of book could be written. And I could also see what had to be done to fill in the blanks, the lacunae here and there that I hadn't covered. So I realized there was hope and that's what kept me going with it, and I went back and of course began to fill in those lacunae and then sat down and wrote it. When I was thinking about a title, one of the phrases—there are two terms that are used in Chinese, Classical Chinese, the *hong ye* {?} and in more colloquial Chinese *dà shì*, which both translate as the great enterprise of conquering China. And for me the great enterprise was also—

17-00:17:02

Lage: Was writing the book!

17-00:17:03

Wakeman: Writing the damn book, you know, and getting this book out and putting it together. And I think it was the hardest thing I ever did in—

17-00:17:11

Lage: And it is a hefty book. Two volumes.

17-00:17:13

Wakeman: Two hefty volumes, yes.

17-00:17:15

Lage: And many pages are half footnotes.

17-00:17:18

Wakeman: Yes, yes, I'm one of these people that some people hate who put substantive material in footnotes. When the book first came out there was a seminar held at Harvard to discuss it, and Philip Kuhn, who was the discussant, said, "Listen, you really have to read this book twice. One is you read the text and next read the footnotes, because they are two different texts." They, of course, are related, but you have to move apace with both, either at the same time, but

it slows down the narrative if you stop to read the lengthy footnotes. So, yes, that was the awkward part of the book, I suppose.

17-00:17:56

Lage: Did the publisher—which was UC Press, wasn't it?

17-00:18:00

Wakeman: UC Press, yes.

17-00:18:01

Lage: I mean, I understand today they encourage shorter books and are reluctant to publish these long tomes. Did you have any problems with them?

17-00:18:10

Wakeman: With that book, let's see. [pause] You know, not really. I did with later books, with *Policing Shanghai*, by then, this, mainly because the university press publishing industry was really facing declining sales. You know, you used to be able to count on, oh maybe five-, six hundred-copy sales to libraries and so forth from a university press book, but by that time it was getting down to about two hundred, because libraries were rationalizing by sharing different sectors of purchasing, and so on. So you couldn't get the guarantee of enough royalties to make it pay, and some places, like first Princeton, saying, "Nothing more than four hundred pages." And then UC began to go along with that.

One of the things that saved me was the so-called science subsidy that we have here. That is, Berkeley faculty, I don't know how it works right now, because I haven't published with them for a couple years, but Berkeley faculty are entitled to a special subsidy, which is called the science subsidy, because it's mainly taken from government, from the overhead on the government science grants. Now, I think, I believe that *The Great Enterprise* sold for, then it was quite expensive, seventy-five dollars for the two volumes, and I was told then that without this subsidy it would have cost 125, which would have priced it way out of anybody's—

17-00:20:00

Lage: Yes, that was a lot of money.

17-00:20:01

Wakeman: That was a lot of money, yes. So it came out much more cheaply here, and I think that made it possible. I think when Jim Clark [director of UC Press] read it, I think that first Grant Barnes and then Sheila Levine were a little reluctant. When Jim Clark sat down and read the whole manuscript, he was very positive about it and decided to do it as a Lilienthal book and to put the editorial work into it. It was edited by Jack Service. He did an incredibly good job. And I don't think you could, I'm not sure I could get that book published today. One of my friends, Shmuel Eisenstadt, who's a sociologist and who is extremely widely read, has read the book, but he keeps urging me—which I don't think I'll ever do—you should pare this down and publish an edition

that is accessible to many more people the way that Betsy Eisenstadt's book on printing was condensed. The big book—who's going to read it, it's too much? And even now, assigning it to students, I can maybe assign one volume, but two is asking too much.

17-00:21:20

Lage: But the story is two volumes [chuckling].

17-00:21:22

Wakeman: It's two volumes, yes.

17-00:21:24

Lage: It doesn't have a distinct break between the two.

17-00:21:26

Wakeman: No, there is no distinct break. The one person who has the artistic eye to—this is not meant to be so haughty, but the book is very carefully constructed; it moves from north to south to north to south to, you know there is a kind of rhythm to it—was Jonathan Spence. Spence gave a wonderful review of the book, and he said he saw this device of drawing together these northeastern regional warlords into what was then sort of an hourglass-shaped empire, in cultural terms. I mean, this is a term that Nelson Wu coined or used, of an empire where the top part of the hourglass was the area around Peking and the capital and then a very narrow little stem through which the sand flows, which was the grand canal zone, and then down here, the area around the mouth of the Yangtze River, which is where most of the scholarly talent and most of the tribute granted the dynasty was produced, and that squeezing together of the political and the cultural was the dynamo that ran the book.

17-00:22:42

Lage: And that's the way you conceived it.

17-00:22:44

Wakeman: Well, no, you know the way I conceived it was very, very silly in a way, because I kept asking myself, "How did they do it?" I mean, they didn't change that much. The Manchus brought in certain important innovations based upon their own institutions: a bond servant system, a language of confidentiality, Manchu itself, eventually a secret memorial system, the banner system of military organization, the imperial household bureau. All of these institutions, plus the garrisons they set up throughout China, were very important in establishing a strong central rule, but it wasn't that much different from the preceding Ming dynasty. And yet, after this great seventeenth century crisis, which afflicted the entire world, they managed to put together something that lasted for 268 years, the last great dynasty. How did they do it? And I realized, I remembered as a child having an erector set, I don't know if you remember those.

17-00:23:57

Lage: Yes, I do.

17-00:23:59

Wakeman:

You know where you had those pieces of metal with holes in them, and you used nuts and bolts, and you had to screw them. It was very—Lego later on was fun, you just pop the Legos in—these things, you had to get their little wrenches out, and then if you had the whole thing made, if one of the screws got loose, a little wobble would start, and pretty soon that would loosen the other screws, the whole thing would sort of fall down. But you could keep it going if you just tightened the screws. And in a way I realized that what the Manchus had done was to come in and in addition to importing or inventing these new organizations, they tightened the screws. They were able to reconstruct imperial order, but without making fundamental changes. And so, even though China was the first to recover from this great crisis—they recovered sooner than Spain or the Iberian countries, sooner than England and France, certainly sooner than Germany—their recovery was a kind of false recovery. I mean, it was based upon old institutions, and they sort of stood still thereafter. They were a gunpowder empire, but they didn't have to endure the terrible warfare that Europe experienced during the eighteenth century. So when the nineteenth century came along, they were militarily inequipped or badly equipped.

17-00:25:20

Lage:

So peace can have disadvantages.

17-00:25:21

Wakeman:

Peace can—certainly if you have competitors, yes, in a multi-state system. And that, I suppose is—but what I also tried to get in that book was the poignancy, the pathos of the period. It's a period of tremendously, in some senses tremendously dramatic *beau geste*. A part that became part of the book that I originally published as an article was about a siege of a city called Jiangyin, which is a major city now at the crossing of the Yangtze River west of Shanghai. It was a major arsenal in the early republic. I had lunch there two summers ago in the Overseas Chinese Hotel. The taking of Jiangyin was a terrible massacre. It was a terrible siege, a lot of people died, and the defenders who spurred the townsfolk on to resist these—it's right there, by the way, where the PLA crossed over when they conquered South China in 1949, so it's a vital crossing point. The defenders were led by two men who weren't natives. They were from another part of China, and what they had in mind as they led this defense was a similar siege from the Tang Period. They saw themselves in this kind of historical drama reliving the heroism of this famous siege that Huang Chao had imposed on another city.

And at first, when I first was writing, my thinking about this—it's an infamous massacre, the Manchus did terrible things, and actually, many of them were Chinese troops—was that these poor townsfolk had been led to their doom by these two outsiders who were playing out their big roles as kind of macho marshals and what a pitiful thing that was. And then as I thought about it more, I realized it was very presumptuous of me to dare to judge them that way. They died for what they believed in, as mawkish as it seemed to me,

or as performative and dramatic in the dramaturgical sense, play acting, as it seemed to me as I read it. And you had to grant them a certain, if you like, existential authenticity, so that if you look at this period, you know there are all of these sacrifices that are made at the same time. There is a great deal of play acting that's conducted; for example, the gazetteers and the *wenji*, the literary collections of the period, are full of accounts of literati loyalists who had announced to their families, "I'm going to commit suicide," rush into their courtyard and throw themselves into their fish pond, which is about six inches deep. Well, there is no way you can drown in a fish pond like that, I mean, it's just—and of course it failed. The sons would haul the father out and say, "Well, you've proved that you are willing to give your life up for the defunct Ming dynasty, now you can shave your head and grow a queue and be a subject of the Ming." So it seemed to me, of course, in a more callow mood that this was hypocritical and cheap. But it almost, invariably it never turned out to be that way. These people really, I mean, it exposed frailty in a way, and I began to realize that one of the reasons I was attracted to this theme of disorder is that you really sometimes can only see a society and a culture at its worst.

17-00:29:15

Lage: In a crisis.

17-00:29:17

Wakeman: In a crisis, because then the *couverture*, the cover is ripped off and you suddenly see things that you never would observe otherwise, so that it's a perfect moment to peer in, whereas in harmonious times, in uninteresting times as life goes on placidly and with normalcy, people aren't put to the test. But that's a terrible thing to have to wish on our fellow humans as a historian.

17-00:29:43

Lage: Just so you can write a good history! [chuckles]

17-00:29:45

Wakeman: Just so I could write a good history, right?

17-00:29:46

Lage: But you speak of it almost as if you were there observing it. And yet you are really removed and you're dependent on these sources that you—how close do you feel you come to the reality? And you also have a very novelistic sensibility—

17-00:30:03

Wakeman: Well, of course, of course—

17-00:30:08

Lage: —it seems.

17-00:30:07

Wakeman: That's true. That's very true. And I've always admired Dilthey, Wilhelm Dilthey's notion of how a good historian writes. He said he writes in a spirit of

detachment *mit gefüllen*, with feeling. It's that detachment with feeling, in other words, with empathy. But there is a certain, I think this is true of the great historical narrative writers, Simon Schama or Jonathan Spence, they have this visual capacity—it's almost cinematographic, to see the events happening. I mean, Jonathan, perhaps too excessively. I mean, the image captures him and the story is all. I'm a little bit less promiscuous in that way, but it's true, that's true, I do, I do, I—it's imagination. It's the capacity—I think all really great historians have to have that quality. I'm not saying that I have it better than anybody else, I don't, but you have to at least have the ability to—

17-00:31:16

Lage:

You've mentioned some of your sources, but what sources get you back to the reality of that time period. What did you have and what didn't you have that came up later?

17-00:31:28

Wakeman:

Um, what I didn't have, and there are very few, actually, records of the late-Ming—the number one national archives, which weren't really open until 1979, and by then the book was virtually written. I mean, there was some fine tuning I could do and so on, but I didn't go back and say, "I'm going to the archives," and simply—to my generation, the primary sources were the *Shilu*, the veritable records. Now these, speaking very concretely for a moment, very specifically, were records put together by court historians from the original documents that were extant, present, at the time they wrote these, a sort of a redaction to be stored for the historians of the next dynasty to consult when they wrote the history of their predecessor.

17-00:32:24

Lage:

So there may have been some editing.

17-00:32:26

Wakeman:

Of course, of course, editing and distortions and deletions, but the sort of categorical imperative was you've got to let the facts, let the documents speak for themselves, and in fact, when people tried to alter, and the next dynasty came in and some fellow wanted to make his ancestor look good and went in and started fiddling around with these veritable records, that was regarded as fiddling around with *the* historical document itself. The documents were sealed away, buried in walls, and only in the twentieth century when they were being sold for scrap paper to Peking paper dealers were they discovered, oh, here are the original doc[uments] memorials.

17-00:33:11

Lage:

Now when were they discovered?

17-00:33:12

Wakeman:

1910, 1912.

17-00:33:15

Lage: Is that some of the things that came to Taiwan? Or—

17-00:33:17

Wakeman: Uh, yes, well, they were discovered, they were put together, originally private scholars, Luo Zhenyu and others, began buying this, they began going around and actually going to used paper dealers and buying the paper which was regarded as—

17-00:33:33

Lage: Scrap.

17-00:33:33

Wakeman: The Chinese have a special thing about paper. You're not supposed to destroy it. I mean, that's a part of a popular belief in religion, so paper is valued for its own sake and people don't throw it away readily. But the paper could also be recycled, and they would buy these things and just store them up and gave them to the institution that was created in the late 1920s after the palace was evacuated by Puyi when he was kicked out by the warlord Feng Yuxiang. The palace, what happened to all of the palace goods? Who owned them? The eunuchs were busily selling them off on the market, and they set up something called the Palace Museum, which was put in charge of these documents as well as all of the paintings and so on. When the Nationalists lost the civil war and went to Taiwan, they took as many of the paintings as they could load on their boats, as well as about a tenth of the contents of this large archives, which was, very often in its original shape, that is, the documents were still in their original linen bags, and they'd just been thrown and some of them were molding away. You know they were, well, you can imagine over the years, insects and humidity and so on. And they took some of the most important ones. They did this by singling out those offices of government that were the most sensitive and the highest place, like the National Security Council, for us, and took those to Taiwan, and they were very well, they've been very well handled on Taiwan. They're completely indexed and available. That was our first insight.

17-00:35:14

Lage: So you used, you must have used those fairly extensively.

17-00:35:16

Wakeman: Used those, yes, I did.

17-00:35:18

Lage: And then—

17-00:35:18

Wakeman: Then the mainland ones opened up. I was the leader of the delegation that got these things opened, which I mentioned earlier.

17-00:35:23

Lage: Yes, we talked about that last time.

17-00:35:26

Wakeman: And so, suddenly—Wow! Here they are. And I decided at that point I, well, I'd be spending another ten years—

17-00:35:32

Lage: You'd never finish the book!

17-00:35:33

Wakeman: I'd never finish this book and I already had used the *Shilu*, which was my main source, but it was of course supplemented by local accounts. This is a period in which, and these were very tricky to use, but this is a period which abounds in something called *yeshi*, wild histories. Sometimes we translate that as historical romances, and it's a very, very loose genre in that it ranges from completely fantastic, novelistic accounts of some historical events to events that are written by contemporaries but are not considered to be written under official imprimatur, as orthodox. But they try very hard to be, and you have to decide in this spectrum which of them are really, reliable. It's like reading a historical novel by Robert Graves on the one end, and then reading something that, well, you know, the whole issue of—

17-00:36:34

Lage: Danielle Steel.

17-00:36:35

Wakeman: Well, Danielle Steel, yes, exactly, which is historical, as opposed to, let's say, a memoir, because these things can be memoirs. A memoir by someone who served as a cabinet counselor and could say, "This is my experience." More like the nature of the diary. And these are extremely rich and so—

17-00:36:56

Lage: But to judge them, how do you judge them from this distance?

17-00:37:00

Wakeman: Well, I mean, you have to sort of, it's very hard and you have to sort of triangulate them by reading several sources at once. I wrote a piece, again that appeared in the book for a volume that Spence and Jack Wills edited, which was on the Shun interregnum, that is, the short reign, because he didn't really make himself emperor to the very end, of a rebel who captured Peking between the death of the last ruler in Peking, the last Ming ruler, and the coming into Peking of the Manchus. It was a period of several weeks while this guy and his troops ran rampant, and the depiction of the death of the emperor, his suicide, is given in various guises by various of these *yeshi*, and there are about four ones that are sort of the most authoritative.

I read them all, of course, and I chose one that seemed to me to ring the truest, which happened to present the emperor in the most unfortunate light. I mean, the last night before he commits suicide he gets drunk, he tries to kill his wife, he chops off the arm of his daughter, the princess, because he's too drunk to do otherwise. He gets very maudlin with his chief eunuch. He tries to escape

from the palace himself. The gate guardsmaen don't recognize him and finally he stumbles out the back of the palace, probably drunk, wanders up to the imperial wardrobe on that hill just behind the Forbidden City that we call Coal Hill and took his own life after writing a mawkish note about [how] he'd been abandoned by his ministers. This was not a very nice light in which to present him. The article was read by a very great scholar, Frederick Mote, one of the great scholars of my seniors—the generation before me—who was a professor at Princeton. Mote is notorious for his high standards and his somewhat finicky if not fixed views on things, and he decided that I'd picked the wrong one of these. And we had a long, I mean, it was all very indirect because he was an anonymous reader for the Yale University Press, but we went back and forth, and he's a very close friend. I'm very junior to him, but that—

17-00:39:22

Lage:

Were you going back and forth anonymously? I mean—

17-00:39:24

Wakeman:

Oh, no—yes, outside of the apparatus of publishing.

17-00:39:28

Lage:

Oh, I see.

17-00:39:29

Wakeman:

I'd, of course, recognized who he was, and we at that point were serving on many committees together, and so we tussled back and forth. And in the end it was clear that you really couldn't say one was more authentic than the other, that it was a matter of choice. And so there is that element of—

17-00:39:51

Lage:

Is it the choice of what makes the better story? Or just what you felt was more authentic—

17-00:39:55

Wakeman:

What I felt was more authentic. Exactly that.

You have to read a lot. It's like, students today, my graduate students today have, you know, access to all of this information, in digital form, so that they can sort of get all kinds, I mean, you know, they can, all of the dynastic histories are accessible on a computer, so you press in, you type in a few phrases, and bang! The document pops up on the screen, so you can do research that way, but there are certain documents, there are certain things that have not been so digitalized. And I remember a year or two ago I was teaching a documents course, and we came to one of these sets of materials, and the student who was supposed to report on it—it was a senior graduate student—saying, "But there's no index. I don't understand how you find anything. How do you know where to look for this." And I said, "Well, Brooks," I said, "you have to read," I said. He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Well, you have to go and stand there in the library, or sit down in the stacks and just start reading through these things." There is just no substitute for that, because so

often it's something that nobody has—most of the documents that I've ever discovered in my life that were important to the project I was working on, I discovered *totally* by accident. I couldn't have predicted where they would be or how I would find them. That's why the *book* itself is still so important. That's why there never, for a historian, will there be an electronic database that's able to do that. You know these things—

17-00:41:30

Lage:

And you have to read the whole thing to get this sense of the truth of it.

17-00:41:33

Wakeman:

To get the sense of—that's exactly right. So that's—anyway there is this vast range, and they also, they exist in annals form, and then finally there is a whole realm of poetry and belles lettres. I finished the book, actually, with, I was sort of fumbling towards an ending. I wanted to try to show how the Qing Dynasty was able to—that the way in which it was able finally to stabilize itself was to create its own loyalists, its own body of Chinese scholars who supported it. And of course, I could say that in many forms and show it statistically, but that didn't seem to have enough of a dramatic impact. And then a friend of mine, who still is at the Library of Congress, Chu Mi [Mi Chu Wiens] told me about a manuscript that she'd seen that was in microfilm—uh, no, there was a single copy which she would microfilm for me, she said, in the Library of Congress. There was no other copy in the world, and she thought it might be of interest, and she sent it to me.

I started reading this microfilm, and I remember reading it in the basement of Barrows, and it was a play written about this moment in the southern part of China during the Revolt of the Three Feudatories, who challenged the reign of the Kangxi emperor, the first really great Qing emperor, and what happened when they were given the choice of siding with the rebel against the Qing, Wu Sangui, or remaining loyal to the new dynasty. They were Han bannermen, that is, they had come from northeastern military families that had defected to the Manchus before the Manchus entered the pass, and it tells in the most amazing detail, the travail that—the way in which the women of this family were killed—step by step by step. It's so moving and so final. And furthermore, other records I found showed that after it was written as a play, it was performed at the Qing court, and it caused a tremendous stir because the Kangxi emperor could look at this and say, "See? We have our own loyalists. We're finally, we finally have," you know, "the ding," the tripod bronze vessel that symbolizes the conquest of the empire, the ding—it's a symbol of imperial rule—"the ding is finally settled, we finally have the ding." So the Great Enterprise is over.

