

A close-up photograph of a woman's face and neck, bathed in a deep red light. She is wearing a multi-strand pearl necklace. The background is dark, and the overall mood is intimate and dramatic.

Dalita I. Alex

CHINA,
THE PEARL
AND I

CHINA
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Dalita I. Alex

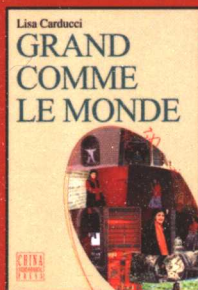
Resides in Zurich, Switzerland. After finishing 2 years of chemistry courses at college, she got a BA in history and philosophy. Married very young a businessman, a pearl expert, who took her for the first time to the Far Eastern countries. First to Japan where she lived six years; and with the wind of change over the pearl business, the couple deviated from their itinerary towards China. She speaks seven languages; one of those languages is Japanese. Her frequent business trips to the Far Eastern countries, especially China, broadened her knowledge on many fields, mainly on Chinese philosophy, human relation and health issues, which contributed to her works and writings. Her love for writing started very young, publishing articles at school and college. She is still writing articles in French and English on many subjects, especially essays about minorities. Her last book *Ageless* tells us about her challenge and secrets to prolong health and beauty.

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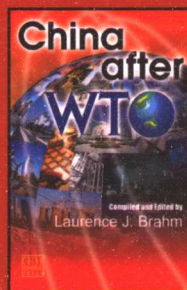
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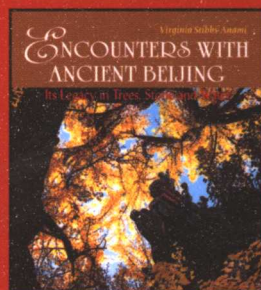
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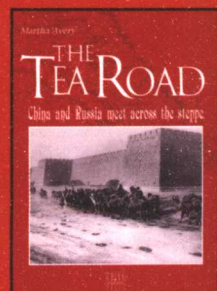
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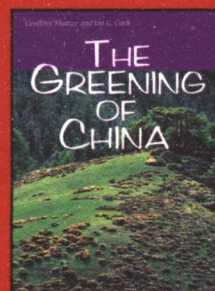
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SECTION ONE



Our Endeavours Were Treasured with Enriched Experiences

I was in a daydream that Thursday afternoon, sitting in front of my computer, asked to write down the story of my many frequent trips to Mainland China, my lived experiences, events and escapades with the Chinese people. Those were cherished memories, enthralled, full of adventure; souvenirs rich of unrivalled experiences, of conspicuous fragrant knowledge through discovery of the old and the new.ⁱ

I was to encounter “the old” with such an avid curiosity. As for “the new” I had to find and appreciate its novelty slowly but duly, mostly coming to understand the “Tao” – the path of my life – a word that I learned in the Chinese philosophy, henceforth a good term to express my indentations during my business trips in China and my itinerary in general, which I ardently believe were enhanced by the cosmic influence in harmonising and leading the pre-eminent changes of my life. Notwithstanding every visit had its capital influence to shape up my life, through its experiences and endeavours. Every visit had to play a decisive role on my financial situation and social establishment, to balance our decisions, to set forth and appreciate the influence of my encounters, thus accepting the givings and relinquishing their results as the fruits of our endeavours.ⁱⁱ

The sun was already high up in the sky, a good indication that many hours had elapsed, ever since I took my writing. I laid down my pencil, feeling little bit swarming in my senses. I stood up, having a very strong envy to sip a cup of tea, an envy of a hot

ⁱ Dalita I. Alex, *Ageless*, where this concept was explained in deep detail.

ⁱⁱ cfr. Alex, page 225-237. I apply this though here in another context.

liquid, to adulterate my throat thus to mitigate and pacify my dried lips. But beneath that sudden desire there was also an act, an urge to enhance and impel a perceptive incitement of my forgotten memories. Thirsty and impulsive, I hastily entered the kitchen to prepare my magic drink to stir and excite my impulses by evoking my memories. It can be realized through the sound of music, the touch of an article, the sight of a place, the smell of the earth after a rainfall, or the aroma of a food. I think Orientals are more prone to the awakening of their conscious mind in general than Occidentals, and me being prone to the philosophy of the Orient I had the eagerness and the preparation to evoke my unfathomable subjective feelings, to induce them to realisation and enlightenment, whenever there was an occasion to celebrate.

