

## **Q&A: Jan-Philipp Sendker**

### **1. Do you have a favourite character in the book?**

I do feel close, in one way or the other, to all the characters. Of course, Paul, the main character of the whole China trilogy has become a close friend over the years...

### **2. What is your favourite scene or moment in the book?**

There are too many since I believe this is a very emotional book. I could name a few but that would mean spoiling the story which I do not want of course...

### **3. What inspired you to become a writer?**

I do not know if there ever was an inspiration to become a writer. I have wanted to write novels all my life. I can't tell you why.

### **4. What keeps you motivated as a writer?**

I just love to tell stories, make things up, day dream, I do what I love to do, there is no special motivation that keeps me going.

### **5. What's your favourite book, and why?**

Too many to name. It also depends on the phase in my life. There are books that left a deep impression in my teens, in my twenties etc.

### **6. Do you have a routine when you're writing (i.e. silence, a particular genre of music, only working in the morning, only working in your underpants?)**

Yes, I do. I need to listen to classical music when I write. I believe the music helps me to leave this world for a few hours so that I can create and enter a different, new world. I usually write from 9 or 10 in the morning until the afternoon. Never in the evening or at night. Never under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Music is my drug.

**7. What advice would you give to anyone who wants to be a writer?**

Start writing. Find your voice. Never give up.

**8. How easy was it for you to find a publisher?**

Not so difficult because my first book was a non fiction book on China. At that time I was the Asia correspondent of Stern Magazine, a leading weekly magazine in Germany.

**9. What's the best experience you've had while writing a book?**

To be totally immersed in the story, forgetting time and space, being in a different world. Like reading a wonderful novel.

**10. Who are you generally writing for?**

Myself.

**11. What one thing would improve your life?**

My life is very good as it is. To wish for more would be greedy and ungrateful, two human qualities I do dislike.

**12. Where would you like to be right now, anywhere in the world?**

Exactly where I am: At home, at my desk with my wife and my kids in the house. (But I just came home from a wonderful trip to Burma and Hong Kong...)

**13. Are any of your characters based on yourself or people you know?**

Yes and no. Not really based on me or people I know but all my experience, my emotions my dreams and nightmares are part of my characters. I created them, right?

**14. If you could swap lives with one of your characters, who would you choose and why?**

I do not want to swap my life with anybody (except George Clooney may be, because he has such a nice villa on Lake Como).

**15. Have you ever regretted how you ended a story and wish you could change it?**

No.

**16. If you weren't a writer, what would your 'dream' occupation be?**

A classical piano player.

**17. If your book was a film, who would you cast for the lead character?**

Richard Gere could play Paul.

**18. Why are books important in your opinion?**

That is a question for my readers. I am not really sure if they are important at all.

**19. What are you reading right now?**

*Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie

**20. Which authors do you particularly admire?**

All the authors who keep writing without much public recognition. All the writers that risk their lives by writing.

**21. If you had a superpower what would it be?**

Stop people from hating and killing each other.