17-00:44:19

Lage:

And that's the way you end?

17-00:44:22

Wakeman:

Yes, well, I ended, no I don't, I don't end it that way, I ended with this notion of a false solution. I actually end it with De Tocqueville. Yes, but that's sort of an afterthought. And it really ended with that other dramatic moment.

17-00:44:36

Lage:

You mentioned the court eunuchs and I know there were a lot of eunuchs in the Ming court. What is the significance of that group?

17-00:44:50

Wakeman:

Well, I mean, eunuchs, obviously in many of these autocracies, in many of these imperial systems, are of course designed, they're there to take care of the harem, the seraglio, and for obvious reasons. In China they began to enjoy an authority beyond that position going way back to Han times and then during the Tang Period and so on, and there was always—the Confucian officials always were very leery of their power, because they had immediate access to the emperor.

17-00:45:28

Lage:

But why did they have this immediate access to the emperor?

17-00:45:31

Wakeman:

Because they were the only males allowed inside the inner palace. At night when the emperor wanted to bed his consorts, the eunuchs would actually carry the concubine or consort in, deposit her in the bed, stand in a side room that was concealed, record the actual intercourse, number of times of intercourse, in order to be able to tabulate who was the heir.

17-00:45:59

Lage:

Oh, I see.

17-00:46:00

Wakeman:

All of these things were part of—but it was part of—

17-00:46:02

Lage:

Very important part of the official—

17-00:46:04

Wakeman:

Very important part of the official record-keeping. Now that was their supposedly primary function. Of course they also became palace servants in the sense of cooks, and I think if you're talking about it functionally, they had no status other than being the emperor's servants. There were certain parts of China that provided them. For example, poor provinces like Fujian Province in the southeast, certain villages routinely castrated their children to present them for service at the palace. But as time went on, as the power of the eunuch directorates grew, partly because they, against all rules, became literate—they taught themselves how to read and handle documents and eventually interposed themselves between the outer court officials and the emperor so that the written documentation passed through them. The emperors were raised by them. If you've seen *The Last Emperor*, it's the eunuchs who

corrupt Puyi sexually; it's not at all uncommon in Qing imperial history. The emperor, in turn, would use them as his own, as the Chinese say, claws and fangs. The secret police, the so-called Eastern Depot, which was a notorious torture place for officials who were regarded as suspect by the emperor, was run by them. They became sort of like political commissars attached to armies. They acquired tremendous power. They also controlled the privy purse. This is all under the Ming dynasty. By the end of the Ming dynasty there were 98,000 eunuchs in the palace, because as—

17-00:47:51

Lage: That's an incredible number.

17-00:47:54

Wakeman: Yes, as the system became more and more entrenched and more and more powerful, people would go and as *adults* have themselves castrated. They had a sort of—

17-00:48:09

Lage: Because it was the route to power?

17-00:48:12

Wakeman: Because it was the route to power. There was a place in western Peking where you'd go. You had to—I think they asked you five times, "Are you sure you want to do this?" And if after the fifth time, then the surgeon emasculated you. And if you could survive the next twenty-four hours, they would stuff the orifice with cotton, and if you didn't get septicemia, because you know no waste could pass through, and the bleeding had stopped so you didn't hemorrhage to death, then you might survive. If you survived—and you were allowed to keep your private parts in a box, because if you had them with you it was believed that in the afterlife you would be reborn a whole man. So they would volunteer to do this inner palace service, and then they weren't allowed to have, of course, they couldn't have families, but they would adopt families. They owned some of the best real estate in Peking. They were major tax collectors. So they built this enormous apparatus, and they were viewed, of course, with disdain and yet fear by the regular Confucian bureaucrats who regarded them as not men. They were eunuchs, they were *huan guan*, *huan*, they were *tai jian*; they were eunuchs, and yet they had to deal with them because the eunuch whispering in the emperor's ear might mean so-and-so would get selected as the chief minister or not. Especially toward the end of the Ming. Now, the Manchus didn't want to have the eunuchs. They wanted to use their own bond servants, men who had surrendered to them—

17-00:49:43

Lage: That they brought with them? Or—

17-00:49:45

Wakeman: Yes. These were men who had surrendered or been captured in war and were literally bonded servants of the emperor, but because of their proximity to the emperor achieved enormous social status. The grandfather of the author of the

*Dream of the Red Chamber*, for example, was a bond servant, and they were whole, they were Chinese, in fact, so they were—

17-00:50:04

Lage: And they were conquered, and—

17-00:50:07

Wakeman: And they were conquered, but they—

17-00:50:09

Lage: They were the loyalists?

17-00:50:10

Wakeman: They were the loyalists, yes. That, in fact, that's—this drama I told you about was one of them. But the eunuchs still crept back in, because the most, the most vital element, the sexual servicing of the emperor, had to let them into the palace and gradually, until by the end of the dynasty, you know from movies and so forth, with the empress dowager, the empress dowager was very much, I wouldn't say she was—I would say she used eunuchs a great deal, so, hence their place in Chinese history, but always a place that—it's interesting, isn't it?

17-00:50:49

Lage: It's a fascinating cultural thing.

17-00:50:51

Wakeman: It really is, yes, it really is.

17-00:50:53

Lage: Now, did this happen in other countries?

17-00:50:56

Wakeman: Well, of course, in the Ottoman Empire, sure.

17-00:50:58

Lage: In the Ottoman, where they had the harems, and—

17-00:51:00

Wakeman: Yes. There's a wonderful book by a member of our faculty, Leslie Peirce, who is an Ottoman historian, about the seraglio and the eunuchs. It's really very, very good.

17-00:51:11

Lage: Now, if you did condense *The Great Enterprise*, which you don't sound like you want to do, would you change any of your interpretation? Have you—

17-00:51:23

Wakeman: Ooh, that's a tough question.

17-00:51:26

Lage: Now, twenty years later.

17-00:51:27

Wakeman:

That's a *very* tough question. Would I change my interpretation? Yes, I probably would a little bit. I would allow for more continuities. I would play down a bit the notion that there was a very deep rift or breach in the continuity of Chinese history, particularly intellectual history.

17-00:51:47

Lage:

When the Qing came in?

17-00:51:49

Wakeman:

Between the late-Ming and the early-Qing. I would also probably do more to stress the importance of local elites surviving the conquest. During these periods of conquest in any given case, this is a time of tremendous local social mobility because people who side with the new dynasty end up on top and the people who oppose them end up as the losers, usually. And some of the great clans or lineages of the late imperial period, the Qing period, of course, went over to the Qing.

I feature that in the book. I talk about a lineage in Hunan Province, the scion of which turned up as the hero of a very famous Chinese play written by Kung Shang-Ren, one of the early playwrights of the Qing dynasty, called *Peach Blossom Fan* that was translated, originally published here at UC Press by my teachers Ch'en Shih-Hsiang and Cyril Birch. It's a wonderful play and the whole family—Hou Fang-Yu is the hero—the whole family was one of these families that quickly made peace with the new dynasty, and they got their appropriate tax remissions and so forth and so on, so I would do more to show that, you know, there were certain wily types who were able to survive this conquest very well, frankly. But basically I think the book still stands. I don't think my basic conclusions have been altered very much.

17-00:53:21

Lage:

Would you change emphasis? Do you treat the women, the peasantry, as much as you might have?

17-00:53:27

Wakeman:

Yes—one thing I would change a great deal is the discussion of anti-Manchuism, because there has been a very, very big dispute in the field.

17-00:53:36

Lage:

Now, what do you mean by that?

17-00:53:38

Wakeman:

Well, the question is, who were the Manchus? The Manchus were descended from the Jurchen, a northeastern Asian tribal people, but their name was coined by themselves. Their second ruler said, "We're going to call ourselves Manchus." Now, where did that come from? Nobody knows. They were already adopting, because the Qing monarchs used many different sources of legitimacy, one of their sources was of Buddhist origin, which was the Bodhisattva Manjusri, or Buddha, if you like, Manjusri, in which guise Qing

emperors often presented themselves. Tibet by then was Buddhist. The Mongols were turning to Buddhism, although they had earlier converted to Islam, so Buddhism was a weapon of state. You could bring Tibetans and Mongols, inner-Mongolia and Tibet, better to heel by using this kind of Buddhism. So Manjusri was in a sense a political device, but there are many portraits of Qing emperors as Manjusri, a Buddha surrounded with, in the western paradise. And some people think that Manjusri lived in Manchu, but no one knows. So they chose their own name.

Their language, which is one of a number of Altaic languages up there, was based on, would use Mongol script. Mongol is basically based on Uyghur script which goes back to Persian script, so their written language is derived; the spoken language is unique to them, it's not Mongolian, but the issue of Manchu identity—did people think of them as Manchus then? Was there simply a kind of great frontier zone where trans-frontiersmen, Han, a little bit like our early mountain men who would join the Cherokees, or the Sioux, or the Potawatomi Indians, and live as Indians, or the Portuguese who in Angola or Mozambique married the daughters of tribal chiefs and became tribal chiefs themselves? This is a fairly common phenomenon, so there were those people, and then there were Manchu, Mongol, even the Mongols are not a clear category. You can't say there were Mongols in the ninth century; they weren't Mongols. It's sort of a Jenghis Khan and the Mongols, so there is this fluidity that makes it very hard to identify what is ethnically different, and I would have to ponder that a lot more. I'm not sure quite where I—I'm giving some lectures in San Diego in a few weeks on this issue. I'm not quite sure where I stand, because my best student in this field is a man named Mark Elliott, who is a professor now at Harvard, and he and the other expert in the field, a woman named Pamela Crossley at Dartmouth are somewhat at loggerheads over this. What does it mean to be Manchu? Is it a contrived identity? Is it the way we currently like to think of people like Benedict Anderson talk about imagined communities? Is this just an imagined community? Or if you're a Manchu, you're a Manchu, that's all there is to it.

17-00:56:58

Lage:

What did ethnicity mean at that time, too?

17-00:57:00

Wakeman:

What did ethnicity mean, exactly, exactly.

17-00:57:02

Lage:

Did they retain their language?

17-00:57:03

Wakeman:

They did, yes, they did indeed. It began to disappear in the mid-eighteenth century, and the emperor, the Qing emperor, was very concerned about this, and they therefore made efforts to perpetuate it by maintaining examinations in the Manchu language and by trying to strengthen their military skills that had also attenuated somewhat or was somewhat vitiated by the civilian life.

By the end of the dynasty, most Manchus, most Manchu banner families didn't really speak Manchu, they spoke—well, the Mandarin that's spoken in Peking, is very heavily colored by Manchu.

17-00:57:48

Lage: Oh, I see.

17-00:57:49

Wakeman: The particular retrofects [urrrrr, arrrrr] that makes it hard to understand if you're not a Pekingese comes from that, and the way you can identify Manchus if at all now is in their kinship terms. I had a Manchu servant who worked for me.

17-00:58:10

Lage: So it's still a distinct group in—

17-00:58:12

Wakeman: Well, it's very hard, again, because the Manchus sort of disappeared after the 1911 Revolution. A number of them were massacred, and people would say, "Whatever happened to the Manchus?" But then under the PRC, with their minority policy, when they declared that the Manchus were a *shao shu*, which means a minority; minorities you know, have special privileges. They get into colleges—it's like you know—

17-00:58:37

Lage: Affirmative action.

17-00:58:39

Wakeman: Affirmative action. They get into college with lower scores, they can have more than one child per family, and so on.

17-00:58:45

Lage: I didn't realize that.

17-00:58:45

Wakeman: So people have *chosen*, and now there's a certain cachet attached to it. You know, "I'm a Manchu." I mean, a lot of people sort of say, "You know, I'm a Manchu!" It's kind of like saying, I guess in this country, having Native American blood, you know, "actually, my grandfather was a Cherokee," or Kiowa or whatever you claim to be. So there is this, so they've enjoyed a certain, if you go up to Chengdu, you know, people get dressed up in Manchu garb to have their photograph taken, where they have these cutouts, you know, where you stick your head through a hatch, and they actually have archery galleries where you can shoot [chuckling] like Jenghis Khan or ride around on a Manchu horse.

17-00:59:26

Lage: But did the twentieth century Chinese see them as invaders in the same way they were seeing the people from the West come in?

17-00:59:36

Wakeman:

That's a very good question. At the turn of the century, there was a considerable debate that broke out among the group of younger intellectuals, primarily students and scholars and scholar officials over what to do about the Manchus. And some of the more moderate ones said, "Look, we can't get involved in this anti-Manchuism." There was no question that there was a strong strain of anti-Manchuism. I think much stronger than we realize because it was taboo to talk about it. You simply couldn't discuss this. I mean, the written record contains almost nothing. We have accounts by Korean travelers of attitudes about Manchus, but it's always sort of sotto voce, and so it's very hard to find written traces of this, but I think the strain was very strong, particularly in the south of China and among what were then secret society elements. That Manchu otherness, that alterity, was reinforced when the Manchus themselves began, toward the very end, to try to set themselves apart again. I mean, they were facing the desperate probability of losing their dynasty, and they picked on the Prussian aristocracy, the Junkers and the Prussian royal family, as their model, and began wearing sort of Prussian military clothes and even a lot of them married German princesses.

17-01:01:04

Lage:

How interesting.

17-01:01:04

Wakeman:

Yes, Brandenburg and Hohenzollerns and so forth. And the last cabinets were called—the last cabinet was called the Cabinet of the Princes, because they were all Manchu princes, so they were reinforcing the Manchu identity at the very moment that, you know, that was singling them out as targets, because at one level, the Chinese could say, "Well, we wouldn't be in this terrible fix if it had not been for the Manchus, who gave away the patrimony of the country, sold our railway rights, did this, did that, to perpetuate their own dynasty, selfishly." And you know, that was, I guess a fairly intellectual, rational consideration. There was, though, this big debate—should we, if we turn against the Manchus, we're going to divide ourselves and we'll leave ourselves open to the imperialists, or the Japanese will come in and start taking advantage of our division, versus those who said, "We've got to face this Manchu problem." And many of the texts that I used for *The Great Enterprise* were revived then. Most of them were destroyed in China during these literary inquisitions of the late 1770s, but copies of these texts had gotten out to Japan, to Annam, Korea, and even to, through the Western missionaries, to libraries in the West. So we could sort of bring them back together, and they began to appear in print. A record of the ten-days' massacre of Yangzhou, for example, which is a bloody account of what happened in that city in 1645, had a tremendous impact on Chinese. They said, "My God! Look at what the Manchus did to us back, way back then. They raped our women, they killed our children, they did this, they did that."

So there was a popular anti-Manchuism that was in the air, and it kind of fed into what I think of as, the trope that comes to mind for this period is the motif

of the raped woman. China has been raped, and it's a very feminine image. The Manchus raped us, or taken from a slight gender remove, they took our women, just as they took our fatherland. And in order for us to regain our confidence, our virility, if you like, our national strength and vigor, to be sufficiently able to counter the imperialists, we've first got to get the Manchus out from under our skin and prove ourselves in that battle. And those guys won. So the anti-Manchuism continued to grow and erupted in the late 19-oughts and of course in 1911. At that point the Manchus kind of momentarily just sort of disappear, but for—

17-01:04:04

Lage: Was that the hook that got you into it? Thinking of the later history and then—

17-01:04:08

Wakeman: Well, no. One of the hooks was my tutor in Taiwan. I think I mentioned him earlier. The book *Nothing Concealed: [Essays in Honor of Liu Yü-Yün (1970)]* is a festschrift for my tutor who was a, let's see, we would say he was a third cousin of the last emperor. And he had been—

17-01:04:39

Lage: A Manchu?

17-01:04:41

Wakeman: Oh, he was the son of a Manchu prince, yes. We called him "The Prince." And he had been an official working for the Manchukuo government, the puppet government under Puyi, working with the secretariat of that government. One of his jobs—he was married to a Mongol princess, which was very common in those days—and one of his jobs, or one of his goals was to try to conceive of, as the war in China began to clearly mean defeat of Japan, a Manchu-Mongol state ranging all the way from Akdan {?} to Ulaanbaatar. And that he wanted to peddle this to—remember, of course Inner Mongolia was dominated by the Japanese. Outer Mongolia was dominated by Stalin and the Soviets, and Manchuria, of course, had been under Japanese control. Now all of these areas were now disputed and what he wanted to do was to sell the Americans, particularly OSS officers he was dealing with, the idea of building a state there that would be supplied by the Americans, because it was assumed that there would be some contest between the Communists and the Nationalists over --

17-01:06:08

Lage: And he wanted to separate from China?

17-01:06:09

Wakeman: He wanted to separate from China, and he went down to Beiping, as it was called then, to negotiate with the Americans and was picked up by Chiang Kai-shek's secret police and taken to Nanking, after it was liberated and then later became the capital again, and put under arrest as a war criminal. He was never tried, but was taken to Taiwan with them and kept under house arrest

for many years. He had been a student of Kang Youwei, the great reform thinker of the end of the nineteenth century, a real visionary. And had attended the {Pierce School?} in Japan, so he had very close ties with the Japanese with Kang Youwei and the New Text School of Confucianism. He also was a very good Buddhist scholar. All of this made him very interesting to people who wanted to study those things, including Hu Shih, who was the ambassador to the US and a great Chinese liberal who studied Buddhist texts with him. And as this interest in his scholarship began to grow, gradually he was allowed to have more contact.

I think his first foreign student was Professor [Richard C.] Rudolph, then a professor at UCLA, and I think I was his fourth student, fourth or fifth student, maybe sixth, I'm not sure—somewhere in there. The student before me that introduced me was a man named Moss Roberts, who is a very close friend, who is a professor of Chinese at NYU now, a real language prodigy. Moss said, "You must study with this man." And I was, you know, I was sort of reluctant, I didn't want to get tied up with this guy. I thought he was sort of a, you know, they called him "The Prince," of course, and he went under a Chinese name, Liu Yü-Yün; he wasn't allowed to use his Manchu name, Aisin Gioro. Gioro is the name of the Manchu royal family. So I was then taken, no, he was brought to see me to decide whether or not he would take me as a student, and I had to literally kowtow. I had been prepared for this by Moss, to get down and prostrate myself and greet him as a member of the imperial family. We had a long discussion, and he agreed to take me on and teach me the Confucian classics, so for the next, oh God, several, several years, I've never talked to you about this?

17-01:08:43

Lage:

I think you might have, but it seems to have more context now, I'm—

17-01:08:47

Wakeman:

Well, I mean, he was an oddity. He's still alive. He's 100 years old. Ed[ward L.] Shaughnessy at Chicago just showed me some photographs of him. He regards me as his most famous student but also as his most rebellious one. He wore long imperial robes. He even had his old court robes, the dragons and all, at his home. He had the long fingernail, because he did fingernail painting, you know, the Manchu moustache, the beard, the Mandarin's hat. You'd see him on the street and he was really a *guiguai*, a strange old fellow, like a remnant from the past. But he suffered the attacks and the sort of scorn of regular Chinese because he was regarded as a traitor. He had served the Japanese. And he regarded everybody—I mean he *hated* Chiang Kai-shek. Of course, I found this rather titillating, because those were the days when the dictatorship on Taiwan was very tight.

