

Offbeat Tales

A Journal

John Paul Campbell III





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January 25, 2024

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Design and Photos

EDITORIAL & LAYOUT: John P. Campbell, with Adobe InDesign

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Ashok Hotel, New Delhi

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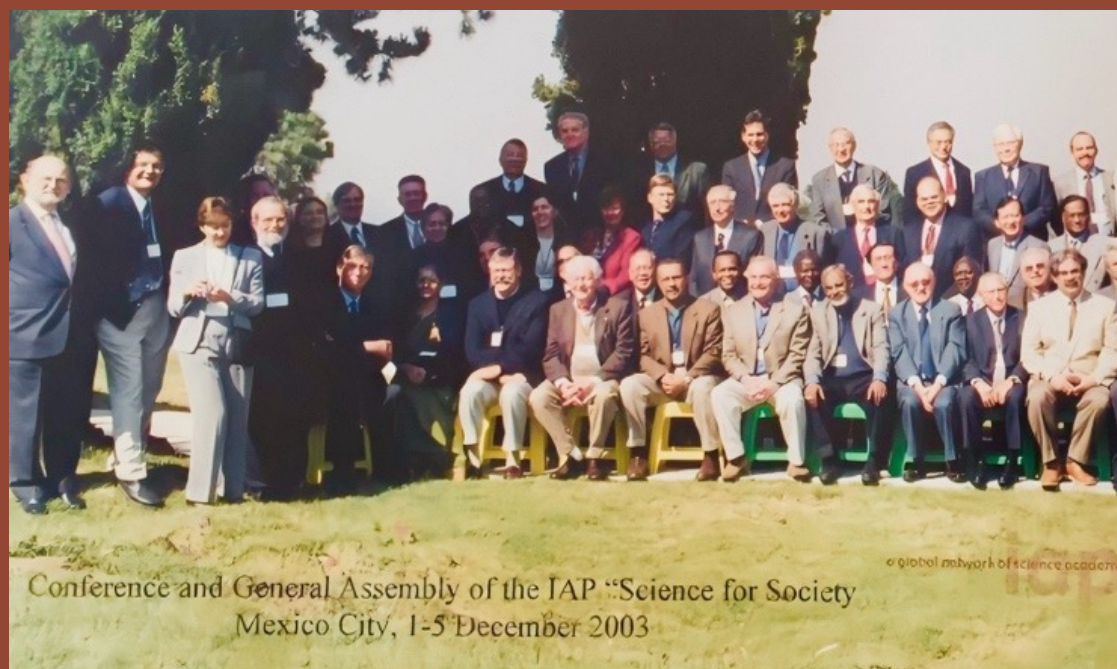
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Acknowledgments

I am grateful to officials of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences for their leadership and for their confidence in my managing global programs.

It was a privilege to work with eminent scientists and technologists from all over the world who joined our efforts to explore more effective options for sustaining humanity's future.

I am thankful for all my family and friends who shared their life paths with me full of joy and mutual support.

And immeasurable thanks go to Sheldon Lippman, my life-partner and now spouse, for our journey together, for his global travel companionship, and for his reliable expertise and editorial advice in producing this journal.



“I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read on the train.”

Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*

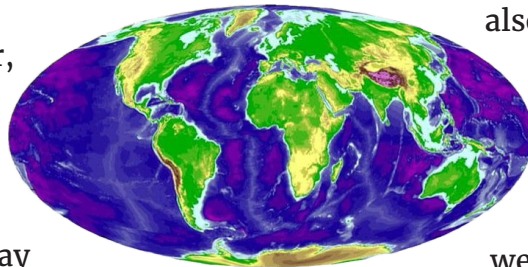
January 25, 2024. I reach my 75th year. Memories of large life events seem to fade, overtaken by quirky small incidents, mostly in foreign lands, that make me gasp, laugh, or wonder. This journal is an illustrated evocation of 34 events in my life that will continue to entertain and haunt me in my remaining years. It is divided into three sections: Amazing Tales, Amusing Tales, and Affecting Tales. I created this journal as an *aide-memoir* for myself and as an *amusement* for family and friends.

A born-and-bred Southerner, for years I listened to my elderly aunts and uncles tell artfully embellished tall tales that would amuse or astonish at family holiday gatherings. While the tales in this journal may be “offbeat,” they have the unusual benefit of being true!

Context, it is said, is everything. So here is the setting for these tales...

My life's work was set in motion at age-13 by a visit to a small-town Louisiana hospital. Talking alone with my dying father for the last time, he shared the highs and lows of his life. He spoke of his three horrific years as an American prisoner of war in Nagasaki, Japan, and the unimaginable horrors of walking through that decimated city days after the atomic bomb. He tearfully made one last request of me, “Live your life helping to make the world a better place.” I tearfully nodded.

At age-15, I won a writing contest with an essay entitled “World Peace.” This essay described how crises in natural resources, health, food, and demographics push nations to collide and people to die. It urged the use of science and technology (S&T) to achieve improved abundance and security for all nations. My tournaments on the Ruston High School debate team were especially useful in honing information and presentation skills for the unknown work which lay ahead.



My global interests were further broadened during my college years at Tulane University and the LBJ School at The University of Texas at Austin. Each post-graduate job aided in my resolve, with work at the White House; U.S. Congress; Office of the Texas Governor; and lastly, 27 years on the staff of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in Washington, DC. As Associate Director of the NAS International Office, I organized global summits on “S&T and the Future of Cities” in Istanbul and “S&T for Global Sustainability” in Tokyo. I

also worked at the German-American Academic Council in Bonn and the Royal Society of London.

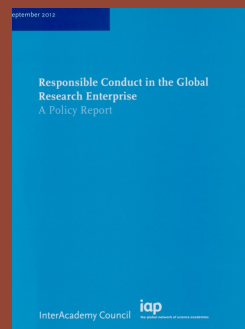
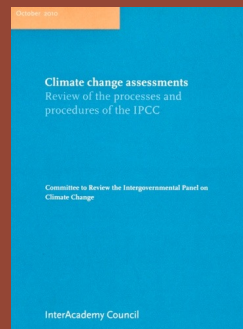
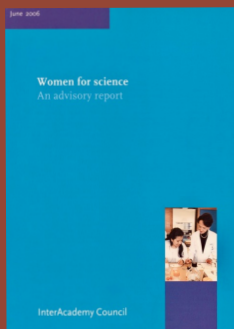
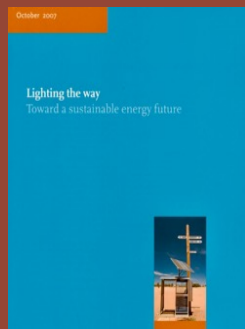
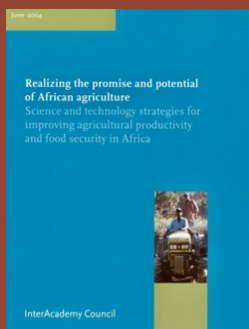
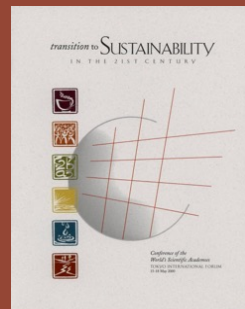
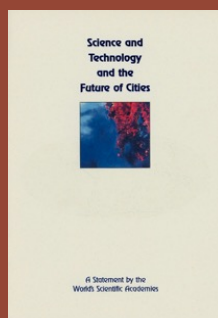
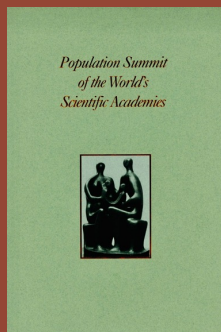
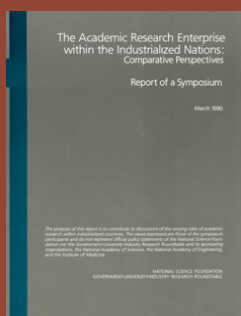
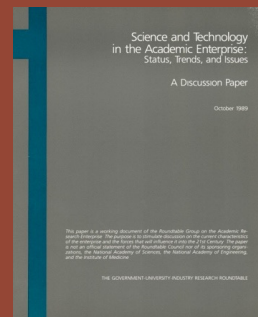
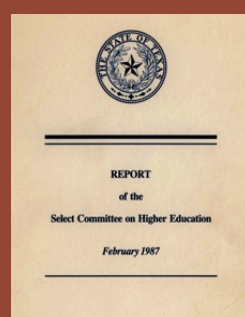
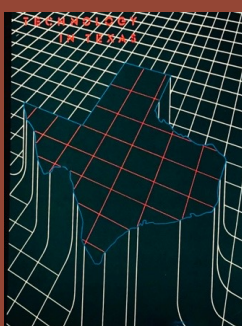
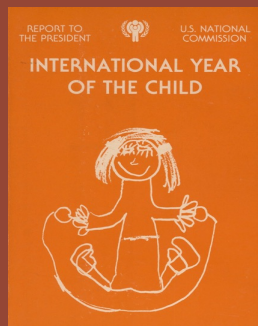
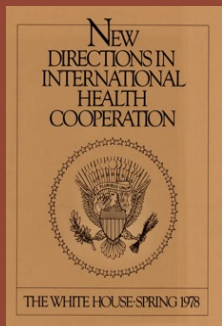
My final eight career years were spent as Executive Director of the InterAcademy Council based in Amsterdam. This consortium of the world's leading scientists responded to requests from the UN to produce reports on such issues as energy, agriculture, climate change, and strengthening science worldwide, presented at UN press conferences in New York.

This work was made possible by the end of the Cold War Era in 1990. During the next two nearly halcyon decades, we were able to assemble the scientific leadership of China, Russia, Israel, Iran, India, Africa, Japan, Brazil, United Kingdom, Germany, France, and the United States to sponsor reports on scientific opportunities for solving global problems.

I am now enjoying retirement with my spouse Sheldon Lippman in high-tech, but still weird, Austin, Texas, and observing the unfolding ups and downs of human history.

Now back to this journal...

A small-town Louisiana boy promises to help make the world a better place, travels to faraway places, meets remarkable people, and has unusual experiences. These tales recount moments along this journey and offer something “sensational to read on the train.”



PART I





Amazing Tales



New Delhi Blues

October 1993, New Delhi. I made my first visit to India to participate in a world conference of national academies of sciences. It was held at the vast 5-star Ashok Hotel built in the 1950s by Prime Minister Nehru in Delhi as a luxury hotel for foreign dignitaries. One evening's outdoor gala banquet was held with an array of Indian cuisine on long buffet tables. One problem with this *al fresco* banquet was the swarm of flies descending on every chafing dish-filled delicacy. Soon I would learn those flies were peppering the uncovered food with *Shigella* bacteria.

The next morning, I awoke with chills. My thermometer revealed my body temperature slowly climbing to 105F! On top of the physical discomfort, I was hallucinating, seeing many bright blue handsome men on the television. Concerned that I might be dying, I phoned Sheldon in Washington to hear his voice one last time.

Miraculously, the next day, without any medication, my temperature slowly returned to normal. And those blue-faced apparitions turned out to be Hindu gods as portrayed on Indian afternoon television soap-operas and cartoons.

