Update 27.01.2021

On the 20th of January 2020 the Sandstone, also called “Kueka”, which formed part of my global stone project was loaded up and transported back to the Grand Sabana in Venezuela from where it originated. This brought to an end a conflict of 22 years and which was based on an error.

The conflict was that Venezuela had given the stone to Germany as a present and subsequently wanted it back. The error was that an environmental organisation at that time was fighting against the electric cable in the area of the Gran Sabana and they believed that the stone was taken illegally.

In a meeting with the ambassador S. E. Ramon Orlando Maniglia Ferreira on the 24th of July2018 at the Foreign Office in Berlin, promising effort was made to overcome this conflict with Venezuela by exchanging this stone with a similar one with equal value.

The premise of this meeting for me was an official acknowledgement of the fact that the stone had not been stolen as had been falsely claimed. And that the relevant documents for the stone are valid and the fact that I had done nothing illegal.

At a second meeting in the embassy of Venezuela in Berlin a three month deadline was agreed. The deadline came and went without any progress.

A year later Venezuela started a further attempt to reclaim the “stone of love” of the Global Stone Project. In the end it was the fifth and last attempt which led to success although with new difficulties.

A group of international lawyers asked for a meeting. We agreed to meet at my house. One of the members from France cannot speak German. We agreed to conduct the negotiations in English. This was of great disadvantage to me since it involved complicated legal matters. Since the legal basis of the donation of the stone to the German People lies in Germany. All negotiations, including the contract, should have been conducted in german language. The participants in the negotiation began with the statement that the document of donation to the German People is invalid. The general director of the office “Inparques” was not allowed to sign the document of donation.

I remembered the difficult and endless negotiations between the foreign office, the German embassy in Caracas and the Venezuelan Government back in 1998. Every single word had to have the same meaning in both languages. I was impatient because everything took so long. Today I am delighted that the officials worked so meticulously. The German Embassy had requested confirmation from the superior authority that the general manager of “Imparques” was in fact allowed to sign the document of donation to the German.

Many further meetings had conducted face to face and per video conference were held. Several months later finally the contract for the returning of the stone was signed.

The return of the first and biggest stone has undoubtedly severely damaged the global stone project. The costs for repair were calculated and estimated and taken on by Venezuela as a form of reparation. Since then, the Corona pandemic and the calculations for a stone in exchange of the old one has turned the time plan into a farce. The return of the “Kueka” stone has given Nicolas Maduro, the socialist president of Venezuela, the opportunity to be celebrated as a hero of his country. He managed to succeed by legal means what his predecessor Hugo Chavez had fought for many years with tricks, disinformation, and fake news.

Not me personally, but the foreign office was the nominal owner of the stone which had been donated to the German People for the Global

Stone Project by the former Venezuelan president. There are three reasons which motivated me to agree to the return of the stone.

Firstly:

The Indigenous of the region appear to believe the fairy tale of thepetrifiedgrandmother who supposedly is sitting inside the stone, which was invented ten years after the stone had been retrieved. No one seems to remember that three quarters of the stone had been submerged underground and attracted no attention. The truth about the stone is barely accessible to the people, but the myth has a good side. The return of the stone gives the Indigenous a new self esteem and strengthens their identity. For centuries the invaders and their descendants destroyed the identities and culture of the Indigenous people. They were disrespected, abused and diminished. It is undoubtedly Hugo Chavez´great merit that he restored the right to own land and property to the indigenous people and restored their dignity.

Secondly:

Through this conflict i gained the most important insight of my live. I found the higher sense behind the phenomenon that, as far as we can see in history, mankind has always been engaged in conflict and war. In my book *“Frieden ist möglich” Five steps to global awareness and peace*, i have written down my thoughts on thisissue. (available by Amazon)

Thirdly:

At the age of 88 I am ‘on my way home’. For a long time I had been wrongly accused by the international media as thief who had robbed the indigenous of their petrified grandmother. The truth did not penetrate. I wanted to prevent my children and their descendants to be confronted again and again with these false accusations. That is why I intended to solve this conflict while I still can. All the erroneous and false comments can never be erased from the internet. Surely there will always be people who want to find the truth.

The history of its conflictual origins will always accompany the global stone project – it was intended as a project for global awareness and peace - as a monument to the future.