17-01:09:56

Lage:

So he was given enough freedom as a scholar to—

17-01:10:00

Wakeman:

He was given enough freedom as—I don't know who deemed him to be harmless enough to be allowed to do all of this, but he started doing it through these various students, including first foreign students, and then he began to build up a clientele of Chinese students. But I was put through a standard training. I had to read, I had to memorize the *Four Books*. First I had to read the *Classic of Filial Piety* and the *Three Character Classic* and then the *Four Books* and then, not all of the *Five Classics*, there are the *Thirteen Classics*, but in this case the *Five Classics*. But, I had to read the *Rights of Chou*, the *Record of Rights*, the *Book of Documents*, and let's see, and then I began reading the *Tao Te Ching*, the Taoist classic, and then the *Book of Changes*. And then I started reading Buddhist texts with him too. Now, this took a lot of time.

17-01:11:02

Lage:

[chuckling] I'll bet.

17-01:11:04

Wakeman:

And he was very, very, very old fashioned. I mean, he had to be treated with great respect. You had to learn how to walk the proper way. I resisted all of this. I mean, I thought he was sort of a scoundrel. And my impiety, I think, sort of bled through to him. He wanted, then, to build an academy, a *shuyuan*, a traditional academy, and he was trying always to borrow money from me for this, to get the cement to build it. He would say, "Come in." And we would talk about something. He would say, "You know," he'd say, "the interest rate now is quite high on loans. Of course, if you loaned me money I wouldn't pay the full interest rate, but a good interest rate to build the academy, and you could, of course, live there any time you come to Taiwan. It would be sort of a place for you to stay." These suggestions would fall like feathers on my lap, and then like four by fours, and then like iron pillars, until finally, I finally got out of all of this by telling him, which was true—at the time I was putting my brother through Washington and Lee University College, and spending all of my money; I mean, I was a graduate student still, although I later studied with him after I joined the Berkeley faculty—that I didn't have the money. And he accepted that. That was all right. I was taking care of my brother. But he moved in with me.

17-01:12:34

Lage:

Oh, he did.

17-01:12:36

Wakeman:

Yes, well, he was—

17-01:12:36

Lage:

Then you really had a close relationship.

17-01:12:37

Wakeman:

Oh, yes, yes. He was a Buddhist layman, a *jushi*. He had taken the vows to be a vegetarian, for example, but he really loved meat, so we would meet. The

idea was we would spend the mornings studying together, and he was a wonderful teacher. I mean, he really was, in terms of explaining the texts, so his idea of learning was very Confucian, very old fashioned, in that if you don't understand it now, wait, at some point, epiphany, you'll understand everything. Sort of like my boxing master, "Don't ask now what this particular thing is, some day you'll understand what it's all about." This is designed to rip your nose off and stuff them in your ears, or whatever, but we don't call it that. [laughs]

So he began staying for lunch, because I had a very good cook and she prepared always meat for lunch, at least one meat dish, and he enjoyed that. And then he lived way out in a rice paddy outside of the city, and he would say, "You know, I think I'll have a nap." And then he'd get up after that and then he would say, "I think we should continue studying." So I found myself spending the whole day with this man. My spouse became very upset at this. The servants hated him, he—I guess I will say this, he had dubious sexual tastes. He was also a wonderful paint forger. His closest relative was a very famous painter, Pu Ru, who's a very well known traditional painter. And pretty soon he was staying for dinner, and then we'd work after dinner and then he'd spend the night, so he sort of moved in. Later, after my first bout with him, stint with him—I gave up a year of study in Japan to stay to work more with him—I came back to the States. When I went back a few years later to resume our lessons, I, by then, no, no, no, I was still married to Nancy and we resumed, and then I came back and a year or two later—

Audiofile 18 Wakeman 18 04-04-06.wav

18-00:00:00

Lage: OK. Now we're recording again. We probably only missed the last couple sentences, I would say.

18-00:00:09

Wakeman: And we were talking about *Nothing Concealed* [the festschrift for *Liu Yü-Yün*].

18-00:00:12

Lage: Right.

18-00:00:12

Wakeman: Yes. Actually the title, which is from a line in the *Analects*, was suggested by Nathan Sivin, so it was more of a collaborative project than something I did solely myself. Well, no, I mean, I did do it myself. I thought it would be a good idea to commemorate him, and the students that I could contact—he had a list of his students that had so far studied with him, and each of us put in a little essay on one thing or another. The book was very modestly published, but he, of course, was delighted with this book, and as I say, he is still alive.

18-00:00:53

Lage: Yes, thirty-five years later.

18-00:00:55

Wakeman:

I haven't dared look him up for many years. I'll tell you, I really haven't dared. But, of course, he introduced me to New Text Confucianism, which Levenson had written about.

18-00:01:09

Lage:

Now what's New Text Confucianism?

18-00:01:11

Wakeman:

Oh, this is a complicated thing. It has to do with the editions—when Qin Shihuang, the first emperor, the famous despot, buried the scholars and burned the books, the Confucian writings were destroyed. And they were reproduced again, after the despot himself died, from memory; that is, the people who were Confucianists wrote down, in the New Text, *jinwen* in the new writing, which the Qin emperor—the Qin emperor unified weights and measures, built the Great Wall, and also introduced a uniform way of writing Chinese which we still use today. So that's called *jinwen*, New Text. And these classics that had been destroyed were written down from memory in this New Text, this new writing. Later, around the Christian era when a usurper had briefly taken the throne of the Han Dynasty in between the former and the latter Han, a very famous bibliographer insisted that he had, that he had access to the old-text versions.

18-00:02:32

Lage:

That they hadn't been destroyed.

18-00:02:34

Wakeman:

That they had discovered a set of these walled up, a descendant of Confucius had discovered a set of these walled up in one of the houses that Confucius had lived in in Qufu in Shandong Province. And these were produced as the original. It would be like the Dead Sea Scrolls or something, you know, so there was a great debate that raged for centuries over which was the more authentic text, and eventually the old-text versions won out. They were less apocalyptic, less mystical, more mundane, more prosaic, to a certain extent than the new-text versions. The new texts were still there and, it's a long, complicated story, but during the Qing Period, when philology and historical phonology were at their peak in China, a number of scholars analyzed the old text and determined by internal evidence, from rhyming and so forth, that the old texts were forgeries, or at least portions of the old texts were forgeries. And that in fact, the new texts that had been not used for years were perhaps the real Megillah, the real thing.

So this launched a revival in the nineteenth century. and because the new texts were texts that presented Confucius as a kind of Nostradamus who could look ahead and foresee the future and had predicted three great ages, culminating in a kind of utopian Period of the Great Peace, the Taiping. He could foresee the way China—history was progressing down into their present. Furthermore, Confucius, in the commentaries of the new text, was presented as someone

who had believed very much in, not in simply tradition, but in accommodating your age with, or in accommodating tradition with one's own age, that it was necessary to alter institutions to accommodate to new circumstances. So Confucius was presented as a reformer.

Well, you can imagine what the young reformers did with this in the early stages of the reform movement in the 1890s. They said, "Well, Confucius himself was a reformer, but we were denied this knowledge for years, and years, and years by these conservative dynasties that didn't want the truth to come out, and so Confucius predicted all of this." And that became a very important part of their rhetoric. But it was so scandalous, of course, many of the supporters of the young reformers, who supported them because they were trying to get China in order after the defeat by Japan in 1895, were offended by—it would be like saying, the New Testament is a forgery and only the Pentateuch is—or you know, we have to go back, or maybe the Essenes were the—it was that kind of canonical controversy.

In the new text there was also this notion of the gentlemen, the *junzi*, and almost a kind of demiurge, a kind of magician who could [sound of clicking] change things with a turn of his hand, you know, it's almost like a Merlin-like figure who was the epitome of moral rectitude, on the one hand, and on the other hand, had great powers. And this appealed greatly to young intellectuals who were faced with the dismal prospect of trying to educate and reform a country of whom 85 per cent were illiterate peasants. But it had this sort of conspiratorial notion, the *junzi*, so in Taiwan in those years, the Prince, or the Manchu as we also used to call him, would talk about Chiang Kai-shek in a hushed voice, saying, "Well," he called him the old bald man, "the old bald man doesn't, you know," and "we new-text people," and so like, kind of like the *Da Vinci Code*, "I've got the real thing!" So I found this all very, very amusing, but it gave me an insight into this school that has stuck with me to this day.

18-00:07:07

Lage: He was an insight into the past.

18-00:07:11

Wakeman: An insight into the past, yes.

18-00:07:13

Lage: Wow. Now, where are we? We must get more on into your work [chuckling], you're telling me—

18-00:07:19

Wakeman: Well, all about the, yes, we've been talking about—

18-00:07:22

Lage: —which is fascinating, but—

18-00:07:22

Wakeman: But you're right, it's turning into a history lesson.

18-00:07:24

Lage: Right.

18-00:07:26

Wakeman: Well, to get back to, so, the completion of *The Great Enterprise* came many, many years after its inception, or after the beginning of the research. And to a certain extent, the same thing was true with this other largish book that I recently published, *Spymaster*.

18-00:07:47

Lage: Now that's jumping us way ahead!

18-00:07:50

Wakeman: I'm jumping way ahead because I started in that area with the police, and the reason I did that was, the reason I got into that topic was very simple. I was working on a project involving a seventeenth century polymath. This was in the 1970s I began working on this guy and also on a project which was a kind of picking up my work in *Strangers at the Gate*, to continue to study the Taiping Rebellion during the period of its occupation of West Central China around 1860. And I just, I didn't seem to have—first of all I've discovered the polymath was so much a polymath I couldn't really deal with it. He was an astronomer, he was a mathematician, he was a musicologist and philosopher. He knew so many things, I couldn't handle it! I was too ignorant. The seventeenth century is a little bit like the period in Elizabethan England, you know, the vocabulary, knowledge, for someone like Sir Francis Bacon you have to know many, many things to write about such a figure, and the same thing is true for these earlier intellectuals, late-Ming/early-Ching intellectuals, because there were no disciplinary boundaries. I took calculus in college and that was about it. I mean, I wasn't about to get into higher topology and so on. So I still was planning on writing about him, and was getting very keen about this Taiping project. I had already, I still have a lot of material and could write about that some day and might even, but *deo volente*, but I then was making my first trips to mainland China and one of the places I was really impressed by, or was struck by, was Shanghai. I mean, Shanghai then, this is still during the Cultural Revolution, was a city of darkness after sundown. I mean, it was—

18-00:10:10

Lage: It shut down, you mean?

18-00:10:12

Wakeman: Yes, I mean, there was no night life, there were no restaurants, it was just—I remembered just looking out over the city, and it was a city that lived within the hulks of imperialism. The Bund was there with the Hong Kong and Shanghai, former Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, then the headquarters of the Revolutionary Committee. It was like all of these architectural vestiges of

British imperialism were there and impressive and imposing. But the city was just, it was lifeless in some ways. It had been frozen. You had a sense of a time warp. This was frozen somewhere in 1937 and what was going on—and in the meantime you go down in the street, and you can see these truckloads of people being carted up to—there's a theater on the corner of Nanjinglu, which is now a theater again, now a big movie house. But was then turned into a sort of place where they had political study. They'd bring these cadres in; it was during one of the anti-Confucius campaigns.

18-00:11:21

Lage: To reeducate.

18-00:11:23

Wakeman: To reeducate. So reeducation, posters, you know, we had a vague sense of what was going on, although we had no idea really what was going on, so it was all very mysterious and strange to me, but this older Shanghai appealed to me and the contrast with the present. I became fascinated by that, and it completely diverted me from these other projects. I mean, not right away, it's just that I'd find that I was dropping them. I had always been interested, as we were saying earlier, in disorder, in the netherside of things, the underworld, I mean in the larger sense of underworld.

18-00:12:01

Lage: And the secret police.

18-00:12:02

Wakeman: Not yet. I was interested—not, well, yes to a—

18-00:12:06

Lage: No? Well, secret societies.

18-00:12:08

Wakeman: Secret societies. Yes, that's what I mean. So the Green Gang, a secret society, had run Shanghai, and I thought, "I think I'll write about that; that's something that really interests me. Are there materials? Can I find them?" You know, so forth and so on. So I started working on that, and I almost instantly realized that in the case of Shanghai, to understand the secret societies, you had to understand the police—that they were two sides of the same hand, that, in fact, the gangsters *were* the police. You know, in Chicago Al Capone bought the police. In Shanghai, Al Capone ran the police, he had a detective squad—the equivalent, I mean.

So I began wondering about how that had happened, and that coincided with, again, again, this issue of documents, a documentary discovery that—actually, had I had my wits about me I could have found this out much earlier from a book published many years earlier, but I had not read the book carefully because my politics at that time, in a sense, prevented me. It was a book by Charles Willoughby, who was MacArthur's G-2, about the Sorge spy ring, and he talks about certain documents, and no more is said of them. At this

point in reading just casually, I ran across an article on the provincial branch of the Communist Party, written by a woman named Marcia [Reynders] Ristaino, who's a very good friend who just sent me some materials from Washington, who was working then for the CIA, and she wrote this article and she referred to Shanghai police materials.

Now I knew there had been Shanghai police materials because a Communist historian, Jean Chesneaux, a Frenchman, had used them in the early fifties. But now where are these materials? Where is she getting access to them? So I contacted her. She was very guarded, but I soon discovered that they were located out at Langley, that they were at the CIA. So I got on the back of Bob Warner, who was then the head of our [U.S.] archives, whatever he was called, the chief of archives—chief archivist and he was serving on the Council of the American Historical Association with me and I said, “Bob, is there any way to get these things declassified, or—so we began putting pressure on the National Archives to try to acquire them and eventually they did. They shipped them to National Archives, and what they were, they were the records of the central investigation department or the criminal investigation department of the Shanghai Municipal Police, that is, the international settlement police, not the Chinese police, from about 1918 to, down to 19, oh 44.

18-00:15:22

Lage:

Strange that they would be in our country.

18-00:15:26

Wakeman:

Well, that was the story I began to—how did they get here?

18-00:15:30

Lage:

Yes.

18-00:15:31

Wakeman:

Well, it turned out, as I began to run the story down and talk to people who knew about them, a man named [Wilbert] Mahoney, who was the archivist at the military reference division—he may still be alive—was an immense help to me then, and he helped me run down the story of these documents. These documents had been taken a few nights before the Communist takeover of the city of Shanghai in May 1949 by American agents, American and Taiwanese agents, Nationalist agents, who loaded them aboard an LST [tank landing ship], which they'd moved up the Huangpu River and parked off of the Bund and moved these documents out of the police archives, which were on Fuzhou Road then, into the LST and took off with them. Apparently, they went initially to put them in the Philippines and then moved them to Taiwan. They were well known to agents because Willoughby, who actually was a German and who was—you know MacArthur didn't cooperate with the OSS. He was only interested in what his own G-2 people did. These documents were made available at a kind of museum school in Taiwan to American agents, including FBI agents, who were brought there to study them, because at one point or

another, most famous American Communists had gone to Shanghai. Shanghai was the hub of the Comintern for the Far East or for all of the East Asia, Asia. You went to Shanghai to get new papers, get a new identity, to get money, to get instructions.

18-00:17:27

Lage: Beginning when?

18-00:17:28

Wakeman: Oh, beginning back in 1928. And they operated under various covers, but they had—the Comintern had very little to do with the Chinese Communist Party. They were deliberately told to keep their distance, and this meant that people like, oh well, three of the leaders of the American Communist Party, a number of other Communists, had gone through there for one reason or another. Shanghai was *the* place. That's where many people think the so-called fifth man, you know, in the sort of Menzies' sea tradition that historians of the MI5 and 6 have written about, appear. In any case, this was a major hub of Communist activity. And the idea was that you could learn more about international Communists, including the Sorge spy ring, and that would lead you to other things, the Rosenbergs, blah, blah, etc.

But all of this was very hush, hush, and very secretive. It was only people who had a need to know about these things who knew about them. They, later, then were shipped partly to Taiwan, and eventually they were taken back to the United States and stored at the CIA headquarters, where they were regularly consulted. And this is the material that they released. We have them here now on microfilm. Not all—there are a small number that have not been microfilmed. But the ones on microfilm, there are eighty-three reels, I think altogether, of these *fascinating* files. I mean, they're incredible as a source of social history and about the police. They aren't about the Chinese police, but they are about the municipal settlement police.

18-00:19:25

Lage: Of Shanghai.

18-00:19:27

Wakeman: Of Shanghai. And the municipal settlement police, like the British police force in Delhi and other parts of the British empire, were part and parcel, that is they worked very closely hand in hand with SIS, with the Secret Intelligence Service.

18-00:19:41

Lage: So they were British, these police.

18-00:19:43

Wakeman: Yes, they were dominated by the Brits, yes, although they had Japanese inspectors, Russian, White Russians, Americans and so on, but the people, the commissioners of police were always, always British, and Patrick Givens and others who were the leaders were also working hand in hand with the

intelligence agents doing things like keeping very close tabs on, for instance, Indian nationalists, the Sikh community in Shanghai, that sort of thing, but also on the movement of Communists, and that brought them into very close connection with the Kuomintang police. I won't go into all of this because it's a very complicated set of things, but once I discovered those, I thought, well, here's my entre to the police in a dual sense: one, the Chinese don't have these, which means maybe I can trade documents.

18-00:20:40

Lage: Ah.

18-00:20:42

Wakeman: I was very frightened they could probably get them on their own by just regular open means, but they weren't prepared to go that far. They would rather have them, to be given these microfilms. And in exchange for those I wanted to have materials on the Shanghai Chinese police force and anything that could be found out about the French concession police. Of course, there are the Sûreté archives in France as well, so, all of this meant that I could begin really studying the police, and that is what led to what is now ultimately a trilogy of books on the Shanghai police from 1927 to 1954.

18-00:21:24

Lage: *Policing Shanghai*—

18-00:21:25

Wakeman: *Policing Shanghai, Shanghai Badlands*, and a new book called *Red Star over Shanghai*.

18-00:21:31

Lage: And they all grew out of this collection and the Chinese—

18-00:21:33

Wakeman: They all grew out of this collection, yes, and of course, as I got into it I began to spread out, people began bringing me materials. I found new materials that had to do with criminal investigations and quickly realized that Shanghai was the center of Chiang Kai-shek's most secret military police, the Bureau of Statistics.

18-00:21:55

Lage: The Bureau of Statistics was his military police?

18-00:21:58

Wakeman: Well, there was the Military Bureau of Statistics and the Central Bureau of Statistics. The Military Bureau, Juntong, was Dai Li, whom I write about, his group. The other was run essentially by Ch'en Li-fu, the Ch'en brothers. And they were rivals, like the FBI and the CIA. And there was a great deal there about that, so that got me off on more than a decade's worth of work on the Shanghai police and led me to publish those books on the police. I'm just finishing that up now, in fact, this—

18-00:22:38

Lage:                   The *Red Star*.

18-00:22:38

Wakeman:           *Red Star*. I'll write the final version this summer. I've gone through three revisions now, but new material keeps popping up. Then in the course of that, again a matter of total serendipity, one of my then graduate students here at Berkeley, Yeh Wen-hsin, who is now a professor here, the Morrison Professor of Modern Chinese History, was looking for materials for me, and she came and told me, in her characteristically understated way, said, "Well, I found some things you might want to look at in the Bancroft." Now, the Bancroft would have been the last place I would have looked for—why the Bancroft? So I went over and she told me where to start looking, and it was the papers of a man named August Vollmer.

18-00:23:30

Lage:                   I know his name.