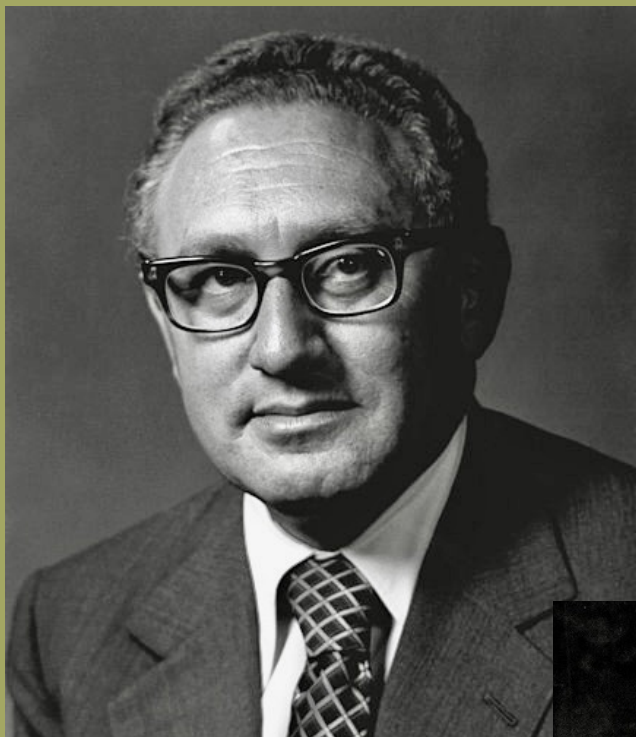
In good health once again, I departed New Delhi with grateful thanks to Brahma, Vishnu, Kali, and especially my body's immune system, for their extraordinary interventions for me to remain in the wonderful Land of the Living!





“Dick died Nov. 15, 2016. Born in St. Louis, he graduated from the St. Louis Country Day School. At Princeton, he majored in English and was a member of Tiger Inn. A talented linguist, he spoke German, Russian, Polish, and French. After graduation, Dick enlisted in the Army. He served in counter-intelligence and was stationed in Berlin. He ultimately entered the Central Intelligence Agency, where he served for 31 years with postings in Vienna, Dahomey (Benin), Libya, Belgium, London, and Washington, D.C. In 1958, he married Katherine Stark, and she joined the CIA to become one of its early female field officers.”

Richard Bull, Obituary
2017 *Princeton Alumni Newsletter*



“The hand that mixes the Georgetown martini is time and again the hand that guides the destiny of the Western world.”

Henry Kissinger, quoted in
The Georgetown Set, 2015

“No, we didn’t get the Bulls posted to Brussels just so we could rent their house!”

Nancy Kissinger, quoted in
The Washington Post, 2021



Spy Mystery in Georgetown

Summer 1982, Washington DC. I was a Fellow in the US House of Representatives Committee on Science and Technology, organizing hearings on new biotechnology research developments, chaired by then-Congressman Al Gore.

Looking for summer lodgings, I was told of an available basement apartment in a house on P Street in Georgetown. Meeting with the owners, Richard and Katherine Bull, I agreed to rent the apartment. Richard Bull told me that during the Nixon years his house was rented by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and his wife Nancy, who needed a grand house in Georgetown for social entertaining. The Bulls were then posted to Brussels.

An unusual thing about that apartment was the wiring running down the walls and hanging from a low drop-ceiling. I soon learned from Richard Bull that the wires were from Kissinger's personal communication system, with antennas on the roof and equipment in the basement. He laughed that Kissinger could communicate worldwide without the knowledge of the State Department or the White House!

One Friday morning, an invitation was slipped under the door to join the Bulls after work for martinis in their back garden to "get to know me." Their house had elegant furnishings and old family portraits. Their immaculate back garden, I was told, was tended personally by the head gardener of the Washington National Cathedral.



Over martinis the Bulls inquired about my education, career plans, and especially any stories about Al Gore. All I learned about them was that they were on the staff of the U.S. State Department and had been assigned to Brussels when their house was occupied by the Kissingers.

The next day, during a telephone call with a friend who worked at the State Department staff, I mentioned that my summer landlords were also at the State Department. The next evening, my friend telephoned to say that he had searched for the Bulls in State Department directories. "Johnny, are you sitting down? Your Mr. and Mrs. Bull don't exist!"

I recall feeling a sudden spine chill, much like the scene in the movie *Charade* when Audrey Hepburn suddenly realizes that Cary Grant is not who he said he was. With that movie's suspenseful background music in my mind, I began to suspect that the house was really a richly-furnished CIA "safe house."

Yet for the next three months, at their regular invitation for Friday after-work martinis with neighbors and friends, I enjoyed their worldly, ironic repartee while tossing a ball for their golden retriever to fetch. Had I become a participant in their elaborate charade? I knew, but they didn't know that I knew.

Unless of course, my apartment phone was tapped!



Tranquil Longevity with Emperor Qianlong

June 2009, Beijing. I was in China for two weeks working at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. One Saturday afternoon on my own, I visited the Forbidden City to continue my quest to see all its gardens and 9,999 rooms. On this day, a sign was announcing the upcoming opening of a centuries-closed section of the Forbidden City, the retirement palace gardens of Emperor Qianlong (1711-1799). The gate was locked to the Qianlong Palace gardens, but I saw a young Chinese man with a museum badge exiting the gate. He approached me to say that the gardens would open within weeks, but the pavilions would not be restored until 2020.

Mùchén introduced himself. He was a university student in Beijing, majoring in History and English, and had just been hired as a part-time museum guide for the new Qianlong Palace Gardens public opening.

He confessed that he was nervous about his tour presentations in English. He offered to then take me on a tour of the Palace on condition that I would correct any English language errors. Agreeing to Mùchén's offer, I followed him into the inner sanctum of Emperor Qianlong's Palace.

Emperor Qianlong was renowned as a ruler, military leader, art connoisseur, and manager of the then largest economy in the world. He was declared a god to intercede with other deities. After his death, in mortal fear of his ghost, Qianlong's Palace was sealed for over 200 years, reopening for restoration in the 21st century with the assistance of American conservators. Mùchén and I reverently entered the remarkable Palace of Tranquil Longevity.

Each pavilion had distinctive architecture, with sublime names: Room of Bamboo Fragrance, Building of Wish and Reality, Hall for Fulfillment of Original Wishes, Pavilion of Practicing Inner Restraint, Terrace for Collecting Morning Dew, Pavilion of Appreciating Lush Scenery, and Pavilion of the Three Friends (his favorite trees).

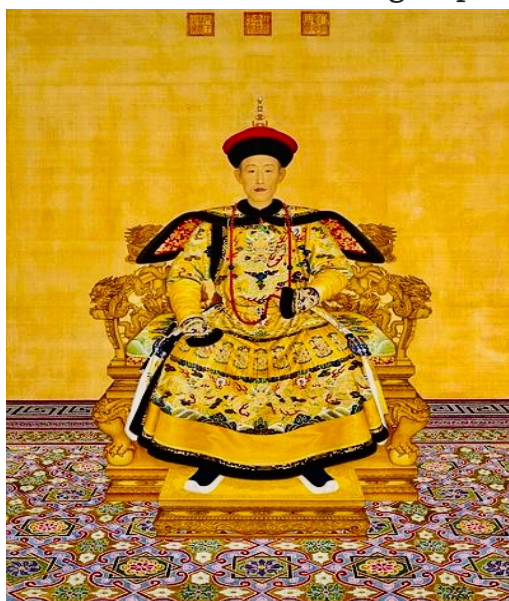
My favorite was the Pavilion of the Floating Cups. It has a huge marble slab with twisting water channels dug deep enough for fast-floating wine cups.

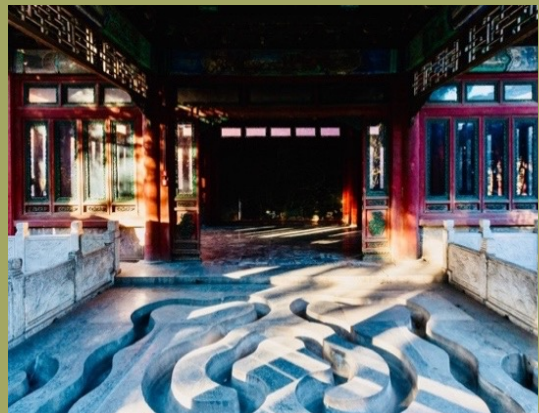
Mùchén explained in his best English that the emperor and his friends would sit aside the coursing rivulets, playing a game of "grab the cups and down the wine." After the drinking party, they would write poetry of beautiful memories.

Mùchén and I then secretly entered the emperor's private bed chamber, still off limits to the visiting public. The royal bed, dominating the space, was the same one on which Emperor Qianlong had died.

Mùchén told me of Chinese fears that this bedroom is haunted by the emperor's ghost. He whispered, "But you as a foreigner could lie on the Emperor's bed and ask his ghost for a personal favor. No Chinese would ever dare to do that!"

And so, as the first person in 200 years to lie upon the death bed of Emperor Qianlong, I reverently asked his ghost to ensure my own "tranquil longevity" with the comradely assistance of his fellow gods up in the Chinese Heavenly Spheres!







Time Warp in East Berlin

October 1994, Berlin. I arrived to attend a week-long German-American conference in the historic Schönhausen Palace in the Pankow section of Berlin.

Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the “2+4” negotiations were held in this very Palace that led to the sudden re-unification of East and West Germany in October 1990.

The palace has an extraordinary history. From 1740–1797, it was the residence of Prussian Queen Elisabeth Christine. While a popular hostess, her eccentric husband King Frederick the Great lived at Charlottenburg and Sans Souci, and visited her only once a year on her birthday.

Until WWI, it was the residence of members of the Prussian royal family. In the 1920s, it was converted to an art museum during the Weimar Republic.

In the 1930s, Adolf Hitler used the Palace to secretly store the “Degenerate Art” that the Nazis had confiscated from museums, art dealers, and Jewish homes. After World War II, the conquering Russian Army used the Palace as living quarters for cavorting Russian officers for whom they installed a casino.

In 1950, the Palace became the first official residence for the President of the newly-formed communist German Democratic Republic (DDR).

In 2015, Schönhausen Palace was restored for special gatherings, and a museum documenting the privileged lifestyle of Prussian royalty and DDR communist leaders.

While meeting in Schönhausen Palace, my colleagues and I were housed within the Palace grounds in the State Guesthouse of the former DDR. It was built in 1960 for visiting foreign heads of state and VIPs.

While its public exterior was designed in the plain Egalitarian Style of the DDR, its interior had luxurious elements of exotic woods, stained glass, and ceramic artistry.

We were the first Americans to stay in the State Guesthouse. Each enormous suite was named for famous visitors such as the Leonid Brezhnev Suite, Fidel Castro Suite, Josef Tito Suite, Indira Gandhi Suite, and Mikhail Gorbachev Suite. I got to spend the week in the Yasser Arafat Suite with a cavernous bathroom and a huge bed that could easily accommodate a party of four persons.

Shocked that we Enemy Americans had invaded their domain, the State Guesthouse staff provided us with efficient, albeit extremely hostile, service.

The staff during the DDR years had been employed as Stasi spies. They reported on overheard hallway discussions and every habit, quirk, eccentricity, or indiscretion of their guest foreign leaders and VIPs. They were clearly distraught that they had no Stasi spymasters left to receive their clandestine Intel on us Enemy Americans.

In 1995, the entire Guesthouse staff lost their jobs when the State Guesthouse was abandoned to years of squatters and graffiti. In 2010, it was sold to a Swiss company that restored its artistic features, converting the Guesthouse into luxury condominiums for sale to private owners.



Egypt on the Highway to Heaven

May 2003, Cairo. My flight was delayed arriving at Cairo International Airport on my way to Alexandria. I was scheduled to attend a global conference the next morning at the new Library of Alexandria for the 21st Century.

Holding a sign with my name, a taxi driver was waiting outside baggage claim. He led me out to his old ramshackle taxi for the three-hour road trip to Alexandria.