I run across a panoply of all kinds of tea, a variety of English tea and especially Chinese tea. A collection of cha that I had the useful habit to drink some of these beneficial drinks in my daily diet. I watched for a while my collection at the back of the shelf, as if I was noticing them for the first time. Indeed I was overhauling them under another light and another dimension. Exploring them from the shelf, where I had exhibited a rich collection of my recollections, scrutinizing and observing the reminiscence and the wishfulness of those little objects: tea cups and potteries of all sizes, very big with lids, middle ones and very small ones, made of porcelain or clay (ref. details about tea drinking to go back *Ageless*). I started to summon up the where, why and how! Most of them were tokens of friendship, given to me at special events or bought at different occasions, which were opportunities of delectable experiences during our trips and tours to Shanghai, Beijing, Fujian, Hainan, Guangdong, Hong Kong, Jiangsu and numerous cities and famous villages.

Many names were coming to my mind, as well as friendly faces and welcoming serene sites, hamlets, dwellings and localities. They were starting to play their magic by soliciting and boosting impressions and feelings which were standing out of my lived moments and indentations of the places I visited, that had an impact on me: the little shops, the corner of a department store, the souvenir shops, or the arcade of a big hotel where I bought something impulsively.

My frequent trips to those different towns and cities were rare opportunities to come across their various kind of tea, peculiar and rare, in one word the art, the pleasure of the tea ceremony (ref. to book *Ageless*). Finally, getting across and around my china-sets, I chose a white porcelain teacup with the motif of a lotus, in pink and

Our Endeavours Were Treasured with Enriched Experiences

red hues. I touched that empty teacup for a few seconds, to see if the vibrations were having any effect on me. My invisible vibrations of energy were at work! My awareness was capturing those sensations through my nervous system, at the very deep of my being. I looked at the cup again, so immaculate and white, reminding me of a very famous Chinese painting, a drawing which represented a young aristocrat, wearing a white silken gown, with rose and pink lotus on her chest. For the first time I wanted the cup to luxuriate in a talk, to gratify and indulge its story and itinerary, before dropping into my house. The suggestive drawing and motif on the cup did remind me of the place where the tea was bought. "That's good," I was telling myself. "That's wonderful!" Details, even the slightest details, were stirring and arousing in my head. Scenes and past-images were quickly inducing the impulses to my memory.

Now my hot water was hot enough to make an exquisite tea. I chose a very special tea bought to us from Beijing. I was told that the Emperors of China used to drink from that tea, very small leaves almost reddish brown, spicy, a bitter foretaste. I used it only for very special occasions, knowing that I cannot find similar teas in Zurich, since it was a very special blend, just like our itineraries of special mood and sensation. I smiled watching the hot and humid fume escape from the cha pot. How many times did I share such consecrated drinks, aromas of my happy moments with Chinese friends, corporate and passers-by? I can not recall! Yet one thing I can think and align, insisting about its value, as being the simplest and healthiest drink of friendship, beatitude and grace made of pure water and herbs.

My Choice of the Title

A human being has got its subjective and objective insight, and one accomplishes the other. The more balance there is in these two elements, the better is the harmony of the person, and its resistance to the encountered situations. When one is too objective, too much down-to-earth, being Cartesian, somewhere on the line, he will have to encounter and come into conflict with some of the questions ensued that happen on, and the answers could not always be explained on the objective level, knowing for sure that science hasn't the answers of all questions even though much is being achieved through it. The same purpose is for the very subjective persons, who detach themselves from the earthly dispassionate open-minded unbiased realities, especially when committed to issues running across, and conveying the assessment of his innermost feelings to choices, aspirations, longings and desires. So my choice of a title was neither very far from my mind nor from my heart, regarding and taking also into account the subject I was to reckon. This issue had developed and was waiting for the moment to dawn, to shine and spread like the rainbow after a rain, which glimmers and decorates the sky with its colourful inspiration. Henceforth my enthusiasm and awakening of the moments was flashing across my mind, to unfold and bring forth the title "China, the Pearl, and I."

This conspicuous and propitious title is the true concept of my story, making an all-out effort in my attempt not to give the impression that I am being conceited or fanciful in the choice of this heading.