18-00:23:33

Wakeman:           You know, you probably have heard his name.

18-00:23:35

Lage:                   Wasn't he police chief here?

18-00:23:36

Wakeman:           That's right. Vollmer had been town marshal during the San Francisco earthquake, and then he was made police chief [in Berkeley], and he was the first professor of criminology at Berkeley, and he was the one who initiated the program of having criminology students serve on the Berkeley police force. But as I began reading about this guy he turned out to be one of these great police pioneers. I mean, he perfected the modus operandi system. He had the first radio patrol car system; police boxes, bicycle patrols, fingerprints, and the lie detector were all attributed to him. His students were known as the V-men. He was head of the National Association of Police Chiefs and made the key recommendation to Palmer to set up the FBI. He believed very much in a national police force, and he was sort of a, you know, he was a German, who had originally been from New Orleans, I guess Germany and then New Orleans, and who served in the US Army as a young man, had been a grocery store clerk here, and he won his election as town marshal on the basis of having raided a fan-tan parlor on Dwight Way. So—[chuckling] it was very much—

18-00:24:58

Lage:                   I'm not getting the China connection though!

18-00:25:00

Wakeman:           Well, in all of this, these trunks of paper, these archives of the Vollmer papers, which remain to be fully plumbed, there began to appear two Chinese. A guy named Frank Yee [Yu Xiuhao], which is a Cantonese name, who was from Chinatown originally, and a man named Feng Yukun, who was from China.

And the two of them had met at the University of Michigan, or Michigan State School of Municipal Administration. This was in the early days of the Nationalist government. And from there they came to Berkeley and enrolled in the school of criminology that Vollmer had just established, and he sort of adopted them, and they called him Papa Vollmer. Vollmer and his wife would have them over, you know, on the weekends for supper. He regarded them with great fondness. They went back to China after they graduated. They served on the Berkeley police force, of course, went back to China, and they wrote him on a weekly basis, practically for the rest of their lives. Frank Yee ended up running a private detective agency of New York City's Chinatown, and Feng Yukun ended up on Taiwan eventually after serving as police chief of Mukden. They are both very interesting, to read these letters, because what they announce is they're going to go back to China to Berkeleyize the Chinese police.

18-00:26:38

Lage:

[laughing] Hah! This is a great story!

18-00:26:40

Wakeman:

It's true! To Berkeleyize the Chinese police. They're going to bring this new scientific law enforcement to the Chinese police, and they proceed to do that. Now, if you read the letters and you look at it at that sort of surface level, the story is they go back, they become instructors at the Hangzhou Police Academy, which is then the equivalent of the national police academy. They institute regular patrols around West Lake, the famous tourist area. They start training their students in modern forensics. They have competitors in the form of returned students from France who have studied police techniques there, and of course, police are the answer, not just to them, but to Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang Kai-shek, by then, has decided that the way he's going to centralize the country is through two wings, as he puts it. One wing is the army, the other wing is the police. And police modernization is the order of the day. So there again, these two guys are given responsibility for taking their police cadets up to Lushan, which is the summer resort where Chiang spent his summers, and being given responsibility for patrolling the area, arresting malefactors, and so on. And introducing along the way to things like the lie detector and all these police—

18-00:28:02

Lage:

And all this you're getting from the letters.

18-00:28:04

Wakeman:

Yes. Then, meanwhile, by now we're now talking about 1980. China is, well already before then, some memoirs have begun to appear about Dai Li, who is a name everybody knows. Dai Li's name, it's sort of like—well, they call him the Himmler of China, but sort of like J. Edgar Hoover here, and among Sinophone populations everyone knows who Dai Li is. So I'd heard about him for years and years and years. Mothers used to scare their children by saying, "Dai Li will come and get you." A very sinister figure. And materials began

appearing about Dai Li, particularly a book about the inner workings of his headquarters written by a man named Shen Zui, who has become a great, great celebrity in China as a result of this, and Yeh Wen-hsin, who then was still a graduate student, went on one of our delegations to China, one of the ones that I set up, as an interpreter and managed to meet Shen Zui and another writer, Wen Qiang, and interviewed them and got yet more material, which she brought back and said, "There's a lot of stuff in China about this." A lot of interest, anyway, because this book that he's written is selling a lot.

So I began thinking, "What if I could get material on Dai Li?" And that sent me off in the direction of the secret police. As it turned out, many of the documents in Taiwan had been shredded, but there was a lot of material in the equivalent of the FBI, the central Bureau of Investigation, that I was able to gain access to through contacts on Taiwan. It's really eerie to work there because the archives is right in the, you sit in the same room where they are bringing in poor blokes who'd been arrested for God knows what and they're hauled off for interrogation—

18-00:30:04

Lage: And you're reading.

18-00:30:05

Wakeman: And you're reading the documents, you know—ah, ah, ahhhhh [nervously]. But—very, very informative things. And then on mainland China, although there are no central secret police archives, station archives exist, that is each of the regional stations in this organization. And, it turned out to be, just an immense massive thing.

18-00:30:29

Lage: And nobody's really delved into it?

18-00:30:32

Wakeman: No, I mean, not in English. And the reason it's selling, the thing is still selling like hotcakes in China, is nobody has really written about it with any real access to archives, because the other thing that also, in a sense, fell into my lap was the OSS archives.

18-00:30:49

Lage: And that was filled with—

18-00:30:51

Wakeman: Filled with stuff on Dai Li. I mean, when Casey was director of the CIA he decided to send over to the National Archives, the records of their China group because that was considered to be one of the great feathers in the hat of the OSS. The OSS didn't do very much in China, frankly. Dai Li hated Bill Donovan, and they just didn't get along, and any time an OSS person did anything, contacted an asset, that asset would be arrested and taken off by Dai Li and thoroughly interrogated. So that they knew everything along the way,

what every OSS man was doing, but there is a lot of material about what's going on in those regards, particularly materials from the so called X section, which was about espionage that, you know—Wow!

So trading microfilms, information, I began to get this—you know, it's funny how these things happen. People start coming up to you. Dai Li's organization was so extensive and so ubiquitous, and particularly after America entered the Pacific War, the need for American or English translators for Dai Li—Dai Li had 200,000 officers in his secret service. I mean, that's almost as large as Stasi was at its height, but certainly, then, the largest espionage organization in the world. As Americans moved in we sent a mission to help modernize the secret service. I don't think many of the Americans knew what they were actually doing. There still is an organization of veterans of this group. They have their headquarters out in Walnut Creek of all places. I've interviewed—

18-00:32:43

Lage:

Have you—you must have interviewed them.

18-00:32:46

Wakeman:

Oh, yes, sure. One of the most important fellows is—I think he may have died now—then a Marine lieutenant, Eri [Earle] Dane, was a member of the same beach club I belonged to in Connecticut. You know they talked about Dai Li as this great man, whereas in China he's seen as you know, this horrendous—but the fascination with him in China is really extraordinary. And here I had these documents that nobody else had seen. So I began writing that along the way, and that leaves me now with the end of the trilogy—

18-00:33:22

Lage:

And this [Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service (2003)] isn't part of the trilogy.

18-00:33:25

Wakeman:

This is separate. And I have got this last book in this realm, which may be, in the end, the best, I hope. At least every author hopes, every historian hopes, I think, that their latest work is going to be a better work than their former ones, but this is about a man who's much more complicated than Dai Li and harder to get information about because—

18-00:33:49

Lage:

It's also biographical, then.

18-00:33:51

Wakeman:

Yes, this is, again, will be a biographical account of this man named Pan Hannian. Pan Hannian in his middle and later years ended up as the head of intelligence for the Communists for East China, for coastal China, and particularly for Shanghai and Hong Kong, all the way down to liberation. And then in 1955, Mao turned against him, and he was sent off to prison with his bride and eventually died in 1977 in a prison camp in Hunan Province on a tea plantation. He was, at the time of his trial, which was two years after his

arrest, he was declared the number one internal traitor, and so forth and so on, and I thought could easily have been shot, but they don't usually shoot these people, but—

18-00:35:01

Lage: And who was he supposed to have betrayed them to?

18-00:35:03

Wakeman: Well, that's—

18-00:35:05

Lage: To the outside world? Or to—

18-00:35:07

Wakeman: He is supposed to have protected his own agents who were working for the Kuomintang as well, or for the Japanese, from exposure to his own party. He was supposed to have betrayed his party by negotiating directly with the Japanese and being a Japanese double agent. And I think the real crime that they accused him of, in 1943, without his willing participation, he was brought into the presence of Wang Jingwei, the puppet president of China, and Wang Jingwei proceeded to try to negotiate with him a postwar solution. What would the puppet troops do vis-à-vis the Communists and the surrendering Japanese, offering them a deal. And Pan Hannian said, "I can't speak on behalf of the party. I don't think the deal is acceptable, but I can't speak on behalf of the party," but he didn't report the meeting. And I mean, in Communist party practice then, not to ask permission from, or get some sort of clearance from party center, was immensely suspect. And he didn't report the meeting because there was a purge being carried out against one of his close friends, {Huang Shun Shaini?} by a very vindictive man, Rao Shushi, and I think Pan realized that if he went to Mao, or went to the leadership and said, "I've just met with Wang Jingwei without informing you beforehand," that he would bring disaster on the head of {Shaini?}, so he didn't tell anything to Mao until 1955 and then he wrote him a letter and said, "I did this, I did it for a number of reasons, particularly this Rao Shushi, this man, I didn't report it, and this is exactly what happened." And Mao considered the matter and said, "This is not enough. This man is a traitor." And he turned the case over to Kang Sheng who was his, his sort of Beria type.

Now that, in itself, is an interesting tale. It's full of skullduggery. The story of his role as a spymaster is extraordinary, because unlike Dai Li, he *was* an intellectual and he operated at the highest levels. He later, before he was purged, became deputy mayor of Shanghai and was a major figure in running the campaigns in the city for the first, well, the first six years of the rule over Shanghai. The *Red Star* book is about that period as well, so there's a certain overlap. But what really interests me, and this is another part of—not so much [evident] in that passage from the colophon to the *Spymaster* about disorder and the demons and so forth—is I'm very interested in moral ambiguity, in the gray zone, where there are no blacks and whites. That's why I like writers like

Graham Greene, for example, who deal with these fatal flaws we all have, the fatal weaknesses we all have. Perhaps in Greene's case too obsessively, but anyway.

Pan Hannian is such a person. This is a full bio[graphy], I mean, it starts out with him—I actually managed to find his village a couple of years ago, a year ago last summer with my father-in-law driving around the goddamn Chinese countryside trying to find this little village, and finally, we didn't even know the name of it, and finally we managed through local people to get to it, and I actually interviewed his sister. So I trace him from—he was from a sort of *déclassé* gentry family, and he was a *brilliant* young intellectual. I mean, at the age of seventeen and eighteen he was hobnobbing with some of the major figures of the world of letters of China. He was an editor, he became involved in—he wrote children's stories and poetry and folk tales. He was a part of the folklore movement and then novellas, so there's a large body of his own writings. His poetry writing continues throughout his life, so you have a kind of constant. And the man is extremely sensitive.

18-00:39:52

Lage:

And then he becomes a secret police.

18-00:39:55

Wakeman:

And it's an amazing thing to watch how that happens, and how he, at such a young age—In 1931, the year that the chief of the security for the Communists defects, he is tapped by Zhou Enlai to become a member of what's called the special department, one of three section chiefs. At that point he is twenty-eight years old. That's very young, and he's working with people like Xung Gung, who are old masters of this sort of thing, and it's a period of time when the party's under tremendous attack in the cities. They lose the cities in effect, because of these massive defections, and the secretary general of the party defects. People are being arrested right and left, and the decision at the highest levels of the Politburo is we've got to strengthen our security and espionage apparatus and start fighting back with selective terror and assassination.

Now, I've written this part of the book up, but I'm still not, I don't think I've done it quite convincingly, how his skills lead to this. I think I know why Zhou Enlai chose him. What it brings in, what it throws into profile is the importance of this whole intellectual wing of the party that functioned in the white zones under Japanese occupation, operating in the most dangerous of circ[umstances]—makes, well sort of like French Resistance under Nazi occupation, that sort of set of tales, but here's a guy who's not some sort of goon, he's not a sadist, he doesn't like ordering people to be executed. He does so reluctantly when he has to.

18-00:41:50

Lage:

But he must really believe in the party.

18-00:41:53

Wakeman:

And that's the question that I end up with, because the very last words he says as he's dying of liver cancer, are more or less that, "I still believe in the party." And then you have to ask the question, "Why?" I mean, it's sort of like, other people have more or less made the same, you realize it's the same sort of thing. If the party wasn't right, then my whole life doesn't have any meaning. My father-in-law is like that. I mean, you know, he looks at what's happening, and he's very unhappy with that, but he can't go back. This man has been a member of the Communist Party since, well, before liberation. And he was a secret agent also. He and his brothers split, and his brother joined the Kuomintang. I mean, but he can't say—it's—the party still is the party, and there is that sort of loyalty of this old guard.

Pan Hannian, and even his wife, before she went completely nuts—I mean, here he is dying and absolutely screwed by Mao, and all she can remember is when she was a student of his, when he had a spy school about twelve miles north of the Yan'an base that we all read about in Edgar Snow's *Red Star over China*, where the *loess* caves are. Chairman Mao is standing around in his underwear picking his nose, this kind of thing. The spy school is being run by him and Kang Sheng, and one of the students is this young woman who happens to be the daughter of a very wealthy Hong Kong banker, which gives her access to a whole world, and it makes her a perfect person to become a paymaster for a South China net. Very dangerous work, she's traveling all the time, you know, she's handling payments and finances from one net to another, and he's training her, and they fall in love. He's still married to his first wife, an arranged marriage, a real shrew from what his friends say, but they had this wonderfully deep love for each other. I think the only other woman he loved was a cousin that he fell in love with as a young man, but it was impossible according to Chinese family law to get married.

She's loyal to him to the end, but once she's there, at one point during this period of economic self-sufficiency that's being touted by the regime, you know, they're living under blockade. Everybody has to sort of grow their own food and weave their own cloth, and she's an elite educated young *xiaojie* young miss, from Hong Kong, who has been surrounded by servants all her life. She finally weaves a little bit of cloth, and Mao happens to pass through the weaving plant where they're doing this, and he says, "Oh," of course he knew who she was, he said, "Oh," he said, "a piece of cloth woven by our dear comrade Miss {Fang?}." And, when she is on her damn death bed and she said, "a little piece of cloth, woven by our..." and I think, Jesus Christ, these people, you know, they never—but of course, now—and this is what makes it so difficult to write—Zhou Enlai was his sponsor. Anything that gets near Zhou Enlai is dangerous. That's the black hole.

18-00:45:26

Lage:

Now, at this point.

18-00:45:27

Wakeman:

*Now.* You can't—Zhou Enlai's archives are completely—they're under armed guard day and night in a building near the Summer Palace. It's just you can't—these archives are, I mean, they're invaluable. Nobody can get them.

18-00:45:44

Lage:

Nobody has been in them in the past? Or were they open and then shut?

18-00:45:47

Wakeman:

Yes, I know one man, who is a party historian, and I know he's been in there because there is a woman—I can't talk about this by mentioning any names, but there is a woman in this country married to a very famous professor—no she's not married, they're living together—a very famous Chinese Chinese professor, who claims to be Zhou Enlai's bastard daughter, and she wrote a book about this in China. It was a huge—I mean it was actually published in Hong Kong and sold in China—a huge commercial success. I think it sold over a million copies.

It's clear to me that she's not, I mean, just from knowing her, but she has this whole thing, and so I met this fellow, this older man who's a very famous Chinese Communist Party historian at a conference, and I raised the matter, and he said, "Well," he said, "we've really looked into that." And he started talking about the documents. So he clearly has access. He also said, "We sent down a team to the village in this province where she's from to check to see what the mother—the mother would have been his mistress. And he said, no, that it couldn't have happened. But he said, the brother, her brother, who is a minor Communist Party functionary, when they went in, he had an office in a two-story building in this former commune. They went upstairs to get him, just to talk; they said they wanted to talk to him, identifying themselves as a party work team, and he said, "What about?" And they said, "About your sister and the premier." Which of course means Zhou Enlai. And he was so rattled his legs started shaking. He couldn't walk down the stairs. He knew full well that if they wanted to, they would just remove them from the face of the earth, like that.

So it's very hard to get anything from those archives, yet I get material all the time from friends. Bits and pieces here and there, material that other party historians refer to after he was formally rehabilitated. The party announced in 1982 that his was the greatest case of miscarriage of justice.

18-00:48:12

Lage:

Oh, he *was* rehabilitated.

18-00:48:14

Wakeman:

He was rehabilitated five years after his death, and of course, six years after Mao's death. No mention is made of Mao, but the party's verdict is that he was the greatest case of miscarriage of justice since liberation. And at that point people began showing up everywhere. I mean, oh, he was this, he was

that, so there's a huge memoir literature about him, which I rely upon very heavily. This guy, for example, he must have been a charming, charming man. One woman who's—again, the ambiguity of all of this, that this woman who's a wonderful poetess and actress fell in love with him. He was already by then with his second wife, and he recruited her because of, oh complicated connections with the chief of the puppet police, and he said to her, he said, “You know, you're never going to get out from this. If you decide to do this, there is no way that you'll ever be clear,” because it's like the famous scenes of women who slept with Nazi officers and had their hair shaved. “You're going to be considered a *hanjian*, a traitor, for the rest of your life. Not even the party's going to be able to clear you.” And in fact, later when this happened, in fact, he went to Zhou Enlai and Deng Yingchao and asked them would they step forth and they said no. They threw her—and she ended up committing suicide. But she clearly was completely lovestruck.

Ding Ling, the great woman writer, in her memoirs about him writes, yes, that he had taken her from Shanghai to Ya'nan. One of the things that he could do thanks to his Japanese intelligence identification was to pass through enemy lines, and that they had, I mean, she doesn't say, “We slept together,” but it's clear, she describes one night in a stable and [chuckling].

18-00:50:27

Lage:

It sounds like you have myriad sources and—

18-00:50:30

Wakeman:

There really are, yes there really are, and getting them all under control. So, it's a difficult book to write. Also because, I'm discovering now, as more and more of these materials are reaching me, that he played a much more important role in the party than I ever realized, particularly at the time of the Xi'an incident in 1936 when Chiang Kai-shek was kidnapped, so this is a big book.

18-00:50:55

Lage:

This is going to be a long one!

18-00:50:57

Wakeman:

Well, I hope not. I've mapped out twenty-four chapters, and I've eight of them done, but I will say this—I don't know if it will be—I'm not sure about publication in China this time.

18-00:51:10

Lage:

Oh, really. But that—we talked about that. You weren't sure what they were going to want you to change, or—

18-00:51:15

Wakeman:

Well, all I know is with this current book, *Red Star*, the last two chapters are kind of a summation of the problem and also a kind of conclusion to the story of the police under the Communists, and I end up with a very short chapter called “The Pan-Yang Affair.” Pan Hannian is the guy I'm working on and

Yang Fan was the chief of police in Shanghai, and the two of them were arrested more or less together, so it has that name. Now, nobody knows what I've written in that part, and the Shanghai People's Press said, "Please send us a Chinese translation of those two chapters, because we're going to have to submit them to censorship." And I realize, it's Pan, that that's what they're worried about. So I'm just as happy to get that over with now. If they say, "No," then I'll say, "That's that." You can only bend so far.

18-00:52:16

Lage: Right, you can't change the text.