At 10:00PM, we headed to Giza, then north along the notorious Desert Road, known in Egypt as the “Highway to Heaven.” The route was sparsely populated, but the driver often had to swerve to miss donkeys and carts crossing in the dark.

The taxi driver inexplicably turned off the headlights, with only moonlight to show the way. As he spoke no English, I had no way to communicate with him. So I decided to enter into a trance to escape the reality a possible collision with a camel or worse.

Then suddenly my amazing past lives in Old Egypt flashed before my very eyes!



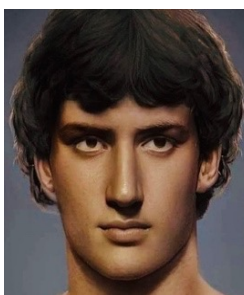
There I was traveling in the year 322 BCE as companion to 24-year-old Alexander, later known as The Great, marching along with his troops on route to found the City of Alexandria. Alex and

I developed plans for the city layout of his new capital on the Mediterranean Sea. Our follow-up adventure was his pilgrimage to the Siwa Oasis in the Western Desert to consult with the Oracle of Ammon about his fate. Alex wanted to know his divine status and how long he would live. The Oracle cleverly assured Alex that he was indeed the son of Zeus and would live a long life. But I warned Alex about treachery among his favorite generals and that he should be watchful. After being anointed Pharaoh of Egypt in Memphis, he went eastward again to conquer all of South Asia. Then Alex mysteriously died age-32 in Babylon while living in the Palace of Nebuchadnezzar. *You should have listened to me, my dear departed friend!*





My half-conscious state landed me next in the tragic year 30BCE in Alexandria when I was a teenage BFF with Ptolemy XV, better known to the masses as Caesarion and to me as Caes. He was the son of Cleopatra and Julius Caesar. His mother and her new lover Mark Antony were at war with Octavian. For protection, Caes and I were sent toward India, concealing a cache of gold and gems. Cleo and Mark then killed themselves. While I begged him not to go, Caes decided to return to Alexandria. On his arrival in Egypt, he was strangled under orders of Octavian, who became Roman Emperor Augustus. I went on to India with the whole cache of gold and gems. *Bountiful friends forever!*



What a thrill to be sailing from Rome to Alexandria in the year 130CE with Roman Emperor Hadrian and his hunky young boyfriend Antinous. I had been appointed Royal Companion to Antinous.

We traveled to the Libyan Desert with Hadrian to hunt Marousian lions. Antinous was terrified, but I reminded him that if he wanted to be a god upon his death, he had to prove his courage. Antinous killed a lion with bravado! We next sailed up the Nile with Hadrian. Antinous, now that he qualified as a god, unexpectedly jumped overboard and drowned so that his perfect young body would be forever worshiped. *Happy life in Olympus, my beautiful friend!*



Jumping forward to the year 270CE, a sect of “holy desert monks” had beckoned me to the nearby Nitrian Desert, where they sought isolation from the temptations of the world in desert caves. Most famous was my young bosom buddy, Tony of Koma, later known as Saint Anthony the Great, “Father of All Monks.” On our daily treks through the desert, Tony and I successfully battled satyrs, centaurs, and other chimeras sent by the pesky Devil to test our faith. Then later, after we both had survived an attack by demons, Tony revealed that God had appeared to him in a dream to reveal that only Tony’s name would be known forever. *Holy Moly, Saint Tony! You waited until now to tell that to your best bud?*



Suddenly jolted awake at 1:00AM, my taxi driver had miraculously delivered me safe and sound to my hotel in Alexandria. I had really been enjoying the adventures with my ancient friends, all VIPs now in Olympus or Heaven, and now all historic subjects in volumes of actual adventures in the Library of Alexandria.

There was truth in my desert trance!



Europe's polar gateway to space

SPACEPORT ESRANGE



Heaven and Earth in Lapland

June 1995, Kiruna, Sweden. I had traveled to northern Sweden in the Arctic Circle, to attend an international conference of engineering academies on the topic of sustainability. Kiruna, the northernmost city in Swedish Lapland, was built in the 1890s to provide homes and services for the mineworkers in the Kiruna Iron Mine. Conferees toured the Esrange Space Center, then a base for scientific research and home to reindeer, and then a cave tour of the Kiruna Iron Mine, the largest underground iron mine in the world.

We also had the opportunity to celebrate the summer Solstice midnight sun. When the setting sun was about to reach the horizon, we joined locals at the hotel bar in the Swedish tradition of an old song (or two) and a glass (or two) of Aquavit liquor to help the sun go back up. That worked! But alas we did not get to join in more festive Swedish rituals such as dancing costumed around maypoles decorated with flowers and leaves, warding off evil spirits with great bonfires, or frolicking naked through the nordic forests of aspen and birch!

January 2024, Kiruna, Sweden. The city of Kiruna that I visited in 1995 is no more! The Kiruna Mine had mistakenly expanded its mine tunnels under the city itself, causing enormous sinkholes that collapsed Kiruna businesses and made homes uninhabitable.

After a referendum, Kiruna was completely rebuilt by the government-owned mining corporation at a geologically secure site three kilometers away. The entire population of Kiruna then moved to this new “City for the 22nd Century.”

Tourism in the new Kiruna has now become the major source of economic growth. Highly-paid technical expertise is also sought for the newly established European Union Spaceport Esrange, which has become the primary launch venue for European spacecraft on earth-observing as well as interplanetary astronomy missions. In 2020 a series of strong earthquakes hit the area, requiring rescues of miners caught in collapsed tunnels. The mining corporation is now replacing all human mine workers with robots and autonomous vehicles, managed via WIFI by computer technicians in offices above-ground.



Tea with the Emperor and Empress of Japan

October 30, 1999. Tokyo. At the 50th anniversary ceremony of the Science Council of Japan (SCJ), I was asked to meet with Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko to discuss plans for an upcoming World Conference of National Science Academies (of which I was staff director) to be held in Tokyo in May 2000.

The Imperial Household staff had responded to an SCJ invitation to the Emperor to make a Welcoming Address, with “yes” in Japanese. In Japanese that could also mean “maybe.” I was asked to say to the Emperor that we looked forward to his participation in the conference. The Emperor would be expected to respond to me in *English*, “Yes, I would be delighted to participate.”

October 31, 1999, Tokyo. I met with the Emperor and Empress over tea to discuss his participation in the conference. The Emperor’s “Yes” in English thus began a successful tea party!

At the end of our discussion of speech topics of interest to the Emperor, the Empress placed her hand on mine and asked where in Japan I would visit next. When I said I was going to Kyoto, she told me of her childhood visits to Kyoto and her favorite hidden places there.

After the Emperor and Empress departed, the Imperial Household Grand Steward, who had silently observed the meeting, approached me and imperiously asked, “And just who are you?” After describing my role with the conference, I casually inquired of the Grand Steward how Emperor Akihito differed from his father Emperor Hirohito. He paused for a while, then glaring at this American, snapped, “Emperor Akihito is not a god!”

November 5, 1999, Tokyo. In planning meetings with the Imperial Household Agency, the Office of the Prime Minister, and the Science Council of Japan, the SCJ staff insisted that my signature alone should be on all official agreements, especially those pertaining to the appearances of the Emperor and Empress.

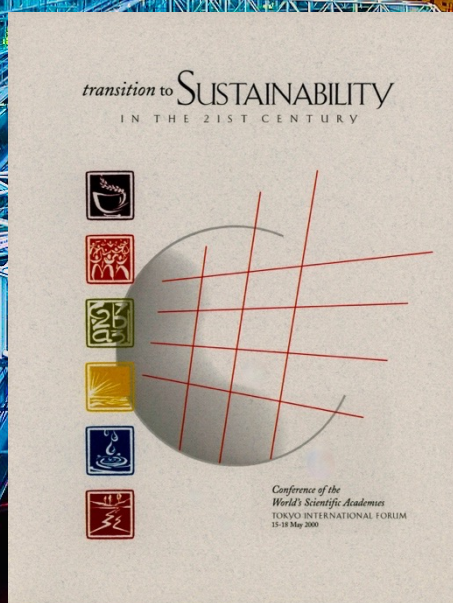
There was a legal provision in one document guaranteeing that the chair on stage for an emperor had to be at least “one centimeter wider” than that of an empress. I jokingly asked what would happen if the chairs were the same size. Without a scintilla of amusement, the reply was “You would be executed.”



May 15–18, 2000, Tokyo. The Academies Conference was a success, with four days of presentations by renowned scientists from throughout the world. On Opening Day at the new Tokyo International Forum, the participants assembled in an auditorium with exotic wooden walls and two chairs prominently on center stage. The Emperor and Empress were introduced and sat on their “thrones”— his larger than hers. Whew!

Following the Emperor’s Welcoming Address and a Keynote Speech by Economics Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, the conference participants adjourned to a nearby ballroom for a reception hosted by Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko.

When I joined the reception receiving line, to my surprise Empress Michiko stepped toward me, reached for my hand, and exclaimed, “Mr. Campbell, how lovely to see you again! How was your visit to Kyoto?” The conference participants around me, including several well-known Nobel laureates, stared at me as if to ask, “And just who are you?”





Delight with the Turkish National Intelligence Organization

1995–1996, Istanbul. I made several trips to Istanbul in preparation for a global conference entitled “Science and Technology and the Future of Cities,” to be attended by scientists from around the world. Held at Boğaziçi University, this conference was to be a part the June 1996 UN Habitat II focused on the growing urbanization of the world’s population.

On a planning visit in February 1996, when I arrived at my Istanbul hotel, the front desk clerk handed me a message that the Director of Turkish Intelligence wanted me to visit him at his Istanbul office. A driver would pick me up at the hotel. My immediate reaction was ‘this is alarming.’

A Turkish intelligence agent met me at my hotel and drove me to the Istanbul Office of Turkish Intelligence. I was ushered into a large, formal room where a distinguished gentleman in a gray pinstripe suit stood behind an ornate desk. He welcomed me to Istanbul with an outstretched handshake. When we were seated, he flipped open a folder and examined a document.

My brain raced through possible scenarios involving the academy conference. But my concerns were greatly relieved when he told me that he had received an intelligence report that the UN Habitat II would be disrupted by groups of “foreign hippies.” I had to suppress a laugh.

With a raised voice, he said that his job was to “THWART ANY EMBARRASSMENT TO THE TURKISH NATION!” He then asked me to alert him if I saw any evidence of “hippies.” I nodded in agreement.

He then handed me his business card. On the back of the card, he had hand-written a phone number. Shaking my hand good-bye, he said with a smile, “Call my private telephone if you ever need me.”

Alas, narya “hippie” invaded our conference. Yet I have kept his business card with me to this day, comforted by the knowledge that if I’m ever in serious trouble anywhere in the world, I could always call upon the clandestine help of the notorious Turkish National Intelligence Organization!



Davos or Bussed

June 1999, Geneva. My first meeting with Klaus Schwab, Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum (WEF), was to discuss how the WEF could help to create an organization of national scientific academies to advise the UN on global science and technology issues.

A car and driver arrived at my hotel in Geneva to take me to the WEF headquarters. In Klaus's office with floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the beautiful Lake Geneva, I was directed to sit at a long conference table in the center of his cavernous office.

Klaus was sitting at a computer desk by a window overlooking Lake Geneva and talking animatedly on a telephone.

Ending the call, he rolled himself in his chair across the room to land across the table from me. He sighed, "Sorry about that telephone call. The Prime Minister of Malaysia is always bothering me!"





Observing me intently, Klaus said that the idea of an independent scientific organization to advise UN leadership and UN agencies was a good one.