Before visiting Mainland China, yet much before that, I was incited through books, magazines, and impelled by documentary films about the Far East and its alluring culture. Television was not what it is today, full of diversified information of cultural,

My Choice of the Title

social and political issues, not to undermine the magic of the internet, a world by itself, “a world fair” piled and stored of incessant information for the lucky new generation and the lesser young public, for intellectuals as well as for businessmen. It is also a rescue wheel for the ones who want to be entertained, henceforth rendering a tremendous service for the new and the old generation to benefit. For my generation cinema was the means for enlightenment and education, thus taking us to faraway lands and ideas, concepts and fashion, for us to think, to compare, and to dream. I was, beyond a shadow, assuredly influenced by films and mediated shots. In a very reserved society with a narrow-minded approach on different issues having to do with social matters on hot topics of love and money and general conduct where our generation was suffering mainly of the guilt of desire and the attempt to make decisions.

I was a teenager when I first saw the film *The king and I*, its major actors being Yul Brynner and Deborah Kerr. It is an American film made in Hollywood that I saw for the first time in the 1960s.

Notwithstanding I understood and analysed that film with the insight of a young girl, who was seeing for the first time the Asian continent and its exotic customs, I will not forget and undermine the respect and admiration embodied in a platonic love, and the attraction of a European woman to an Asian king. They had a deep affection for one another, despite the great differences in their culture. The romance and the platonic love in that relation was mostly and mainly alluring to my young and innocent heart, although being so much in contrast with today's superficial and unsubstantiated love stories that have one aim: momentary attraction and sex. Images have so much impact on children, the same thing happened to me.

Henceforth were the obvious rebound of my desire and its reverberation to enhance and boost the itinerary I had to take to meet the “Silk Road”, an innocent allot which was first drawn in my heart as an spiritual aura, then in my head. My path had to make a turn of 360 degrees on the compass of my life. It was undoubtedly an innocent desire which did not need to exert any will or guilt conscious to bring forward memories of my longings to life.

The protagonist of the film *The King and I* possessed qualities that made her more conspicuous. Anna, the heroin of the film, was an English teacher appointed by the king and the courtier, to furnish a Western education to his court elements (children and courtship). She was a British citizen, educated, knowledgeable and elegant,

possessing a critical and outspoken character (something that was not conceivable in that epoch, especially for a woman), in one word a courageous person. Her origin had its capital importance of course, to give her more pride and make her feel sure of herself. She was well aware that she belonged – although very far away from home – to a solid nation in the 19th century Britain, which was in full expansion, an empire, where the sun did not set down on its territory. Britain claimed to have by far the largest merchant ships all around the world, war fleets, marine ships, overpowering all other nations in Europe, and the Asian world, an ambitious programme and requisite for an empire which was at odds with the Asian empire. Already in the 19th century, Britain had its industrial revolution, was ambitious to overpower other nations and to endorse a modernised economical welfare and education. He had revolutionised and washed away the old system, and brought forth novelty to a world which was emerging towards acceptance, with some reticence. British already had freedom of thought and ideology. Their famous *Gazette* newspaper is a very good example, possessing the privilege of criticising and accepting the new and the different. Britain could also boast of having a more defined social ethics and courtesy and a more pronounced occidental decorum and protocol, not undermining its modernised and organised economy of defined statues. All of which were somehow in contrast to the Asian world, in China with the Manchu emperors modernisation was almost forgotten, where freedom was conducted through a king or an emperor and dealt with the different aspects and issue of social etiquette, political problems, refined social welfare through religious leaders and philosophers, whilst centuries long they were known, especially for the Chinese, as innovators, inventors and creators in many fields, which had to open new possibilities and innovative ideas to reshape and enhance to the quick development of the other countries, mainly Middle Eastern cities and the Occident.

The colonialist British of that epoch, indeed, besides being conceited and ambitious, were also conservative, in their dogmatic demeanours, while Asians in general were more traditionalists, therefore conserving an immobile empire. Asian sovereigns, especially Chinese emperors, besides being the most powerful leaders and the most dominant and authoritative Asian emperors, they were also the law, the one who was bearing the consciousness of the people; and if that emperor had a consciousness and a candour based on many-century-old religious-and social-bound consciousness, immobile and without any hint of the new fangleness and innovativeness in current duties,