18-00:52:17

Wakeman: I can't change, yes, I can't change that. And it's all the more, it's all the more, I think, potentially controversial now because Mao is on the block, as it were. This current book [Chang and Halliday] is just so negative and condemning and people are wa[tching]—

18-00:52:38

Lage: And how is that—maybe we should do this next time, it's getting late. I just wondered how that was playing in China.

18-00:52:48

Wakeman: Uh, oh, I don't know, really, I haven't really talked about that, and I haven't been back since the book came out. I don't know. I should find that out, yes.

18-00:53:03

Lage: OK. I think we should stop for today.

18-00:53:07

Wakeman: Yes.

## Interview 11: April 11, 2006

Audiofile 19 Wakeman 19 04-11-06.wav

19-00:00:00

Lage: OK. Today is April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2006, and this Fred Wakeman and Ann Lage, mainly Fred Wakeman. And we're anticipating this being our last session.

19-00:00:18

Wakeman: Yes, yes.

19-00:00:20

Lage: So, we'll just see how it goes.

19-00:00:21

Wakeman: OK!

19-00:00:21

Lage: I thought we would look more at history at Berkeley, both Chinese history, history in general—

19-00:00:29

Wakeman: Yes, OK—and the history of the History Department?

19-00:00:31

Lage: And the department matters.

19-00:00:33

Wakeman: Yes, well, let me start with the department, then, since that was the—I'm thinking not of my years as a graduate student but of when I came to teach here.

19-00:00:41

Lage: No, no, because we actually talked—

19-00:00:43

Wakeman: We did talk about that at great length, yes.

19-00:00:44

Lage: —about those years and we talked about the FSM years—

19-00:00:47

Wakeman: Yes, yes, that's right.

19-00:00:47

Lage: And the Vietnam War years, but we haven't talked much since then.

19-00:00:52

Wakeman: No, we haven't, and I don't think I said very much about the department when I joined it, or my impressions of the department when I joined it. I think there are other people that you've interviewed, probably, who know a lot more about this, because although I came in with a group who were assistant professors and briefly, in gross, the history of the department is that there was

a sort of palace revolution by a generation of really superb scholars, younger, people like Gene Brucker and Bill Bouwsma, and so forth, who overthrew the Guttridges and the Sontags and just completely opened the department up to novelty, to new currents. The department began to admit Jews, which was, there had been only one Jewish member of the faculty who was actually originally in another department, Rhetoric, and who furthermore had been an apostate. And suddenly this all began to change, and I was with that group that came in that *they* had selected, then. This second generation selected a third, a group of very, very—to me at least—very bright and exciting, engaging young men.

19-00:02:08

Lage: And all men.

19-00:02:08

Wakeman: —no women, all men, all men.

19-00:02:09

Lage: Did that strike you at the time? Or had—

19-00:02:12

Wakeman: It struck me at the time because the one woman on the faculty, a historian of science, had just left, so I, yes, I was struck by that. There are no women in this department, and then I began thinking about it, and I think it struck me most strongly because there was a woman in Chinese history, a woman named Esther Morrison, who was brought in as sort of a lecturer by Joe Levenson to teach Chinese administrative history, very dry stuff, but to me, very useful. She was a very, I think she was a Radcliffe graduate, so her presence made the absence of women among the regular faculty more striking. In any case, the fact that we all were of an age and of the same gender made for a certain camaraderie and some were, I mean, quite brilliant, Larry Levine, George Stocking, Sheldon Rothblatt, Irv Scheiner—who turned out to be my best friend—Roger Hahn, Ira Lapidus, a whole panoply of—

19-00:03:25

Lage: All kind of an age cohort.

19-00:03:28

Wakeman: All kind of an age cohort, but I was probably the youngest of the cohort. I think Gerry Feldman was a year older than I was. Ira Lapidus was about my age, but he had gotten his PhD more quickly. He was from Harvard, a Middle Eastern historian of great repute. He had been Sir Hamilton Gibb's greatest student, and so on, and I, you know, had studied with Gibb at Harvard also. But, our discussions, our sessions, our lunches—we had a regular sort of faculty coffee hour, which now seems quite quaint, sort of a common-room tradition. We'd all gather around ten o'clock, if we didn't happen to have a class, in the faculty lounge and sit around drinking coffee. I always remember George coming in and saying, "Who's had the latest conceptual breakthrough?"

19-00:04:18

Lage: George Stocking?

19-00:04:20

Wakeman: George Stocking, all worried about—you know, it became a big joke—the latest conceptual breakthrough. Historians don't have conceptual breakthroughs, frankly speaking, but there it was.

19-00:04:29

Lage: So what kind of—can you recreate the scene there at all?

19-00:04:32

Wakeman: Well, you know, I'll give you two examples, one of which is probably, probably I shouldn't, but I will, because Irv Scheiner was still writing his dissertation at Michigan under John Hall on a study of Christian converts among the samurai in Japan at the time of the Meiji Restoration, and he was taking forever to do it, partly because Irv is such a man, such a man of bonhomie. He loves to talk, and he, in those days was a cigar smoker, so he would come out of his office, battening his typewriter, and corner you in the hallway, and start telling you about his latest idea. And here was a man who had a lot of concepts. Then, you know, he'd finish with you, and you'd flee into your office to do whatever writing you needed to do, because most of us lived in hovels. You could hardly afford, even then, to have a decent place to live in Berkeley. Our salaries were pitifully low.

19-00:05:26

Lage: So you were working in your office, is that what you're saying? You couldn't work at home.

19-00:05:28

Wakeman: Yes, so we all pretty much wrote in our offices, and you'd get into your office and lock the door because you didn't want to waste any more time, and Irv would be talking to somebody else. But his thesis became pretty static. Joe Levenson, who was beloved by all, and I would say, along with Schorske the sort of certified genius in the department, Levenson would tolerantly come to lunch with us, and we'd have chats about one thing or another. I remember one time we went to this Hofbrau House out on Telegraph Avenue. We were in there eating pastrami sandwiches, or something, and Irv was talking about the Lord Peter Wimsey novels, the mystery novels, he's a connoisseur of mystery novels, and I was quite stunned by, you know, he also accumulates a tremendous amount of trivia. He was going on and on about this one and that one, and I could barely remember which one it was where he climbed over the wall to get past the griffins and so on. I said, "Jesus, Irv," I said, "you should write a book about this." And Levenson made some—"I think he should probably finish his thesis first." And then finally Joe took me aside, because I was clearly his closest friend, and he said, "You must talk to Irv. He has got to finish this dissertation, because he won't be renewed unless he does." He was an acting assistant professor. He said, "You must do something to keep him from talking to people." So I rounded up all the others, starting with Bob

Middlekauff : we have got to take an oath not to talk to Irv and apply the pariah treatment, you know, the law of silence; we'll get him away from the campfire until he gets this—and I said, “We must be very open about this and tell him.” So I was deputed to go, and I told Irv, “We're not going to talk to you anymore until this damn thesis is finished.” And Irv thought it was all a big joke. But we did. You know, he would come out puffing on his cigar, and we'd see him, and go back into our offices. He was *terribly* frustrated, but he finished the dissertation. Or, he finished a manuscript—he hadn't finished it, and Bob Middlekauff read it, and said, “Irv, this *is* the dissertation. You can't go on; don't keep going.” And then, you know, so that sums up one sort of aspect on this kind of effort to get each other through the process of eventually getting tenure in the department, and this sense of shared rites of passage and all the rest of it. It was very much a part of it. But at the same time, the excitement, Reggie Zelnik, there were so many interesting people.

19-00:08:07

Lage:

Did they have a similarity at all? Or was there a—

19-00:08:09

Wakeman:

I don't think so, no, we all did different kinds of history. I don't think any of us did—

19-00:08:19

Lage:

There's no Berkeley school.

19-00:08:21

Wakeman:

The only Berkeley school then was the Latin American school associated with Woodrow Borah and demography, you know, the depopulation of Mexico, that sort of thing. But no, there was no distinct Berkeley school and that was the other thing that became very clear from the very beginning, that this was a variegated, multifarious department. You did what you wanted to do, you did it as best you could do it, and there was a great deal of tolerance for different approaches and styles.

The other thing that I realized—I got my tenure very quickly, and the thing that I realized a couple of years later when I was promoted to associate professor, which I hadn't understood, was the standards of the department, which were absolutely—I would say without any doubt whatsoever, from my experience with other universities, other systems, that the combination of academic faculty rule here, which meant relatively weak chairmen, the power of the budget committee, and this adherence to the highest standards without reference to anyone else but members of the department. We didn't go out and ask for letters from people—what do you think of so and so?—because I think we would have regarded this as a concession to the notion that somehow our judgment didn't suffice. We each felt we could judge any area of history. And I remember my first tenure meeting, I was actually put on the ad hoc committee, and the committee divided, which—

19-00:10:02

Lage: An ad hoc committee to fill a certain position?

19-00:10:05

Wakeman: To—no, no, I'm sorry, not a search committee, but the tenure committee for the department to make a recommendation to the department for a vote for or against tenure for such and such a person. And I felt strongly that the person was not—I didn't feel I could vote for tenure and—

19-00:10:24

Lage: And so this was one of your co-professors.

19-00:10:28

Wakeman: It was one of the cohort, yes.

19-00:10:30

Lage: Yes, oh my.

19-00:10:31

Wakeman: The other two members, one of them an older professor, who was very senior in the department and who tended to be a consensualist, didn't want to do this, and the third person, who actually was a former teacher of mine, not Levenson, someone else, was as ardently for this person as I was against. And you know, if you're a young man, and you, I was very ashamed by this, I didn't know what to do, but I couldn't but stick by my guns, and I remember going to the department meeting, it being one of my very first meetings [of the tenured faculty] and what astounded me was that it was a department tradition then that everybody read the work.

19-00:11:13

Lage: Everybody in the tenured faculty.

19-00:11:14

Wakeman: In the meeting, everybody in the tenured faculty read the work, and if you didn't you had to abstain. The only people, the people who abstained were people who had not read it or people who had, who were members of the budget committee and therefore had to recuse themselves.

19-00:11:28

Lage: I see.

19-00:11:27

Wakeman: And I was astounded. People in fields so far away from this particular person's specialization had read it, thought about it, written long critical, virtually critical essays on this and that. I thought, "My God, this is like being put through the judgment day." It was extraordinary. And I don't think I've ever seen such high standards applied. And my experience as an outside member of committees at Harvard, Cambridge, Princeton, you name it, Stanford, they just don't do it that way. It's not that rigorous.

19-00:12:00

Lage: And what kinds of things were they looking at?

19-00:12:03

Wakeman: Well, you know, it's pretty ineffable sometimes. They're looking first of all, of course, at the simplest level they're looking at the matter of documentation, how you read sources, do you understand the materials, and how do you interpret them. And then at a next level, what is the problematic of your work, what are you after, what is informing your work, and how conscious are you of that; how original is the work in terms of other work done in that particular area—and there you do have to rely upon the opinion of experts more. But above all, finally, at the highest sort of level, what is this as a work of an intellect? Not necessarily this work itself standing alone, but what does it tell us about how this person is going to be as a scholar for the rest of their lives. And that was almost always the criteria, and that's a very iffy proposition.

19-00:13:01

Lage: And these are the kinds of things that would be discussed.

19-00:13:03

Wakeman: They would be discussed and we would, we made many mistakes. I wouldn't say a lot of them, but we made mistakes. We made appointments that—and we still remember them. We still remind each other, “You voted for so and so back then, remember?” And I can't speak more than that because that would really betray my colleagues. And in other cases, I can remember, and I have to say—goddamn it, of course, I'm stubborn enough—that most of the time I was right. A couple of times I was wrong, but most of the time I was right. On the other side, where the department decided, or the tenure committee decided at the end of the day that so and so did not deserve tenure, and they said no, and that person goes off and turns into a superb scholar at another university. I mean, that is not uncommon.

19-00:13:52

Lage: So has that happened in ones that you've—

19-00:13:53

Wakeman: Oh, yes, oh, yes, I can think of at least four cases where they go somewhere else and they're just, they're still alive and very productive people today. But the standards and the level of the scholarly discussion were what impressed me the most at that point in the department.

19-00:14:15

Lage: Did teaching come into it?

19-00:14:17

Wakeman: Well, you know, that was a kind of—in those days there was very little, how can I put this? I recently did a review as an outside reviewer of another history department in the UC system. And there were several very, very blatant cases of inequity, particularly involving women. In some of these cases, the women had thrown themselves either into professional service, or department,

university service and/or into teaching, really into teaching. And we all know at the end of the day, it's the research that counts. Now, since the decision was taken after Chancellor Bowker retired to sort of start making us into a kind of Swarthmore, which Berkeley can never be and I think it's a futile effort.

19-00:15:18

Lage: You mean an undergraduate teaching institution.

19-00:15:20

Wakeman: Yes, this is not ever going to be Reed College or Swarthmore or Haverford, it's just not what it does. When I came here, it was a normal school—we trained scholars at the graduate level, and I like undergraduates, I like teaching, but I've always felt the center of my teaching life was with graduate students, and particularly as the tremendous demand for academic PhDs began to wane a bit in the mid-seventies, and it became harder to place people, the administration began reducing the quotas, and graduate students began to, their numbers began to decline. People who really had started out as that began to find they didn't have graduate students. Now, fortunately for me, Chinese history never faced that predicament, but I'd see colleagues in other fields who, you know, they were just, they couldn't teach a seminar, they didn't have enough students to take it.

19-00:16:21

Lage: Trends in student interests.

19-00:16:23

Wakeman: And trends, which also pushed, and they would try to redefine themselves, pick a more trendy kind of field or redefine their own field in ways that would give them more of a graduate teaching role. But invariably, and as it's quite proper, their interest turned more to undergraduate teaching. The university meanwhile was beginning to promote that partly because of pressures from the legislature and a new spirit, that I think that's even more characteristic today, which is quite understandable given the inflation in university costs. Any parent such as myself has had to go through this, particularly if you send your child to an Ivy League school, it's just impossible—it's not impossible, we all do it, but it's really difficult—and that you should get some bang for your buck, to put it simply, and that therefore there should be more emphasis on undergraduate teaching,

That, by the way, tended to begin to create a bit of a rift in the department between the happy few who had plenty of graduate students and could be guaranteed five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, a dozen, or whatever, fifteen. I mean even today my graduate seminar has fifteen students in it, partly because we draw on other departments—Asian Studies and Political Science—versus one, or two, or three [in other seminars]. [A rift] between those who are mainly teaching graduate students and those who were directing their attention towards undergraduates, and that began to break the solidarity of this group.

19-00:17:56

Lage: Oh, I see, that's any interesting point that nobody has mentioned, really.

19-00:18:00

Wakeman: Really?

19-00:18:00

Lage: Yes.

19-00:18:01

Wakeman: Yes, I think it was there along with the other changes and trends that are more general and more, I mean, they're more universal around the country.

19-00:18:11

Lage: Now, how would it create a rift? Would it create a rift in how you judge your fellows for tenure? Or what—

19-00:18:17

Wakeman: Well, let's take one example—credit for teaching. Everybody gets the same credit. You teach under the quarter system, two, two, one [courses per quarter]; that was the way it used to be. You actually got a credit for one course. And under our current [semester] system it's two, two. Now, of course, I'm sort of at maybe the distaff end of this particular teeter-totter, but in my field, an immense amount of effort has to go into teaching the tools of scholarship—learning diplomatics, learning how to read Chinese handwriting, things that are bread-and-butter skills you have to acquire to be able to translate certain forms of Chinese that are written in peculiar jargon not used since the seventeenth century, for instance. And that means a lot of years of training. The linguistic demands are very high. In a field like American history, for a period of time, there really wasn't any language requirement. In a field like Chinese history, we have to have at least three languages, four really if you count spoken Chinese, Classical Chinese, Japanese, and French, German or Russian. So the linguistic requirements almost dictate that the people coming in have at least one or two of those before they step in if they want to stay by normative time. The dean is willing to grant you an extra year for fields like that, but nonetheless, the preparation time required—you don't just put a student and say, "Write me a PhD paper." It takes three courses to get ready for that, and consequently graduate teaching is much more a process of hand-holding and guiding people through to it. Now, in my own field, the demand for—because of China's growing eminence in the world—there's always been a ready demand for that, so large numbers of graduate students were not unusual. At one point, I was supervising twenty-two dissertations.

19-00:20:20

Lage: That's incredible.

19-00:20:21

Wakeman: That is incredible, I mean, you really shouldn't have to do more than six or seven to do them adequately, at any single time. So here are twenty-two

dissertations; I'm working my head off trying to stay on top of this and make sure the students are writing good these, and doing the regular teaching load.

Well, what is the apportionment of graduate and undergraduate classes to be? If you decide that every year your faculty member doesn't teach one graduate course—we'll take the current two, two—one graduate course each semester, one out of two, half the courses graduate, which makes perfect sense for me, but it wouldn't make perfect sense for somebody teaching in a field where there isn't that kind of demand. And I won't single any field out because that would be somewhat invidious, but in any case, you start feeling a little resentful, and that starts to create rifts between you and someone who gets very gung ho about undergraduate teaching and how we've got to improve this, and responds to Carol Christ's call for freshman seminars, or whatever it might be.

And then there is a certain kind of, a certain kind of self-definition and specialization that begins to take place, particularly younger people who are eager to do what they think will get them tenure, or to please, or to live up to the pressures you feel from students, undergraduate students, to give them the kind of personal attention in a large ca[mpus]—I mean we are not the largest campus by far of any—Arizona State has something like a hundred thousand.

19-00:22:01

Lage:

Fifty thousand, or something like that.

19-00:22:02

Wakeman:

Something like that—it's huge. So those will become more interested in undergraduate teaching and tend to value that more. How do you weight this, though, to give, and I'll take myself out of the picture now, to give someone who is teaching a graduate seminar every year of three or four or five graduate students as opposed to someone who is teaching a junior year proseminar with eight undergraduates where you read, you know, several papers, grade them, and that's that. Well, it sets up a very unhappy kind of comparison.

The department now is trying to institute a new system that gives credits for these heavy graduate teaching loads, and I don't know if it's going to work very well or not. I was talking to the vice chair the other day about how is it operating, and it's too soon to tell. But in any case, that was never carried out or attempted—it was felt better to let sleeping dogs lie; let's not raise this controversy. But there was a feeling that there were those of us who had a lot of graduate students, and those who didn't have a lot. And the ones who didn't have a lot were very envious of those who could give a seminar every year. Because let's face it, for most of us historians, anyway, you very often teach what you do. I don't do this myself very much, but some people do—if you're working like Bill Langer, one of my teachers at college, if he was working on the imperialism of 1898-1890, he could assign little things like, you do the Algeciras crisis, you do the Agadir crisis, you know, I'll take the—

19-00:23:48

Lage: And then he writes it up in his next book.

19-00:23:49

Wakeman: Yes, he sort of writes it up in his next book or at least it's part of his concern. People like Carl Schorske always believed that you taught what you did research on, that there was an intimate link between the two, and that's not always true when you've got a 101 with students who want to write on female prostitution in Bombay versus somebody who wants to write about samurai in Japan or textual scholars in 1870 China. So that was one of the things that began to break this [collegiality] up, and also just the passage of time. Then I'm going to really sound like an old fuddy duddy.

19-00:24:26

Lage: OK.

19-00:24:27

Wakeman: I think that with the passing of the VERIP generation, the Bruckers and the Bouwsmas and so on—

19-00:24:37

Lage: And they were the generation just previous to you.