And he had a proposal that would ensure all our selected academy presidents would come to a planning meeting: invite them as his personal guests to attend the World Economic Forum in Davos. Not surprisingly, all the recipients of Klaus's invitation accepted.

January 2000, Zurich. The invited twelve science academy presidents joined with me in a hotel suite with luggage packed for a week at the World Economic Forum.

Our bus ride through the snow-packed scenery of Switzerland was festive with collegial relationships developing along the many twists and turns to Davos.

This was small wonder considering these academy presidents were all fellow scientists from Africa, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom, and United States.

January 2000, World Economic Forum, Davos. This august group held morning meetings, joined at times by Klaus and Maurice Strong, a member of the WEF Board. They agreed to create an InterAcademy Council (IAC).

We also experienced the wonder of WEF Davos as we attended plenary sessions along with heads of governments, international corporate and financial leaders, and international celebrities.

January 2001, World Economic Forum, Davos. We met again with these same academy presidents, constituting the first IAC Board. Thereafter we met annually in Amsterdam at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences.





DELTA

A Passage from India

October 1993, New Delhi. A world conference of national academies of sciences took place at the majestic Ashok Hotel, focused on the topic "Population growth and global sustainability." In addition, we also toured grand palaces and ornate Hindu temples, as well as attended a reception given by the President of India.

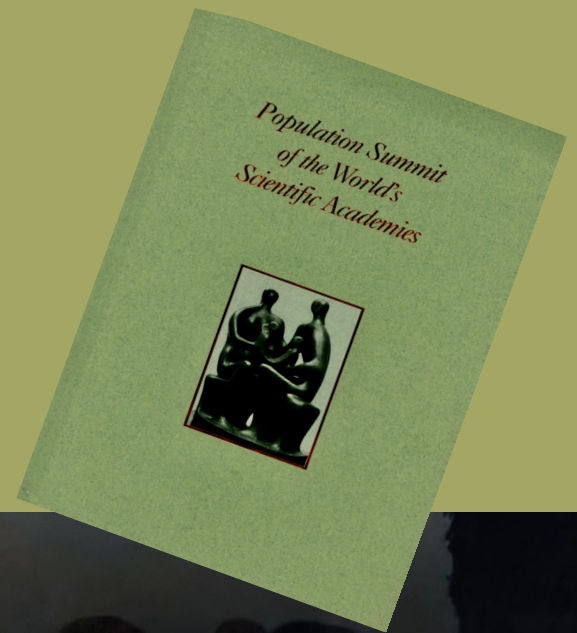
At the conclusion of the conference, the American delegation arrived late in the evening to the Indira Gandhi International Airport for our 1:00AM flight to Frankfurt.

All passengers entering the airport had to receive OFFICIAL SECURITY tags from an entrance guard, showing they had entered the airport legally. After I received this tag, the guard realized that he had run out of said security tags. So, he ran to the nearest airline counter and grabbed a handful of Delta Airlines luggage tags for the passengers next in line.

After getting our boarding passes, we had to have our carry-on luggage inspected via X-ray. However, the airport's X-ray machine was broken that night. The luggage inspector insisted that rules require all hand luggage to pass through the X-ray machine. That was his job to oversee. So we, the passengers, had to shove our luggage onto the non-moving conveyer belt and then pull them out the back of the non-active X-ray machine. The inspectors then gave us each INSPECTED tags to attach to our uninspected carry-on luggage.

Two hours later, we began boarding the plane to Germany. Guards armed with automatic rifles began checking for the OFFICIAL SECURITY tags issued at the airport entrance. Those that were given the Delta Airlines luggage tags were prevented from entering the plane.

One scientist among us yelled at the soldiers, "I'm boarding this plane! You will just have to shoot me!" After a Delta agent made a frantic phone call to airport management, we were all able to board the plane to Frankfurt Airport.



Joyriding Around Beijing



October 2006, Beijing. Late one afternoon while on a business trip, I made a visit to see Maurice Strong. He had recently relocated to China and had been appointed as the United Nations liaison to North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-Il.

Maurice Strong (1929–2015) was the most mysterious person I have known in my life. A Canadian born into a poor family, he had a long career as a petroleum corporate president, longtime leader within the UN-system, Founding Director of the UN Environment Programme, Senior Advisor to the World Bank President, and Chairman of the 1992 UN Rio Earth Summit.

He also helped my career. During 2005, Maurice visited me for coffee at my apartment in Amsterdam to chat about my new job there and the challenges ahead for me.

We then strolled along the canals while he advised me on dealing with the UN and other international agencies. He also revealed astonishing tales of his secret meetings with “rogue” political and industrial leaders. He cautioned me that “in global politics, nothing is as it seems!”

In Beijing I arrived at Maurice’s spacious new offices high up in a glass skyscraper. His secretary informed me that Maurice had just returned from a private meeting with Kim Jong-Il in Pyongyang and was on the phone with the U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. He eventually came out of his office to greet me, apologizing for having me wait while he had his “little chat with Connie.”

He invited me to join him and his wife Hanne for a dinner party that evening at their apartment in the Chaoyang District. We took his private elevator down to the garage, where awaited his handsome young Chinese driver, opening the back doors of a large black Mercedes.





As we zigzagged through the tumultuous Beijing traffic, Maurice mused about the crafty ability of Kim Jong-Il to outfox American officials. Then noticing my concern at our speed, he revealed that Chinese government officials had given him special license plates that prevented Beijing police from stopping his car.

That “courtesy” was partly owing to his deceased international journalist cousin, Anna Louise Strong. She had interviewed Mao Zedong in 1946 during his Long March to the Chinese Revolution, famously quoting his view of the United States as a “paper tiger.” She also became a mistress of Zhou Enlai, who was to become Premier of China. Declared a “National Hero of the Chinese People,” she was ceremonially buried in an elite Beijing cemetery.

The view of Beijing from Maurice’s penthouse apartment was amazing. As always with the wry Maurice, the table talk was full of amusing anecdotes of how the truths of world politics and economics are quite different than reported in the media.

At the end of the evening, Maurice phoned his driver to take me to my hotel. I thanked Maurice and Hanne for their hospitality and took their elevator down to the garage.

As I approached their Mercedes, the young driver smiled at me, taking off his coat and tie. Shaking my hand, he said his western name was “Rupert” and invited me to sit with him in the front passenger’s seat.

We then took off into the Beijing night, whizzing and veering through Beijing’s narrow dark hutong streets and wide bright avenues with an utterly wild abandon.

Reaching Tiananmen Square, Rupert veered illegally around the police barricades to begin a race around that enormous public space. Zooming at great speed past the Great Hall of the People, he slipped a CD into the car’s dashboard, lowered all the windows, and turned up the volume. The lyrics “*Do you believe in life after love?*” could be heard throughout all Tiananmen Square. Rupert, with a wide grin, leaned over to me and yelled, “I assumed you like Cher!”

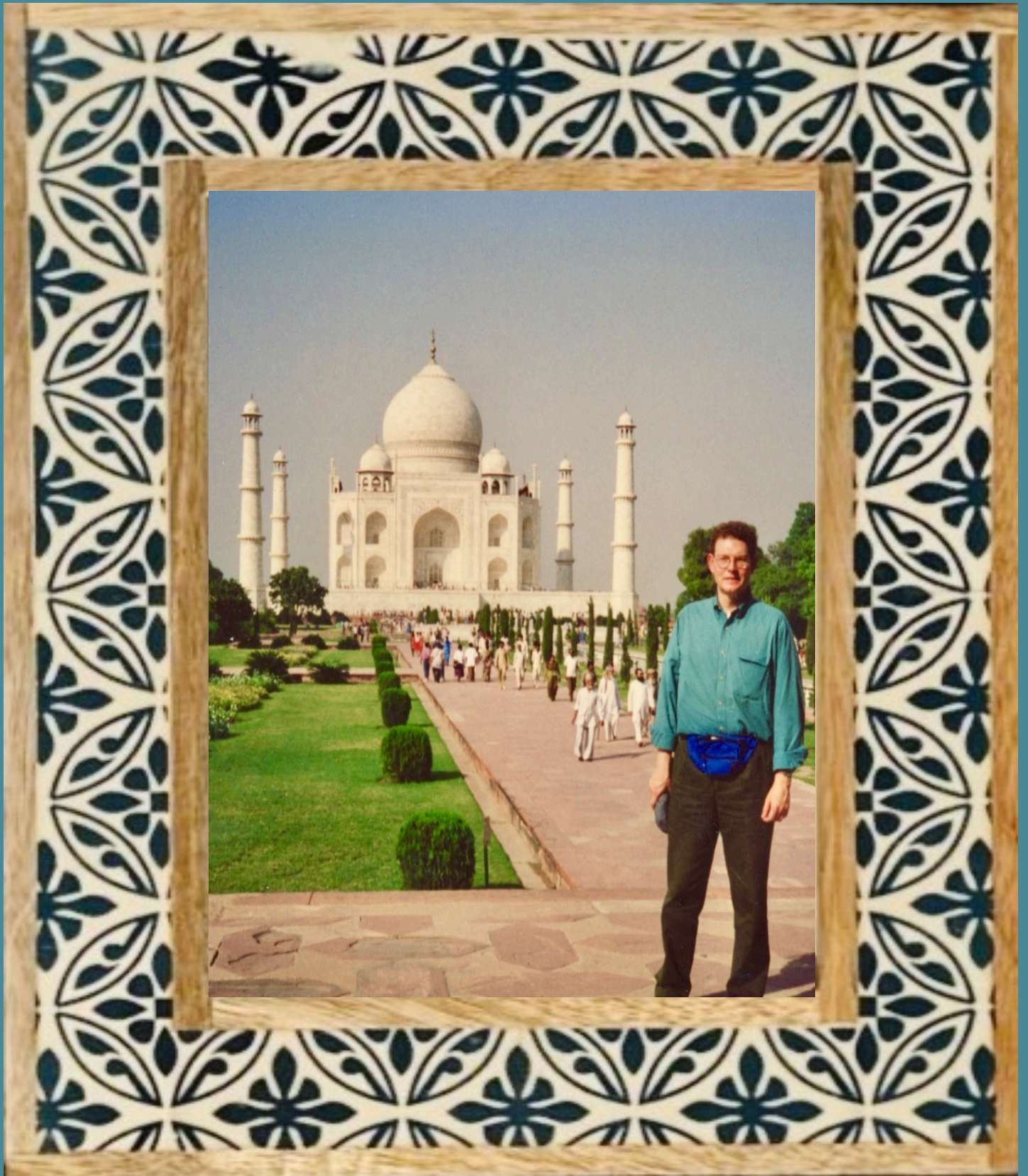
PART II





Amusing Tales





Taj Mahal with a Dame

October 1993, Agra, India. I found myself early one morning on a bus ride from New Delhi to Agra to see the Taj Mahal. Traveling with me was Dame Anne McLaren (1927–2007), famed Oxford University reproductive biologist, pioneer of *in-vitro* fertilization, and Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society of London.

Half-way through our jostling journey, the bus stopped at a café-shop. To everyone's horror, Anne insisted on drinking a glass of local tap water "for her immune system." She bought a simple sari which she said was now going to be the only dress she would take on future foreign trips. Then she announced that she was walking down to the creek behind the café to look for dragonflies. I walked with her to ensure that we get back to the bus on time.

The number of dragonflies flitting around the creek was astonishing. Anne revealed to me that the humble dragonfly was among the very first insects, appearing around 300 million years ago, and now played a vital role in maintaining ecosystems. Pointing to a brilliant red dragonfly, which early humans worshiped for their magical abilities to attract mates, she mused that reproduction appears to be the sole purpose of a dragonfly. Suddenly the bus driver shouted at us to quickly rejoin the bus or be left behind. Running, we climbed aboard just in the nick of time. Miraculously, we arrived in Agra in time for a vegan curry lunch.