19-00:24:39

Wakeman: Just previous to this one, to mine and the one that I'm describing—that we lost the backbone to say no. It's very hard to deny tenure. And I think it's very seldom done now. I almost doubt that this department now could bring itself to do it.

19-00:24:57

Lage: Hmm. So they were more willing to, you think, because they had gone through this earlier revolution.

19-00:25:01

Wakeman: It was a determination that unless you wanted to be the best of the best, the thing that's distinguished, I mean, we have the lousiest education system in the world K-12, practically speaking.

19-00:25:14

Lage: Yes.

19-00:25:15

Wakeman: We have the best university higher education system in the world bar none. And one of the reasons is this idea of the best of the best and the fact that there's huge lateral mobility. I mean, [you might] get an offer from Texas to get a new lab for you—Europe doesn't do that, you can't do that in Europe or in England or in China, or anyplace else. So constantly you're recognizing and rewarding talent and paying for it, and that's how you stay on top of the research university pyramid. In terms of your human talent, you have to be absolutely severe about these criteria for promotion to associate and full

professor. Now, admittedly, you can make mistakes. I just mentioned those, and they are not infrequent. You can make mistakes and we're all fallible, but if you give up that sense of absolutely—

19-00:26:16

Lage: Almost arrogance.

19-00:26:18

Wakeman: Arrogance, and I mean, I, you know, I was at a point—I think it was youthful arrogance—where I would have voted to deny my father tenure if I didn't think he deserved it, and I had done that with friends where I thought, no, this guy just isn't up to it.

19-00:26:34

Lage: Did the person—you started to tell me a story about the committee you were on where you said, "No." One person was very much in favor and the other—and how did that come out?

19-00:26:45

Wakeman: The department voted against me.

19-00:26:47

Lage: Against you.

19-00:26:48

Wakeman: And that guy never wrote anything else in his life.

19-00:26:51

Lage: Wow. Interesting.

19-00:26:55

Wakeman: So, I mean—I'm getting a little hesitant here because in many ways that gets out. I remember one person who actually went on to a very distinguished career elsewhere. And I had spoken out against him, and of course somehow, you know, it's a very porous—

19-00:27:17

Lage: Yes, I would think keeping these things secret would be very difficult.

19-00:27:18

Wakeman: This is like Libby and Cheney and the White House, you know, a lot of leakages that are going on. And I remember this guy at one point, I came out of the elevator in Dwinelle, and I was operating under the illusion that he didn't know that this was going on, and he turned and stared at me, and I've never seen such unalloyed hatred. Just, I mean, if looks could kill I would have been skewered. And I realized he knew and I thought, "Oh." But I'm not saying you do this with joy. I don't have any—there's no *schadenfreude* here, taking delight in other people's pain, it's just I really believed in the system. I really believed in it. And I had scorn for schools that rewarded respectability. I mean, Harvard, shit, excuse me, you know, the professoriate at Harvard

thinks they're the best in the world because they're at Harvard—"We wouldn't be here if we weren't the best in the world." Well, that's a bunch of nonsense. Princeton has certain distant elements of this. Stanford relies upon old boys in ways to make appointments that I, when I served on their committees I could never quite understand it. Well, read the work for yourself, you're a responsible, presumably perceptive academic. You can tell what's good and what's bad, you have some sense of judgment.

19-00:28:38

Lage:

Now how did the coming of women to the department affect all of this? Was that a factor in the changes that you've described?

19-00:28:48

Wakeman:

Absolutely, absolutely, yes. And that was, I think, the great rift in the department. The department weathered, as, we've talked a bit about this earlier, and I'm sure you've heard a lot about it from other History Department interviewees. The department managed to weather the free speech movement period OK. In a sense I came at a great disadvantage, the year after, so when I got here they were still sorting through the wreckage, the detritus of this event, and the department was still somewhat riven.

Particularly in the next few years when the egalitarianism of the era—you know, my graduate students, and I wasn't that much older than they were, my graduate students didn't quite know how to address me. They were not going to call me professor, for sure, not in those days, so they would call me usually by my first name, which, you know, I used to have good manners, but then everybody was sir to me. But I didn't find that offensive or anything. I wasn't a stuffy person. I had this one guy who, when he first came here he called everybody sir. He was from the Midwest, he was a Midwest debating champion. He's now the president of a university, and I'm very fond of this gentleman, but I think his father was a minister, so there was an element of piety in all of this. But here he was in the middle of this turmoil where every—it was the days of '68, right? What was he to call me? So he finally, he couldn't think, he didn't really dare call me Fred, he wouldn't call me sir, so I became guy. "Hey, guy!" [laughter] It was very funny.

19-00:30:38

Lage:

Very funny.

19-00:30:39

Wakeman:

It was really very, very amusing. But you know, in the department, if you take the field of Russian history and put Reggie Zelnik here and Martin Malia there—a Social Democrat and a conservative, both of whom were very outspoken during the Cultural Rev—during the Cultural Revolution, it *was* our Cultural Revolution—during the FSM, you could imagine the potential for conflict, but we somehow got through that OK. I mean, the department's higher standards prevailed. We all said, "We're not going to mess this up. This is the best damn department in the country if not the world, and we're not

going to let anything happen to it.” And then, of course, that era passed and, again prominently absent were women. But when the first women began to be appointed in the department, and now as you know, the historical profession is—a majority of PhDs are women, and they are now becoming to be the majority of faculty members, which was not the case back in the sixties. As women began to be hired, of course, there were some, some people were simply incapable of dealing with this, honestly.

19-00:32:02

Lage:

When you say “of course,” it’s really not of course, I mean—

19-00:32:07

Wakeman:

Well, I’m thinking of some old-fashioned European professors, one of whom actually sort of retired or resigned because of this, and he knew, he simply said, “I cannot discuss this matter, be involved in any personnel issue involving women in this department, because I have to confess that I,” he thought, I guess he thought women were inferior or something—sort of a demented position to take, but off he went. And there were conservatives who felt that. And I think that what happened then was, added to that, was a change in the study of history, the discipline of history as a whole, namely, the rise of cultural studies.

19-00:32:54

Lage:

And did they come together? Do women contribute to that?

19-00:33:01

Wakeman:

Uh, they tended to coincide temporally. I’m not sure that women brought cultural studies, but they certainly coincided, and the appointments that were the most controversial usually involved women. Not always, but usually, and what you had was a growing division between what people in the department began to think of as hard history and soft history.

19-00:33:28

Lage:

Now, you mentioned that before, but you didn’t elaborate. So tell me—

19-00:33:32

Wakeman:

Well, hard his[tory]—

19-00:33:32

Lage:

And you also described it as girls’ history and boys’ history.

19-00:33:36

Wakeman:

That’s right. That’s exactly what I was trying to say earlier. I think because my colleague Professor Yeh often facetiously puts it that way, you know. “You like to do the big time stuff, Fred—secret police, armies, violence, war, terror.”

19-00:33:49

Lage:

These are the boys’ history.

19-00:33:50

Wakeman:

This is like boy flicks versus chick flicks. And the chick flicks are women, children, this, you know, that, you know, music, blah, blah—soft things, nice things, happy things, harmonious things! And it is a kind of optimistic/pessimistic division, you know, the pessimist in me looks at the history of, at least Western humankind in the last two hundred years and there has barely been a year without war, so obviously military history has its place, but that was very, very controversial. It got tied in with the ROTC business.

The conservatives in the department, who tended to be people who sat on the ROTC board, or who had fantasies of being admirals and generals themselves and loved to have lunch with—well, these [ROTC] guys, I'm not going to mention their names, but the guys who went on—I knew them for the rest of my professional life because they generally ended up doing some sort of clandestine work on the Far East.

19-00:34:51

Lage:

These people came from the ROTC.

19-00:34:55

Wakeman:

These were the officers who came to serve in ROTC for their little tour, but the people who supported them tended to be people who did things like economic history, military history, business history. The hard-core history that dealt with the real world. The sticks and stones and bread and butter and none of this other stuff. And the other stuff was, "Hah," you know, history of aesthetic attitudes in Paris towards the opera in the 1880s, you know, this kind of thing was regarded as, "This is puffery, this is tomfoolery, let them piddle around with these things. The real decisions are made by men in board rooms!" You know, this sort of thing. So there was a gender division.

19-00:35:36

Lage:

Now, are you exaggerating?

19-00:35:37

Wakeman:

Of course, I'm exaggerating. Perhaps I'm exaggerating the point to make it, but there is a bit of that and certainly some of my less self-conscious colleagues talking about these things, and there are some, and there were—and I really can't talk about them—but there were personnel fights that were *extremely* bitter.

19-00:35:58

Lage:

And they were over this [question of ] what kind of history?

19-00:36:01

Wakeman:

They were over, they tended to be hard and soft, except for this—Marxism somehow straddled it. So that you could have hard Marxist historians, particularly in the economics field, and kind of soft ones and their Marxism then became rather suspect. I'm specifically thinking of the infamous Abraham case involving Professor Feldman and this controversy over the

German business community and their connections with Hitler, which was a huge—

19-00:36:38

Lage: Was this something he studied? Or—

19-00:36:41

Wakeman: Well, this is no big secret, so I can talk about it.

19-00:36:44

Lage: OK, yes—tell me about it.

19-00:36:45

Wakeman: Uh, it bled over into the department in other ways, but Gerry Feldman, who is a very, very dear friend of mine, is a man who writes hard history. His first book was on the German army. He made a very great reputation based upon his work on the Weimar inflation, and he works in banking history now. He frequently consults with Swiss and German banks on the issue of the Holocaust and returning Jewish investments. He's a good guy, but he's also a person who is—"let's get down to the nuts and bolts of the issue." And, who, although he loves opera and all the rest of it, he sort of says, well, you know, you put on your white tie and tails and go to the opera in the evening after work is over.

19-00:37:37

Lage: It's not real life.

19-00:37:39

Wakeman: It's not *real* life. And in this case, the Marxism came into it because David Abraham, who was the person with whom he got embroiled, with whom he engaged, was a young assistant professor at Princeton seeking tenure. Of course, that's very hard to get at Princeton because they don't have the slots for every assistant professor they hire. And in this case, Abraham had written a book about the German business council, which involved people like the Krupps and the other great industrialists and their representative, a man, whom I think recall as being named Blank, which is a wonderful name for such a person, who had some important meetings with Hitler before the Reichstag fire and the election, before 1933, so the question of what he advised the business council was very important in terms of the historiography of all of this. I mean, if you're a standard Marxist, you believe that because big capitalism supports fascism, this is a natural marriage. That was the standard line that came out of East Germany and other parts of the Soviet empire, and certainly from the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and Feldman was opposed to that. He said, "It's not that simple. These important business leaders thought that Hitler was a crazy," which he was, and even though we all know all about the slave labor and how these companies operated during the war, I think by and large he's right about that.

But Abraham wrote a dissertation while the archives were still in East Germany. He went to Potsdam and in Potsdam he got into the materials; that's where they kept these business council archives, which had been captured by the Soviets when they liberated Berlin, or when they took Berlin. And he had evidence to show that Blank, for example, would tell Krupp, or whoever was the chair of the business council, "I've had a meeting with Mr. Adolf Hitler today and we talked about what would happen in the event of an election and what measures he would take to support the revival of German industry," blah, blah, blah, "and here is a man I think we can deal with." Well, you know, gee, you didn't hear what Krupp's response was, but here was the main business political agent, sort of the Jack Abramoff of the day, telling his masters what they should do. And Abraham used this as evidence of this collusion.

Gerry read the book in manuscript for Princeton University Press, and Gerry, who's a very honest man said, "I don't like this conclusion, but I have to agree with it because the documentation proves that I was wrong and he's right." Princeton went on to publish the book. A year or two later, one of Gerry's students who was working on the Schutztaffel, I think on the SS, was in the Potsdam archives, and he happened to run across some of these documents that Abraham had cited, and he read them and he was astonished that certain words that were in the original were not in the German versions that had been quoted by Abraham. Namely there were no *nichts* and *keins* in there—there were no negatives. He *can't* be a man, he's *not* a man we can deal with.

19-00:41:11

Lage: Oh, so it was a total reversal.

19-00:41:14

Wakeman: Total reversal. Well, this isn't just a matter of maybe misplacing a comma or so, this is taking a document and deliberately misquoting it, according to Gerry. His student wrote a review essay in the *Central European History Review*, Gerry himself went and looked at the documents and he—Gerry—

19-00:41:31

Lage: It happened more than once?

19-00:41:33

Wakeman: Yes. It became a big case and in fact, it was followed by the *New York Times* eventually, and in the last article in the series, the *Times* reporter, I forget who it was, went to Abraham's flat, his apartment, in Princeton or New York, wherever he lived, and looked at some of the notes, and it was clear! I mean, he went as close as—

19-00:41:56

Lage: It was deliberate.

19-00:41:57

Wakeman:

The reporter went as far as he could without being liable for slander, a suit against him for slander, or libel, to say this guy obviously had to have done this. Abraham would say, "Well, I was tired that day," or, "I forgot what I was," you know, it was, there obviously—and don't rely upon for me for this, because the newspaper accounts will be—

19-00:42:20

Lage:

Yes, I remember it now that you—

19-00:42:22

Wakeman:

Well, I, of course, I knew all about this because Gerry, who has a very large booming voice, and I had offices that were not just contiguous, but they were at the corner of that inner atrium, I think it's called the Ishi Pavilion or something, inside when they wanted to rename all of Dwinelle after the Indians, Native Americans, and some people said, "No, we'll name the courtyard—the Ishi Courtyard." His office was here, and mine was there, and the acoustics are such as you can practically hear anybody who's whispering on the telephone. Well, of course, everybody was calling him up, *New York Times*, the *Post*, the *L.A. Times*. This was a nice little academic controversy, and he would respond in just a stentorian voice, so I'd be sitting there [indicates distracting talking].

It became very controversial because Princeton, of course, rallied behind this young man. And Princeton then, of course, was at the vanguard of what might be called cultural studies. Schorske had left Berkeley to go to Princeton. Schorske's an intellectual historian. Natalie Davis had moved there, partly because of her marriage—her husband is a mathematician, then teaching in Toronto and she was tired of flying across the country—but also because her history, you know, this wonderful cultural history that she writes, was so much—young Bob Darnton was starting up. It was a very distinct department and extremely distinguished. And they rallied behind this gentleman, and at one point Carl Schorske was saying, was quoted as saying something like this, "Well, it may be true that he has a few of the details a little wrong, but in general, he gives you," he said, "he gives you a good sense of the cultural contours of the issue and of the period." Of course, the Princeton department was about to vote to grant this man tenure, and he said, "We don't want to simply get bogged down in issues of mere facticity."

19-00:44:21

Lage:

This is Schorske.

19-00:44:22

Wakeman:

Yes, this whole—facticity was such a kind of pummel word anyway, like meritology, facticity. Well, it just set, it was like setting a rocket underneath Feldman—Whoa! So, he demanded that everybody, of course, agree with him; well, to this day, the German field regards Gerry as kind of a loco because he pursued this so energetically. When Gerry gets his mind set on

something, he really pursues that. This coincided with the appointment of a person, or the recommended appointment of a person, female, who was engaged in, and who is a very distinguished historian herself, engaged in the kind of cultural history broadly speaking that Gerry felt was mere frippery. So it created a department fight and a rift between those who were supporting—and of course it created a gender division, and women all supported the appointment, which put them in the soft camp, and in general males supported, though many males supported the appointment also, and Gerry was seen as something of a crank.

19-00:45:33

Lage: Isn't this interesting, because I'm sure all the women and others weren't supporting the facticity [chuckling] argument.

19-00:45:42

Wakeman: No, no, no, no. No, that's where it got—

19-00:45:45

Lage: But in Feldman's mind it was—

19-00:45:46

Wakeman: Yes, yes, that's right. It became fused in his mind, and actually we did appoint a woman to that position.

19-00:45:57

Lage: A woman, or that person?

19-00:45:59

Wakeman: No, a woman, another person. So it turned in the end not to be bad for the gender distribution of the department but, I think that although we have some very hard historians among some of our women scholars, I mean, some great economic historians, Linda Lewin, for example, Margaret Chowning, and so on, I think that women, well, this is part of another problem in the field that also, as I say, kind of bleeds over into the department, namely—it comes as no surprise to anyone who knows anything at all about American history that sort of sectarian little groups will try to establish themselves professionally. You know, nineteenth-century barbers turned themselves into physicians, penny farmers become lawyers, they create guilds, they elevate their status, their salary, they're now the most highly paid, highest status, I mean, who would have thought in the 1800s that a doctor would be what a doctor is in the early 2000s.

19-00:47:09

Lage: But may not be later.

19-00:47:12

Wakeman: Yes, yes, it may not be later, or lawyers—there's more ambivalence there, I think, but that in the case of subfields of history, these subfields tend to try to replicate and generate or clone themselves and create a demand for their work, so you get journals—it's a sort of history of history, a sociology of science,

you know, the sort of thing that Thomas Merton [means Robert Merton] did so well, where you get somebody doing urban history and then they have a journal, they create a dead demand, a slot for urban historians and pretty soon you're training urban historians, you get a graduate program, and you get medals on medals for that and so forth. The same thing happened with women's history after the early days of Greer and {Frere?} I guess, whatever it is, and Betty Friedan and so on, Simone de Beauvoir, the great { }, and then women's history became a field that had its own canons, its own programs later become virtually departments, and that was resisted, as was Ethnic Studies. So—the Ethnic Studies division is something else. I can talk about that separately. And then that translated itself into an age division, which was, I remember when this was, this division was suggested by one of our faculty members, a woman, suggesting that the younger faculty should meet separately from the older faculty off campus—in other words to form a caucus. And she was asked, well, who are the older and who are the younger? And they said, well, we draw the line here. And they had a line—I was at the bottom because I was the youngest in sort of the older group, and then the oldest of the younger group was only three months apart from me, but he did soft history, so to speak. And—

19-00:49:15

Lage:

And he was a he.

19-00:49:16

Wakeman:

And he was a he—well, he's with us, so that's where we draw the line, he's part of the younger and Wakeman's part of the older. I mean, that provoked a lot of mirth, but also kind of, gee, what do you mean, who do you think we are? So there was a kind of—now, a lot of that has broken down because the young people that we've appointed in the last decade or so are really above that. They're extremely, extremely good. And this sort of thing, these are old battles that were fought a long time ago, and the smoke has been cleared from the battlefield, and nobody gives a hoot anymore. Let's talk about something else that's more interesting, but for my generation that was—

19-00:49:57

Lage:

So what time period was this occurring?

19-00:50:01

Wakeman:

I think it came to a head in the early eighties, early and mid-eighties. I wasn't here for most of that. I was in China for a long period of time—three years altogether, and then I became head of the SSRC so I was out of town, but I of course was constantly coming back to Berkeley and hearing and getting the various confidential reports on the department and hearing from colleagues—“You've got to come back for this vote.” As if, if you didn't come back, you know, the forces of, I don't know, they weren't backward forces, but the forces of ignorance and of soft history would sweep over us and we'd be engulfed in some kind of marshmallow wave that would—

19-00:50:45

Lage:

What did something like the journal *Representations* represent in the department? Was that part of this division?