We then went on a jaunty, dizzying afternoon tour of centuries-old grand edifices. These included Akbar's Agra Fort, Akbar's Tomb, Nur Jahan's Itmad-ud-Daula, and Jama Masjid.

Last, but not least, we arrived at Emperor Shah Jahan's Taj Mahal, upon which he could gaze upon his dead wife's tomb. Again, running late to the bus for our return trip to New Delhi, we paused for our final gaze at this timeless world-famous sight. My photograph standing in front of the Taj Mahal was quickly snapped by Dame Anne McLaren.



Rocking Tiger Leaping Gorge

May 2006, Yunnan, China. On a visit to a Chinese Academy of Sciences geology research center, I was taken on a side trip in western China to the Tiger Leaping Gorge, a World Heritage site.

According to legend, a hunter chased a tiger through the Gorge until they reached the narrowest point. The tiger, trapped between the hunter and the rushing river, leapt across the Gorge. Tourists were forbidden to enter the Gorge because of flash floods, but I was allowed to enter the Gorge accompanied by Chinese geologists.

The inhabitants of the area are primarily indigenous Tibetan tribal NaXi people. Their god appears in the image of a frog. Thus, for the NaXis, frogs are sacred animals and appear in all sorts of NaXi iconography.

My guide/interpreter and driver took me to a local NaXi roadside market. Among the local vendor stalls, a woman was selling rocks polished smooth by the rushing waters of Tiger Leaping Gorge. One of her rocks caught my attention because it looked to me like a frog! The rock lady noticed my curiosity in the rock and hurried over with a hand calculator, showing her asking price of 900 yuan or 100 US dollars.

I politely declined her offer and continued to wander about the other vendors. The rock lady followed me throughout my market with the “frog” rock and her calculator, showing me a continuously declining price. I continuously declined. As I made my way back to the car, the rock lady ran to me and, with a defeated shoulder shrug, showed me her final price of 9 yuan or 1 US dollar -- “Sold!”

Before the driver pulled away from the market, the rock lady ran up to whisper in my guide’s ear. I asked what the rock lady had whispered to her in Chinese. The guide offered the translation, “Can you believe that stupid American paid me 9 yuan for a rock!?”





Fairies in Amsterdam

May 2006, Amsterdam. Our life on the Leliegracht in Amsterdam offered endless walks to explore small shops, especially in the Jordaan. Sheldon and I particularly enjoyed visiting a tiny curiosity shop snuggled in the base of the Westerkerk.

This shop sold a collection of small plasticene fairies, based on the garden fairies depicted in the books of the English author Cecily Mary Barker. We thought these 2-inch-tall figurines would make unusual Christmas ornaments.

We were very selective in the character of fairies we wanted and asked the shop owner, Nathalie, if it were possible to obtain more of the more mischievous looking fairies for our new menagerie.

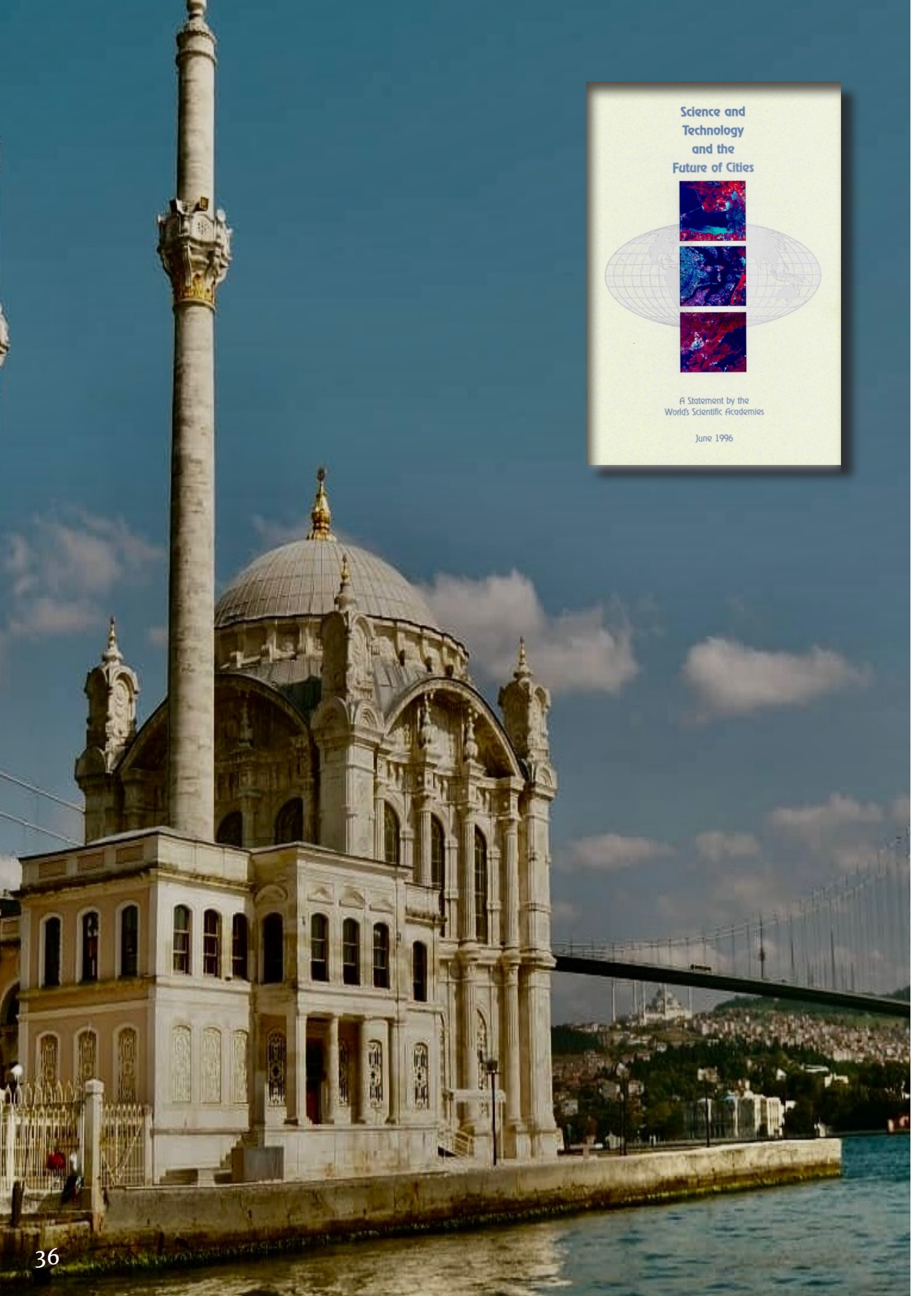
Nathalie took our order, which we arranged to have delivered to my office at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences (KNAW) in the Trippenhaus, a 17th century mansion, which happened to be familiar to and very convenient for Nathalie to make the delivery.

Several weeks went by since we made our order. Then during the middle of my meeting with several foreign scientists at the KNAW, the front-desk guard entered our meeting room and announced, "Mr. Campbell, your fairies have arrived. I took them to your office."

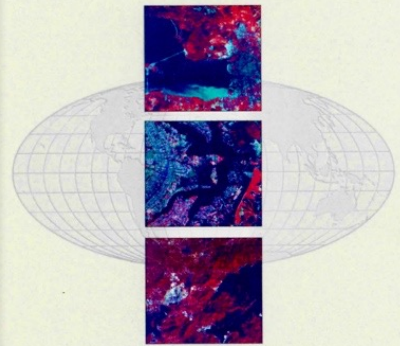
After I thanked the guard, my fellow meeting colleagues curiously glanced at me with discrete smiles.







Science and
Technology
and the
Future of Cities



A Statement by the
World's Scientific Academies

June 1996

Booze on the Bosphorus

June 1996, Istanbul. As staff director for the global conference “Science and Technology and the Future of Cities,” held in Istanbul as part of “UN Habitat II,” I greeted guests aboard an evening boat cruise along the Bosphorus Strait where we would pass the Dolmabahçe Palace, Çırağan Palace, Rumeli, and Beylerbeyi Palace.

After the boat pushed off on its scenic journey, I was met with complaints from a few thirsty academy presidents. The on-board bar, as contracted by our Turkish colleagues, was not serving alcoholic beverages.

Realizing the need for a quick fix, I made an “executive decision” to open the boat’s bar for liquor, thus quenching the thirst of these distinguished scientists from many nations.

At the end of the cruise, I had to use my personal credit card to pay for the alcoholic drinks, which totaled roughly US\$600.

The next day I received a faxed receipt from the cruise company that included the cruise expense report.

The report described the liquor purchase as “More alcoholic drinks aboard the yacht.” I remarked to a colleague that this itemized description was an auditor’s “caught-you” dream.

I faxed back the report to the cruise company requesting that this line item be rewritten to read: “Supplemental refreshments for the scientists observing the Bosphorus Strait.” That worked!



Clubbing at the Red Capital

2003–2012, Beijing. On many trips to Beijing, a secret evening respite from the manichubbub of modern Beijing was the Red Capital Club, an American-owned historic Dongsheng courtyard home-turned-restaurant. Located in a narrow alley-like street, it also bears historical intrigue as the epicenter for those individuals secretly plotting the Chinese Revolution in the late 1930s and mid-1940s.

Approaching the Red Capital Club is not easy if on foot, requiring a walk down a long unlit hutong street, where friendly Chinese teenagers might be playing ball in the dark but stop to lead an adrift foreigner by the hand to the Club entrance. Club staff dressed in Chinese Revolution garb to greet arriving patrons.

Kitschy Revolution Era memorabilia is everywhere, with a 1930s telephone which plays recordings of Mao's speeches. The restaurant menu, in English, is derived from the cuisine served at extravagant 1950s Mao-era dinners, each named for an old hero of the Chinese Revolution.

The cocktail lounge is comfortably furnished with original furniture from the Great Hall of the People and replete with heroic paintings and ceramics of the Revolution. And I can attest to the expertise of the lounge bartenders serving great classic American martinis!

The well-stocked wine cellar below the courtyard had been originally dug in the 1950s as a bomb shelter in anticipation of an American nuclear attack on Beijing.

I love the Red Capital Club for its friendly eccentricity. I enjoyed inviting friends and colleagues who were visiting Beijing to join me there.

Most of all, I enjoyed the Club's coziness. Its 1930s-era white ceiling light fixtures reminded me of the ceiling lamps in my Louisiana school classrooms.

One evening there, I half-jokingly mused to Sheldon that when I die, I would like my last thoughts to be of those memory-evoking Red Capital Club ceiling lamps.







Inveighed in Inverness

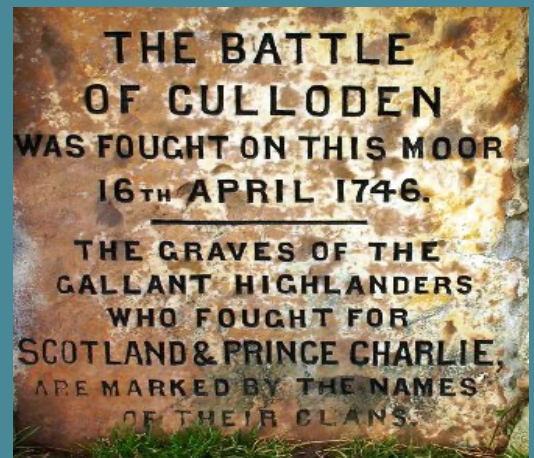
September 1989, Scotland. As a descendent of Scottish Campbell immigrants, I was especially excited to make my first trip to Scotland. Arriving by plane in Edinburgh, I explored that bewitched city. Two days later, I boarded a morning train for a scenic journey north.

Arriving in Inverness too early to check into my hotel, I rented a car to visit Loch Ness and Castle Urquhart, Cawdor Castle, and the battle site of Culloden. The beautiful landscapes of Scotland seemed haunted by the ghosts from millennia of ancient inter-family battles and massacres.

Returning to Inverness, I arrived at the Glen Mohr Hotel overlooking the scenic River Ness. The cozy, cheerful fireplace in the reception room was a respite from all the sites of deadly family feuds that I had spent the morning recalling from my Scottish history reading.

At the front desk I presented my reservation and passport to the desk clerk, an elderly woman with hair swept up in a bun and wearing a pince-nez. She turned the guest book toward me with a pleasant demeanor.

After I signed in with my name and address and returned the guest book for her viewing, she examined my signature and looked me in the eye. With a scowl, she said, "A Campbell are ye? Aye, there's a bad lot!"



Fêted in Shangri-La

May 2006, Far-West China. The Chinese Academy of Sciences arranged a site visit for me to a Himalayan ecological research center within the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of China. I was accompanied throughout the trip by an interpreter/guide, a driver, and an armed bodyguard who always stayed by my side.



The driver pulled up to an old auto mechanics shop where the jacks and tools had been moved and replaced by a large iron pot over a coal fire. Tables and chairs were placed in an outside garden. Along with jasmine tea, a large Tibetan bowl of hot-pot chicken and vegetables was set before me with a smiling server's greeting to this foreign guest.

I was also taken on a weekend driving tour of seemingly storybook villages and magical landscapes. The Chinese government had proclaimed that the fictional Shangri-La portrayed in the novel and movie "*Lost Horizon*" was based on a visit by author James Hilton to this part of China. A town in this region had been recently renamed Shangri-La, where people live long and harmonious lives, enticing tourists to help improve the local economy.

After many meals at standard Chinese restaurants, when we arrived in Shangri-La, I asked the driver to choose a restaurant. The guide looked at me doubtfully, "Are you sure?" I replied, "It will be an adventure!"

My bodyguard tasted it first and nodded his head. My guide translated for the server, "Because you are our honored guest, you get the delicacies, the most delicious parts of a chicken." These parts were the entrails and intestines; not my usual choice of chicken parts.

I carefully managed to eat these unfamiliar chicken parts without grimacing. When finished eating, I graciously acknowledged my empty bowl, "Thank you very much, it was delicious."

And then suddenly a second bowl of steaming delicacies was set before me for my gourmet dining pleasure.







Magnetic Resonance in Slovenia

September 1991, Bled, Slovenia. As a guest at a meeting of European national science academies at the Grand Hotel Toplice, we were the first group of foreigners to arrive in Bled following Slovenian independence from Yugoslavia. The once-loyal Communist hotel staff worked hard not to show their discomfort serving our group. And I was their first American hotel guest in recent memory.

Bled is famous for its location in the Julian Alps, its medieval Bled Castle, a picturesque fairytale church on a little island that can be reached only by boat, and the summer villa of President Tito of Yugoslavia. The Grand Hotel Toplice was modernized in 1931 as a guesthouse for the King of Yugoslavia. After WWII, the hotel became the site of summer holidays for officials of the Yugoslav Communist Party.

In a walk through the small downtown of Bled, I was drawn to a tourist shop. The shopkeeper appeared to be busily removing all the Communist kitsch from the shelves. Always looking for an inexpensive souvenir, I asked the jovial shopkeeper if she had refrigerator magnets featuring images of Bled.

With a puzzled look she asked, in a mixture of Slovenian, German, and English, “Vat ist magnet?” After I gesticulated how a magnetized photo adheres to a refrigerator, she exclaimed, “Americani buy magneti? Oh, I buy some za mein shop!”

Postscript 2024: In a Google search, I find that there are now a wide variety of refrigerator magnets in Bled tourist shops, but no mention of how they were introduced to the Bled marketplace in 1991!!





BLED
JUGOSLAVIJA
GRAND HOTEL TOPLICE



Antiquing with Madam Fu

June 2007, Beijing. On a Saturday sightseeing trip around Beijing, I was joined by Madam Fu, the Director of the Chinese Academy of Sciences International Department and my favorite dragon-lady.

Madam Fu gave me a Chinese history lesson at the ruins of the Old Imperial Summer Palace, destroyed by the British in 1860 for Chinese stopping the British opium trade. She next took me to the bustling Panjiayuan Market with stalls of antiques and not-so-antiques. I saw six Chinese boxes that I wanted to buy. The seller punched in numbers on his calculator to show that he wanted 4,500 Yuan (\$500). I declined.

When I told Madame Fu of his price, she marched back to the seller and had a heated exchange in Chinese. The seller then approached me, asking 450 Yuan (\$50) for all six boxes. I accepted his new offer.

Later I asked Madame Fu what she had said to the seller. Grinning, she replied, "I told him that you are not a rich American businessman, but a poor scientist trying to save the world, and that he should be ashamed of himself for trying to cheat you!"



Mad Cows and Englishmen



May 1989, London. At breakfast on the morning before I was to meet with Sir John Fairclough, Scientific Advisor to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the Cabinet Office, I read a newspaper article about British concerns over bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), commonly known as “mad cow disease.”

The article described growing fears that Thatcher’s deregulation of agribusiness in the UK had allowed sheep brains to be added to cattle feed for extra protein and thus spread sheep “scrapie” SE prions to cows. Are humans next in line?

The article reported that Sir John Fairclough had just issued a reassuring public statement to the media on behalf of Prime Minister Thatcher: “The loyal beefeaters of Britain should have no fear in eating their traditional Sunday roast.”

I arrived at the Cabinet Office for my 11AM meeting with Sir John. He was a famous computer expert, most recently head of research in the U.K for the IBM Corporation. Thatcher had hired him to help promote university-industry cooperation in developing new technologies and revitalizing U.K. industry.

My meeting with Sir John went by quickly as he quizzed me about all aspects of the Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable (GUIRR) at the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, of which I was then a program officer. I in turn learned of new British Government plans for greater research cooperation.

Our meeting over, Sir John invited me to join him for lunch at a nearby pub. We walked across Whitehall to the Red Lion Pub on Parliament Street, popular with government officials. Perusing the menu, Sir John leaned over to me and whispered, “If I were you, I wouldn’t eat the beef!”







Another Passage from India

January 1995, New Delhi. When a three-day meeting of national academies of sciences concluded, academy officials from 15 nations posed for a group photo before heading to the airport for their respective trips home. The U.S. delegation at this meeting included Dr. Sherwood Rowland, the Foreign Secretary of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and later that year winner of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry (for his discovery of the cause of global ozone layer depletion); Dr. Bill Colglazier, Executive Officer of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences; and me, Associate Director of the NAS Office of International Affairs.

Arriving at the Delhi airport at 11:00PM, Sherry, Bill and I went through check-in, reached the gate area around 11:30PM, and boarded the plane at 12:00PM. Our plane taxied to the runway at 1:00AM. The pilot announced there would be a delay due to heavy fog. Around 4:00AM, the pilot announced that the flight had been rescheduled for 1:00AM the next day!

We were able to get a hotel room and to sleep for a few hours. That evening, we arrived once more at the airport for our rescheduled flight. Passing time before boarding, I roamed through the nearby shops and was attracted to a red wooden statue of the Hindu elephant-headed god, Ganesh, and bought it. I brought it back to the boarding gate area and set it in front of Sherry and Bill and said, "This is the god Ganesh, the 'Solver of Problems'. He will get us to Frankfurt."

Settled into our plane seats, Bill and I were chatting when I saw through the window next to him a thick curtain of descending fog. When I called this to Bill's attention, his jaw dropped.

At 1:00AM, the plane taxied onto the tarmac first in line. Just before the scheduled takeoff, the pilot announced another delay and that the plane would remain on the runway until it was safe to depart.

Hours later, the fog still engulfed the plane. The pilot then announced that the passengers should buckle-up for take-off. The plane engines revved up. The plane was airborne through the fog en route to Frankfurt. Sherry Rowland, who was seated ahead in First Class, soon told us that our pilot had taken off without clearance from the control tower. There had been angry radio exchanges with airport officials, threatening to complain to the IOTA.



The pilot assured passengers that he had been confident that the plane's radar system was sufficient for a safe takeoff. He assured Sherry that he would alert officials in Iran and Russia that an unauthorized American aircraft was soon to fly over their territories! *Oops, had Ganesh taken on more than its four arms could juggle?*

January 1995, Frankfurt. We safely arrived at Frankfurt late in the morning to consult with agents for getting flights onward the next day. Hotels in Frankfurt were fully booked that night due to an international trade fair. So Delta reserved us a hotel near Frankfurt. Three hours later, all Indian passengers received their temporary visas to leave the airport and enter Germany. We arrived in a remote mountainous village. To me, it was a picture postcard village with crystalline air and wild geese flapping their wings in an icy garden pond. We were greeted by blond-pigtailed female staff wearing traditional German *dirndl* costumes. A special dinner was prepared for our group...chicken schnitzel with mild curry powder sprinkled on top.

Phoning Sheldon in Washington, I kept getting failed connections. I asked the *junge Frau* at the front desk what was the problem. Wide-eyed, she giggled, "Because the hotel is full of Indians!"

Camels to the Pyramids

September 1999, Cairo, Egypt. Sheldon had a fantasy of watching the sunrise over the Great Pyramids in Giza. We were in Egypt to attend the General Assembly of the International Council for Science. Sheldon announced that we should make an early visit to the Pyramids. Several other conference attendees heard about our plans and wanted to go, too. Sheldon arranged for a driver to take us out to the desert west of the Pyramids early the next morning.

Our group arrived in Giza very early in the morning at the designated location for our journey. We were unexpectedly asked for our preference of transportation: horse or camel? We all chose camels. Secure in our saddles, off we rode in the early morning darkness into the Sahara Desert. We were accompanied by a guide and a few local children on horseback.

As our slow-moving caravan of camels plodded across the sand, an Egyptian security officer came riding up to us on horseback. He was approached by our guide, who handed the security officer a wad of Egyptian currency (presumably as a bribe not to arrest us). This looked to be a daily transaction for both the guide and security officer!

Sheldon and our group saw the sunrise over the Pyramids, albeit a bit cloudy at dawn. We rode our camels back and dismounted on the streets in Giza where we began that morning. Our guide took us to a local perfume shop that specialized in ancient Egyptian fragrances in small ornate bottles and undoubtedly owned by a cousin.

We declined to buy any perfume, but returned to the hotel exhilarated by our Saharan Desert camel ride to see the Great Pyramids of Giza!!







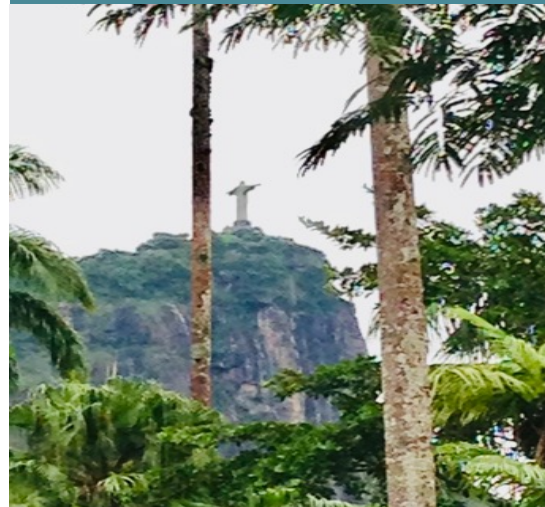
Palmistry in Rio

May 2010, Rio de Janeiro. My love of palm trees began in the Jardim Botânico, a space covered with a collection of 900 varieties of palm trees. I have been drawn to the park and have spent hours there on every trip to Rio, mainly to marvel at these palms.