19-00:50:53

Wakeman:

Well, that was very much a part of it. Of course, several key members of the journal—Steve Greenblatt was the guy who, because of this offer he got the money to set the journal up, although Steve himself was always, I think, a little bit—I remember toward the end of his term here, he was very—well, he still is a very close friend of mine—being somewhat aghast at the way in which he and the new historicism were being attacked by the younger members of the English Department. But he attracted to him a number of historians from our department, and it was kind of an odd bunch, and for a while I couldn't figure out why these people were somehow associated: Tom Laqueur, later Carla Hesse after she joined—of course Tom Laqueur and Carla are now spouses; Thomas Metcalf, who had been a very, relatively old-fashioned scholar of the British empire and then turned to imperialism and the symbols and signs of imperialism, architecture, representation; Randy Starn; David Keightley, oddly enough, Keightley works with signs. David is a man who, you know, works with these early Shang scripts that are almost hieroglyphic.

19-00:52:17

Lage:

The oracle bones.

19-00:52:18

Wakeman:

The oracle bones. And David, while a very old-fashioned sinologist is also a man of immense imagination, so he appreciates—one of his most, I think it was published in *Representations*—a marvelous article comparing Greek and Classical Chinese culture in which he rests his case on a depiction on a Greek urn of Ajax being wounded by the queen of the Amazons and the look that they exchange. It's a beautiful—I mean, he really has a sensibility about him that is amazing. He came up to me the other night and just handed me—you know he'd had a stroke and can't speak very well—handed me a piece of paper and he pointed to it, and it had "parenthesis thirty-seven" and then "Joe Levenson" on one of his computer printouts from his calendar, obviously, and he said, "Yesterday," he said, "Yesterday." I said, "There was a meeting yesterday." And he said, "[Sigh] Yesterday." And then I realized it was the thirty-seventh anniversary of Levenson's death.

19-00:53:26

Lage:

Oh, my.

19-00:53:28

Wakeman:

The day I will never forget. But David remembers those things. He's caught by that. But what gave these people a kind of common identity? The other thing that gave them the identity was bicycling. I don't know if you've heard about the—

19-00:53:40

Lage: I've heard about David Keightley's bicycling.

19-00:53:41

Wakeman: Well, that was the Cyclists Club!

19-00:53:44

Lage: *Representations?*

19-00:53:46

Wakeman: All of those guys, and the one woman, maybe there was another woman or two. I don't think Cathy Gallagher took to the bicycle, but certainly Carla Hesse would get all geared up and sort of dressed up in their bike outfits with a [ snapping sound ] and on weekends they'd go off on a thirty-five or fifty-mile bike ride.

19-00:54:09

Lage: Discussing high matters, probably.

19-00:54:12

Wakeman: I don't think they could, actually, because they were, you know, going through the Marin Highlands, or coastlands, or Headlands or whatever it is, but they would go on these, and in fact one summer they all went off to France and did part of the Tour de France.

19-00:54:24

Lage: Oh, I didn't realize it got that serious.

19-00:54:26

Wakeman: With Vannie Keightley driving a van with, you know, bike parts and all the things the various équipes would have when they were making the climb at the Pyrenees, so they took it all very seriously, but these were the bikers. And if you were part of *Representations*, you were part of the bike group.

19-00:54:44

Lage: And were the hard history people scornful of that type of history that *Representations*—

19-00:54:52

Wakeman: I don't think there was a lot of scorn for it. I mean, I think there was something amounting to impatience, but it was such a very good journal. It was hard to be—I published an article in there, and I remember when I gave it to them, shortly after I submitted it, Randy was an editor and he came up to me at a party. I was standing by the fire, by the fireplace, and he came up and leaned against the mantle, and he said, "Fred, do you think you could prrrrrrroblematize the issue more?" And I said, "Oh, come on." Jesus Christ, problematize it. [makes high-pitched noises] So I might fret at the preciousness of it all, but I was happy to have my article published. They have quite a readership. And Steve, you know, is one of the world's great geniuses, so anything he set his hand to was bound to be very good, but the

*Representations* group, it didn't provoke any great divisions in the department. It kind of legitimized that history in a way, though of course the journal was much more than a history journal, I mean, it was *Representations*. But, for example in my case, I remember reading an article by David Miller in there on crime fiction, Victorian-period crime fiction, and being very influenced by it, in what for me would be—I mean I write about the *police*, that's about as hard as you can get, and it had a great impact on me, this notion of, sort of like Pauline Kael sort of things that would be "{inaudible} the movie house or I read it on the subway", that kind of thing. So *Representations*, yes, was a very prominent, I would say it had a very prominent position in the department.

19-00:56:42

Lage: Who would you give your work to to be read? And how did that work in the department?

19-00:56:53

Wakeman: Well, it was unusual, I suppose. I would usually give it to Irv Scheiner, but Irv read everybody's work. I mean, that's one reason why he's so beloved in the department. He read everyone's work, younger and older scholars.

19-00:57:13

Lage: And is this because people valued his feedback?

19-00:57:16

Wakeman: Yes, he's a very good—

19-00:57:17

Lage: Or because he's willing to do it?

19-00:57:19

Wakeman: No, no, no—they valued his feedback. He's a good reader, and he reads very well. Sometimes people were not very happy with what he said about it, but he's a very good reader, and I would always have him read whatever I was doing. But then another reader became more, it became almost a kind of contract between us. When I first came here, I think I told you I taught a course in French history, and through that, Professor Nicholas Riasanovsky, who while a great historian of Russia, is also a very interesting historian of Romanticism, French Romanticism, and French thought. And he, when he found out that I knew something about France, and we talked about it, Nick is, still is—although we became very close friends and his reserve dissolved somewhat—he was a very stiff man, very hard to talk to. But he has a wonderful sense of humor, really very, very, I hate to essentialize him, but very Slavic in that sense, and he was always fascinated by China, as Russians often are, by Maoist China in particular. He came up to me one day and said, "I've just written a book on Fourier. Would you mind taking a look at it?" Because he knew that I had done a lot of work on Fourier and on utopian socialism, and I said, sure. So I read the book, it was a very small book and I read it very carefully. Nick is the kind of person, kind of scholar, quite

unusual who—he walks a lot, or used to, he’s now ailing, getting much older—but he would take long walks at night and would think about the book he was working on, and I’m convinced, compose it in his head almost sentence by sentence, so when the time came to set it down, he would write it out in this very old-fashioned penmanship.

19-00:59:22

Lage: Not even type it.

19-00:59:24

Wakeman: Not even type it, in these handwritten versions which, with very few changed or crossed out letters or words. Almost as though he conceived—and the sentences were always quite complete. A little dense, but that’s Nick, and I appreciated that kind of talent and I became very enthus[iastic]—so I began reading. Every time he finished something he gave it to me, and he would repay me by taking me out to lunch. He always ordered dessert for me, and he would say, “Well, give me your work to read.” I remember when I finished *History and Will* in manuscript, I presented it as a paper to the Smelser seminar, the seminar on comparative theory, which I haven’t talked about which had a very big influence on me here at Berkeley, and the night I presented it Bob Bellah was there, and Bellah, after I finished my presentation, oh they’d all read the manuscript, said rather emotionally, “Fred, I implore you, do not publish this book. This will ruin your reputation. It’s ill thought through,” it’s this and that and the other. And I was just devastated. I remember Irv Scheiner gave me a lift back home and I was just, “Irv, what am I going to do.” And then I decided that night, “Well, to hell with it, I’m going to just plunge ahead with this thing.” I—“this book is a crazy book, but I said what I really felt and meant to say.” And when I gave it to Nick, you know, the other great intellectual historian in the China field after Joe Levenson died is Ben Schwartz at Harvard. Ben is dead now and Ben was a very different kind of intellectual historian, and he had been a Marxist as a young man and really knew his Marx, so I gave this thing to Nick to read, and I remember we went to the Golden Bear, which was a restaurant in what is now—either it’s a fast food joint—

19-01:01:26

Lage: A study center or something.

19-01:01:27

Wakeman: Or a study center or something, went to the Golden Bear and he, of course, had read it through very thoroughly and he had a list—no, he didn’t even have lists, it was all in his head, you know, turning pages—what do you mean here, what do you mean there, are you too excessive here, and so on. And he finished, and by then we had gotten to the dessert, and he said, “What I really want to ask you is a question. For whom did you write this book beside yourself and Ben Schwartz? And who do you think is going to read it?” And then he probably said, “Well, that’s not very fair. We don’t have to write books for other people to read, do we?” And I was [chuckling], oh, Jesus.

Well, so, over the years we still read each other's works, and I tend to write rather lengthy books, so he's very patient to wade through these things.

19-01:02:20

Lage: And give you—

19-01:02:21

Wakeman: And give me his opinion, and tell me the latest story that he's heard from Minsk or Vladivostok or wherever he picks these things up, and ask about what's going on in China. So Nick became a reader. And then I would give the manuscript, depending on the topic, to Bob Middlekauff sometimes.

19-01:02:44

Lage: He seems to read a lot of people's—

19-01:02:46

Wakeman: Bob reads a lot of other people's stuff, yes. And he's a wonderful reader. He's a very, very good reader.

19-01:02:51

Lage: And is this given when it's almost ready to go? Is that when you—

19-01:02:56

Wakeman: Yes, it's given when I've redacted and revised it probably with one final revision waiting to do before it actually goes to the—I mean, it's been submitted and the readers of the press committee may have approved of it, but it's before I hand it to their copy editors. And Sheldon Rothblatt—I mean various people over the years, but the constant, the standbys, are Irv Scheiner and Nick Riasanovsky.

19-01:03:29

Lage: Let's talk about who was hired in the China area and why and—if that seems like a good topic to you.

19-01:03:38

Wakeman: All right. Oh, yes, well—

19-01:03:41

Lage: Right now, they all have a Berkeley connection, it seems.

19-01:03:50

Wakeman: Oh, that's right, Michael Nylan went to school or was going to graduate—in fact, she took her first China course with me. That's true. I guess I hadn't thought about it that way. When I came here, of course, there were two-and-a-half Chinese historians—Levenson, Schurmann who was half in Sociology half in History, and Woodbridge Bingham, who did sort of early China, but of course was a Tang historian of a kind of old-fashioned sort, and I sort of as a student dismissed him with all of that callowness of youth, as not, you know—compared to Levenson, that kind of thing. But he was a—we would

say in those days, solid, a good solid historian, and very much concerned with inter-Asia, Pan-Asian problems and so on.

The first two, Franz of course kept his dual citizenship until he retired much later, but Bingham reached the age of retirement and now—let me get this right—he retired after Joe died. Joe died and I found myself already becoming overwhelmed by the number of students that he and I were sharing, and that now were suddenly all having to work with me.

19-01:05:16

Lage: And you were very young.

19-01:05:17

Wakeman: And I was only a year or so older than some of them. I mean Joe Esherick, I think, was probably two or three years younger than I was, and we had a terrible time with—

19-01:05:29

Lage: You've told me a bit about him [chuckling].

19-01:05:30

Wakeman: I've told you about that. He, of course, I saw him this last weekend and we're very dear friends now, but, anyway. So the first problem was getting another Chinese historian. And Joe died in April of 1969—that very spring we'd already begun recruiting for another Chinese historian. And at the AAS, which was held in Boston that year, Joe and I had interviewed David Keightley, whose thesis I really liked a lot, and Joe liked the thesis too, but he was worried about David's age.

19-01:06:18

Lage: He was older.

19-01:06:19

Wakeman: He was older. David had been an editor for seven or eight years before he went back to graduate school. In graduate school first he'd studied, he'd done an MA thesis on French, I guess, medieval theater, the passion plays, before he turned to China at all, and then he took—that field is very hard to master and it took him a while to do that, so he was in his mid-thirties by the time he would have come here as a beginning assistant professor and I remember Joe saying, "I don't know, he's too long in the tooth, I think, don't you?" And of course I was younger and I said, "Well, I don't know." [chuckling] You know, we don't all have to be twenty-five years old, or whatever.

So he was momentarily dropped, but then before Joe died, a man named Martin Wilbur from Columbia, who actually is best known as a modern historian but then had written his thesis on the Han dynasty, called me up. I had known him fairly well, because I had been in Taiwan the years

before '67-'68 and the governing board to which I reported was—well, he was one of the members. And, so I had gotten to know him fairly well. He came to Taiwan several times, and he said, “I don’t usually do this, but I really think you should take a second look at Keightley. He’s really good and I know this seems rather,” he’d written his thesis on, essentially, slave labor under the Zhou dynasty. He wasn’t—just getting into Shang work. So I went back and looked at it, and I went back to Joe, and I said “You know, Joe, I really think this guy is worth bringing out here, at least for a talk.” And that was already underway when Joe died. And during that very confusing time—it was just a couple of weeks—Keightley called up to tell us that he had been offered a position at Rutgers, and he had to make up his mind, and so I said, “Well, I think we should really try to get him.” And so I guess I more or less single-handedly selected him.

19-01:08:30

Lage:

Hmm. Before he came out.

19-01:08:32

Wakeman:

Before he came out, yes, yes. Without even a talk. I was certain—I’d asked around about him and so forth. And he came out, and he turned out to be a tremendously good choice, but of course, he was working way back, I mean, we’re talking about his working in the fifteen hundred years before the Christian Era, and Bingham working in the, essentially in the sixth century Christian Era, so it’s two millennia apart. But David was already here, and then Bingham announced his retirement. Now at that point I was really, really snowed under. I thought, you know what I really need is someone to come in as a modern Chinese historian. I just can’t take this burden. David knew modern Chinese history, was acting of course on committees, but I thought to myself, “No, you know, you can’t have a great program unless you have the whole thing at least in some way covered.” So we decided, again, I guess maybe I decided—shortly after taking my job here I had gone to a conference held in Champaign-Urbana by [William Theodore] Ted de Bary, who is a very prominent, he’s emeritus now, professor at Columbia in Chinese thought and philosophy. And this young guy showed up, who was an assistant, beginning assistant professor at Princeton, I think in his first year, finishing up his dissertation at Harvard, and it was Tu Wei-ming. I was completely dazzled by this guy, I mean he was just—and you know, he’s a very charismatic—I don’t know if you know him.

19-01:10:20

Lage:

I don’t, no.

19-01:10:21

Wakeman:

Well, he’s an extremely charismatic person. He’s truly a public intellectual now, but he moves around the world in circles that I have no knowledge of. I mean, he knows the Pope, he knows Ayatollah Khomeini—because he’s in religious studies, he was part of the Aspen Institute, he’s with the Davos group, I mean he just kind of—

19-01:10:46

Lage: And where did he originate?

19-01:10:48

Wakeman: He was from Taiwan. He was a student in high school of a very famous Chinese philosopher who was in Taiwan in exile after the Communists took over, and he studied with him, and then he went to a private school in Taiwan called, Tunghai, which is a Christian school, and from there to Princeton, and then got his PhD at Harvard and was teaching, went back to Princeton to teach. I remember trying to present him to the department and their being very puzzled because most of the material that I had to present was in Chinese so I had to translate it for the department.

19-01:11:29

Lage: But this would make it difficult to do this reading of the work.

19-01:11:31

Wakeman: Very hard, very hard. They couldn't do it, of course, there was nobody in the department except Keightley who could possibly make any sense out of it. There was a manuscript, which was his thesis, which was written under the influence of Erik Erikson, who wrote *Young Man Luther*, and this book was on Wang Yang-ming, the sixteenth century Chinese philosopher, very important figure in Chinese thought, but done along Eriksonian lines. We used to joke about Young Man Wang, and I forget, I guess David was on the committee and Gerry Caspary and I read his work. Caspary said, "Is this man really a historian? I mean, he's more of a theologian, more of a, you know, and almost himself a kind of priestly person." When he came here and started lecturing, oh, the lecture halls would fill up with people, I mean—

19-01:12:27

Lage: From all over.

19-01:12:28

Wakeman: From all over. Buddhist nuns from Sri Lanka, you know, it was just incredible, and he has this kind of guru quality which he still, I mean, he still is, he's probably going, he's now in China, he's a professor at Harvard, was director of the Harvard Yenching Institute after he left Berkeley and a man of immense complexity, and he's one of those guys you always talk about if you knew him, in absentia, but as a person to place before the department it was very risky because quite honestly, the thesis itself would not have sold him, *junzi*, a gentleman who wrote about everything, you know. He wrote about moral philosophy, and so I translated some of these pieces and prepared them for the department, and he was brought in as an assistant professor, always feeling a little uneasy about not being a historian by real training and temperament.

19-01:13:32

Lage: But he wasn't—was he trained as a historian at Harvard? As his PhD?

19-01:13:36

Wakeman:

He got his PhD in history, but it was in Ming history, but he was not—Wei-ming could not, I mean you would call him an intellectual historian, but he just has never done that since, and he keeps telling me, “I’m going to write history,” as though, you know, he’s missed some strange vocational appointment. So Wei-ming came and of course his specialty was the Ming and earlier periods, and what that translated into was a regimen of reading in essentially neo-Confucian thought. But he attracted a lot of students who came, and his teaching style was, in some ways, in some ways very old-fashioned in that he read texts with his students.

19-01:14:29

Lage:

OK, we’re about—

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20-00:00:00

Lage:

We’re back on.

20-00:00:06

Wakeman:

OK. All right. And he developed a coterie of students in intellectual history, and his reputation internationally began to simply soar. He left Berkeley, let’s see—he left Berkeley in the mid-eighties, I would guess around ’84, and accepted a position at Harvard. It was one of those situations you know, where I think he didn’t make the choice—Beverly Bouwsma once said when Bill went off to Harvard for two years before deciding to come back to Berkeley, she said, “At this age, Fred, you know, academics always have their mid-life crisis, and they either choose to get a new job or take a new wife. I’m glad that Bill is taking a new job.”—but Wei-ming did both. He got a new job and he took a new wife. [chuckling]

20-00:01:02

Lage:

Did Berkeley try to keep him?

20-00:01:05

Wakeman:

Oh, yes, oh good Lord.

20-00:01:11

Lage:

So he made his mark here.

20-00:01:07

Wakeman:

I think he felt he had to leave because his wife, his ex-wife, who’s very beloved here, a beautiful, both physically and spiritually, person and who’s friends of many of us. I mean many people felt that he’d really not done the right thing in leaving her, so maybe he was leaving us for that reason. In any case, he later told me he really regretted it. He’s not happy at Harvard.

20-00:01:34

Lage:

And he’s been *there* a long time—fifteen years.

20-00:01:40

Wakeman: He's been there a long time and he's been director of the Harvard Yen-ching Institute for now—

20-00:01:44

Lage: Twenty years, I guess.

20-00:01:39

Wakeman: Well, he's been director for about seven or eight years. In fact, they bought him a house. He has a huge mansion as director, and he will stay on as director I think until he retires. But Wei-ming is a wonderful person to have around. Now, shortly after he left, of course, that left an opening in sort of the medieval period, and at that point we launched a search and we had a number of people who were potential candidates. One of them was a person I knew very well because he and I had been in college together, though he was a year behind me and then in graduate school—David Johnson. We'd taken many of the same seminars together in Tang literature, poetry, and so forth, and he had become a Tang specialist. He was a very, very good historian working in Tang social history and also he was beloved of Keightley. He and Keightley had done their language work on Taiwan at the same time, and they had become very close friends, and at that point David Johnson had not been voted tenure at Columbia for reasons which are a little mysterious to me but I think in part had to do with de Bary and in part had to do with whether or not they had a slot. But he had been given as a kind of pro tem arrangement a position at their humanities center. So we decided that Johnson should join the faculty, which he did, and soon began to change his orientation towards popular history, popular culture, which is what he does, has been doing ever since very well.