Founded in 1808, Jardim Botânico is located at the bottom of Corcovado Mountain, where the huge statue of Christ the Redeemer towers overhead. Perhaps it's that religious icon perched overhead that touches my senses. Or the biological fact that the fantastic Royal Palms leading into the Jardim are descended from a single tree, the Palma Mater, which was destroyed decades ago from a lightning strike. I am entranced by their 80-foot stately height and 145 million years on earth!

Closer to home, the coconut palms evoke pleasant sensory memories of my grandmother's fresh coconut pies, and date palms remind me of my mother's sweet and chewy date cookies.

But in Rio, what could be better than relaxing on a warm Sunday afternoon, sipping cold coconut water from a fresh coconut while watching young Cariocas play an aggressive game of volleyball on the sands of Copacabana Beach!



Frisked in Frankfurt

May 2001, Frankfurt. At the end of a multi-city trip in Europe and the Middle East, I arrived at Frankfurt Airport one morning to connect to a noon flight back to Washington.

When I submitted my passport to the immigration officer, he looked at his computer and said that I had to step aside and await an officer who would escort me to the airport office of the German Federal Police.

Apprehensive, I was taken through a side door, led down a long hallway to an interrogation room. I took a seat across from two middle-aged German men in dark suits seated behind a bare metal desk.

They told me that I had been flagged as a potential security risk due to my unusual week's itinerary: London, Amsterdam, Trieste, Rome, Alexandria, Istanbul, Frankfurt.

They took my wallet and passport to examine my driver's license, credit cards, and currency, and especially all the countries that I had visited in the last few years. They thoroughly searched my briefcase and smartphone.

I had to explain in detail the purpose of my entire travel itinerary and with whom I met.

After an hour, they were satisfied with my explanation and supporting evidence, but I was taken to a nearby inspection room for a final clearance procedure.

A handsome young security officer wearing a military-style uniform had finished searching my luggage when I entered the room. He told me to remove my coat and shoes, explaining that he was going to perform a thorough body search for hidden explosive devices, contraband, or other suspicious items.

He skillfully slid his hands all around my upper torso. He crouched to check my legs. Then patting down my pelvic area, he suddenly exclaimed, "Aha! I found something!"

Standing up, he quickly reached down into my right-front pants pocket. He pulled out a long Lindt chocolate bar that I had just purchased that morning upon arrival. Unwrapping the candy bar, he smelled and tasted it. Then he licked off all the melted chocolate.

Leaning toward me, he whispered in my ear, "You should never keep chocolate in your pants. It's hot down there!"





PART III





Affecting Tales





Epiphany in Kyoto

October 31, 1999, Tokyo. I had a private meeting with Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko to discuss plans for an upcoming summit in Tokyo in 2000 of all national academies of science on the topic of global sustainability.

At the end of our discussion, tea was served. Empress Michiko then asked me about my plans for visiting Japan. I told her that I was next going to visit Kyoto's famous temples. She told me of her childhood memories of visiting Kyoto and her favorite secret places there. Among them was a cave where Shinto gods enticed the hiding Sun Goddess Amaterasu to come outside to bring the sun back. I told the Empress that it would be an honor for me to climb that mountain and to experience her favorite sacred cave.



November 1, 1999, Kyoto. Alone, I hiked up a remote steep mountain trail and came upon that mythical secluded cave of Amaterasu, one of the holiest Shinto religious sites in Japan. In that spooky dark cave, I found an ancient Shinto shrine and remains of centuries of devoted worship, old partially burned candles and a book of matches.

Since it was the day of All Hallows, I lit one of the used candles with the still usable matches and placed it on the altar. I declared it as a memorial to all my ancestors, of whose DNA I am now collectively composed.

Hiking back down the mountain trail, I was caught in a fierce rainstorm. Coming upon an eerie-looking cemetery, I looked around for shelter in this forested area.

A cemetery worker, seeing that I was caught in the storm, ran to me, took my hand, and led me to a three-sided stone hut where other workers had gathered.

An elderly toothless woman was stirring a pot above a fire pit. The cemetery workers motioned for me to sit with them in a line of wooden stools looking up to the mountainside graves. The woman gave me a small bowl of boiled vegetables and a cup of hot tea.

For centuries, these workers and their ancestors have patiently trimmed back the humble yet stealthy moss relentlessly attempting to enshroud the tombstones.

Their smiling stoic faces bespoke an ancient serenity. Together we beheld the sculptured tombstones engulfed by howling whirls of rain.

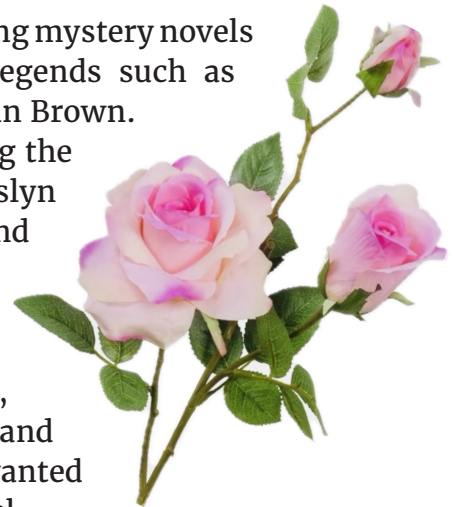
It felt as though I had entered an idyllic place, unaffected by time and remote from reality. The day before, I had sipped tea with the Emperor and Empress of Japan. On this day, I sipped tea with lowly cemetery workers; yet, in that ancient cemetery, I experienced a transcendent state of bliss. I wept.



Roz's Roses to Rosslyn Chapel

April 2009. Walking on a Paris street, I had a pleasant Easter Day phone chat with my sister calling from Louisiana. A week later I received a call from her husband telling me of her sudden death. My sister, Mary Rosalind Campbell Kelley, was 59 years old. She was to be buried in an old family cemetery at the Boeuf Prairie Church in my late mother's hometown of Fort Necessity. Sheldon and I traveled quickly to Louisiana from Amsterdam to attend her burial.

Roz had enjoyed reading mystery novels based on historical legends such as *The DaVinci Code* by Dan Brown. His storyline involving the 600-year-old Rosslyn Chapel in Scotland had especially intrigued her, with its suspenseful tale of the Illuminati, Knights Templar, and the Holy Grail. She wanted to visit Rosslyn Chapel.



At Roz's funeral, I removed a stem of pink roses from atop her casket, making a silent promise to take these roses to Rosslyn Chapel.

August 2009. Five months later, when on a visit to Scotland, Sheldon and I took a day trip from Edinburgh to nearby Rosslyn Chapel. Roz would have loved visiting this location, a haunting structure punctuated by stone carvings of Scottish knights, gargoyles, dragons, pagan green men, and course, lots of angels!

On that blustery, rainy day, I placed her now-dried roses in the Rosslyn Chapel Garden under the large spreading yew tree planted 300 years ago to symbolize the "Tree of Life."







Fifty in Paris

January 25, 1999, Paris. For my special 50th birthday celebration, Sheldon and I traveled to Paris. We spent a weekend doing what we always love in Paris: walking the grand avenues, quiet streets, and sublime gardens. Sheldon took my photographic birthday portrait in the Jardin des Plantes while I was consulting a paper city map in those pre-GPS days.

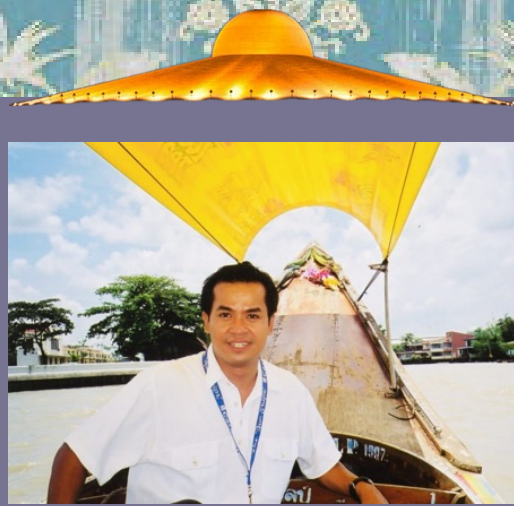
On my Monday birthday, I attended a morning meeting at the French Academy of Sciences in the Institut de France. A luncheon was held in Saint-Germain-des-Prés at Café Le Procope, the oldest continuing restaurant in Paris, having served the likes of Napoleon, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin. On evenings Voltaire would write at his own desk upstairs. I was surrounded by famous ghosts.

Later that day while having cocktails at Cafe Deux Magots, Sheldon proposed that we should be atop the Arc de Triomphe at the exact time of my Louisiana birth: 7pm in Paris.

So we quickly took the Paris Metro over to the Champs-Élysées, jogged our way to the Arc de Triomphe, then climbed the stairway of 284 steps to the top. At the exact time and date of my birth fifty years past, we were surrounded by the glorious luminous beauty of Paris on a crisp clear January night.

That moment was especially poignant for me. While living for 50 years certainly was triumphal, my thoughts were of my father who died age-49. I had now become older than my father!





Bodhi in Bangkok

October 2000, Bangkok. Following a week-long conference of Asian national science academies, I treated myself to a luxurious weekend at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel.

Checking in at noon on a Friday, I was escorted by the concierge to my hotel room. Waiting in my room was a personal butler who inquired of my preferences in flowers, wine, bedroom and bathroom fragrances, bathrobe and towel material, and pillow firmness. All my desired choices soon appeared in my room. My preferences were recorded for future stays there.



Later Saturday night, Chop and I plunged into the everything-goes nightlife of Bangkok in all its exuberant, lurid diversity. The Bangkok night scene was deservedly world-famous for its exotic and surprising entertainments.

Then Sunday morning, for a decidedly different turn, Chop transformed into a spiritual guide. As required of all young men in Thailand, he had spent a year as a novice monk in a Buddhist monastery. He explained the ornate Thai temple imagery and the colorful, musical ceremonies.

Friday afternoon, after cardio on the gym treadmill and a deep Thai massage in the spa, I continued to luxuriate on an urban riverboat cruise. That night I dined on elegant Thai cuisine in the hotel's outdoor restaurant overlooking the Chao Phraya River. Later that night, I had the most serene sleep of my life on the most sumptuous bed I've ever experienced.

Saturday morning, a young Thai tour guide, hired for my weekend, showed me the highlights of Bangkok. Chop, the guide's name, took me on a fantastic odyssey. He steered a rented "long-tailed" boat down Chao Phraya River for me to view life on the rural riverbanks and to eat lunch on the boat among a "floating market." Back on land, tuk-tuks offered wild rides careening through heavy traffic to visit ornate palaces, museums, and shops.

We made pilgrimages to the revered Buddhist Wat Pho Temple with the Reclining Buddha and the Phra Ubosot Temple with a statue of Buddha sitting atop a huge golden plinth.

Chop arranged for me to meditate beneath the Phra Ubosot Buddha. Alongside me were red-robed Buddhist monks repeating a prayer together, striving to achieve Bodhi, the last religious stage of reincarnation before Nirvana, whereby they would no longer return to mortal earthly life.

Chop's translation of the monks' prayer: *"Please nourish me with your goodness, that I may nourish all beings with an unceasing banquet of delight."*

By the end of my whirlwind weekend in Bangkok, I was thoroughly enlightened.