At about that point, I spotted a student of my own who was really, really good—Yeh Wen-hsin from Taiwan who had gone to Taiwan University and who had the highest average ever in their records, and then to USC where she did an MA with Jack Wills, and then came up here to study with Tu Wei-ming. She didn't know who I was—but she got here, and it turned out that she was the granddaughter, great-granddaughter of one of the most famous Chinese intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century, the translator of Huxley, Spenser, Montesquieu, Locke, first president of Peking University, a man named Yen Fu about whom Schwartz had written a book. It's a very, very proud and—

20-00:04:15

Lage: And that's her grandfather?

20-00:04:16

Wakeman: That's her great-grandfather.

20-00:04:17

Lage: Great-grandfather.

20-00:04:18

Wakeman: Her mother is a very famous novelist, sort of the Danielle—

20-00:04:19

Lage: Steele?

20-00:04:25

Wakeman: Danielle Steele of China, of Taiwan, but now serialized in China, has her own television series, and so on, and her father was a very important Nationalist official. She grew up as a kind of Nationalist princess because in addition, through her mother, she is related to the Koo family. The Koo family is—I know these names don't mean much to you, but Jeffrey Koo, China Trust Corporation, it's one of the top fifty fortunes in Forbes, you know. It's world billionaires, so this is sort of Taiwan international aristocracy. And I didn't know any of this, of course, when we accepted her, admitted her. But she began working here. She's a very quiet, modest person, and I didn't really have any sense of how good she was until she got near the thesis stage and began producing stunning work.

20-00:05:21

Lage: And then was she working with you or still—

20-00:05:19

Wakeman: She was still working with me, but she got a job here teaching Chinese literature in the Oriental Languages Department—an advanced course in Chinese literature—and one of her students, who's now a professor in Australia, came to see me in Peking and said, "You know, you really should think about hiring her if you get a chance. She's really good." And I said, "Oh, yes, I hadn't thought about that." But how to do it? We didn't have an FTE. That was when they had inaugurated this Chancellor's Minority Fellowships, where you took someone for a year, and then they were mentored, and then they had a shot at a regular appointment in the department designed to increase minority—I mean, nobody would do that for a Chinese student because you know, they don't need the chance, but it was still true then that they were, I mean, she was the first—

20-00:06:07

Lage: Still underrepresented.

20-00:06:13

Wakeman: I think she was the first or second Chinese woman on the faculty. And she meanwhile had postdocs at both Stanford and Harvard, went off and revised her dissertation into a really excellent book, and then came here and started teaching. I wasn't here then, but she took the fellowship here, and was mentored by David Keightley, and stepped into a teaching job, and now she's the Morrison Professor of Modern Chinese History at Berkeley.

I remember one time when she was still a graduate student I wrote an article, which was called "Romantic Stoics and Martyrs in seventeenth century

China,” and I translated a lot of poetry in it, so I gave her the essay to read and we met at some coffee shop, and I said, “What do you think of it?” She said, “Well, it’s really very, very good. It’s quite an excellent essay, and your translations are excellent, but to tell you the truth, they’re too good.” And I said, “What do you mean?” She said, “Well, how can I put this—you can’t really catch the clichés.” And it hit me like a hammer and I could almost feel the thud. I could spend the rest of my life studying this literature and never spot the clichés. I mean she’d come in and—

20-00:07:52

Lage: So—

20-00:07:53

Wakeman: Meaning that you could read a lot of poetry written in the eighteenth century, seventeenth century, and she’d say, “Oh, that was used by so and so during the north/south period, the third century, it’s just reinvoking that.” I mean, she has that level of education of Chinese and I remember telling her later, I said, “Gee, you know, if I had met you when I was a graduate student, I would have shifted to French history. I would have been so dispirited and suddenly aware that I could never really do this thing properly,” I mean to the extent that you can if you’re raised in a tradition and literate in it and—she still has that quality. She’s amazingly—she knows modern history but her mastery of the classical literature is just tremendously deep.

20-00:08:37

Lage: Well, just follow up with that thought for a minute. What is it like to be basically still an outsider in some respects? Or can you ever not be an outsider—

20-00:08:43

Wakeman: No.

20-00:08:51

Lage: I mean, how does it affect your history and your place as a historian? Especially now as there are more Chinese historians coming to the field?

20-00:09:01

Wakeman: Well, that’s—uh, I don’t think of it so much in terms of the last point, or the last question, but certainly in terms of the earlier ones, yes. I once told myself, I may even have said this in an earlier talk with you that one reason I chose Chinese was because I could never be Chinese.

20-00:09:25

Lage: You did say that.

20-00:09:22

Wakeman: I couldn’t pass for Chinese even looking at the face, and it’s another thing to be what I think was a kind of border runner. I’ve always somehow imagined myself standing on a tall step ladder looking over a wall. The height, the vantage point, gives you a certain perspective the people inside the wall don’t



he's Chinese, how could a Westerner know what a Chinese is thinking?" And I thought, "Oh give me a break, what is this claim to cultural exclusiveness?" I mentioned the ethnic studies problem earlier on. Joe Levenson was deeply involved in that, although I didn't realize it at the time, and I remember him saying to me, "You know, if you accept the argument of these ethnic studies people that you have to be Chinese to be able to teach Chinese history, then this civilization is in a very serious state of crisis." I mean, it's such a particularistic claim to such exclusivity, or in their case inclusivity, that it makes them unintelligible to outsiders. That's like saying, "I'm from Venus. I can't talk to you. I'm from outer space." And I shared that sentiment, that feeling, so usually you learn to be very patient, and anyone who studies China as I and my friends and students do, who is not Chinese, runs up against this. In fact, anyone who studies China who is not Chinese—

20-00:14:14

Lage:

Runs up against it in—

20-00:14:16

Wakeman:

The feeling is that we have such a complex culture that it's hardly worth it trying to explain it to an outsider. The standard Chinese language, it's *fuza*, it's very complicated. That means I don't want to try to explain it to you because there are too many things that go into this. I can remember sitting in Hanoi with representatives of the Vietnamese foreign ministry, most of them had been trained in China, and sitting there at a banquet, and as we got more drunk and more maudlin they would start up saying, "I love my years in China," then saying, "Those goddamn Chinese, they think we're all a bunch of barbarians." [chuckling]

When I was teaching at Taiwan University I had a taxi I would hire by the month to take me to and from school, and it was amusing and this wasn't a problem after a while, but at first he'd say, "What are you going to the school for?" And I'd say, "Well, I'm teaching a course in Chinese [history]." "You're teaching a course in Chinese history, how can that be!"

20-00:15:18

Lage:

And he laughed!

20-00:15:18

Wakeman:

The same thing was true in Peking when I was at Beida—"What?" You know, I mean, you might be amused to learn that Professor Leipnik is teaching a course in American history, but I wouldn't really say, "That's impossible." But there it's, "Ohhhh, how can you—" And then he would test me, he would say something, well, "What does this mean?" And he'd cite some line from the *Mencius*, which everybody knew, and I'd say well, it's such and such and—oh, you know, there was this kind of constant sense of, "You foreigners are really funny coming here to study China." But gradually the feeling begins to set in—this is a four-character scroll that someone gave me a few years ago is a phrase that says, *buogu tongjin*, which means, "He has a vast learning of

antiquity and he's also—knows modernity to its very depth.” It's a cliché, of course, and probably was meant as such in a sycophantish way, but the guy assured me that I was very remarkable in that way because I did know modern and I did know the classics. But there's always that gap, you know, you will go to your grave wondering about—what if I *had* chosen some[thing else]. But it doesn't really bother me anymore, I mean I—

20-00:16:35

Lage: But do you think you do bring a certain perspective?

20-00:16:37

Wakeman: Oh, absolutely, of course, of course.

20-00:16:40

Lage: So—and after all—they're reading your books, as you say!

20-00:16:42

Wakeman: Yes, after all they're reading my books and I certainly feel appreciated there, so that's—I never imagined that would be possible, but, and I just will say this personally, one of the major changes in my life has been my living with and then marrying my spouse Lea He, because most of our friends now are Chinese, so I live in a, you know, for example, if a Chinese person comes to your house, they usually end up spending the night.

20-00:17:17

Lage: Oh, that's just the standard?

20-00:17:19

Wakeman: Sort of standard—they'll sleep on the floor, or on your couch, or whatever. Or they have a few drinks too many, they don't want to drive. I know that if I were there alone, they would not be saying the same things they do. I mean, I sort of have the advantage of being a fly on the wall. I mean, they kind of forget I'm foreign, but the minute they stop to think about it I am. So it's interesting, and the perspectives that you get from that, as a border runner, are very profound and very different. You really are, you really are—Churchill pointed out that you can only really write one language well, although there are obviously exceptions, for example [Joseph] Conrad writing in English. But you can only write your own language well, and I think that's probably true. And I have nothing but admiration for someone like Yeh Wen-hsin, who writes eloquently and beautifully in English. That is so—I couldn't imagine what it would be like to be exiled in a country where I couldn't write in English and couldn't communicate that way. I can write in Chinese, but it's terrible.

20-00:18:28

Lage: You wouldn't do it.

20-00:18:30

Wakeman: I wouldn't, yes.

20-00:18:32

Lage: Now do people who come from Taiwan or from People's Republic bring their political—

20-00:18:40

Wakeman: Yes, sure.

20-00:18:43

Lage: Views that might shape how they write things or what they're interested in?

20-00:18:46

Wakeman: Oh, well, yes, certainly earlier. I mean, there still are hacks around who do this, but the situation has gotten politically so complex on both sides of the Taiwan Straits that in Taiwan, for example, it's a multi-party system now, the Taiwanese Ch'en Shui-bian virtually lost the last elections. I don't know what's going to happen. Mr. Ma will probably win the next ones, but party loyalties are—and certainly the issue of reunion with the mainland is difficult, and besides, there are so many more Taiwanese now going to [the mainland]. You know there are something like six hundred thousand Taiwanese living in Shanghai. Six hundred thousand.

20-00:19:39

Lage: I didn't realize that.

20-00:19:40

Wakeman: Yes, there's a huge amount of Taiwanese business persons who live on the mainland now and have businesses there in spite of the gap between the—and from the mainland's point of view, well, you know, everybody is willing to talk about everything, particularly if you're outside the country. I happen to be very close to a group of dissidents who are poets and writers and so on and they're—and then on the other hand, my relatives there are Communist Party members, so you get all kinds—but it's the fluidity of it all.

I think a good example is this current book on Mao that's being read so widely, by Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, which presents such a dark portrait of Mao. There are a lot of Chinese, mainland Chinese, who like that book very much, because they didn't like Mao, and they know that he did some terrible things, and it kind of gives them a vicarious satisfaction to see somebody else drilling a hole in him, even though they'll agree with you that the book is exaggerated into caricature, so you know, and you very seldom hear—I mean, there still are the *apparatchiki* and people who come, you meet them, who are cadres and who—there is a kind of what I call cadre-speak, a particular kind of language they use which is, you know, they sound like they're giving you the latest Communist party line. Then you could hear the other thing, if you listen to the local Chinese television station, the current anchor, the—what's her name, Kathy [Katie] Couric, or whatever her name is—the equivalent of that, is ridiculously pro-Taiwan. I mean even Taiwanese are embarrassed by it, you know she gives you this sort of flag waving about this and that and you

think, well, she must have gotten this job through the influence of the Taiwanese North American Institute or whatever they call themselves now.

20-00:21:29

Lage: I don't want to—do you have your next appointment in front of you?

20-00:21:33

Wakeman: I don't see anybody there.

20-00:21:34

Lage: Shall we just continue—what about your students? Are your students—are there more Chinese, ethnic Chinese, or foreign students from China than used to be the case?

20-00:21:47

Wakeman: Uh, you mean, the students from China itself?

20-00:21:50

Lage: Well, the balance of people studying Chinese history. Are there more Americans who are ethnically Chinese? Or—

20-00:22:01

Wakeman: There are some, there are some. I think our most distinguished graduate this year in the PhD program is an American-born Chinese who went to Yale and she's, you know, she's American. And she's learned very good Chinese for an overseas Chinese. Oddly enough, it's not as good as some of our American Americans, but it's very good. But in terms of the composition of our graduate students now, back when I started there were, except after the Cultural Revolution we began to get a little trickle of people who were fleeing from China, and Berkeley didn't tend to be on the map for people who were from Taiwan. They tended to go to Stanford, largely for political reasons, Stanford being much more conservative and pro-Taiwan, or Columbia, for example.

20-00:22:54

Lage: So the program at Stanford was more conservative.

20-00:22:57

Wakeman: Yes, exactly, and the personnel, and Berkeley was always seen as very sort of pro-Red China. Being a Berkeley prof, that was the problem that I had with the Reagan administration, that was part of their dislike of me, was I was too pro-Red China. Those things, of course are too red a brush to be of any real significance, but yes, that was true. I remember the first delegation of historians that came from both countries to try to meet together at the AAS, which was that year being held in Chicago. The mainland group stayed here with me and the Taiwan group went to Stanford. And they just happened to bump into each other on the airplane to Chicago, but there was a distinct difference—certain places were seen as, and this was because of the Chinese émigrés, as being strongholds of the {Kuomintang} and that was very much a question of contingency, somebody happened to get there and—

20-00:24:01

Lage:

But then that affected the kind of history people were writing?

20-00:24:03

Wakeman:

Absolutely, yes, absolutely. That was very true in those early days, but what's happened now is that we're getting a generation of Chinese who are usually trained in Chinese literature, which is well taught in China, which means they are literate in Classical Chinese, secondarily perhaps in Chinese history, who come here, and they come, and they sort of have to be—I don't know how to put it—Chinese higher education in this area is very, very, sort of mechanical. A lot of memorization, you don't challenge authority, you're told what—it's not as though they said, "You must memorize this, the party said." It's not that. It's just that the authorities write these histories, and you read the authorities, and you churn the material back to them.

20-00:24:55

Lage:

I've heard the same thing said about European education to an extent.

20-00:24:58

Wakeman:

To a certain extent it's true also, but I think in China it's—

20-00:25:00

Lage:

At least undergraduate.

20-00:25:02

Wakeman:

It's true triply so. Undergraduate yes, of course, these are undergraduates and they come here and you have to kind of break that so the first year or two can be very painful. Some drop out, some go back, some have nervous breakdowns, but some of them are very, very good, and they are smart enough to begin to see what they hadn't seen in China. Plus their teachers are aware of this. Their teachers may have, I mean, one of our best students now from Shanghai, two of her teachers—one is deputy director of the Social Sciences Academy of Shanghai and spent a year here, and the other professor, Zhu Weizheng, who's a brilliant scholar and really a maverick in his own right, spent a year at Toronto and frequently comes here to visit, very sophisticated, was a hardcore Marxist, Maoist, I should say, but he's now basically a cynic. He and I respect each other a great deal, and she's really, really a good scholar. She's going to be a world-class scholar, so that's very refreshing.

And there are things there that you just—well, for example, who was talking about this, oh, I asked Paul Cohen at the AAS the other night what he was working on, and he said he was working on Go Jian; had I ever heard of Go Jian? I said, "Sure." He said, "Very few Americans seem to have heard of Go Jian. I said, "Well, I can see why." It's a *chengyu*, it's an aphorism in Chinese. Go Jian was the ruler of a kingdom called Yue, and every Chinese school kid learns about this, and you know, like George Washington and the cherry tree, or apple tree, whatever the hell it was he chopped down. And so they have this kind of fundamental grade school knowledge of things that people who started studying China as adults never get, and that's always there as a reservoir to

fall back on. The cultural markers, the referents are powerful. But as the leaders of the fields in the future in this country or elsewhere [door opens] they are going to be really multicultural products.

20-00:27:29

Lage:

And will they—they'll be going back and teaching, I would assume.

20-00:27:32

Wakeman:

It tends to vary. I think that the young woman I mentioned, I'll bet she stays. She has a male colleague also with the provenance, who's nicely set up in Shanghai, and he'll no doubt go back to Shanghai. Salaries have now started to get to the point where it is possible to live fairly well there for what you would get as a professor. But I would say, the first wave, going back about ten years of recently admitted PhDs, ended up teaching at American institutions. One of my favorite was also at the AAS, Yu Maochun, who got his PhD here, who is the son of army generals, so he's from that military elite. When he was a graduate student here he was a dissident, constantly being spied upon by both diplomatic groups. He led the student movement here—his name is Yu Maochun—and did a thesis with me, and now he's a full professor at the naval academy in Annapolis!

20-00:28:44

Lage:

Wow! That's—

20-00:28:44

Wakeman:

You know—it's astounding. And he's adopted many of the attitudes of his naval colleagues, so—

20-00:28:51

Lage:

He's a changeling.

20-00:28:51

Wakeman:

Well, he's a changeling, except he had the military background to begin with, so he feels very comfortable in this sort of--.

20-00:28:54

Lage:

Oh, I see and then he—now when you say he led the student movement here, what period was he here?

20-00:29:01

Wakeman:

Oh, this was later, this was around the time of Tiananmen, the late eighties.

20-00:29:06

Lage:

Oh, I see, so it was the Chinese student movement.

20-00:29:08

Wakeman:

The Chinese student movement, yes. He published something called *The China Forum*, and you'd constantly see him organizing rallies here at Berkeley, very funny guy, but he's got a career here, he's married an American wife, and he's after all a naval officer; he has an officer's rank. So,

it varies, but you put your finger on it—and I know we have to stop in a moment—you point to a very signal change, which is really amounting to a kind of sea change. No longer do we have a monopoly on modern Chinese history, which we held for years, because in both societies academic life burdened under a dictatorship. In the seventies and eighties you couldn't do modern Chinese history in Taiwan. That's one reason why Yeh Wen-hsin is here, because it was too delicate, too dangerous. And in China, ditto. Now, these things are becoming open, much more open, and as these intellectual immigrants came to America, they have—first they did it in sociology, then political science, economics, areas where their quantitative skills are very important because they have much better math and statistics than any American student who would normally end up in a history department in the United States, and now in history. And so you could look at the sort of demography of the field and say—and the one thing everybody worries about, I'll be quite blunt about this, is that they will bring their cliqueishness. If you put five Chinese in a room—I'm going to be very, very—if my colleagues heard me they would shudder—if you put five Chinese in the room, you're going to have three factions, or two factions and then one person. I say this from bitter experience, the factionalization, the pettiness, the effort to establish nepotistic or backdoor connections for your friends or relatives, is, it's a habit. It's very hard to kick, and they've been doing it for thousands of years.

20-00:31:25

Lage: So this will affect, as they enter the—

20-00:31:27

Wakeman: Well, you already can begin seeing it, and Chinese among themselves say, “Oh, this is really a bad thing. You know, the thing about America is it's open, it's progressive, you can be yourself here. For godsakes, let's not bring these bad habits with us because pretty soon so and so will set up a base at Duke University or at NYU and you know. . .” I know a lot of these people very, very well; you can sort of follow them around the place. So that may change things in terms of the conviviality and harmony of the field, but make no mistake, these are going to be the major historians with a few really, really talented—the other thing that I have to say is the linguistic level of American students now in Chinese is so much higher than it was when I was a student. I probably couldn't get into a graduate program today.

20-00:32:18

Lage: Hmm. Because you have to bring a certain linguistic level with you?

20-00:32:20

Wakeman: Well, because I hadn't studied—most of the students who come into our program, if they're American university graduates, have spent at least a summer in Taiwan, a year on the mainland, or they may have learned Japanese. Their weak point is always the European language, but that saves them a great deal of time as they move towards a degree, and of course, they

can read and operate at a much higher level, so it's, I mean, I have great hopes for the future.

20-00:32:49

Lage: That is a good way to end.

20-00:32:51

Wakeman: OK!

[End of Interview]