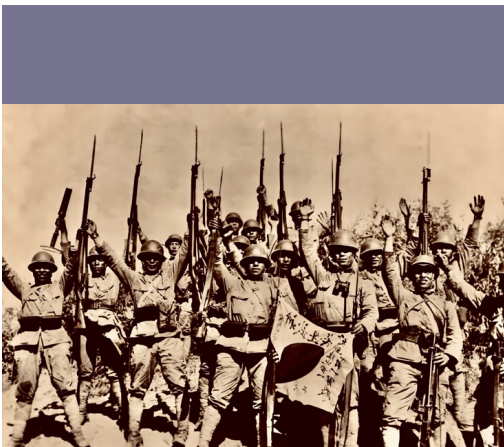


Atonement in Tokyo



February 2010, Tokyo. The most revelatory conversation of my life occurred after a morning meeting at the Science Council of Japan. One of the Japanese participants, a distinguished university professor of psychiatric medicine, invited me to join him for lunch at a nearby *omakase* restaurant.

After each receiving an ornate red-lacquered, three-tiered bento box with surprise compartments of sashimi and vegetables carved into animals, the professor inquired about my life story.



During previous visits to Japan, I had never talked about my father's years as a POW in Nagasaki during World War II. On this occasion, I did tell the professor about my father's reminiscences of walking through Nagasaki as a free man days after the American atomic bomb was dropped in August 1945, killing 40,000 people in an instant, leaving more than double that many to die later from radiation. When my father died age-49 from cancer, I was age-13.



Continuing the conversation, I told the professor of having read many books about Japan in World War II, noting that the Japanese military, in the event of an American invasion of Japan, had planned to execute all POWs before they would evacuate to mainland China. I suggested to the professor that perhaps I should make some atonement for owing my existence to an atomic bomb!



The professor was silent for a moment, then told me about his own father, who had been a general in the Japanese Army. Commanding troops in their 1937 invasion of China, his father's troops had carried out the horrific tortures and massacres of 300,000 men, women, and children in Nanjing. In 1946 his father was tried by an international tribunal, convicted of crimes against humanity, and ceremoniously hanged. The professor was 6 years old at that time.

He mused that his excruciatingly long career as a psychiatrist was atonement enough for the sins of his father. We stared at each other in silence for a while. Then, picking up our chopsticks to delight in our delicious sashimi and carved vegetables, we continued our conversation on more pleasant topics.



EIN FILM VON STEVEN SPIELBERG

SCHINDLER'S LIST



1287

Abashment in Bonn

February 28, 1994, Bonn, Germany.

This was when I experienced the most excruciating evening of my life. I was in Bonn as Associate Director of the German-American Academic Council (GAAC), a foundation created in Germany in 1993 to bring together acclaimed academic persons from the US and Germany to further ties between the two countries.

It had been announced in the German news that a premier of the new film *Schindler's List* was to be held in Frankfurt on March 2, 1994, to be attended by director Steven Spielberg and the President of Germany. After the premier, the film would be widely released throughout Germany.

Not publicly known was that an agreement had been made between Spielberg with the German government (still in Bonn) for a private viewing in Bonn on February 28. Its purpose was to prepare the government ministries for public and media reactions to the film's release in Germany with its telling of a Holocaust story. This secret event would be attended only by high-level German government officials along with their spouses.

Josef Rembser, GAAC Executive Director, and a German government official, with his wife Edeltrud, invited me to join them to view this new American movie.

The film portrayed Oskar Schindler, a German industrialist who during World War II saved more than a thousand Polish Jews from the Holocaust. With unflinching cinematography, the film portrayed scenes of the brutal Nazi treatment of Jews in Poland and the industrial-like murders of millions in the Final Solution of the Holocaust.

As the film began, the audience was silent. After the first scenes of terror on screen, there were sounds of weeping. With the final images of mass murder, there was open sobbing throughout the movie theater. When the film credits ended, there was again complete silence from the audience. Couples then hurried to exit the theater, holding on to one another with heads down staring at the carpeted aisles.

Afterwards, the Rembsers drove me from the theater to my hotel. Not one word was spoken in the car.



Angel of the Leliegracht

April 2009, Amsterdam. Sheldon and I returned to our Amerstam apartment after attending the funeral of my sister, Mary Rosalind Campbell Kelly in Louisiana.

Our arrival coincided with the annual Dutch holiday Koninginnedag. The Nederlanders annually celebrate their monarch's birthday, wearing orange attire, partying in the streets and on canal boats, singing old Dutch songs, and drinking lots of beer.

In seemingly every neighborhood in front of homes and shops, Amsterdammers set up small sidewalk markets to sell (get rid of) old household appliances, toys, clothes, and knickknacks, usually for 1 euro. After a full day of strolling and partying with friends, Sheldon and I stopped for dinner at the Restaurant De Luwte, conveniently across the Leliegracht from our apartment.

We were seated at a sidewalk table with a view of the canal and the passing jovial partiers. We very much enjoyed the festive atmosphere after having returned from such a sad visit to Louisiana. Then a woman from the moving crowd passed our table and without pausing, placed an object in our breadbasket. She quickly disappeared into the stream of revelers. We never saw her face.

This unseen stranger had dropped a small white porcelain angel in our breadbasket.

Then it dawned on us that for many years my deceased sister had collected small white porcelain angels, lovingly displayed in her dining room glass cabinet! To this day we continue to prominently display this mysterious little angel among our treasured keepsakes.





Spirited in Jerusalem

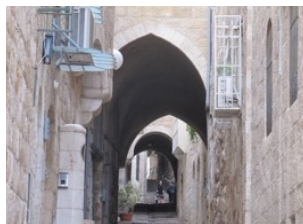
November 2009, Israel. For my 60th birthday, I had announced to Sheldon that I wanted to go someplace “spiritual”. We decided to visit Jerusalem in January 2009. However, an intifada of missiles was attacking Israel as we began making travel plans, so we postponed that Israel trip for Thanksgiving 2009. [Not to be undone on my January 2009 birth hour, we traveled to London and had a spiritual experience in the Rivoli Bar at the Ritz Hotel.] But it was in Israel that we had an all-encompassing spiritual experience:



In *patriotic spirit*, we arrived at the fabled American Colony Hotel in East Jerusalem in November

2009. Originally built in 1902 as a villa for a Turkish Pasha, the hotel was a busy meeting venue in the tumultuous history of early 20th Century Middle East politics and the residence of Lawrence of Arabia. It has become the hotel of choice by many foreign diplomats, businessmen, and celebrities.

As *free spirits*, we wandered through the narrow maze of stone streets in the Old City with its many curio shops and fruit markets. Getting lost was inevitable, except for the long and crowded Via Dolorosa.



To *raise our spirits*, we visited the holy Western Wall where we wrote short prayers for friends, family, and each other; rolled them into thin scrolls; and solemnly squeezed them in the crevices between the ancient wall stones.



In *ecumenical spirit*, we visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre,

deemed the site of both Jesus’s crucifixion and burial. I joined in lighting a candle in memory of my mother’s Roman Catholic family.

In a *spirit of adventure*, a hotel driver took us to the Dead Sea to see the caves where the Dead



Sea Scrolls were found. These ancient Jewish religious manuscripts on papyrus have been important to biblical history.



In *high spirits*, our driver drove us into Palestine and up to the ruins of Herodium, the palace of King Herod, to see

remains of the original architecture and mosaics. From high on the hilltop, we also saw the new Israeli settler communities of concrete being built in the West Bank.

With *Christmas spirit*, we next were driven through Palestine to Bethlehem to visit the Basilica of the Nativity,



believed to be the birthplace of Jesus. I knelt to touch the stones where it is said the manger held the original crèche. The Basilica is the oldest site continuously used as a place of worship in Christianity. We toured the chapels of Roman Catholic, Armenian Apostolic, and Greek Orthodox.

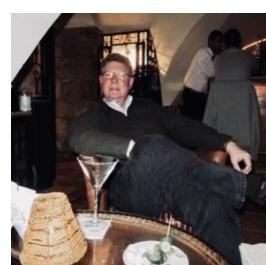


As *wandering spirits*, we visited the solemn Mount of Olives. The western slopes of the mount facing Jerusalem have been used as a Jewish cemetery for over 3,000 years and holds approximately 150,000 graves. It is central in the tradition of Jewish cemeteries.

An *earthly spirit* came over us when we visited the Garden of Gethsemane and stood in the shade of the olive grove where Jesus stayed before his arrest and crucifixion. The olive trees are some of the oldest living known trees to science, dating back to 1100CE.



A *divided spirit*, the golden Dome of the Rock, a Muslim shrine built in the 7th century CE on a flat plaza is known to Muslims as "The Noble Sanctuary" and to Jews as the "Temple Mount." It is the world's oldest surviving work of Islamic architecture. We were moved to see where the last ancient Jewish Temple once stood, before being destroyed by orders of Roman Emperor Hadrian in 70CE, forcing Jews from Israel into their Diaspora throughout the world.



In true *Thanksgiving spirit*, the American Colony Hotel prepared an authentic American Thanksgiving dinner attended by many American expats and locals. The meal was complete with roast turkey, stuffing, pumpkin pies, and all the trimmings. After our Thanksgiving dinner, in *fine spirits* we drank martinis in the lounge, bartended expertly by local teetotaling Israeli Palestinians. Indeed, a very *spiritual week* in Jerusalem!

Wabi-Sabi in Japan

1999–2012, Kyoto. Since childhood, Japan has haunted me. My father had been a World War II POW in Japan for three years, forced into slave labor in the Nagasaki shipyards and later in the nearby coal mines, then walking through Nagasaki days after the atomic bomb.

Yet despite these memories, my father insisted on teaching me Japanese words and numbers and making me expert in using chopsticks. But to reassure himself of survival for another day, he secretly fixed and ate a bowl of rice in the middle of each night. Hidden, I watched him.

In later years, I traveled often to Japan, working on international projects with Japanese scientists. Ironically, my last visit to Tokyo was to chair a session at the Science Council of Japan on the long-term results of the tsunami meltdown of the Fukushima nuclear power plant, releasing radiation to populations in central Japan.

In Japan I gained appreciation for their aesthetics and found philosophical wisdom and comfort in the Japanese Zen concept of “*wabi-sabi*”: the art of seeing profound beauty in the imperfect, impermanent, or incomplete.

I learned to appreciate *wabi-sabi* in Japanese tea ceremonies with misshapen teacups, in cracked porcelain repaired with gold, in the celebration of the ephemeral in cherry blossom festivals, and in sacred gardens made of shifting sand or hiding moss.

In the Kyoto Ryōan-ji Temple, there is a garden of raked sand with 15 cunningly placed rocks. But when gazing upon the rocks, one can see only 14 at a time, from whichever angle viewed. The number 15 means ‘perfect’ in Japan.

In the Kyoto Ginkakuji Temple, the lowly moss, one of the earliest plants to appear on Earth, epitomizes the Japanese ideal of *wabi-sabi*. Several Kyoto temples have acres of simple moss tended by hand with scissors, tasks done with care for over 1,000 years.

The Kyoto Kinkaku-ji Pavilion is revered less for the architecture itself than for its unearthly golden reflection from across the calm water-lily pond below it.

Applying *wabi-sabi* on a much larger scale, cosmologists and quantum physicists see beauty in their equations revealing that the universe consists entirely of infinitesimal (often virtual) iotas variously detected by scientific instruments as being both waves and particles. Now that’s *wabi-sabi*!



Leptons	Quarks	u	c	t	γ	Force Carriers
		d	s	b	g	
		ν_e	ν_μ	ν_τ	Z	
		e	μ	τ	W	
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